As your incoming President I have many people to thank for our current success. But I especially want to express my thanks to former President Adrian Binns – and outgoing Councilors Bert Filemyr and Art McMorris – for the brilliant contributions they have made and continue to make to the DVOC. Their efforts are part of the reason we are such a premier birding organization. Do such contributions of time and concern just “happen”? I think not. The Club continues to get contributions like theirs only because we are blessed with many members who just plain love the DVOC. Since the dawn of the Club, we’ve been blessed with colorful personalities who have found and re-found a formula for having terrific fun while carrying out our scientific and very stuffy-sounding mission: the advancement and diffusion of ornithological knowledge.

When I assess the “State of the DVOC” today I see great things happening and more coming. The sheer number of our field trips, the quality of our website and Larus, our growing endowment and membership, our champion World Series of Birding team, our “orni studies” and rising attendance at meetings, our active work on archives – by any measure DVOC is “on a roll.”

While I can speak of other activities at later times, let me just encourage members to take full advantage of the treasure of resources that webmaster Bert Filemyr has placed on our Club’s website at www.dvoc.org. Have you seen all the detailed directions to Delaware Valley birding “hotspots”? Did you know you can access – and read – many issues of the ornithological literature as well? Yes, back issues of journals like *The Auk* and *Journal of Field Ornithology* are displayed there for us. Just scroll down under “Ornithological Studies.” And have you used the ‘Ornithological ID Database’ created by our new Secretary Frank Windfelder, again accessible by clicking on “Ornithological Studies”? Try it – you’ll find articles detailing the finer points of field identification of many intriguing species. Members would do well to survey the growing content of our website…it is the most powerful bird club website around.

A word about this issue of Larus. You will find two articles of immediate importance: first, a description of the by-laws changes being recommended by Council. We will take a vote on these at the June 1 meeting so please take the time to review them. Second, the article by our new Conservation Committee Chair, Debbie Beer, which explains how the Club proposes to use the money you pledge in support of your 2006 World Series of Birding team. Don’t miss it. And now, as the greatest gift of all – spring – bursts upon us, let’s all hit the woods, swamps, and beaches, use our ears and eyes, and – ENJOY.
When did you first get interested in birds?
When I was seven years old, my grandfather showed me a Song Sparrow at a birdbath in Teaneck, New Jersey. This was the first time I saw a bird through binoculars. I saw the big spot on the breast and I was hooked. . . . the power of identification. I remember, “Wow! This is neat!”

Who were your early birding influences?
I was most influenced by my grandfather, Frank Rockingham Downing. Members of the Hackensack Audubon Society who carted my brother, sister, and me all over New Jersey to see birds when we were young also influenced me along with Irv Black of the Urmier Bird Club.

Where did you attend college and where did you get your degree in ornithology?
I attended the University of Michigan for both undergraduate and graduate.

Were you raised in the Philadelphia area or did you only settle here later?
I was raised in Teaneck, New Jersey and moved to the Philadelphia area when I began to work at the Academy of Natural Sciences (ANSP).

Who are some of your favorite birding companions in the field?
My brother Doug has been a birding pal for many years and Bob Ridgely and I have had a lot of fun and adventures birding together over the years. But my favorite birding companion is my wife, Sally Conyne. My non-human birding companions are Merlin, an English Setter who points Ipswich Sparrows, and Raven, and a Labrador who spots turkeys in trees.

Prior to joining the Academy of Natural Sciences Philadelphia (ANSP) in 1969 what did you do?
I was in graduate school doing fieldwork for my thesis on the white-eyes of Reunion. I was also working for the Smithsonian surveying seabirds in the Indian Ocean.

Your tenure at the ANSP from 1969-1994 was a very fruitful one. Of what achievements were you most proud?
I hope that I helped to connect ornithology with the general public and with the bird watching community. Part of that process was the creation of VIREO (Visual Resources for Ornithology) and starting BNA (Birds of North America). I enjoyed launching an era of modern ornithology at the Academy. Keys to that accomplishment were the building with labs for analyzing DNA, re-housing the collection in modern compactors, and hiring a number of great ornithologists.

During your tenure at ANSP you initiated several new programs, including the BNA. What was the impetus to start such a huge project? Are you pleased with the results?
I only started it because I had no idea what I was getting into. . . . sheer foolishness. In the end, it was fun and, yes, I’m thrilled with the results and where it’s headed with Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

The ANSP is going through some tough times. Is this the beginning of the end for the ANSP or are brighter days ahead?
The Academy has been around for 200 years. It has seen its share of good times and tough times. Currently, many NGOs are struggling. The Academy will adjust and weather these difficult times.
You joined the DVOC in 1969. Why did you join? It was an honor to be able to join one of the great, old bird clubs in the country. It was one of the big advantages of coming to the Academy and the Philadelphia area. Birding and birders are an important part of my life.

On what kind of projects would you like to see the DVOC and ANS working together? I’d like to see the two working together on local projects like the East Park Reservoir. I’d like to see them working on outreach to get more people, especially kids, into birding and environmental awareness. I’d like to see them coordinating their efforts to show Philadelphia and beyond what a treasure they have in the Academy.

You have traveled extensively. Have most of these been collecting trips? No…after the 1960’s many have been for research on nectar-feeding birds or just plain birding enjoyment. In the 60’s, collecting trips were my priority.

Are the rumors true, that on one collecting expedition in the tropics, your native guides/porters deserted the expedition, that the country side was inhabited by a tribe of cannibals, and that the expedition was reduced to eating catfish caught in the streams to survive? If so can you elaborate on this?

Yep, except the cannibal part…read Bob Peck’s Headhunters and Hummingbirds for details. Catfish sucker lips are pretty good in a pinch.

What have been some of your favorite destinations and why?
I loved working and traveling in Kenya. I spent parts of eight years there and really got to know it….great birds and other wildlife, great people, great climate and lots of sunbirds. I like the high altitude Andes. Tanager flocks, super hummingbirds, big vistas….Wow! A couple of other favorites are Madagascar and the upper Amazon and all southern oceans because of albatrosses.

Do you have any travel goals…places you have yet to visit that are top travel priorities?
You bet….first, I’d like to go to the Foja Mountains of New Guinea, the site of that amazing expedition last December. Then I’d like to travel more broadly there. I want to savor seabird diversity from New Zealand to the Ross Ice Shelf and Antarctica. And then I’d like to explore Australia from top to bottom. After I finish all of that, I’ll start my quest to see all of the pittas of the world.

You have written the most widely used Ornithology textbook in college-level classes. What inspired you to write this book? Is there another edition forthcoming?
I needed a book with an evolutionary perspective to use with the course I was teaching at the University of Pennsylvania. The third edition is in the works and is scheduled to be out for the fall of 2006.

In 1996 you became Vice President of Science at National Audubon. How did this job differ from your responsibilities at the Academy?
Fundamentally it was a move from the realm of fairly pure science to conservation education, politics, and partnerships including the daunting task of providing for a half million, grass roots Audubon members.

What are the major advances that have been made in Ornithology now that we are in the 21st century?
There are several. The diversity of fossil birds in the Cretaceous period which is giving us the history of modern birds from dinosaurs, the discovery of the relationships of modern birds based on the comparison of DNA sequences, the discovery of the importance of extrapair fertilizations on the breeding systems of most species and the growth of citizen science in monitoring the changes in populations and contributing to the conservation of species.

Traveling to the Neotropics
Sooner or later you will probably want to expand your birding experiences by traveling to the neotropics. I made this jump a few years ago and wanted to share some thoughts on choosing and preparing for a trip based on my initial ventures to the tropics.

You first need to decide on where and when you want to travel. Depending on your work schedule (if you aren’t retired), vacation time (another subject not exactly relevant to retirees) and finances, you will have to choose between taking a short trip such as my recent adventure to Serra dos Tucanos (see accompanying article in Larus) or a grand tour of a country (typically around...
20 Questions and Then Some ...cont’d

With the announcement in April 2005 of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers (IBWP) being re-found, you had a very memorable quote. “This is huge...just huge. It is kind of like finding Elvis.” While this news certainly gave birding a shot-in-the-arm with the Department of the Interior funding a $10 million initiative to buy, lease and encourage conservation of more land in the Arkansas-Louisiana region, we later learned that this money actually is being taken away from species of special concern. How do you feel about putting “all our eggs in one basket?”

