COME ONE, COME ALL. Yes, once in a while DVOC needs to celebrate. We’ve earned it. Let our celebration be our annual banquet, upcoming on Thursday evening, November 16. Put it on your calendar today. This annual rite of passage is as regular for DVOC members as the passing of the seasons is for the rarities we chase. And just as we did last year, we’ll gather at the beautiful Sheet Metal Workers Hall on the Delaware River in south Philadelphia.

Raconteur and writer extraordinaire Pete Dunne, our longtime member, will be our featured banquet speaker. Come and listen in as Pete details “25 Things that Changed Birding”.

Of course we all know that Pete Dunne is a household name in the bird world today. As the original director of the Cape May Birding Observatory (CMBO), he had much to do with popularizing Cape May and making it the international birding destination that it is today. He also made famous his related brain-child -- New Jersey’s annual World Series of Birding.

Pete was the Club’s banquet speaker back in 1984. Wow, time flies. In the intervening years, the Wall Street Journal tagged Pete the “Bard of American Birdwatchers.” He’s written many books including The Feather Quest, Tales of a Low-Rent Birder, Small-headed Flycatcher, Wind Masters, and more recently, Pete Dunne’s Essential Field Guide Companion.

Do not miss this chance to hear Pete, to buy any of his books you’ve missed, or just to get him to autograph whatever book you have. And – bring a friend. Parking is free and guests and non-members are welcome. Banquet menu, price, directions, and other details can be found at www.dvoc.org.

Editor's Note:
The banquet sign-up sheet is included in this newsletter as additional information. If you want to attend the banquet, please call or email Bernice Koplin and she will get you booked. Payment can be made at the door. If you haven’t signed up yet, please do it now. You won’t want to miss the program.

Thanks to those who have contributed articles for this issue and to the rest of the Larus committee. Have a great holiday season and hope to see you all in the field.

Naomi Murphy
Topic IV: Find Your Niche by Frank Windfelder

For some reason, DVOC has had an undeserved reputation for being an elitist club. *Nothing could be further from the truth.* Certainly, a few active members are the “hot shots” of the birding world. But we also have many who are at the beginner’s level, or somewhere in between. As a club, we try to cater to everyone, not just a select few.

For example, we are one of the few clubs that does not charge a fee for field trips, even for non-members. Our meetings are also free, and offer quality programs each time. We also meet twice a month, which is conducive in providing opportunities for bonding that other clubs might lack.

Let me get to the point. There is something in our club for everyone. If you are a new member or a beginner, please don’t feel that you have to be a star birder in order to fit in. There are many different ways in which you can contribute. Here are just some examples of how DVOC members have taken ownership:

- Connie Goldman has become adept at specimen preparation. She volunteers at the Ornithology Department of the Academy of Natural Sciences.
- Doris McGovern is an expert bird bander. Tom Bailey once brought in a dead Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Doris immediately went into a dissertation on aging the bird that made my jaw drop.
- Steve Kerr is a great photographer.
- Current President Chris Walters has great people skills, which certainly qualifies him for the position.
- Naomi Murphy has parlayed her accounting skills into a long-staying role as DVOC Treasurer.
- Alan Brady’s knowledge of pelagic species is legendary.
- Bert Filemyr is the brains of the organization. As a result of his work, our website is the best around.
- Tom Bailey has taken ownership of Palmyra Cove Nature Park, and JoAnn Raine has done the same for Pennypack Ecological Trust.
- Jan Gordon is very interested in conservation issues and heads the East Park Reservoir Committee. Debbie Beer has followed in her footsteps and has taken over as chairperson of the Conservation Committee.
- Recent President Adrian Binns is successfully running his own tour company, Jaeger Tours. Adrian can meet someone he has never seen in his life and make them feel like they have known him forever.
- Anita Guris has used her friendliness and charm to sign up many new members.
- Former President Don Jones has become an expert at making bird recordings.
- Jeff Holt is interested in ornithological history, and has written articles for a recent issue of Cassinia and Larus-on-Line.
- Keith Russell coordinates the Philadelphia Midwinter Bird Census.
- Bernice and Joe Koplin run our Annual Banquet.
- Art McMorris, in addition to being Cassinia Editor, also organizes our Ornithological Studies presentations.
- Paul Guris wears many hats. He probably knows more about east coast pelagic birds than anyone, has won the World Series of Birding many times as the captain of DVOC-Nikon, and of course is a computer wizard as well. Don’t you hate people like that? Jealousy, jealousy, jealousy!
- Former President Colin Campbell is another guy who has it all. But perhaps his biggest asset is his sense of humor. You should have heard him describe a ride on the Cape May-Lewes Ferry where he witnessed an accident aboard the vessel between a Mercedes and a BMW. Also, when we were in Churchill, Manitoba, we happened upon a junkyard with abandoned cars piled high. Colin said, “That must have been one hell of an accident!”

Have you had enough? I think you get the point. This list would be an even longer if I tried to mention everyone. Each of us can contribute in our own way. *What are your strengths? How can you contribute?* I must repeat that you don’t have to be a star birder. The great thing about DVOC is that we are a team, and together we make a cohesive, well-run bird club that serves to improve the experience for all our members. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Of course, we’re happy if you just come to the meetings. But DVOC has a way of drawing you in. I think it has something to do with the great people in it.

You might ask, “What are Frank Windfelder’s strengths?” Dwight D. Eisenhower would have said, “Give me a week and I’ll think of something!”

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Bird Facts – Fall 2006 by Adrian Binns

- The Sora undertakes the longest migration of any of North America’s rails, wintering as far south as Peru.
- Ospreys have readily taken to nesting on man-made structures and platforms. Yet in Baja California, ground nesting Ospreys are relatively common.
- Limpkins were nearly hunted to extinction in America in the beginning of the twentieth century because they were considered a culinary delicacy.
- Boreal Owls retrieve cached prey that, if frozen, they “thaw….by performing brooding-like behavior over it”.
- Most passerines or perching birds have ten primaries. In some families the tenth, or outermost primary, is reduced to a greater or lesser extent. In the case of the Oscines (finches, buntings, tanagers, etc), however, the tenth primary has disappeared altogether.
Audubon’s Birds of America: The Double Elephant Folio & Beyond

By Jeff Holt

Few will dispute that the artistry of John James Audubon reached its apex with the publication of the first (and most celebrated) edition of Birds of America. Published in “parts” (each part consisting of five prints) beginning in 1827, it was completed more than a decade later in 1838. The finished publication consisted of 435 prints, was customarily bound into four volumes, and was accompanied by a five volume descriptive text titled Ornithological Biography. The double elephant folio edition of Birds of America was produced in England by engravers William Lizars for the first ten prints and Robert Havell, Jr. for the remainder. The term “double elephant folio” derives from the size of the paper used by Lizars and Havell, being approximately 29 ½” X 39 ½”. The extraordinary size of the paper used in the publication allowed Audubon to reproduce each bird in life size.

The finished prints are routinely referred to as engravings, etchings and aquatints. These terms, in fact, refer to discrete processes used by Lizards and Havell in the intaglio method of printing. In this printing process, a tracing was made from Audubon’s original paintings and transferred to the surface of a smooth copper plate. The transferred image was then carved into the plate using both cutting tools and acids to create an image that sat below the surface of the copper plate. The resulting image was then inked, and under tremendous pressure, the black and white image was transferred to paper. A team of colorists hand-colored each print, using either Audubon’s original painting or an approved “pattern” print as a reference.

Each finished print bears the name of the species being depicted at the bottom along with Audubon’s name on the lower left, and the name of the engraver (Lizars or Havell) on the lower right. At the top of each print, the “part” number is on the left, and the print number is on the right. The numerical system used by Audubon bears a brief discussion. While each finished print was printed on the same size double elephant folio paper, not every species depicted covered the entire page. The mechanical press used in the intaglio printing method resulted in a visible and distinct “plate mark” which surrounded each image. Because Audubon’s paintings (from which the prints were produced) tended to fall into roughly three size categories, the resulting prints and corresponding “plate mark” did as well. The largest of Audubon’s paintings (and the resulting prints), almost filled the paper entirely. The medium size images resulted in a “plate mark” that measured approximately 21” X 26”, while the plate mark of the smallest images measured about 12” X 19”. At the outset of production, Audubon recognized that each “part” would consist of one large, one medium and three small prints. Accordingly, in assigning numbers to each print, the large images were given print numbers that ended in 1 or 6. The medium prints were assigned numbers ending in 2 or 7, and the small images had print numbers ending in 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 or 0. While many of the large prints depict relatively large birds, this isn’t always the case. It is size of the original painting and not the species of the bird portrayed which dictated what number each was assigned. Thus, in the case of part 8, plate 36 depicts a Stanley Hawk (Cooper’s Hawk), plate 37 is the Gold-winged Woodpecker (Northern Flicker) and plates 38, 39 and 40 depict a Kentucky Warbler, Crested Titmouse (Tufted Titmouse) and American Redstart respectively. The result of this numbering system is that Audubon’s prints appear in an order unlike modern field guides which depict species in taxonomic order.

An important detail on the production of the double elephant folio edition of Birds of America requires a comment relative to the paper. Audubon’s engravers used a high quality paper manufactured in England by “J. Whatman” or “J. Whatman Turkey Mill”. Paper produced from both paper mills bore a large, distinct watermark. With the proliferation of literally millions of reproductions of Audubon prints over the last century and half, it is said that “the presence of the Whatman watermark is the single most important factor” (Steiner, 2003) to look for in ascertaining whether that old print buried in grandma’s attic was an original double elephant folio print.

Given the physical size and the complexities in producing the finished product, only a select few could afford the roughly $1,000.00 cost of the completed subscription. The extraordinarily high purchase price was, in part, attributable to the cost of production which exceeded one hundred thousand dollars over the twelve years it took to complete the publication. Furthermore, given the vagaries of time and the economy, many who initially subscribed to the work never completed their subscription. While the exact number of fully completed subscriptions is unknown, most Audubon scholars agree.
that between 175 and 200 fully completed sets of *Birds of America* were produced, of which 120 are known to exist to this day. There were many incomplete subscriptions, some subscribers having received only a few parts, others having received two or three hundred prints. This, coupled with Audubon’s habit of making gifts of individual prints, makes it impossible to determine the number of any individual print produced. Additionally, throughout the decade it took to complete *Birds of America*, Audubon was constantly soliciting new subscribers. Thus, each time a new subscriber signed on, those prints produced up to that date would have to be provided to the new subscriber, and accordingly, it can be safely assumed that more prints from the earlier numbered “parts” were produced than from those in the later stages of the project.

During the period it took to prosecute *Birds of America* to completion, Audubon’s knowledge of ornithology improved significantly. By 1838, Audubon recognized that he had made errors. For instance, in print #9 Audubon identified the bird as Selby’s Flycatcher. This bird was in fact an immature Hooded Warbler, the male and female of which he depicted in plate #110. Thus, before Havell shut down production, Audubon ordered thirteen “composite” plates produced which would correct these errors. In the example above, the Selby’s Flycatcher was added to the bottom right of the Hooded Warbler plate. It is believed that six prints were made of each “composite” plate. (Audubon scholar Susanne Low has located seven prints of one of the “composite” plates, suggesting that more than six prints were produced.) Three sets of these 13 extra plates were incorporated into Audubon’s personal copy and those of his friends, Edward Harris of Moorestown, NJ and Dr. Benjamin Phillips of London, creating a completed work consisting of 448 prints.

While a critical and economic success, completion of the double elephant folio edition of *Birds of America* didn’t allow Audubon to simply retire without any financial concerns. Building upon the public enthusiasm engendered by the double elephant folio edition, upon returning to America in 1839, Audubon sought to exploit that advantage by publishing a smaller (approximately 10” X 6 1/2” in size), more affordable edition of his work. Commonly known as the royal octavo edition, the first edition of this work was published in Philadelphia between 1840 and 1844. Like its predecessor, the royal octavo edition consisted of 500 plates, bound into seven volumes and it cost a tenth of the amount of its big brother.

One of the factors that allowed the royal octavo edition to be produced at a lower cost was the method employed in producing the colored prints. Instead of using the *intaglio* printing method, the recently perfected lithography print method was used by Audubon’s printer, J.T. Bowen of Philadelphia. Where the *intaglio* printing process requires the image to be engraved below the surface of the copper plate, in lithography printing the image was simply transferred onto the surface of smooth flat piece of limestone. To start the process, Audubon and his son, John Woodhouse Audubon, reduced a double elephant folio image to octavo size using a *camera lucida* (a device that allowed a large image to be traced to a reduced size). The reduced image was then gone over with a fine red or brown pencil by one of Bowen’s employees and the traced image placed face down on the printing stone where it was rubbed onto the limestone surface. The transferred image was then permanently adhered to the stone by the use of chemicals. Ink and water were applied to the stone which caused the ink to adhere to the transferred image but not by the wet stone surface. Paper was then pressed to the printing stone creating a black and white print which was then hand colored by a team of colorists. The net result was that lithography printing was less costly and time consuming than the *intaglio* printing process. Furthermore, only a trained eye could detect the difference in quality between a well made lithographic print from that made using the *intaglio* process.

Unlike the earlier edition, the royal octavo edition of *Birds of America* followed the then recognized taxonomic order of the day. However, like its brethren, each print had a part number in the upper left and a plate number in the upper right. Thus, part 1, plates 1 through 5 depicted, in order: Cali-

(Continued on page 5)
Audubon’s *Birds of America* continued

fornia Turkey Vulture (California Condor), Red-headed Turkey Vulture (Turkey Vulture), Black Vulture, Caracara Eagle (Crested Caracara) and Harris’s Buzzard (Harris’ Hawk). Credits at the bottom of each print followed the previously established format (Audubon’s name on the left and the lithographer on the right), with one subtle addition. In many first edition royal octavo prints, small initials can sometimes be found at the bottom of the print, above the name of the species and below the colored image. These initials identify the artist responsible for the drawing of the image to the lithographic stone.

The first edition of the royal octavo edition was produced under the supervision of Audubon and his sons, Victor Gifford Audubon and John Woodhouse Audubon. Following their father’s death in 1851, the Audubon sons elected to produce additional royal octavo editions. These later editions, six in all, were published beginning in 1856 and continued to be published until 1871, well after both Victor and John had died. Absent having a dated bound volume in hand, it is almost impossible to ascertain the precise year any individual print from these later editions was produced. However, first edition royal octavo prints do bear unique characteristics that allow them to be distinguished from the later editions. In the first edition only, Audubon and the printers credit at the bottom of each print was italicized in plates numbers 151-185 and 190-500. In all or the later editions, these credits are in block letters. Second, print numbers 136-150 in the first edition were produced by the George Endicott firm in New York, not by Bowen in Philadelphia, and the lithographer credits on these prints reflect that fact. As envisioned by Audubon, subscribers to the octavo edition were to receive a new “part” every two weeks. The public demand was so great, that in order to maintain Audubon’s publishing schedule, part of the lithography process had to be shifted to another firm. Last, while the first edition used a single lithographic stone to produce the entire image, including the background, the later editions employed a second stone. This second stone was used to create a faint colored background or halo. On some prints, this tint is quite apparent, on others very subtle. Nevertheless, a careful examination of a print with a 10X print loupe will usually reveal the presence or absence of the second stone tint.

Present consensus places something under 1,200 as the number of complete first edition royal octavos published. As with the earlier work, there were those subscribers who received only a portion of the entire project. Of course with time, many complete editions have been broken up or destroyed. Yet, even today, fully intact sets are available for purchase by the well-heeled through dealers and at auction.

When Audubon left England for America in 1839, he arranged to have shipped with his other possessions, his original paintings, a small number of unsold copies of the double elephant folio *Birds of America* and, the engraved copper plates used in the production of his work. Upon arrival in the States, the later were sent to a warehouse in New York City for safekeeping. A fire in 1845 damaged some, but fortuitously, did not destroy the plates, for it was these that were used in the production of a third version of *Birds of America*. Commonly referred to as the Bien edition (after Julius Bien the lithographer of this edition), this project was undertaken solely by John Woodhouse Audubon. In 1858, the younger Audubon decided to produce a full size reissue of *Birds* in America. Like the two earlier editions, this too would be sold by subscription, but at a cost of half that of the earlier double elephant folio edition. While the engraved copper plates would be used as the reference source in producing this new edition, the actual printing process would essentially entail an advanced version of that used in the royal octavo edition. Color printing had advanced to the point where chromolithography could be used, and Julius Bien was one of the foremost practitioners of this art. Bien created the prints by first inking the engraved copper plate and transferring the resultant image to paper. Then the inked transfer paper was laid on a prepared lithographic stone, and under the pressure of the press, the image was transferred from the paper to the stone. Unlike the royal octavo edition where the black-and-white image on the lithographic stone was transferred to paper for later hand-coloring, the color in the Bien edition was applied directly to the paper from up to six colored ink lithographic stones. It is believed that a small amount of hand coloring may have also been used to touch-up and correct minor errors in the finished prints. Using different colored inks in varying order and combinations, Bien essentially layered the colors directly onto the finished print. The skill of Bien was his ability to judge how one color laid on another would affect the final print. The overall result created a print that one commentator describes as “softer” than the earlier editions. To this writer’s eye, when viewed next to a double elephant folio, a Bien print seems almost to be slightly out of focus. Some find the effect pleasing, others do not. However, one thing that all commentators agree upon is that the technique employed by Bien to create the prints yielded inconsistent results. From image to image or even from one print to another of the same image, the results could vary in quality from outstanding to horrible. Everything from variances in the color of the ink used, to misalignment of the print from one lithographic stone to the next as it went through the printing process, affected the overall accuracy of the final product.

Other aspects of the Bien edition differ from the earlier works. Bien used the same size paper as Havel, but whereas the earlier work only contained one image per sheet of paper, John Woodhouse decided to deviate from this format. Each “part” that was delivered to a subscriber consisted of two large images, two medium size images and six small images. Whereas the large and medium prints followed the earlier one image per sheet format, the small images were printed two to a sheet. Hence, each complete “part” consisted of seven sheets and ten prints. A total of 44 “parts” were planned.

This printing arrangement affected significantly the marginalia of each print. All prints in the upper right corner bore a plate number which corresponded (in most cases) to the same number found in the royal octavo edition. Unlike the two earlier works, the “part” number in the upper left of each print in the Bien edition consists of two numbers separated by a hyphen. The first refers to the “part” and the second refers to the number of that print within the “part”. The second number was also printed slightly smaller then the first. Thus, in the case of the Hooded Warbler, the plate number 71 in the upper right corresponds to the same plate number as in the royal octavo edition. In the upper left appears the number 13-5, meaning that this print is the fifth print in “part” 13.
Audubon’s *Birds of America* continued

The attributions at the bottom of each print, in the case of the large and medium prints, followed the format of the earlier editions, with Audubon’s name on the left and Bien’s name in the lower right as the chromolithographer. However, in the case of the smaller images, the two per sheet format employed affected the credits. In those prints where the two small images are arranged horizontally, the Audubon and Bien credit appears below the lower print only. Neither credit appears below the upper print. If separated (as is the case in many instances for framing and display), the uneducated eye may not recognize the upper print as being an Audubon Bien edition print, given the absence of any credits. Where the small prints are positioned vertically, the left hand print bears Audubon’s credit in the lower left and the Bien attribution appears in the lower right of the right print. Thus, when separated, the vertically oriented small prints will always bear one of the credits, but never both.