Bird conservation in the US, much less worldwide, is a much larger effort than $10 million. This “contribution,” wherever it comes from, is a token. We need to think bigger and we need an administration that thinks bigger and cares. Repairing and protecting global ecosystems needs huge, long-term commitments.

There has been much debate about the validity of the IBWP observations. Do you think the recent and coming papers written against this sightings and related debate damage the image of birding and conservation biology efforts in the eyes of the public? Open questioning and debate are the very essence of good science. They re-affirm the importance of verifiable documentation of rare birds. This is the same process by which reports of cloning advancements need to be questioned and replicated.

Two potential fatal viruses have affected the avifauna in recent years – West Nile Virus (WNV) and Avian Flu. What are the global and local implications of these diseases?
Diseases such as these pose significant threats to small populations of bird species especially on islands where they have lost their resistance. But continental bird populations have well-developed, broadly responsive immune systems that protect the majority of those populations. Over the many years, natural selection favors resistant individuals. We see this in the birds of Europe which exhibit strong resistance to WNV for example. However, global warming will certainly increase the frequency and spread of new wildlife diseases.

Do we need more professional ornithologists? If so, can groups like DVOC help in any way?
We need more professional ornithologists like Frank Chapman, Chan Robbins and Witmer Stone who can connect academic ornithology to the general public and to effective conservation policies.

If DVOC could pay $10,000 to support ornithological research in the next two years, what kind of projects would you suggest the club support? Would such funds be well used to support an internship in the Academy’s Bird Dept?
The greatest contribution to birds that ornithological societies can make is to encourage, mentor, and connect young birders/ornithologists. Take them birding, connect them to ornithologists. Provide scholarships to places like Hog Island & the Puffin Project or the Arizona VENT camp. A summer intern in the bird department of the Academy is a great idea. When I was a youngster, I would’ve thought an opportunity like that was a dream come true.

Traveling to the Neotropics ...cont’d

three weeks in length).

A short trip to a place like Serra dos Tucanos or Chan Chich in Belize or Asa Wright in Trinidad offers good accommodations, stays in one or two places during your trip and a manageable bird list. You may get to see only three or four species of woodcreepers or parrots as opposed to several times that number on a grand tour but for your initial exposure to these families that may not necessarily be a bad thing. I have been to all three of these places and highly recommend them as destinations. However, there are quite a few other lodges out there (i.e. San Isidro and La Selva) that cater to a short stays as well. To me, the benefit of these shorter trips is that it allows you multiple chances to see and study the birds in the field. Not only that, you have limited travel, and you can build a sense of familiarity with the place you are visiting. Now, if your intent is to build the largest list you can, a short trip may not be desirable.

If time and money allow, there is nothing wrong with going on a grand tour. You definitely will build a larger trip list, you will get great looks and opportunities to study the birds you see, and as long as you travel with a reputable tour company or carefully plan your own itinerary your travel and logistics should be no problem at all. Bottom line: choose the itinerary that best fits in with your life and desires. Whether you end up planning your trip yourself or book a trip with a tour company you still should do a certain amount of “homework”.

As you are deciding when, where, how long and with whom you are going to travel, talk to friends who have traveled to that country, stayed at that lodge or birded with that tour company to get first hand recommendations and references. (Please refer to the DVOC Birder Beware article, http://www.dvoc.org/Misc/BirdersBeware.htm ). There is nothing like someone else’s first hand experience to help prepare you for what to expect and avoid.

You will also need to check two government websites well in advance for information vital to planning your trip. The first site is the U.S. Department of State site, www.state.gov/travel/ and the other is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention site, www.cdc.gov/travel. These sites will inform you about travel restrictions, visa requirements (and I do not mean the credit card) and health concerns in the regions you will be traveling. There are still countries that require a visa for entry (Brazil, for instance). There are also health concerns to be considered. Traveling anywhere outside the United States may require that you take malaria prophylaxis, receive a yellow fever vaccination or update your tetanus and polio vaccinations. Besides checking the CDC recommendations, you should always check with your physician, and preferably with a physician who specializes in travel medicine.

I would also recommend obtaining trip lists of previous tours or a checklist of the birds routinely seen at the lodge where you will be staying. This will allow you to study field guides in advance of your trip so you can become familiar with the field marks of the birds you will be seeing. Now, I know that some people do not find this very helpful
Shakespearean Birding: To Bullock or Not to Bullock, Purity is the Question ...  
By Michael Lyman

In the wide world of birding, we are often presented with identification challenges. Some are easily rendered and some are not. It is the “not” which the crème de la crème of birders loves to ponder and debate over. Such a challenge is seen in the Icterid group, particularly amongst the orioles.

In the mid 1990’s, the American Birding Association accepted the split of the Northern Oriole into the Baltimore Oriole (Icterus galbula) and the Bullock’s Oriole (Icterus bullockii). The decision was made because the two species commonly interbreed and produce reproductively fit hybrids in the small area where their ranges overlap. In the rest of their respective ranges, both Baltimore and Bullock’s Orioles lead separate and successful existences and there appears to be no threat that either oriole will lose species integrity as a result of this interbreeding. In fact, DNA analyses of their mitochondrial DNA reveals a surprising fact - the two species are not even that closely related phylogenetically! Bullock’s Oriole has more genetic similarity to the Streaked -backed Oriole (Ictica pusilla) of Mexico, while the Baltimore Oriole is more closely related to the Altamira Oriole (I. galari). That said, it still remains a challenge to separate certain winter females and juveniles of the two species; add in the possibility of the bird being a hybrid in this age group or sex, and the identification can become a lesson in futility.

Bullock’s Oriole very rarely makes it into our vicinity. There are only two accepted records in Pennsylvania and two in New Jersey. An oriole appeared in Bethlehem, PA at the beginning of 2006 and, although it possessed many of the identifiable traits associated with the Bullock’s species, experts raised concerns that the bird was a hybrid. Using the Bethlehem bird as a model, I would like to present the potential problems associated with identifying such an oriole. It is my hope that, through this experience and by using the three photos shown below to assist us, we can learn the finer details needed to separate the two species of oriole - even if we can not definitively identify this particular individual.

In figure 1 (Point A), we can see an abrupt change between the yellow breast color and the gray belly region. A suspected Baltimore (dull fall/winter bird) would be expected to have more extensive yellow on the under parts, blending into the belly region.

Also in Figure 1 (Point B), a bright supercilium and dark eyeliner is evident. Some birders are concerned that the eyeliner is not dark enough for Bullock’s. However in studying textbooks and professional photographs of this species, this individual’s eyeliner appears to be within range for the species. A Baltimore Oriole would be expected to have a darker olive-gray face that abruptly contrasts with the bright yellow-orange malar and throat area. The Bethlehem bird, however, shows a bright face coloration that blends equally into the malar and throat region. In figures 1 and 3, the bird shows a slight dark tinge to the posterior ocular and crown region. This characteristic raises a flag relative to whether or not this bird is a pure Bullock’s Oriole, but this trait may be so minimal that the phenotype still falls within the range of this species.

In Figure 1 (Point C), note the bright orange yellow auricular area. This is not a trait of Baltimore Oriole which tends to be much duller in this region.

In Figure 3 (Point A), the mantle shows a gray coloration with light brown centering. Bullock’s would be expected to have an entirely unmarked gray mantle or very little center marking to the feather region. This bird may be just within the extreme range of the latter. Baltimore Oriole would be expected to have darker center marking in the mantle area along with an overall darker cast to the mantle.

In Figure 3 (Point B), the median coverts show the edge effect which is akin to a sharp tooth design. This trait however can be matched by some Baltimores.

In Figure 3 (Point C), the greater covert edges show a white lining that connects the two wing bars. In the Baltimore Oriole, the wing bars are separate.