Unlike the two earlier editions which employed high quality 100% cotton rag paper, the Bien edition was printed using a less costly paper containing wood pulp. Whereas the double elephant folio and royal octavo editions will hold up well if properly cared for, the Bien edition prints are inherently subject to deterioration unless conservation efforts are employed. Lignin, a polymer found in wood pulp breaks down over time. The result is that the paper becomes more acidic which causes it to darken and become brittle and fragile. Thus, while all Audubon prints are subject to suffering the wear and tear of age, in the case of the Biens, even the most carefully cared for is likely to show its age more so than prints from the earlier editions.

Unfortunately for John Woodhouse and the Audubon family, the timing of the Bien edition couldn’t have been worse. By 1860, the country was embroiled in the Civil War. Many of the subscribers were from the South and hence, cut-off from the Audubons. The result was that after only 15 parts (150 images), the project had to be abandoned. The resultant financial impact on the Audubon family was catastrophic, and was likely a factor that contributed to John Woodhouse’s death in 1862. In 1863, Lucy Audubon, the widow of John James was forced to sell the families assets including her husband’s original paintings and the families personal copy of the double elephant folio edition with it’s extra composite plates. It is unknown precisely how many complete sets of the 15 part Bien edition were produced. Audubon scholar’s estimate that between 75-100 sets were produced, of which, 49 intact sets are believed to presently exist. It is known that with the abandonment of the Bien project, Audubon’s creditors came into possession of an unknown number of unsold prints. These were later sold after the war ended.

Thus, with the death of John Woodhouse and the financial devastation of the Audubon family’s assets, did end after three distinct versions, the Audubon’s supervision over the production of *Birds of America*.

**Reference Materials**


A Frustrating Exercise: the Ultimate Thrush Identification

Article with Photos—both by Gerry Dewaghe

I do not profess to be an expert, but I could identify any of our spotted thrushes by sight with some confidence and with little regard to minute details: faint buffy spots: Veery, large, bold spots: Wood and so on. That was until early 1993 when Catharus minimus bicknelli (then a race of the Gray-cheeked Thrush) was elevated to full species status: the Bicknell’s Thrush.

The Bicknell’s Thrush breeds in some regions of southeastern Canada and into some parts of the New England states, mainly at higher elevations (1). This species winters only in the West Indies. From this information it can be presumed that Bicknell’s Thrushes pass through our region during the spring and fall migrations.

If you are an avid birdwatcher/birder in need of adding the Bicknell’s Thrush to your life list; two broad options are offered to you:

1. Travel to New England or eastern Canada in early summer to seek out the bird on its breeding grounds, find the bird and infer that “In the proper habitat and at the proper season, if it sounds like one, looks like one, it has to be one”.

2. Convince yourself that the bird that you saw at “………” (Fill in your best spring thrush location) is in fact a Bicknell’s Thrush. Should you want to make it official and be venturesome enough, also try to convince others who did not see your bird (including any ornithological records committee) that what you saw is in fact a Bicknell’s Thrush.

Having first opted for solution No.1, I found my Bicknell’s Thrush a couple of years ago at various locations around the Gaspé peninsula of Quebec.

In 2005 I had the opportunity to spend a larger than usual amount of time in the field during the peak of the spring migration. By doing so, I have had multiple local sightings of Gray-cheeked Thrushes, some of which I managed to photograph with varying amounts of success. On May 29th, a gray-cheeked type thrush appeared in our yard and remained there through mid-day May 30th during which time the bird was easily observed and extensively photographed. At one time, the bird disappeared for an extended period of time but I was able to coax it back into view with the use of a recorded call. The bird’s appearance and coloration seemed different enough from the thrushes I had previously seen this spring that I decided to do a bit more research on the matter. It was time to go to solution No.2. Would I be lucky enough to have a Bicknell’s Thrush in my yard?

From this point on, be aware that the Bicknell’s Thrush is not one of those birds that look like no others; that would be too easy! The problem stems from the fact that the two remaining races of Gray-cheeked Thrushes; mainly C. minimus minimus (Newfoundland), and to some extent C. minimus aliciae (interior Canada to Alaska); share many similarities with the Bicknell’s Thrush.

What field marks were we supposed to be looking for? Since the field guides depicted only generic to basic information, I resorted to articles found in the birding literature. Some, which were more or less confusing did nothing but muddy waters.

I was aware that Bicknell’s Thrush was extremely difficult to identify in the field but, since the collection of photographs I secured was extensive enough, I figured that this was almost as good as having the bird in the hand, and if I could work my way through the various points of identification, I had the bird’s identity nailed.

I went through all applicable identification points mentioned in the literature and came up with the following results:

- It has a different song from that of C. minimus (4): Well, my bird did not sing. From the tapes in my possession, I most likely would have been hard pressed to differentiate the song of one thrush from another unless the bird sang repeatedly. After all, the differences are best found in the sonograms.

- Bicknell’s Thrush does not respond to playback of C. m. minimus and C. m. aliciae presented during the breeding season in its territories (4): My yard bird did not respond to the song nor to the call note of the Gray-cheeked Thrush and it did not respond to the song of the Bicknell’s Thrush. But responded agitatedly to the call note of the Bicknell’s Thrush when I played a tape to coax it into view. We were approaching breeding season but the bird was not on territory. Would that still make it a Bicknell’s Thrush? Then my next question was: Does the Gray-cheeked Thrush respond to the Bicknell’s call? I could not find anything in the literature one way or the other. I almost had something there.

- The dorsal area of Bicknell’s is more frequently olive brown while the Gray-cheeked is more frequently olive (4): My bird (Photo “B”) was definitely warmer in color compared to some of the Gray-cheeked Thrushes I had seen earlier (Photo “A”), but then, the C. m. minimus of Newfoundland can also exhibit the same warmer coloration (I guess that it is the “more frequently” part of the statement).

- The tail of Bicknell’s is almost constantly chestnut while C. m. minimus is almost constantly olive and C. m. aliciae is almost constantly olive brown (4): The above-two statements, taken together, would tend to indicate that there is a difference, possibly a noticeable difference in color between the back and tail of the bird. My photos did show some tone variation in the bird’s side views (Photo “B”) but little in the back views (Photo “C”) except at the base of the tail, but some reports have indicated that this may not always be the case (3).

- The wings of Bicknell’s Thrush are warm olive, showing a slight rufous tone (3): Side views of my bird did show a slight rufous tone in the wing and in the tail (Photo B), but the literature (2) indicates that this trait is also found in C. m. minimus.

- In Bicknell’s the base of the mandible is bright pale yellow while in the Gray-cheeked it is flesh or yellowish flesh color (4): My bird did not exhibit any bright pale yellow at the base of the mandible but rather a flesh or yellowish flesh color (except at the gape which is always yellow in thrushes)

(Continued on page 8)
A Frustrating Exercise continued

(Photo “B”), but apparently this trait cannot be considered indicative of either species due to much variation (2).

• Dark distal area (tip of the bill) is more extensive in Gray-cheeked (more than 50% dark) than in Bicknell’s (4): The Gray-cheeked Thrush in Photo “A” does show a predominantly dark bill (well in excess of 50%) while my yard bird tended to show the opposite (Photo “B”). However, the literature discounts this field mark as valid since a minority of Gray-cheekeds also exhibit this trait (2).

• The color of the tarsi (legs) in Bicknell’s are light purplish flesh to purplish flesh with toes that are darker than tarsi (legs). In Gray-cheeks, tarsi are lighter flesh color tinted with brownish black. Toes are much darker than tarsi (4). If I had to qualify the color of my bird’s legs, I would opt for purplish flesh color (Photo “D”), but I am puzzled by what “lighter flesh color tinted with brownish black” should look like. I would classify the toes as “darker than tarsi”, but again how much difference is there between “darker” and “much darker”? 

• The sole of feet in Bicknell’s is flesh to dull pale yellow while in Gray-cheeked is yellow to brighter yellow (4): Believe it or not, I’ve had this one covered. Photo “D” definitely shows the sole of the feet to be pale yellow or is it yellow washed out by the flash on the camera?

• Bicknell’s is significantly smaller than Gray-cheeked: My yard bird had a dainty appearance compared to the bird in Photo “A” but, in my opinion, unless you have both birds side by side this is only a judgment call.

• Ratio of primary extension to tertial length less than 1 is indicative of Bicknell’s, greater than 1 is indicative of Gray-cheeked (2): This is finally a characteristic that can be evaluated in the field. It is easy to judge the length of the primary feathers extending beyond the tertials (primary extension) and that of the tertials extending beyond the wing coverts (the shoulder). However, the data presented to support the above statement shows much spread and overlap in the ratios, 0.64 to 1.10, for Bicknell’s, 0.88 to 1.22 for Gray-cheeked minimus, and 0.84 to 1.33 for Gray-cheeked aliciae. In my opinion, only the extremes should be considered. Anything less than .84 (or 0.88 if Bicknell’s and aliciae can be separated on color alone) should be indicative of Bicknell’s, and anything more than 1.1 indicative of Gray-cheeked; anything in between can be either. In the case of my bird, careful measurements of various views on the photos indicate a ratio in the range of 0.95 to 1.0 placing the bird squarely in the zone of uncertainty.

Well, well, well…There was no definite answer to my question. This exercise only helped me validate the fact that separating Bicknell’s and Gray-cheeked Thrushes in the field (away from their breeding grounds) is indeed extremely difficult, if not impossible.

By the same token and for all the right reasons, ornithological records committees tend to disregard any reports of Bicknell’s Thrushes in migration unless accompanied with voice recordings. By this, they are not stating that the bird is not what one claims it to be, only that the evidence is not there to be 100% certain. For this reason, P.S.O. classifies this species as “Accidental” in Pennsylvania.

Actually, in most cases, you may only have one person to convince: yourself. In my case, this was surely an education; I never went to any greater length and effort to definitively state that I had a thrush sp. in my yard.

Literature cited:

Photos: © G. Dewaghe 2005
A Frustrating Exercise continued

Photos:

Thrush B
Yard bird showing warmer tones in wing and tail
Langhorne 5/29/05

Thrush C
Yard bird showing dorsal view
Langhorne 5/29/05

Thrush D
Yard bird showing leg, toe coloration and sole of feet
Langhorne 5/29/05
Observations of a Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*) Nest on Big Hill, Leisuretowne, Southampton, NJ, Spring 2006 - Observed and reported by Augie Sexauer

Big Hill (elevation 109 feet) is located in the center of a large retirement community off Route 70, two miles east of the Red Lion Circle (Routes 206 and 70). The hill is on the edge of the Pine Barrens, and is relatively high compared to the land surrounding it, with a commanding view north toward Fort Dix. At the top of the hill there is a small wooded area with nature trails and a picnic area which is never used. I often climb the north slope (which is quite steep) from my backyard and sit on a bench enjoying the view across Budd’s cranberry bogs.

My observations began on April 23, 2006, when I first sighted a female Cooper’s Hawk carrying sticks to a nest about 60 feet off the ground near the top of a pine tree. On April 26, 2006, a male was seen flying in with prey from the north. I did not see the exchange, but watched the female feeding about 10 feet off the ground while the male stayed in the vicinity.

On April 28 Don Jones came with me to confirm the sighting, and we watched the first sign of incubation as the bird sat low on the nest with her tail extending over the rim and just her head visible. The iris of her eye was yellow, an indication of a juvenile bird. This was probably her first nesting.

Between April 28 and May 28 I observed numerous times while the female was incubating. Each time I approached the nest site the male would dart off and disappear completely. The female never moved at all. During this period I did see the male chasing crows away from the area.

On May 29 I noticed the first sign of hatching. The female was sitting higher on the nest in a brooding position, and would occasionally stand and look down into the nest.

On June 1, while she was standing on the nest, a flock of grackles flew low over the nest and landed in the tops of trees behind me. She immediately launched off the nest, swooping low overhead, and perched low and close to where I stood. Even after the grackles left she stayed for a while, and then flew back to the nest. I was left with the feeling that she also checked me out more closely while she was there.

One June 11, I had my first glimpse of a downy head in the nest. Only one young bird was ever observed. Often when I visited the site the female was nowhere in around, but any time there was activity near the nest (such as a crow or Turkey Vulture flying too close) she would immediately come zipping back to the nest, occasionally giving an alarm note (during the course of nesting I seldom heard any alarm notes). Apparently she was always hunting within sight of the nest.

On June 20, Chip Krilowicz and Jean Gutsmuth visited the site with me and photographed the adult and young bird in the nest. While we watched, the male called from a grove of pines on the north slope. The female left the nest and flew to the grove, returning to the nest with prey. During the entire nesting period I never saw the male approach the nest.

On June 27 the male again called from the north slope, and the female flew back to the nest with prey on which both she and the young bird fed. By this time the youngster was almost fully feathered, and after eating began exercising its wings and venturing out in the same tree.

On June 29 I found the young bird about 50 feet from the nest tree. With a series of short flights, it returned to the nest where it apparently searched for remaining food. It picked up the tarsus of a small bird (with toes still attached) and seemed to play with it before swallowing it whole. [Note: during this whole process most observations of the nest were done with a 30 power spotting scope from a safe distance.]

From June 29 to July 6 the young bird was seen venturing farther and farther from the nest tree, but it stayed in the area and often returned to the nest. On two occasions during this time the female flew in and perched low, close to where I sat in plain view. It was a great experience as we studied each other. She seemed relaxed, standing on one foot. Her purpose, I believe, was to see if there was any real danger to the young bird. My purpose was to learn more about her life.

On July 6 at 1:00 pm the youngster was still hanging out in the nest and that was my last sighting.
In August, Lynn Jackson and I traveled to Ecuador on an eight day birding adventure. The trip allowed us to sample a cross section of the spectacular Andes mountain range as it transects Ecuador near the equatorial city of Quito. Our tour started in Quito and featured a two-night stay at Tandayapa Bird Lodge (TBL) on the western slope of the Andes followed by a four-night stay at the cloud forest lodge of Cabañas San Isidro (CSI) on the eastern slope of the Andes.

TBL is 90 minutes from Quito and is located at an altitude of 1750 meters (5750 feet). It is located in the midst of the subtropical cloud forest of the Tandayapa Valley and is perfectly situated so that day trips give you access to lowland rainforest at 400 meters or paramo grasslands at 3500 meters. The grounds of the lodge itself have a trail system that provides you with plenty of opportunity to sample some of the 295 species of birds that make the Tandayapa Valley home.

TBL has only been open a few seasons and it is already becoming known as “THE” place to see hummingbirds at the feeders on its balcony. In the wet season the feeders regularly attract 20 species of hummingbirds a day and 31 species have been recorded here with some consistency. In addition, mixed flocks pass through the canopy above the balcony each morning. Within 15 minutes of our arrival in the later afternoon, we easily had all of the following species in good numbers: Brown, Green and Sparkling Violet-ears; Western Emeralds, Green-crowned Woodnymphs, Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds, Andean Emeralds, Fawn-breasted Brilliantis, Buff-tailed Coronets, Brown IncaS, Purple-bibbed White-tips, Booted Racket-tails, and Violet-tailed Sylphs. Cameras were clicking and jaws were dropping in amazement. Before the evening was over a Velvet-purple Coronet came in to the feeders although not everyone saw it. The next day at lunch a White-necked Jacobin was seen at the feeders adding to the “TBL-alone” hummingbird list. What a place!

Leading up to our arrival at TBL, we visited the Yanacocha Reserve outside of Quito for a morning of birding in a temperate forest habitat. We were looking for flocks of birds and checking out the hummingbird feeders that are maintained along the road in the reserve. It is about a two kilometer, one-way trail. Birds seen along the walk included: Andean Guan, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Great Sapphirewing, Sapphire-vented Puffleg, Green-tailed Trainbearer, Black-capped Tyrannulet, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, Blue-backed Conebill, Black-chested Mountain-Tanager, and Glossy Flowerpiercer.

Our travels from Yanacocha to TBL along the Nono-Tandayapa Road paralleled the Alambi River. We made a few stops along the way when we heard or saw new and interesting things. We birded along the road for the better part of the afternoon. Some of the new birds we picked up were: Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, White-tailed Tyrannulet, Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant, Turquoise jays, Beautiful Jays and White-capped Dipper.

We spent the next morning on the trails of TBL and enjoyed the bounty of the subtropical cloud forest there. In the afternoon we headed to the Milpe Road area, which is foothill habitat at 3700 feet on the western slope. It was our only chance for this habitat and therefore Club-winged Manakin. Our initial goal was the manakins and after getting them actively displaying on the lek, we picked up Choco Toucans and started searching for other birds in the Milpe area. We really had some great birds along the road including: Swallow Tanager, Guira Tanager, Red-headed Barbet, crippling looks at...
off to San Isidro which was to be our home for the next four days.

We spent our last morning around TBL and then headed back to Quito for the night rather than make a very long drive to CSI all in one day. While it felt like a quiet birding day we still managed some excellent birds along the Tandayapa-Mindo Road. Probably our best birds of the day were a pair of Toucan Barbets which came into a tree just over our heads in plain sight and were coaxed into duet calling. We also had Barred Becard, Golden Tanager, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker (a real stunner of a bird), White-sided Flowerpiercer, and a pair of Russet-crowned Warblers.

Near the Bella Vista Lodge we managed to pull some birds out such as Capped Conebill, Grass-green Tanager, Dusky Bush-Tanager, Western Hemispingus, Flame-faced Tanager, Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant, Green and Black Fruiteteater and Gorgeted Sunangiel. A late afternoon stop at Mindo Lomo for hummingbirds was another bright spot of the day. Any stop with active hummingbird feeders picked up our spirits (the tea and coffee didn’t hurt either). Although not as busy as TBL, these still were very active with: Brown and Sparkling Violet-ears, Western and Andean Emeralds, Fawn-breasted and Empress Brilliant, Buff-tailed and Velvet-purple Coronets, Brown Inca, Speckled Hummingbirds, Long-tailed Silphs, and Purple-throated Woodstars. It was a nice way to end the day.