The undertail coverts show yellow marking and, although this trait is shared by both species of oriole, Bullock’s often shows gray in this region. Another area to check is the color of the rump but, unfortunately, I have been unable to see an unobstructed view of this bird’s rump. In Bullock’s Oriole, a gray rump would be expected whereas in Baltimore Oriole, a yellow rump would exist.

Traits that further complicate identification:

In figure 2, we see a pronounced dark throat patch. This feature, amongst all others, probably complicates matters the most. Without it, the bird looks like a good candidate for a second year (SY) female Bullock’s, utilizing the condition of the primary coverts which appear brown and tapered in Figure 3 (Point D) to determine age. However, expert opinions from observers in the West suggest that a female may show black in the throat area, but only rarely, and one would expect to see it on older female birds. In their opinion, the black should also not be so well defined, but should be more of a mottling or slight streaking. Finally, they believe that the limited streaking does not rule out that the bird may be a SY male that did not fully molt into its throat patch.

Interestingly, a study of over 800 museum specimens of the two orioles deduced that the Bullock’s Oriole does not go through a pre-alternate (PA) molt (molting during the winter months late November into April) whereas it is a common phase for the Baltimore Oriole. In the photographs (probably not the best means to determine this) the Bethlehem bird does not show any conclusive signs of PA molt.

Can’t ID them all:

In conclusion, the Bethlehem oriole cannot be positively identified as a pure Bullock’s Oriole at this time. The possibility of some Baltimore genes being present is too difficult to rule out completely. A
Shakespearean Birding (cont’d)

detailed in-the-hand exam or, better yet, DNA analysis may be the only positive methods to reveal its true identity. Neither of these steps is likely to occur in this instance. As of this writing, the bird is still present and, if it stays around long enough, it may yet reveal its identity as it begins its spring molt. More pictures can be seen on-line at http://www.users.fast.net/~becard/index10.html#Home.

I would like to thank the home owner, Steve Wolfe, for being such a gracious host to visiting birders and allowing us to come see the bird. Thanks also go to Dave DeReamus for his assistance in researching identification issues and the use of his web site. Though we may not be able to conclusively identify this bird at this time, its presence offers a unique opportunity for eastern birders to gain knowledge on a bird species that only very rarely finds its way into our neck of the woods.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7
**Shakespearean Birding (cont’d)**

**Fig 3 Copyright M. Lyman**

**Bibliography:**


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**Bird Facts - Spring 2006…A. Binns**

- The first record of a metal band being attached to a bird’s leg was about 1595. One of Henry IV’s banded Peregrine Falcons was lost in pursuit of a bustard in France. The bird showed up later in Malta, about 1350 miles away.

- The first recorded band recovery was in 1710 when a Gray Heron in Germany was found wearing metal rings that were placed on it several years earlier by an unknown bander in Turkey.

- John James Audubon was the first to band birds in North America. Upon his arrival in the Philadelphia area in 1803, he banded an Eastern Phoebe by tying a silver wire around its leg.

- Over 6000 banders are now registered in North America. Over a million birds are banded each year of which about five percent are recaptured or recovered. Most of these are doves, waterfowl and gallinaceous birds whose bands are returned by hunters.

- Banders are known as ringers in Europe.

- For further information and to report or return a band, contact:

Bird Banding Laboratory
USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
12100 Beech Forest Road
Laurel, MD 20708-4037
1-800-327-BAND (2263)

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**BIRD QUIZ – SPRING 2006…. by A. Binns**

1. What percentage of the approximate 470 species of passerines in North America build open nests versus the percentage that build domed structures or use cavities?

2. What was the last North American species to have its nest described and what is unique about it?

3. Which North American gull constructs a floating nest?
Glassboro Woods WMA—a spring destination...by Sandra Keller

Clayton/Glassboro Woods Wildlife Management Area (WMA), known to birders simply as Glassboro Woods, is a 2,337 acre tract of oak-pine forest, deciduous swamps, and the occasional cleared field. The area is bisected by a power line cut, five dirt roads, and two gas line right-of-ways. The Red Maple and Sweet Gum dominated swamps are the key stops here for birders in the spring. The place is best described as a “birding by ear” destination and I won’t minimize the necessity of knowing the bird songs and some calls for getting the most out of a birding trip here. Even so, beginners should be encouraged to try the area. At only 30 minutes from center city Philadelphia, the area is a prime destination for Delaware Valley birders in the spring. On the downside, it is loaded with ticks, so stay on the roads and wider trails if this is an area of concern.

Directions:
Glassboro Woods is located between Route 47, Fries Mill Road, and Route 322 in the towns of Glassboro and Clayton in Gloucester County, New Jersey. Detailed information can be found in the DeLorme Atlas - page 62, grid C9 and vicinity. There are numerous ways to get to the site, so I’ll just give directions from Route 55. Take Route 322 east from Route 55 and head south on Route 47. This will get you started with some of the access points like Lincoln Avenue which is 7/10 of a mile south of the intersection of Routes 322 and 47. Boyle shows the road on his map – page 370 – but he doesn’t have it labeled and there is currently no street sign posted. Carpenter is another mile further south and it also is currently not marked with a street sign. The “Road to Nowhere” is the name I have given a dead-end dirt road that comes in off Carpenter and ends at a turn-around a little over a mile later. The road is approximately 1/4 of a mile from where Carpenter comes in off Route 47. An open area near here along Carpenter that I refer to in the “birding section” is 6/10 of a mile in from Route 47. The burned area is 1.3 miles in from Route 47. Another open wet area that I discuss along Moore is 4/10 of a mile north of Carpenter. The Carpenter Rd. entrance along Fries Mill Rd. is 1.4 miles south of Route 322.

Logistics:
Glassboro Woods has no bathroom facilities, but numerous fast food restaurants and convenience stores line both Routes 47 and 322. I like to stop at the Wawa on Route 47 north of 322 if needed before starting my birding here. Remember to bring insect repellent and a light jacket as dawn here can be quite cool.

References:

Photography Opportunities:
Photography can be challenging here because of the dense foliage, but patience will sometimes reward one with a shot of a singing warbler or other migrant species.

Spring Birding:
Here are my favorite routes for three different periods in the spring.

April:
From April 26 to April 30 is a prime time to see Louisiana Waterthrush and Prothonotary Warbler, since foliage on most trees is still sparse. Pine Warbler, one of our earliest nesting warblers, tends to get quieter come May, so now is the best time to see and hear them. Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Hermit Thrush numbers peak from mid to late April. Barred and, to a lesser extent, Great-horned Owl can be heard calling before dawn. April is the time to watch for migrating Broad-winged Hawks and to watch for the pair or two that nest in the WMA.

Arriving one hour before dawn and listening along the wetter areas on the “Road to Nowhere” might reward the early birder with a calling Barred Owl. Head to the turn-around at the end of the “Road to Nowhere” for Great Horned Owl which nests in the vicinity and may still be feeding young. At dawn, head back to the wet areas along Lincoln Avenue. This is where it I find it easiest to see Prothonotary Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush. Hermit Thrushes can be anywhere in Glassboro Woods, but the area at the east end of Lincoln Avenue has always proved productive for me. If it is a good migrant day, say a cold front comes through after a couple days of southwest winds, the sunny western edges of the fields are sheltered from the wind and can be productive. Early warblers such as Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Northern Parula and American Redstart can be found here.

Continuing on with this route, turn right and head south on Moore at the end of Lincoln. Moore cuts through upland Pitch Pine areas and is good for Pine Warbler. The power line cut is ideal for Indigo Bunting and, as you continue south, you come to another open wet area that is very good for seeing Hooded Warbler. Two pairs have nested in the vicinity and viewing is more open here. This is generally also good for migrants if they are around.