We left for Quito to bird in the central valley, working our way up through paramo to the Papallacta Pass then back down to Guango Lodge before reaching CSI. As we started to climb, which is saying something since, Quito itself starts at 9,000-10,000 feet, we started to get some true paramo birds: Bar-winged and Stout-billed Cinclodes, Andean Tit-Spinetail, Andean Gull, Carunculated Caracara, Andean Teal and Yellow-billed Pintail. We kept climbing higher and higher, knocking these birds off and hoping for Andean Condors. As we got higher, the wind just kept blowing and the occasional rain shower fell. At the top (14,300 feet) the rain was more like sleet and the conditions were downright nasty! We drove down a bit to get out of the worst of it, had lunch and then walked into Suco Lake to pick up Silvery Grebe, Andean Coot and Andean Duck. We made the clean sweep of paramo waterfowl before crossing over the continental divide and heading towards Guango Lodge.

At Guango, we had 13 species of hummingbirds including some new ones for the trip list: Long-tailed Silph, Gorgeted Woodstar, White-bellied Woodstar, Glowing Puffleg, Collared Inca, and Chestnut-breasted Coronet. We only made a brief visit at Guango before setting off to San Isidro which was to be our home for the next four days.

We spent these four days in and about CSI covering these varying habitats. On the grounds immediately around our cabanas we had excellent birding with the following seen almost every day from the car park: White-crested Elaenia, Pale-edged Flycatcher, Barred Becard, Black-billed Peppershrike, and Blue-naped Chlorophonia. The main entrance road was also not without its good finds. One morning we walked right into a great flock of birds including: Olive-backed, Strong-billed and numerous Montane Woodcreepers as well as several Pearled Treerunners, Azara’s Spinetail, Russet-backed Oropendola, and Mountain Cacique. The walk that morning held one of the real surprises of the trip, a Semi-collared Hawk. To quote our guide, “this is a bird that has to come to you, you don’t go looking for it”.

Some days we left the grounds completely for the surrounding national reserves which we visited in the morning or in the late afternoon. These adventures rewarded us with so many birds that ultimately the birds and these adventures kind of all ran into each other (okay, I stopped taking explicit notes, truth be told). But the birding was incredible day in and day out, every day! Rather than detail each adventure we had during our four days at San Isidro, I’ll list some highlights:

- One flock of birds on the Guacacmayos Road contained Golden-olive Woodpecker, Ornate Flycatcher (a truly beautiful bird), Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater (a really pleasant surprise), and Golden-eared Tanagers. This short stretch of road also held Magpie, Paradise (WOW!), White-shouldered, White-lined and Orange-eared Tanagers, Grayish Saltators and Greenish Pufflegs. Both Yellow-vented and Yellow-tufted Woodpeckers were added to our list at various points during the day.

- You know how it is when you are in the field; it isn’t always birds that make memorable impressions on you. Here we were, birding on this same road (unpaved by the way) that although considered a major roadway in Ecuador, would be considered by us to be more or less in the middle of nowhere, when all of a sudden, an Ecuadorian birder, Rick “Something-or-other” made a grand entrance. He came screeching up the hill just as his right front tire blew out. Not content to merely blowout a tire, he continued on the bare rim until he had bent it. We offered him a ride to town of Cosanga.
Montane Ecuador continued

since he was riding on his spare tire having already gotten one flat tire earlier in the day. To add insult to injury, he locked his keys in the car as he was gathering his belongings. So he birded with us until he hitched a ride on a passing bus to Quito. We wished him well as we continued birding till dark.

• While trying to coax an uncooperative tapaculo into view a bold and inquisitive Slate-capped Antpitta snuck into our viewing stage and made for a very pleasant surprise. “Who needs tapaculos when antpittas want to be seen!” In fact this little guy not only walked into view once but also walked away and then walked back into view as if to say, “hey forget those guys, look at me”.

• Right after that antpitta moment that reminded us that sometimes birding is about being in the right place at the right time, a Barred Antthrush decided to slowly cross the path not ten feet in front of the group. It was a Bill Oddie CMF moment if ever there was one. Everyone was really excited about this one. Our guide commented, “Usually all you do is hear these guys on this trail but to see it so darn well, wow!”

• While on a late afternoon walk on trails at San Isidro that could be best described as quiet we were coming back to the cabanas when we heard a White-capped Tanager calling. As luck would have it, it was calling from the forest edge, immediately where the trail emerged from the forest. Talk about catching a lucky break and talk about a great bird. We scoped it as it just sat in its treetop perch and the five of us who were left on the walk just cycled through taking looks. Apparently this bird behaves like a cotinga, looks like a tanager and no one knew where to classify it for the longest time until DNA testing revealed that it is in fact a tanager.

On our return to Quito we stopped back at Guango Lodge where we had some of the best birding for the trip especially when you consider it was all part of our “mop-up day efforts”. Besides the usual suspects such as Pearled Treehunter, Spectacled and Slate-throated Whitestarts and White-banded Tyrannulets, we nailed two brush-finches (Slaty and Pale-naped and just missed nailing Striped-headed), two hemispinguses (Black-capped and Black-eared), Black-crested Warbler, Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager, Gray-headed Bush-Tanager and Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant.

• Our return trip over the Papallacta Pass was equally successful for paramo specialists that we missed when coming east as our return trip to Guango Lodge. We ate lunch overlooking Papallacta Lake and then we went to work birding. First we had a small flock of Black-backed Bush-Tanagers. Then it was back up to the radio towers at 14,300 feet to look for Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe. We were waylaid by Paramo Ground Tyrant a non-migratory split from Plain-capped Ground-Tyrant according to The Birds of Ecuador. It took some searching but we found two seedsnipes. That was a major success and we then started down the mountain and began picking off more paramo specialties such as Viridian Metaltail, Tawny Antpitta, Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant (instantly one of my favorite birds for the trip) and two Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles. These were about the last two birds for the trip.

For those of you who need numbers: We had 54 species of hummingbirds, 64 species of tanagers (counting tanagers, mountain-tanagers, bush-tanagers, hemispinguses, etc) you get the idea, and all 11 possible species of tyrannulets that occur in the area we birded Total bird taxa (i.e. identifiable to subspecies level) seen or heard by the group was 400. WOW! What a trip, what a series of locations, what a country!

Bird Quiz – Fall/Winter 2006

1. One species of North American Scolopacid (sandpipers, phalaropes & allies) is unique in that it spends the majority of its time in a completely different habitat. What is the species and what is its habitat?

2. What separates Scolopacids from Charadriids (plovers and lapwings)?

3. Charadriids are most closely related to which other family group - Scolopacids, Laridæ (gulls & terns) or Rallidæ (rails, gallinules and coots)?

See answers on page 14
Of Interest on the DVOC Web

Birder Beware:
Travel to distant parts of the US and to other countries is a very exciting way to extend and enhance our birding experience. So … what is the best approach to planning and/or taking these trips? Many of us elect to travel with companies that specialize in bird watching tour. But there are things you need to consider before you book with a tour company. The Birder Beware article has been on the DVOC website for some time but it is still timely, relevant and highlights things to be considered before any money changes hands. Be sure to read this. Oh, and tell your birding friends about it too. Nobody should have a trip spoiled by an unscrupulous tour company.

Birds of the Delaware Valley – Species Accounts:

We are lucky to have had the opportunity to bring this info to our website. Much of the work on gathering, design and posting of this information was originally done by Adrian Binns and Lynn Jackson – both DVOC members - on a now defunct website called Delaware Valley Birding. When that website folded, Bert Filemyr did a bang of job of incorporating, reformating and adding to it so that users continue to have access via the DVOC website. There is a ton of information here and I suggest that you spend some time browsing through it. For purposes of this article, I wanted to highlight just one section – the species accounts. Click on the species account link and you'll be taken to what is essentially a species list in columnar format which includes:

- the species name which is linked to a page for that species and contains info on status, distribution, photos, in some cases audio, etc.
- columns for PA, NJ and DE which tell you whether or not the species is either on the official state list or if there are sightings that are currently under review in by the state review committee.
- Links to the state records committees for PA, NJ and DE
- Links to the official PA, NJ and DE checklists

Some species don’t have pages yet but this is a work in process so, if you feel you might have something to contribute, contact Bert Filemyr and he’ll be able to tell you what, if anything, is needed by way of additional info for this section of the web. http://www.dvoc.org/DelValBirding/Species.htm

Bird Quiz Answers – Fall/Winter 2006 by A. Binns

1. One species of North American Scolopacid (sandpipers, phalaropes & allies) is unique in that it spends the majority of its time in a completely different habitat. What is the species and what is its habitat?

   American Woodcock. Woodlands.

2. What separates Scolopacids from Charadriids (plovers and lapwings)?

   All Scolopacids with the exception of Sanderling have short, elevated hind toes.

3. Charadriids are most closely related to which other family group - Scolopacids, Laridae (gulls & terns) or Rallidae (rails, gallinules and coots)?

   Laridae (gulls & terns).

4. What is a “Cox’s Sandpiper”?

   A hybrid between a Pectoral Sandpiper and a Curlew Sandpiper.
Northern Oregon Birding Trip June 2006 by Don Jones
Photos by Margie Keefe and Earl Harrison and various other sources

Introduction:
From June 3-14, 2006 Frank Windfelder, Al Driscoll, Tom Bailey, Earl Harrison, and Don Jones birded the northern half of Oregon. Marjorie Keefe joined us from June 3-7. June 3 and June 14 were basically travel days from Philadelphia to the west coast. We saw a total of 208 species in Oregon with one additional species tallied by three of us in Seattle—a Tundra Swan. All but Margie flew to Seattle then drove to Oregon (about 3 hours) arriving in Forest Grove southwest of Portland at 8:30 p.m. Margie flew to Portland and met us at the motel in Forest Grove. This is a log of our adventure. Numbers that appear in parentheses after species names indicates the total number seen on the trip; pluses within parentheses indicate counts were not kept each day. The first several pages provide a brief overview of Oregon’s habitats. It is hoped this report will allow you to plan your own trip to this spectacularly beautiful state with its large number of birds and its friendly people.