Keep heading straight to the intersection with Carpenter and turn left (east). Drive until you come to a burned area on your right and find a safe place to park. This area can be very good for Eastern Bluebirds, nesting woodpeckers, Indigo Bunting, Blue-winged and Prairie Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9
Glassboro Woods WMA....cont’d

For the next stop, turn around and head back west on Carpenter, pass Moore, and you’ll come to another wet, somewhat open area that is my favorite for seeing Prothonotary. Up to three pairs have nested in this vicinity. I theorize that because so many territories are so close together, maybe the males feel the urge to sing more often and from higher perches, which is what seems to occur in this area. This stretch of wet habitat is my least favorite for seeing Louisiana Waterthrush because the undergrowth is extremely dense.

May:
Mid May has the most diversity of singing breeders and migrant passerines and seems to be the best time for seeing Kentucky Warbler as well. Foliage is usually fully leafed out so tracking the birds down for a look is a bit tougher. It is very helpful to know those songs and call notes at this time of the year! Insects are not too bad yet, but can be a problem very early in the morning on calm days.

May 10, 2002 was one of those fallout days that birders dream of and I personally had: 4 Blue-wingedds, 4 Nashville, 19 Parulas, 5 Yellows, 3 Chestnut-sideds, 11 Magnolias, 13 Black-throated Blues, 10 Yellow-rumps, 22 Black-throated Greens, 2 Blackburnians, 9 Pines, 1 Prairie, 1 Bay-breasted, 30 Black and Whites, 32 Redstarts, 3 Prothonotaries, 15 Worm-eating Warblers, 35 Ovenbirds, 2 Northern Waterthrushes, 2 Louisiana Waterthrushes, 3 Kentucky, 4 Common Yellowthroats and 14 Hooded Warblers. Numbers like that are extremely unusual, but good migrant conditions for south Jersey can lead to a 20 warbler species day. Least Flycatcher is annual for me in the WMA, but is not predictable as to an area.

My favorite route for migrants and the Kentucky is as follows. Start at the east end of Carpenter – off Fries Mill Rd. Listen for migrants as you slowly drive along and stop if you hear any to work the feeding flock. Stop again at the 90 degree turn to the right about ½ of a mile in. This open area is one of my best if migrants are around. Continue along Carpenter when done here and stop when you hear migrants. At the big burned area on the south side of Carpenter, stop again and walk the trail. The dirt road at the west end of this burned area is probably my most reliable spot lately for Black-billed Cuckoo. Continue driving and stop at the most open wet area described under April’s account. Turn left onto the “Road to Nowhere” and stop to bird the gas line cut. Continue on and stop a few times to listen for Kentucky. Some effort will be needed to see it, but this is the spot! The breeding territories of the four pairs that traditionally nest in the area are usually along here and seem to cover both sides of the road. The males fly back and forth, perching in different areas where they usually sing for a few minutes. Watch for the general area where the birds are perching and then keep scanning for better looks at the birds.

Early morning is a must for migrant thrushes since they seem to stop singing shortly after dawn. I have seen all the migrant thrushes throughout the WMA, but Lincoln Avenue seems to be the best for some reason. Listen for them and just keep watching along the road edges, a short distance into the wooded areas and along the field edges.

June:
I often have the breeders even at the end of June. Mourning Warbler has occurred here during the first week of June, but it is extremely rare and there is no one spot to find the bird. If you visit at dusk in early to mid June, you might hear Whip-Poor-Will in the drier areas of the WMA. Late migrants like Canada and Magnolia Warblers can still be found during first week of June.

I have no route suggestions for June. Just hit each area and watch for whatever species has eluded you in the previous two months. I find birds are quieter in June and so it usually takes much longer to see them.

Spring is the prime time at Glassboro Woods, but here are some suggestions for other seasons.

Summer:
Birding opportunities are limited in the summer. The birds are still around, fledged young are moving around, but the dense foliage, lack of singing, and multitudes of insects make birding difficult to say the least. Try a visit at dusk in late summer for Common Nighthawks. It is a rare species here but can sometimes be heard and seen.

Fall:
Never as good as areas along the Atlantic coast, Bay Shore region, or the Delaware River, Glassboro Woods can have some variety in the fall. Be careful of hunting! I would recommend a weekday or a Sunday in the fall. Sunny edges out of the wind are the best.

Winter:
Wintering species include both Kinglets, Hermit Thrush, Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and several common species of sparrows. I never have large numbers of birds, but if I am spending a few hours here on a winter morning, I prefer the Cedar Swamp areas. For sparrows, the brushy areas along the “Road to Nowhere” and Carpenter Road in the proximity of the “Road to Nowhere” are the most productive areas. The fields themselves do not seem to attract the sparrows, probably because there are no brushy edges around them.

I keep a bird list for Glassboro Woods and ask fellow birders to submit any unusual sightings to me at sandrakeller@verizon.net. Species like Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Chat. Golden-winged Warbler, Connecticut Warbler and Summer Tanager are of special interest to me. My current list for the area is 158 species. This article concentrates on spring warblers, but many other species occur here regularly. Overall, a visit to Glassboro Woods provides for a good morning out in the field.
Delaware Valley Rarity Roundup: Spring thru Feb 2006

...A. Binns

Pennsylvania

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD - Westgrove, Chester Co, from Oct 12 thru Dec 11
RUFIOUS/ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD - Elkins Park, Montgomery Co, Nov 5 thru at least Nov 26
PACIFIC LOON - Lake Ontelaunee, Berks Co, Nov 25
HARRIS'S SPARROW - Seaventhe, Northampton Co, Nov 28-Dec 15
LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE - Media, Delaware Co, Dec 22
WHITE-WINGED DOVE - Washington Crossing, Bucks Co, Dec 11 thru 20
EURASIAN GREEN-WINGED TEAL - Lancaster, Lancaster Co, Jan 27
12 GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE - Lake Nockomixon, Bucks Co, Feb 12
LARK SPARROW – Limerick, Montgomery County, Oct thru at least Feb 3

Delaware

BLACK-HEADED GULL - Indian River Inlet, Sussex Co, Dec 1
12 AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS - Rehoboth, Sussex Co, Dec 11
NORTHERN SHRIKE - Broadkill, Kent Co, w/o Jan 21
WESTERN KINGBIRD - Cape Henlopen State Park, Sussex Co, Jan 6

New Jersey

RUFIOUS/ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD - Verga, Gloucester Co, Oct 9-Nov 28
ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER - Assunpink, Monmouth Co, Nov 12-16
FRANKLIN'S GULL - Cape May, Cape May Co, Nov 13
BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD - Barneget Light, Ocean Co, Nov 22-27. 3rd State Record
EURASIAN WIGEON - Rumson, Monmouth Co, Nov 28
BLACK GUILLEMOT - Barneget Light, Ocean Co, Dec 3 thru at least Dec 15
WESTERN TANAGER - Forsythe NWR (Brigantine), Atlantic Co, Dec 4
2nd W THAYER'S GULL - Spruce Run Reservoir, Hunterdon Co, Dec 5 thru 19
SNOWY OWL - Ocean City, Atlantic Co, Dec 8 thru Dec 13
SNOWY OWL - Stone Harbor Point, Cape May Co, Dec 17-19
EARED GREBE - Lakes Bay, Atlantic Co, Dec 17 thru 19
YELLOW RAIL - Wildwood Crest, Cape May Co, Dec 18
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE - Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co, Dec 31 thru Feb 28
WESTERN GREBE - Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co, Jan 9 - Feb 5
GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW - Colts Neck, Monmouth Co, Jan 12. 6th State Record
BREWERS BLACKBIRDS - Supawna and Freas, Salem Co, Feb 5-26
EURASIAN GREEN-WINGED TEAL - Brigantine NWR, Atlantic Co, Feb 18

Rooting for the Rookery: 2006

WSB Funds to Help Save Heron Rookery

by Debbie Beer, DVOC Conservation Chair

I still remember my first sighting of the tall, graceful wader. He was standing motionless along a picturesque stream, staring intently into the water, patiently waiting for the perfect opportunity to catch a fish. His piercing yellow eyes observed everything around him. His wayward blue-gray neck feathers fluttered slightly with his cautious movements. His grace and elegance earned my immediate attention and admiration.