Some Oregon Geography:
An understanding of Oregon’s physiography and climate provides a framework for birders who want to plan a route that will maximize the number of species seen. Oregon is a large, roughly rectangular state, ninth in size and bordered on the north by Washington, the east by Idaho, the south by California and Nevada, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. It is about 360 miles west to east and 260 miles north to south. The climate and physiography provide a rich variety of habitats resulting in a high diversity of birdlife.

Proceeding from west to east (see map above) the habitats include: (1) the open Pacific Ocean and rocky headlands—the haunt of albatrosses, petrels, jaegers, shearwaters, cormorants, rock-pipers, and alcids. Most of these species require going offshore, but some find nest sites in the many stacks that lie just offshore and are visible from land. Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Brandt’s and Pelagic Cormorants are prolific. Tufted Puffin nests at a few locations with the largest colony located on Haystack Rock just offshore in southern Cannon City.
Northern Oregon Birding Trip continued

The Coast Range comes right down to the Pacific Ocean in incredibly beautiful headlands and runs in a north-south direction that parallels the coast and extends inland roughly 50 miles. It is a relatively low mountain range (averaging 2-3000 feet) whose highest point is Mary’s Peak (4097 feet). Since most of Oregon’s weather comes from warm, moist prevailing westerly winds off the Pacific Ocean, the lifting and cooling effect of the Coast Range on this moist air results in very high annual precipitation. For instance, Tillamook County averages over 90 inches a year. As a result, the Coast Range is predominately wet coniferous forest habitat where Douglas fir is the dominant tree but red cedar, grand fir, western hemlock, and sitka spruce are also common. In many places this habitat comes right to the coast. Similar habitat is found on the west slope of the Cascade Mountains. In the very high, wet areas of northeastern Oregon in the Blue and Wallowa Mountains similar habitat exists but here the Douglas fir is joined by Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. These areas of wet coniferous forest are clearly indicated on the precipitation map shown above (the purple to light blue areas).

The rivers and streams arising in the Coast Range drain either directly into the Pacific Ocean or into the Willamette River which runs from south to north and empties into the Columbia River at Portland. Where these rivers, such as the Columbia, Nehalem, Tillamook, Nestucca, Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea, Suislaw, Umpqua, Coos, and Coquille dump into the Pacific Ocean they have created coastal estuaries, shallow bays, and mudflats. This habitat is the haunt of waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, and terns.

Moving east out of the Coast Range in the northern half of Oregon one enters the Willamette Valley. The habitat here is primarily agricultural land (farmlands, fields, brushy areas, and hedgerows) but it contains patches of, and particularly in the foothills of the Coast Range or Cascades, more extensive areas of broadleaf deciduous forest consisting of big-leaf maple, ash, white oak, willow, red alder, and vine maple. Many birds of this habitat -Downy Woodpecker, Western Wood-Pewee, Black-headed Grosbeak - are distributed statewide in similar habitat but a few, such as Acorn Woodpecker which prefers Oregon oak, only occur here. The Willamette Valley is also home to the majority of the population of Oregon in cities such as Eugene, Corvallis, Salem, and Portland and their suburbs.

The western Cascades as mentioned above are wet coniferous forest like the Coast Range but are slightly less moist. The Cascades drain most of the remaining moisture out of the warm Pacific air, and just a few miles or so over the crest the forest structure begins to change.

(Continued on page 17)
Northern Oregon Birding Trip continued

dramatically to a (6) dry coniferous forest. This forest is composed of ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, and western larch. In riparian or wet areas one finds patches of aspen woodland. The forest is open, often with a grassy understory. The Cascades are volcanic in origin and contain Oregon’s highest peaks. Mt Hood—the highest—is 11,235 feet. Several others exceed 10,000 feet. Here one finds extensive lava fields—a reminder of the recent volcanic past. Crater Lake in Crater Lake National Park, Oregon’s only national park, was formed by the collapse of the top 5,000 feet of Mount Mazama (>13,000 feet) during a volcanic eruption just 7,700 years ago.

As one proceeds further east the ponderosa pines become more widely spaced, sagebrush predominates as the understory, and one enters a narrow belt (around 3,500-4,000 feet) of (7) juniper woodland between the dry coniferous ponderosa habitat and (8) sagebrush steppe further east. This is arid woodland. The junipers are usually mixed with small pines or, more commonly, an open understory of sagebrush. Juniper woodland is the habitat of the Ash-throated Flycatcher and the eagerly sought Pinyon Jay.

Slightly further east one enters the (8) sagebrush steppe habitat most prevalent in southeast Oregon in the region labeled Harney Basin on the relief map on page 15. Malheur County in the extreme southeast is the state’s driest county receiving only about ten inches of rain per year. Although dominated by sagebrush, this habitat also includes similar desert tolerant species such as rabbitbrush, saltbush, greasewood and others. In the sagebrush habitat, one finds appropriately Sage Thrasher and Sage Sparrow. This sagebrush habitat is expanding in both a northerly and westerly direction at the expense of (9) native grasslands which are nearly non-existent today in Oregon—either invaded by the sagebrush steppe or converted to irrigated farmland. Native grasslands are the haunt of Grasshopper Sparrow and Ferruginous Hawk, both very local species in Oregon now. Ferruginous Hawk, however, is easily found along Route 20 at the edges of irrigated farmlands cut into the sagebrush steppe at Hampton and Riley.

Within the above macro-habitat groups one also finds micro-habitats such as (10) riparian areas, (11) freshwater lakes, ponds, and marshes, and (12) rimrock areas. As the name implies, (10) riparian areas are found along watercourses and consist mostly of broadleaf shrubby plants that grow in dense patches. In arid eastern Oregon, this is an especially important habitat, not only for its birdlife, but also for cleansing and retaining water supplies. The birdlife is very similar to that of the broadleaf forest, but it is even more attractive to ‘brushy’ species such as Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Lazuli Bunting.

Oregon is blessed with two of the finest and largest (11) freshwater marshes in the United States—the Klamath basin marshes and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. The Malheur marshes result from the runoff from Steens Mountain—a large fault-block mountain just southeast of the refuge—merging into the Donner and Blitzen River. These huge areas of tule and cattail attract many birds and as a result, many birdsers. Similar though much smaller wetlands occur throughout the state in all of the macro-habitats. The Coast Range and Cascades are the home to many lakes—both natural and artificial. The Cascade Lake Highway, running from Bend to Crescent City, allows the visiting birder to sample many of these lakes.

Usually found in eastern Oregon, (12) rimrock areas are the home to local species such as White-throated Swift and Rock and Canyon Wrens. They provide nesting sites for Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcons, Common Ravens, Great Horned and Barn Owls, and swallows. One of the most beautiful Oregon rimrock areas is the Crooked River Recreation Area which runs south from Prineville along Oregon 27. Malheur NWR contains many areas of rimrock as well as the unique Diamond Craters area where the volcanically formed craters are topped by rimrock at the same level as macro sagebrush habitat; some of the bottoms actually contain small ponds with marshy edges.

The Trip Log

Rather than writing a chronological log (a daily trip list can be found on the DVOC website for those interested), this narrative is organized by bird groups (except for coastal birds) with emphasis on “target birds” or interesting behavior. Our strategy from the outset was to focus our attention firstly on the species the participants needed for their life lists and secondly on the species we hadn’t routinely encountered on other trips or in the east. Earl, who had never birded the Pacific Northwest, and Margie who had limited experience in the northwest, had the longest wish lists. Frank and Tom had just a couple of species as lifers or “better view desired”. Al and Don were doomed from the start for lifers, but Don had never recorded here and he added many species to his recorded list.

(Continued on page 18)
Northern Oregon Birding Trip continued

Coastal Birds:
We spent just one day (June 5) birding the coast from the town of Seaside in the north to Newport about 120 miles south. Target birds were Black Oystercatcher, Tufted Puffin, Marbled Murrelet, and Rhinoceros Auklet. The only passerine critical to get along the coast was Wrentit although we actually heard another (June 6) far inland at the headquarters of Finley NWR near Corvallis. We had an early picnic breakfast at Ecola State Park on an overcast day with a few drizzly showers and occasional sunshine. The ocean surface was covered with thousands of Common Murres and hundreds of Pigeon Guillemots. Brandt’s and Pelagic Cormorants were standing on the exposed rocks and flying in all directions in search of food. Western and Glaucous-winged Gulls were doing the same. Frank found three Marbled Murrelets among the hordes of murres and nearly everyone got a decent yet distant scope view. We were not to see any others. Small groups of Brown Pelicans glided by periodically, and a Pacific Loon was found amongst the murres. Margie’s life Black Oystercatcher adorned the top of a cliff on our short walk to the observation area; we saw a total of six on our coastal day. A few Western Grebes were also in the surf. White-crowned Sparrows sang from the wind-stunted trees and brushy patches and Swainson’s Thrushes seemed to be everywhere.