I've since seen hundreds of Great Blue Herons in this wondrous posture and environment. No matter how familiar, the posture remains interesting and noteworthy. But there's another behavior of Great Blue Herons that is equally interesting, though less commonly witnessed – the ritual of breeding. This annual process involves many birds coming together in a rookery to pair-up, build nests and raise their young. Once discovered, heron rookeries offer a wonderful opportunity to view and study the age-old instinct of the species.

Montgomery County is fortunate to host one of the few heron rookeries in southeastern Pennsylvania. Over 20 pairs of Great Blue Herons have been documented as successfully raising young in the site. Vince Smith, of the Valley Forge Audubon Society, has surveyed the site for consideration as an Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA).

Unfortunately, as with too many other wildlife areas, habitat destruction is now threatening this special place and the local population of Great Blue Herons. A developer has purchased the property adjacent to the rookery, located in New Hanover Township, and plans to build an active adult community just 100 yards away.

Recognizing the importance of the heron rookery, Montgomery County Lands Trust (MCLT) has stepped forward to save the imperiled site. They are negotiating with the developer and township to enlarge substantially the buffer zone around the rookery by implementing a conservation easement covering the sensitive habitat.

Since its inception in 1993, the non-profit MCLT organization has worked effectively within Montgomery County to preserve thousands of acres of land. They usually implement conservation easements, in partnership with the county, non-profit organizations and landowners. The organization cultivates relationships with landowners to design and implement preservation solutions to conserve as much green space as possible.

The DVOC Conservation Committee identified the preservation and enlargement of the heron rookery habitat as an important local project for our organization to support. DVOC plans to donate the proceeds of our 2006 World Series of Birding fundraising to MCLT for this project. The funds will be used by MCLT for the consultants, surveys, documents and fees needed to secure the conservation easement affecting the heron rookery.

Please use the pledge form that's been included in this issue to show your generous support of this important project.
Snapshots of India ....by Colin Campbell  (All photos © Colin Campbell, 2006)

I’d never been to Asia. I’d been to Israel. I don’t count Israel as Asia. Asia to me is that vast continent east of the Middle East, sort of starting in Afghanistan and Pakistan and heading east through India, China, Mongolia, Siberia, and all those SE Asian countries out to eastern Indonesia and north to Japan. A vast area and all foreign territory to me. Therefore fascinating and beckoning.

Jaeger Tours offered an alluring trip to Northern India at the time of year – January - when I urgently needed to explore new parts of the World. I'll rephrase that. I always need to explore new, selected parts of the World. It’s just that it’s a year since I last did it and eternal youth cannot escape me forever. I have a hit list. It’s not necessarily based on huge numbers of bird species, contrary to popular opinion. It’s based on the fascination of the country – which includes both isolated or populous regions, scenic beauty and urban sprawl, diversity of food and drink, color, warmth or coolth, and of course the natural wildlife. When I get the urge (which is frequently) which coincides with an interesting looking trip (not quite so frequently), I’ve just gotta go.

This was my first birding trip in which I did not take a print/slide camera. I was dragged, screaming and kicking, into the digital camera age and, as with all new technological advances, I wondered at the end why I had not done this years before. So, rather than totally underwhelming you with holiday snapshots, I’m selecting a “Taste of India” potpourri and adding just a few ….. well, words … not necessarily of any consequence. This bloody Larus-on-line is just too easy to download an hour’s worth of stuff. As you’ve seen before. Sorry about the script; try to enjoy.

The Kama Sutra is for lovers;
I’ll just stick to these two plovers;
You may say – with reason – I should be throttled,
But these are Lapwings, Red- and Yellow-wattled

Kingfishers don’t fish for kings
They’re looking for more juicy things.
But why are their beaks so very torque-filled
Like the White-throated and the Stork-billed?
Snapshots of India ..cont’d

Waiting at the railroad station
There’s ample time for meditation

Nightjars need more than a glass of whisky
To wake them up and get them frisky.
These Large-tailed and Indian versions
Are at rest before nocturnal excursions.

Great Black-headed Gull is now Pallas’s seaGull.
But this was always Crested Serpent Eagle.
Snapshots of India ..cont’d

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What a pain you were to get:
It took five days, nine trips, and yet …
All forgotten at the sight!

(With apologies to William Blake)

Just because it looks quite neat here
Here’s a picture of a Desert Wheatear.
Snapshots of India ..cont’d

To me, Taj Mahal was a beer, a restaurant and a tea.
But now I’ve seen the real thing and, in all reality,
It was indeed a beautiful sight, a wonder of the world,
Around whose marbled domes a myriad Black Kites swirled.
And as we marveled at the Maharajah and all of his culture
We were momentarily distracted by an Egyptian Vulture.

Festivals are held with kites,
From paper they are foldered.
They finish in trees, quite a sight,
Just like this Black-shouldered.

Ah! Missa roti and chewy naans,
Pulled out hot from the tandoor;
Odd to think that the fuel they use
Is fashioned from dried cowpats and straw.
Snapshots of India ..cont’d

Ye canna i.d. it? Ach, stop yer sobbin’,
‘Tis jes’ an Oriental Magpie Robin!

Trash on the highways to us – pollution;
There’s just no garbage collectors, it seems.
But nature supplies its own solution:
Here’s a couple of recycling machines.

An elephant eats a lot of leaves
Per day - and twigs and branches too.
So much so that when he relieves
He leaves a whopping mound of poo.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16
I say! What’s the difference between a Brown Fish Owl and a Tawny Fish Owl? Isn’t tawny a sort of brown? Adrian says it’s all in the breast-streaking and he should know, he’s the leader. I tick both off without a frown.

I’d never heard of Gharials or Muggers. Thought they were just typos, not crocodiles. But now I’ve witnessed both of these buggers, I’d walk a million miles for one of their smiles.

A Painted Stork ogling is well worth a goggling. But I prefer one flying more – a sight worth dying for!
Snapshots of India ..cont’d

Enough, enough, I hear you cry,
We don’t need the Falconet or Flameback;
The jackal, or the butterfly;
But the state of the tour bus ….
I was glad I came back!

Collared Falconet

Striped Tiger

Golden Jackal

Black-backed Flameback

Tour Bus...note the bedstead!
A Brazilian Birding Adventure

....by Martin Selzer

This past December, along with club members Bill and Naomi Murphy, Bert Filemyr, Lynn Jackson, Jane Henderson and her husband Bob Cohen, I made my first trip to Brazil. We visited the southeastern rainforest, home to over 160 endemic species. We stayed at the Serra dos Tucanos Lodge (www.serradostucanos.com.br).

Serra dos Tucanos (SdT) is a small lodge within Tres Picos State Park, roughly 90 minutes (100 km) from the international airport in Rio de Janeiro. The lodge is a former family home on an old banana plantation. It has been renovated and converted into a lodge which caters to birders. The lodge is surrounded by forest. Excellent birding can be had from its veranda, where we watched multiple hummingbird feeders and feeding tables; as well as on the trails surrounding the lodge and on a wide array of full and half-day excursions into the countryside, all run by the lodge’s owner, Andy Foster.

During our 10 day adventure our group recorded over 250 species including 60+ endemics of the region. We originally learned about SdT from Ron French, who made his own visit there in February 2004 and came back singing the praises of the lodge’s birding opportunities and comfortable accommodations.

So, what exactly made our visit so appealing? To begin with, there are the birds. The southeastern rainforest of Brazil has a large number of endemics. Coupled with the fact that close to 90% of the original forest no longer exists, many of the birds of this region are unique.

Think of birds such as: Three-toed Jacamar, White-throated Hummingbird, Large-tailed Antshrike, Restinga Antwren, Black-throated Grosbeak and Serra do Mar Tyrannulet. All these species are endemic to the region and everyone on the trip saw all these birds very well. Best of all, this is just the tip of the birding iceberg!

Next, there is the lodge itself. It is comfortable, well appointed, and efficiently run to meet a birder’s needs. We had first hand knowledge, thanks to Ron, about what to expect. He told us we would be getting an excellent deal for our money. By the way, the rates are incredibly reasonable! A first hand recommendation is invaluable, whether for a place to stay, a guide to hire, or a tour company to travel with. Thanks to its location, we were able to stay in a single spot that within two hours had a wide variety of habitats close by. This afforded us the opportunities to see a good sampling of the birds in the area without having to change locations every other night. While we did not generate a trip list comparable to a three-week grand tour of Brazil, this was an excel-

lent initial exposure to the birds of Brazil for most of us. Only Bill and Naomi had previously birded Brazil, and they had never visited this region, so there were lots of new birds for them, too.

Lastly, there was our guide, Andy Foster. He is an ex-pat Brit who fell in love with Brazil on his first visit about a decade ago. A little over two years ago, he opened the lodge after purchasing and refurbishing it. He knows the birds incredibly well, knows the local habitat as well if not better, speaks Portuguese and runs excellent excursions (field trips). He currently offers eight different excursions (five full-day and three half-day). We initially planned to take all of the excursions and booked our trip accordingly but we were only able to take six of them. It was the rainy season, and they don’t call it the rain forest for nothing! We had rain on two days that simply forced us to cancel our plans as the conditions were either too difficult for birding, roads were impassable due to all the rain, or a combination of both.

The various excursions take you to different habitats within the rainforest or just outside it. The basic routine at SdT is breakfast at 6:30, a picnic lunch on full-day excursions, or lunch back at the lodge at 1:00 pm following half-day excursions and dinner at the lodge at 7:00 pm. All meals at the lodge are served buffet style and there is 24/7 access to a cooler filled with beer, soft drinks and water. All you have to do is keep track of what you have taken to settle up at the end of your stay. Anytime we were at the lodge, we could kick back on the veranda and watch the feeders, wander the trails on the grounds or take a swim in the spring-fed swimming pool. Now that sounds really hard to take doesn’t it? NOT!

Here is but a sampling of our birding adventures:

Immediately upon arriving at SdT, and after throwing our bags in our rooms, we began birding from the veranda before sitting down to lunch. We were like kids in a candy store. The hummingbird feeders and bunches of bananas had birds all over them. In no particular order, we were calling out what we were seeing: Saw-billed Hermits, Black Jacobins, Swallow-tailed Hummingbirds, Palm Tanagers, Green-headed Tanagers, Ruby-crowned Tanagers, Violaceous Euphonias, and Golden-chevroned Tanagers. After lunch, we settled back on the veranda where we enjoyed more of the same species we had observed before lunch. Now we had a pair of Spot-billed Toucans, our first Brazilian Tanager of
A Brazilian Birding Adventure ....cont’d

The group © N. Murphy

The Restinga Antwren/Coastal Excursion had three main target species: Sooretame Northern Antshrike, Hangnest Tody-flycatcher and Restinga Antwren. In getting to the restinga, which is a quickly disappearing habitat of coastal sandy scrub with cactus and related vegetation predominating, we made a few stops at some salt pans for waders. In quick order we found: Collared Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, and Spotted Sandpiper. It took stops in two of the remnant restinga patches to nail down our three target birds before we stopped in the town of Praia Seca (Dry Beach) for a lunch of barbeque chicken, beef, sausage, pork chops along with rice, chips (French fries) and manioc at a local restaurant.

The fog and mist lifted a bit (remember we were still in the rain forest) and with some patience, we pulled in Pallid Spinetail, Bay- chested Warbling-finch, Rufous-tailed Antbird and Mouse-colored Tapaculo. We also had some juvenile Diademated Tanagers in the treetops and a quick glimpse of a Serra do Mar Tyrannulet. We immediately put our orders in for better looks at both. We made it to the security gates and the two guards came out to greet us, collected our identity papers (our passports and Andy’s resident identification card). Once this was all taken care of, we continued up the trail. Just a couple of hundred feet from the security gate, we picked up a Large-tailed Antshrike, and several adult Diademated Tanagers (much, much more satisfying). We tried for the Serra do Mar Tyrannulet at the base of the steps up to the top of the mountain without luck, and then started up the 603 meters. Fortunately, a lot closer to the bottom than to the top of the stairs, Lynn spotted the Itatiaia Spinetail. Our primary target for this part of the journey was found, and our legs were saved. Also at this spot, we had Spix’s Spinetail, Rufous-capped Antshrike and another Serra do Mar Tyrannulet. The best part of all these birds was that they were close, in the open and below us in the vegetation, so we had great views.

These truly are a mere sampling of the specific excursions and our overall adventure. It was a fantastic trip and a place well worth visiting. Please contact any of us who went for additional details or check out the full trip report at—http://www.thefilemyrs.com/Birding/Brazil2005/Default.htm

Charlie Wonderly Remembered ....by Jane Henderson

I recently had a very nice letter from Chuck Lyman, DVOC member and long-time friend and birding companion of the late Charlie Wonderly.

In reference to the obit I wrote for the 2002-2003 Catsinia, Chuck wrote: “You and I share the same depth of grief for this unmatchable guy. Even now, writing this, I am on the verge of tears. I was a … member of the Comstock Society, and met Charlie when I was 16 or 17. (I am now 76!) He introduced me to this wonderful hobby of ours (nature – not just birds.) I never met anyone else like him … In one of your pieces you mentioned McDonald, Sehl, Brady, Stern, Mark Robinson, the Cutlers. Forgotten were Joe Sparmaker, Brownie and John McNeil, Paul Weirick, Ted Telch. “When CW heard I was being shipped to Korea via USMC, he told me to bring a heavy, hooded sweatshirt, which I did, to my eternal gratitude. It got me through ‘Frozen Chosin.’

Jane, I could talk all day about CW, but I just wanted you to know that someone shares your sorrow and memories.”
As we continue to welcome more and more new DVOC members, we want to help integrate them into our club. Of course, meeting and mixing at DVOC activities will inevitably lead to familiarity, and often, friendships. But we also do a number of things to help foster the process. One recent strategy has been to place each new member’s “birding bio” (from their membership application) on a personal webpage on DVOC’s website; we invite them to submit a photo to go along with it. Standing members wanting to know who our new members are, can go to www.dvoc.org and search by the new member’s name, or go to the “Our Members” section and browse through.

But….that is only half the idea. New members want to know and recognize the rest of us, too! We have a growing section of personal pages for ongoing club members. If you have submitted a birding photo of yourself, a “birding bio,” or both, then a page has been created for you. It’s possible that there is a webpage for you already, if you have been photographed while on a DVOC field trip. You can always change the photo that appears by simply submitting a new one. If there is no page for you yet, we would love you to have one. Simply submit a photo of yourself, and an introductory birding bio. Your bio can contain anything you’d like others to know about your birding history, activities, etc. If you like, read some of the current personal pages to see what others have written. E-mail your information to Bert Filemyr, our webmaster, and your personal page will be “opened!” Our printed annual club directory gives us basic contact information about current members; to supplement that, these personal pages provide an interesting and fun visual directory of our members and give a “story” to go with a name.

Listed below are our new members for the past quarter. Have you met any of these new DVOC-ers at a recent meeting or field trip? If you’re not quite sure who is who, look them up on their DVOC Personal Page!

David Larsen
“I am 43 years old and have always had an interest in nature (especially birds). I began birding at about 15-20 years of age when I found Bill Boyle’s book in the library and realized the wealth of birds in New Jersey. Until then I thought most of the birds in my field guide lived elsewhere. Since then I have become a more active birder as the years pass. My favorite local birding spot is Palmyra Cove. (I can even bird for 1-2 hours before work in the Spring!) I’ve participated in CBC’s, WSB and want to continue getting more involved in birding.”

Julianne Harris
“My husband Bill Lane is already a member of the club and an avid birder. When we have time from our jobs as squash professionals, we like to be in the great outdoors. While he finds the birds, I like to photograph them.”