Our next stop was at Haystack Rock; the quarry-------Tufted Puffin. While far less aesthetically pleasing than Ecola since this stack is essentially right in the resort town of Cannon Beach, this is the easiest spot during the nesting season to find this bird in all of Oregon. The stack is close to shore, which allows for excellent views except in the late afternoon when the sun (it does occasionally appear here) is right in your face. A quick walk down the beach - set up the scope - and there they are, standing in front of their nesting burrows in their breeding plumage splendor. They are comical to watch take flight as they literally plunge off the cliff, their tiny wings beating frantically; somehow, they always manage to get lift before slamming into the ocean.

We next stopped at a scenic overlook called Rockwork along headlands north of the town of Nehalem. In 2005, a Limosa birding tour had a large number of coastal species from this area. We were not so fortunate; the only seabirds present were ones we had already seen. Nonetheless, as we were about to leave, Tom heard a Wrentit in the dense scrub downslope from the rock wall. A couple of songs from Al’s iPod brought the singer to within a few feet of the wall. Everyone delighted in the unbridled activity of this rusty denizen (the northern subspecies is much rustier than its southern counterpart) of dense coastal scrub whose bright yellow eye looked us all over before moving back down the hillside.

A detour off US 101 in Nehalem took us to Tideland Road, a location where the rare White-tailed Kite has occasionally been seen. No kite, but we found lots of Savannah Sparrows and our only Eurasian Collared Dove sitting on a wire near some barns. This species has just recently begun to invade Oregon (sightings are always posted on the Internet) and although we had a couple of locations in eastern Oregon (Burns) where they had recently been seen, we did not expect to find one here.

Suffice it to say, there were few sightings of new additional coastal birds the remainder of the day. For completeness (for those who may plan their own trip), our coastal itinerary included stops at: Barview Jetty County Park where we meet Mike Price and his wife (local friends of Al’s), Cape Meares Lighthouse (where a cliff nesting Peregrine Falcon family had apparently fledged and dispersed and an Orange-crowned Warbler decided to pose on a car’s radio antenna in the parking lot), an oyster plant in Garibaldi (where we had our only Common Loon and Purple Martins-nesting in gourds hung by schoolchildren), a nice picnic lunch at Cape Lookout (where we took a break from coastal birds and spent some time with Stellar’s Jays and a very cooperative Hermit Warbler), Devil’s Punchbowl (another close Black Oystercatcher), and Boiler Bay (where we all delighted to a close-in Gray Whale). We lacked time to explore Yaquina Head Lighthouse and Newport jetty. Emulating Colin Campbell’s Pokomoke weekend we concluded the day with dinner at a local micro-brewery.

Grebe’s through Pelicans:
No birds in this group were on a “target list”. Five species of grebe nest in Oregon, most east of the Cascade crest. We found Pied-billed Grebe in the mountainous lakes along the Cascade Lakes Highway and at Malheur. Western Grebes were found at several locations in addition to the coast with the highest count being at the Narrows in Malheur. It was at the Narrows that we also had excellent looks at a couple of Clark’s Grebes. We had missed Eared Grebe along the Cascade Lakes Highway and most of the day at Malheur. On leaving Malheur we decided to stop again at the Narrows in a desperate attempt to locate Eared Grebe and especially American White Pelican. In just a few minutes Earl found both of them for us.

Waterfowl:
A surprising variety of waterfowl nest in Oregon’s freshwater lakes, ponds, marshes, and rivers in all the macro-habitats. Not surprisingly, Malheur NWR is one of the best places to find the majority of them. In the wet fields and ponds along Hotchkiss Road and Route 205 just outside Burns-Hines (June 9) and at Malheur (June 10), we found (number of individuals in parentheses; those without a number were 100+) Trumpeter Swan (2), Canada Goose, Wood Duck (2), Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Pintail (15), Blue-winged Teal (6), Cinnamon Teal (22), Northern Shoveller (30), Canvasback (16), Redhead (21), Ring-necked Duck (2), Lesser Scaup (31), and Ruddy Duck (10).

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Scoters favor the coast and do not breed in Oregon although some (who apparently don’t migrate) can usually be found all summer. A stop at Oceanside (June 5), necessitated by Frank’s need for coffee, produced our only scoter flock and fortunately it contained all three species. Surf (17) and White-winged (5) are the common ones in Oregon with Black (1) the least common (different from our east coast winter species distribution where Black and Surf are common and White-winged by far the least common). Harlequin Duck nests along the fast rivers on the west slope of the Cascades and winter along the rocky coast. Common Merganser also nests along fast rivers and we found a few at several locations. Harlequin Duck was missed.

Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck, and Barrow’s Goldeneye prefer to nest at high elevation lakes and meandering rivers. We found all three in this habitat. Lost Lake Campground along Route 20 near the Cascade crest consistently has nesting Barrow’s Goldeneye. We were not disappointed this year counting at least nine including a beautiful, close male. Among nesting Oregon waterfowl we missed American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Harlequin Duck, and Hooded Merganser.

Herons & Ibis:
Oregon is not a destination to visit if one wants a large list of herons and ibis; only seven species nest. The best location in western Oregon for American Bittern is the Killin Wetlands near Forest Grove. We had planned to visit here on our first day, but rearranged our schedule when we received information on Mountain Quail (see later) which was a target species for several participants. We did hear American Bittern at McFadden Marsh in the southeast corner of Finley NWR. White-faced Ibis nests abundantly at Malheur NWR and presented no problem. Among the herons and egrets Great Blue was the most common by far. On our drive into Cape Meares along Bayocean Road (south shore of Tillamook Bay) we found an amazing total of 30+ Great Blue Herons. We had a single Green Heron in flight along Route 228 on the drive from Brownsville to Sweet Home, a single Black-crowned Night-Heron at the Narrows in Malheur, and a single Great Egret on June 6 at McFadden Marsh.

Hawks, Eagles, and Falcons:
Turkey Vulture was a daily occurrence. Ospreys (8) were seen along the coast, at Haag Lake, and around the Cascade lakes. Fifteen Bald Eagles were seen along the coast and an additional seven in the Cascade lakes. A total of 15 Northern Harriers were observed with the majority (12) at Malheur NWR.

Accipiters were the group we did the poorest job of finding. Two of the group saw a single Sharp-shinned Hawk for the only accipiter on our list. The reason is not known as other groups along a similar route at about the same time of year had all three species. Perhaps we need more training!

Buteos were a different story as we had multiples of all the breeding species. Red-tailed Hawk (58) was by far the most common species and was observed every day with 32 of the total seen June 9-10 during the drive to Malheur and at Malheur itself. Plumage is highly variable on this species. On the way north of Burns-Hines along Route 395 we found a nest with a pair of light colored Red-tails - light phase ‘Western Red-tailed Hawks’ according to Sibley. Swainson’s Hawk (12) is common in summer in eastern Oregon and we found a total of twelve, including nesting birds, right behind our motel in Burns-Hines. Ferruginous Hawk (4) is also found in eastern Oregon from March to September. It is a native grassland species and has declined as sagebrush habitat spreads. Reliable locations for this species are in the irrigated agricultural areas along Route 20 between Bend and Burns-Hines at the towns (if you can call them that) of Hampton and Riley. All our birds were found at these locations. Perhaps our best find during the trip was Red-shouldered Hawk-a species we observed at Calliope Crossing in the riparian

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habitat along Indian Ford Creek. While we were there in the evening of June 6, Frank located a buteo perched on a high broken-off stump somewhat downstream. He identified it as a Red-shoulder. All of us got a quick look at this well marked adult before it flew off and several minutes later, we heard a Red-shoulder calling near by (whether the same individual visually observed we don’t know as we never saw this calling bird). While some of us napped on the afternoon of June 7, Al and Earl returned to Calliope Crossing looking for Gray Flycatcher and observed a soaring Red-shouldered Hawk. Despite additional visits before leaving the Sisters area we did not observe the bird(s) again. Red-shouldered Hawk is a resident species mainly along the southwestern coast as far north as Cape Arago preferring woodland habitat along the edges of meadows-exactly the habitat at Calliope Crossing.

Golden Eagle (7) is a resident species which is most common in eastern Oregon. Frank and Don had a very quick look at one along Hayward and Gheen Roads on June 4. We were aware of a nest location along Harney Lake Road in Malheur. We drove here first thing on the morning of June 10 and found the huge nest in rimrock with the two adults soaring in the vicinity. We had three additional birds during our day at Malheur and located another nest in the Diamond Craters area and a final bird when leaving Burns-Hines off Route 395.

Five falcons can be found in Oregon but Merlin is rare and Gyr falcon only a very rare winter visitor. American Kestrels (44) are numerous throughout the state and we found an amazing total of 32 on the single day we drove from Sisters to Burns-Hines. We found only two fly-by Prairie Falcons (2), one at Barnes Butte Lake where we went for Tri-colored Blackbird, and one at the location for Upland Sandpiper on June 11. Despite having a location for a nest at Cape Meares, we missed Peregrine Falcon. The young had apparently fledged before our arrival and we failed to cross paths with any others.

Gamebirds (grouse, quail, et. al.):

This group of secretive, ground-dwelling birds is often difficult to locate visually and offer not only the visiting birder, but also the local birder, serious challenge. Many are prized species on a list. Usually many more are heard than seen. Seeing them is a lucky encounter other than during the lekking season for those species using this method of sexual attraction. With this group you usually put yourself in the right habitat and hope. Oregon has thirteen (one likely extirpated and counting two species for ‘Blue Grouse’) species; we managed six of which three were heard only.