Mora Harrison
“I’ve been a casual birder for a few years. The change to being addicted was inspired on a trip with my daughter during which a barred owl flew across our path, only a few feet in front of us, and landed in a nearby tree. The frustration of not being able to get a close up view, since I had not “I am a herpetologist with a lifelong passion for natural systems. Only this year have I been birding, but I have truly taken to it. I learned most eastern warblers in the Spring at John Heinz and various parks in Delaware County PA and Ocean County NJ at a job site. I have had the pleasure of observing the Fall raptor migration with Skip Conant and the other gentlemen at the Rosetree Hawk Watch in Del. Co, PA, and I have taken a few trips to Barnegat Lighthouse (shorebirds), Brigantine NWR and Cape May (mainly Higbee Beach). I am a novice birder, but this is the beginning of a lifelong journey to understand and respect yet another facet of life as we know it.”

Sasha Laskowski
“Last April my Mother and I took a trip to Richmond National Battlefield. While exploring the civil war battlefield we saw a Barred Owl. It was after seeing this magnificent bird that I took an interest in birding. I have gone out birding with my Mom, at different places around the Delaware Valley. We also did some birding while visiting the Caribbean Islands.”

Sally Johnson
Sally is a long-time friend of Jane Henderson. She wrote: “I started birding after I retired from work, approximately ten years ago. Living in University City in Philadelphia, the John Heinz NWR is not only convenient but offers such a wonderful variety of habitats. When traveling I am never without my binoculars whether it is a birding trip or just one to visit a friend.”

Sarah Loughran
“For a few years prior I saw birders at Militia Hill (now the Hawk Watch). I was interested and began watching in 1998. I found that it was challenging and very enjoyable. I’ve kept up since then, always expanding my knowledge only to find there is ever more to know. Last Fall I visited NZ and Australia - the birding was overwhelming. With Cheryl Cutler (herb’s daughter) and my now husband Mike Trager, I visited the gannet colony at Murina Beach. At O’Reilly’s my guide was Glen Treifo, who was a photographer for BBC. I saw 39 life birds in one day - and gloworms that night! For quite a few years I have gone birding with Andy Fayer and Jim Best and members of Wyncote Audubon. I participate in the Christmas Count and Fort Washington Clean-ups. Unfortunately I can’t do pelagics, as a few people know. I so enjoy the activity and like a good friend it’s not always easy for me - but rewarding.”
Proposed Changes to the DVOC By-Laws ....by Chris Walters, By-Laws Committee Chair

The By-Laws Committee is proposing that the Club revise its By-Laws and Constitution by a vote at the June 1, 2006 meeting. The Committee, which consists of Chris Walters, Paul Guris, and Jeff Holt, proposes only three changes of substance, which aim in part to make the by-laws conform to current practice as well as to create by-laws more consistent with those adopted by the Membership October 2, 2003. DVOC Council supports these proposed changes.

The purpose of this article is to acquaint members with the proposed changes well in advance of the vote, as is required both by the current by-laws and by common sense. At the June 1 2006 meeting, a 2/3 favorable vote is required for approval assuming a quorum is in attendance. The full text of all revisions is being placed on the website for review. The text of the three sections of the by-laws containing revisions of real substance are set forth in full below. The proposed changes of substance are:

**Article II, Section 6:** extend from one year to two years the time within which the Club’s immediate Past President shall be a member of DVOC’s Council.

**Article IV, Section 7:** give to Council the power to drop a member from the Club, under the protective standards and procedures set forth in the revised by-laws. Previous to October 2, 2003, all membership decisions were made by a vote of those members attending a given Club meeting. When by-laws were last revised on October 2, 2003, the power to add members to the Club was given to Council without requiring a membership vote. At the time, no one thought to do the same with the little-used power to drop (expel) members, a power that remains lodged with the members rather than Council. Indeed, the current by-laws give a member being dropped the right to use an attorney and the right to a hearing, events which would make dropping a member extremely cumbersome. The revision now being proposed aims to correct this inconsistency by giving to Council the power to drop a member just as it now has the power to add a member. To present misuse, the revision requires a vote of 9 (of the 12) members of Council to expel and also allows a dropped member an ability to appeal to a panel of three former members of Council.

To be clear in case anyone wonders, Council can only use this expulsion power going forward, that is for actions of members that occur in the future, and not for member’s actions that occurred in the past.

**Article X:** provide for a Conservation Award to be given at the Annual Banquet, as has become our custom in recent years.

The full revised text of these three by-law sections follows:

**ARTICLE II. OFFICERS AND COUNCIL**

Sec. 6. The Council shall consist of the elected officers and members-at-large of Council, the Editor, and the last preceding President for two years following the end of service as president. The Council shall transact all business of the Club, except the elections of officers and members of Council.

**ARTICLE IV. ELECTIONS AND EXPULSIONS**

Sec. 7. Active Members may be dropped from membership by the Treasurer for dues arrearages (see Article V, Sec. 3 below). Active Members and Life Members may also be dropped from membership (expelled) if their continued membership is determined by Council to be detrimental to the operations or reputation of the Club. The votes of no less than nine members of Council shall be necessary to drop a person from membership, and each member of Council will be permitted to vote either in person or by proxy. The Secretary shall notify persons dropped from membership of the Council’s action promptly by mail. A person dropped from membership shall have the right to appeal Council’s decision to drop them if they so request in writing within forty-five days of the mailing of the Secretary’s written notice to them. To decide any such appeal, the President shall designate a panel of three former members of Council, whose decision on the matter, after hearing from both the dropped member and from Council, shall be final. The Club shall return to any expelled member such portion (if any) of the member’s dues or life membership payments as may appear appropriate under the circumstances. In the event of an appeal as provided herein, the panel shall determine what payments (if any) should be returned to any member whose expulsion is upheld by the panel.

**ARTICLE X.**

An award may be presented annually at the discretion of the Council to one or more non-members of the Club who have made a significant contribution to conservation of the environment. The presentation of the award shall be made at the annual banquet generally held on the third Thursday of November. The Conservation Committee shall suggest to Council possible candidates for this award.
Traveling to the Neotropics …cont’d from page 4

(they need to see the birds in the field to get to know them) and sometimes you cannot find the time to study. However, even a little bit of pre-trip homework will benefit you in the field as to at least knowing what to look for when someone calls out, “There’s an Olivaceous Woodcreeper vs. an Olivaceous Elaenia”. Do you look up? Do you look close to a tree trunk? Is it a large bird? Is it a small one? You’d be surprised how just learning the new families of species that you will be seeing will help you. Do you think woodnymphs, jacobins and hermits are characters in the Lord of the Rings trilogy rather than types of hummingbirds? Are antbirds, antwrens and antshrikes some gene-therapy experiment gone badly? If so, what the heck is a shrike-tanager? As you can see it isn’t just that the birds will be new to you, but the families and their names as well.

If you are going to the neotropics, I would suggest that you read A Neotropical Companion: An Introduction to the Animals, Plants and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics by John Kricher published by Princeton University Press and Birds of Tropical America: A Watcher's Introduction to Behavior, Breeding and Diversity by Steve Hilty published by Chapters Publishing Ltd. Both books provide a fantastic overview on the general ecology and interrelationships of the flora and fauna of the neotropics and I found them to be very helpful in explaining ecosystems that are quite different from the one we live in.

I hope these suggestions help to make your travels to the neotropics successful. Heck, except for the books and bird names, this advice would serve you well for travels anywhere in the world looking for birds.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology Seasonal Projects

From backyards and city streets to remote forests, anyone who counts birds can contribute to the Lab's research. Data from the Lab’s projects are used to monitor bird populations and outline conservation efforts. It’s easy and fun! Citizen Science is an important partnership between the public and professional scientists and it allows for better understanding and conservation of birds across the continent.

EVERYONE is invited to participate! No matter what your location, age, or experience may be, the Lab has a project for you. You'll receive easy-to-follow instructions describing how to count the birds, monitor the birdhouse(s) and record additional information. Once you have submitted your data to the Lab you will have succeeded as a citizen scientist and contributed valuable data to bird conservation and population monitoring efforts. For more info on the Lab’s seasonal projects, visit their website at http://www.birds.cornell.edu/

Updates Needed?

Moved? Changed your name or your email address? Added a new phone to your communications arsenal? Please notify us so that we can keep the DVOC database up to date.

Send any corrections, additions or deletions to Naomi Murphy at:
♦ ndmurphy3@hotmail.com.
♦ 234 Orlemann Avenue, Oreland, PA 19075

DVOC Dues are Due!!!

DVOC dues are due. In fact, they are overdue. If you haven’t already done so, please send your check, made payable to DVOC, to Naomi Murphy at 234 Orlemann Avenue, Oreland, PA 19075.

Why not consider a life membership? For three annual payments of $125, you can become a life member. You will never have to write another dues check and you will support the annual operations of the club in the most effective way possible.

BIRD QUIZ Answers—SPRING 2006 by Adrian Binns

1. What percentage of the approx 470 species of passerines in North America build open nests versus the percentage that build domed structures or use cavities?

77% build open nests and 23% use holes or domed structures

2. What was the last North American species to have its nest described and what is unique about it?

The Marbled Murrelet was the last North American species to have its nest described. It discovered in 1974 in California. What is unique about it is that it has the highest tree nest of any species at 150’

3. Which North American gull constructs a floating nest?

Franklin’s Gull
Field Trips …Martin Selzer & Adrian Binns, Field Trip Chairs

April 1 - Southwest New Jersey (Pedricktown & Mannington Marsh)
We'll be looking for winter stragglers such as Ross' Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, blackbirds, etc, along with any early migrants. Ruffs have previously been seen on this trip.
Leader: Frank Windfelder

May 12-14 - NOTE DATE CHANGE  Birding Southern Delaware and into Maryland
This weekend trip starts at Bombay Hook NWR on Friday morning and works south to Trap Pond State Park where you can camp or motel nearby. We will bird Nanticoke WMA on Saturday and areas around Seaford before returning to Trap Pond. Sunday, we bird the Cypress Swamps in DE and MD, then head north to the bayside areas. Interspersed throughout is a gourmet tour which will allow us to sample local delicacies such as crab, scrapple and muskrat. Yummy. Let Colin know in advance if you intend to participate. Additional info will be posted to the web as it becomes available so keep an eye out.
Leader: Colin Campbell

May 7 – Ft. Washington State Park, Montgomery County, PA
FWSP can be great for spring migrants. Meet at the Militia Hill hawk watch platform at 8AM.
Leader: Bill Murphy

May 13 – Carpenter's Woods, Philadelphia, PA
Meet at 6:30 AM at the bus stop at Wayne Avenue and Sedgwick Street for some migrant watching at Carpenter’s Woods. This trip will probably run until 11:00 or 12:00 Noon, or until we run out of birds.
Leader: Erica Brendel

May 14 - Hawkins Road & Brightview Farm, Burlington County, NJ and BRIGHTVIEW FARM
Target species at Hawkins Road are breeding Prothonotary, Worm-eating, Kentucky and Hooded Warblers. After enjoying these breeders, we will swing over to Brightview Farm for grassland species. Meet at 6:30 AM at the bridge over Little Creek.
Leader: Don Jones

May 20 – Ridley Creek State Park, PA
We will look for spring migrants including Louisiana Waterthrush and Kentucky Warbler, thrushes (maybe even a Swainson's), vireos, flycatchers and many others. Meet at 6:30 AM at the Ridley Creek Bridge on Gradyville Road (near Newtown Square, PA). We will bird until 11:00 or noon, depending on when the birds give out.
Leader: Art McMorris

May 21 - Westminster Cemetery, PECO Property and West Laurel Hill Cemetery
We will meet at 7:30 am at the entrance to Westminster Cemetery, which is just north of West Laurel Hill Cemetery on Belmont Avenue. After driving into Westminster, we will park at the east side of that property and walk down into the PECO property. This is the best birding spot and our leader has permission to bring the group into the area. Once we have finished birding the PECO property, we will drive over to West Laurel Hill Cemetery proper for some additional birding. A thorough walk through the environs will take a minimum of 2 hours.
Leader: Greg Gorton

June 4-14 - OREGON
This trip is an opportunity to join Tom Bailey, Al Driscoll, Frank Windfelder, and Don Jones on a trip to Oregon. Additional information can be found at on the DVOC website at http://www.dvoc.org/FieldTrips/FieldTrips2006/Oregon/Oregon2006.htm

June To Be Announced (Friday - Sunday) – Western PA Grasslands
Targets for this weekend trip are such specialty sparrow species as Henslow’s, Savannah, Grasshopper, Clay-colored, and Vesper Sparrows, etc.
Leaders: Chris Walters and Rick Mellon

July 15 - BOMBAY HOOK NWR and ENVIRONS, DELAWARE Part 1
Join us to witness the early part of the annual southbound shorebird migration spectacle. Meet at 7:30AM at the headquarters.
Leader: Martin Selzer

July 2006 To Be Announced (Saturday) - Annual Picnic
Exact date for this event is still to be determined. Details will be posted on the website when they become available.
Officers

President
Chris Walters

Vice-President
Paul Guris

Secretary
Frank Windfelder

Treasurer
Naomi Murphy

Council
Doris McGovern
Martin Selzer
Jeff Holt
Mike Lyman
Nate Rice
Connie Goldman

DVOC is an organization for birders and bird enthusiasts in the Delaware Valley region. Anyone with an interest in birds is invited to attend our functions.

Visit our website at www.dvoc.org.

Interested in becoming a member? Follow the link to "Membership Information" for everything you need to know about how to join the club.

Larus Committee

Naomi Murphy
Jane Henderson
Martin Selzer

Larus will be published three times in 2006 - March, July, and November. We want to thank those of you who have submitted articles for this issue or for prior issues. We encourage members with an interest to submit articles for publication. Deadlines for submissions are March 10, June 10, and November 1.

Caption Contest by Naomi Murphy

Responses: Winter Issue

Photo #1

1. The Camel: the shit of the desert. (C. Campbell)

2. Adrian teaching his camel to genuflect. (C. Campbell)

3. Down, boy, down...that’s a good boy. (C. Campbell)

4. Get ‘im off. (B. Mercer)

5. Binn there, dune that. (B. Mercer)

Photo #2

1. Those three birds went that way. (C. Campbell)

2. Ooooh, look there; isn’t that Adrian Binns? (C. Campbell)

3. We can see you in those bushes, Frank! Watch out for those thorns. (C. Campbell)

4. Birds: Where did she find those sandals? (B. Mercer)

Here is this issue’s photo that is just-crying-out for a caption. It depicts one of our current DVOC Council members at a “Wing Bowl” event...he’s the guy in the middle. I won’t disclose the name of the Council member and I don’t know if you’ll even be able to recognize him (but his initials are Jeff Holt). It’s frightening, actually. Anyhow, send your suggestions for a caption to me at ndmurphy3@hotmail.com
Delaware Valley Ornithological Club

Support the Nikon/DVOC Team in the 2006 World Series of Birding!

We raised over $4000 last year which was used to support critical conservation and educational efforts relative to horseshoe crabs and the shorebirds that rely on them. This year, we are partnering with the Montgomery County Lands Trust in an effort to preserve a Great Blue Heron rookery in Montgomery County, PA. (see article in this Larus for more insight).

The Nikon / DVOC team, the Lagerhead Shrikes, is a real winner. They have raised the competition to an art over the last several years and we have every reason to believe that they will deliver again this year. Everyone will agree that it is fun to root for the team and to win. Certainly our team’s efforts reflect well on the DVOC. But the most important component of this effort is that it raises funds for worthwhile conservation efforts.

We need everyone’s support in the form of pledges and contributions to make our team’s effort the most successful ever. Please get involved by using this form to make a pledge or a direct contribution.

Here is my pledge!

Per species sighted: $1.00 ___ 50¢ ___ 25¢ ___ 10¢ ___ Other ___

Or, I am contributing $ ______________ to our team’s effort.

Name __________________________________________________________
Street Address ______________________________________________________
City __________________________ State _________ Zip _________
Phone ______________________

Send to: Naomi Murphy
DVOC Treasurer
234 Orlemann Avenue
Oreland PA 19075

Visit www.dvoc.org for more information.