Mountain Quail (several heard) was a target species of many participants. This particularly shy species is resident in Oregon primarily in the Coast Range and western Cascades. It prefers brushy foothill habitat such as forest openings and young clear cuts. We spent a large part of June 4 looking for this species. Because this group is so difficult, we sought specific information through the internet (OBOL=Oregon Birders On Line). Several OBOLers responded to our request for this and other species as well. Lars Norgren agreed to provide us with a map of locations near Forest Grove where he had found Mountain Quail; in addition, he placed seed at several of the more promising locations prior to our arrival. But he also warned that the species is very difficult to see at this time of year because the birds are on the nest. When we arrived at the Forest Grove motel the map was waiting with the receptionist along with a generous quantity of Lars’ home-grown strawberries. While munching on the delicious strawberries we completely rear-ranged the first days’ itinerary to focus on most of Lars’ locations along Hayward and Gheen Roads in young clear cuts.

Several birds were heard briefly but none were at all interested the iPod. We picked up many Coast Range species at Lars’ locations despite our failure to see Mountain Quail. Our best chance at Mountain Quail actually came at Reeher Forest Camp along Cochran Road near the town of Timber. This road provides excellent habitat for Coast Range birds (except old-growth). While searching out other species, Tom and Don both heard a male Mountain Quail call several times and the quest was on. We found a trail into the meadow edge where the bird was calling. The grass in the meadow was about 12-18 inches tall and the bird seemed interested in both the iPod and Don’s playback of its own voice. But we didn’t see it despite a lengthy try so we decided to lure it into the woods where the ground cover was scant. After an equally lengthy try at this tactic the score remained Quail=1, Birders=0 and we would have to settle for a heard-only Mountain Quail. In contrast, eastern Oregon provided numerous California Quail (24) with no effort.

‘Blue Grouse’ was also a highly sought target species. It is resident throughout Oregon in forested areas most often in the Coast Range, western Cascades, and the Blue and Wallowa Mountains. In mid 2006 the AOU announced the split of ‘Blue Grouse’ into Dusky Grouse

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(Dendrogapus obscura), the “interior species”, comprising the subspecies obscurus, richardsoni, pallidus, and oreinus, and Sooty Grouse, the “coastal species”, (Dendragapus fuliginosus) comprising the subspecies fuliginosus, sitkensis, sierrae, and howardi. Our first encounter with Blue Grouse was in the Coast Range where we heard several individual males calling at Mary’s Peak. None of these birds were seen despite a good effort. The “Blue Grouse” subspecies in the Coast Range is fuliginosus so these birds are Sooty Grouse in the new taxonomy. Our second encounter with Blue Grouse was a lone individual female found by Earl and seen by most of us on the way to Moss Guard Station in the Wallowa Mountains of northeastern Oregon. The ‘Blue Grouse’ subspecies present here is pallidus and thus this bird was a Dusky Grouse. The Cascades subspecies of “Blue Grouse” is sierrae (thus also Sooty Grouse); we neither saw nor heard this form. Thus subsequent to our return, Blue Grouse (6) became Sooty Grouse (5 heard-only) and Dusky Grouse (1). We failed to find Ruffed Grouse, Greater Sage-Grouse, and Spruce Grouse (present only in the Wallowa Mountains of northeastern Oregon). White-tailed Ptarmigan, extremely local and also present only in the high Wallowa Mountains where it was introduced in the mid and late 1960s, was also missed.

Among the introduced Oregon Galliformes (Ring-necked Pheasant, Gray Partridge, Chukar and, yes, some “countable” populations of introduced Northern Bobwhite and Wild Turkey) we heard a single Ring-necked Pheasant at Barnes Butte Lake. Chukar was a highly desired species by most participants and here we quite simply were lucky. Chukars prefer inhospitable, rugged rimrock areas and adjacent desert that has an available source of water. Areas along Route 27 south of Prineville and in Malheur provide suitable habitat. The Diamond Craters area of Malheur is excellent for sparrows—Lark, Brewer’s, Sage, Vesper, and Savannah and we had come in search of Lark and Vesper. We found Lark Sparrow easily and on the way back to Diamond Junction we stopped at the second crater (on a grassy knoll) to search for Vesper. Scoping a rocky outcrop on the far side of the crater, several small creatures were observed moving about among the rocks but the distance was too great to tell what they were. Finally a parent came into view and it was apparent that the small creatures were very young Chukars. A short trail along the north rim of the crater brought the group to a point just above the Chukars providing superb scope views of the parents and three young. Partridge, bobwhite, and turkey were neither seen nor heard although Frank often commented that we already had too many ‘turkies’ in the group.

Cranes, Coot and Rails:

Sandhill Crane (about 10) breeds at Malheur and we saw seven here and along Hotchkiss Road and 295. Another small group was heard-only in the Cascades at West Davis Lake. American Coots (77) are abundant breeders at Malheur. Interestingly no time was spent trying to lure rails into view and both Virginia Rail and Sora became heard-only species on the list. Virginia Rail (5 heard only) was encountered at several locations: McFadden Marsh, along the Cascade lakes Highway, and Malheur and Hotchkiss Road and 205. Sora (25) was only encountered along Hotchkiss Road and 205 on June 9 but the number calling in this area was staggering. At one single stop we heard about 20+ and the figure of 25 for our total is extremely conservative. Yellow Rail nests in Oregon in the wet meadows between Agency Lake and Fort Klamath but this southern location was not on our itinerary.

Shorebirds:

Although many Oregon birding tours are scheduled in the fall when migrant and wintering shorebirds are present, fully eleven species of shorebirds regularly breed in Oregon. Most can be found in the Burns-Hines area and at Malheur. Visitors to Malheur should allow at least several hours to explore Hotchkiss Road and Route 205 on the outskirts of Burns-Hines before or after their time at the refuge; otherwise, if you only allow a day for Malheur and the area of Hotchkiss Road /Route 205, you will never be able to cover it all. It is easier to get most of the shorebirds (and ducks and rails) along Hotchkiss Road and Route 205 than in the refuge itself. Our conservative shorebird tallies for Hotchkiss Road and Route 205 (as far south as the east-west ridge for about two hours in late afternoon on June 9) were as follows: Long-billed Curlew (25+), Willet (10+), Wilson’s Phalarope (35+), Black-necked Stilt (15+), American Avocet (4+), Wilson’s Snipe (2+), Killdeer (15+). Killdeer breed throughout the state and were only missed on two days. Many of the preceding shorebirds were seen again on Scotty Creek Road off of Route 395 north of Burns-Hines where we searched unsuccessfully for an internet-reported Upland Sandpiper (a very rare local breeder in wet highland meadows of eastern Oregon) on June 11 on our way to La Grande. Black Oystercatcher (6) only breeds along the coast and has been discussed earlier. Spotted Sandpiper (2) was found at Lost Lake Campground and West Davis Lake in the Cascades. The other shorebird breeder is Snowy Plover whose habitat preference in eastern Oregon is alkali lake beds with some standing water; it also locally breeds along the coast on undisturbed open beaches. We did not search for this species and were never in appropriate habitat.

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Gulls and Terns:
Most of the gulls along the coast were Western Gulls or Western/Glaucous-winged hybrids with just a few seemingly pure Glaucous-winged. A few California Gulls were also present and Tom had a single Herring Gull. Inland gulls were mostly Ring-billed Gulls (12) except at Malheur where they were vastly outnumbered by breeding Franklin’s Gulls (150). The only terns encountered along the coast were Caspian (9); inland we found only Black Terns (20) at Malheur and vicinity, and somehow missed Forster’s Tern which breeds at Malheur and some of the Cascade lakes.

Pigeons and Doves:
In Oregon as elsewhere Rock Pigeons are a fixture in towns and cities. Band-tailed Pigeon (17) is easy to locate in the Coast Range and somewhat less easy in the western Cascades. Indeed one of the first birds we saw on June 4 was a Band-tailed Pigeon and we had a total of 14 that day. A single Eurasian Collared-Dove was seen on the coastal day (see earlier). Mourning Doves (42++) are abundant in eastern Oregon.

Owls:
Like the Galliformes, this is another difficult but prized group of species. There were several target birds among this group-Flammulated Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, and Great Gray Owl on the breeding grounds. At dinnertime on June 9, more than halfway through the trip, we had not seen or heard an owl despite two nights of owling in the Sisters area and several dusk and dawn excursions. At Cold Springs Campground near the Sisters we heard a call of Northern Pygmy-Owl but were not sure if it was the bird or a camper imitating our iPod. A bird certainly did not come in to the iPod, and the bird/camper question will forever remain a mystery. Our plan at dinner that evening was to work on the “owl problem” beginning immediately after dinner.

Burrowing Owls (3) had been reported (Internet) near Lawen, a scant 15 miles from our motel in Burns-Hines off Route 78. No specific location was given. We quickly found three different birds easily seen from the highway itself. We next returned to the Burns-Hines area to look for the Short-eared Owl that had been reported (“In the evening of the 4th up to seven were flying above fields along the 205 between Hines-Burns and Malheur NWR”) the previous year by a Limosa tour group. We assumed “fields” meant the grassy agricultural fields along 205 before the sharp left curve at the east-west ridge. We scoured this area until dark but disappointingly found no Short-eared Owls although a heard Great Horned Owl did provide our second owl species. However the next day (June 10) promised to be good for owls as we had nest locations for Great Horned, Barn, and Long-eared Owl.

At first light on the morning of June 10 we drove directly toward Malheur on Route 205 not stopping at any location until descending the east-west ridge south of the agricultural fields. Surprise! Here, before reaching the refuge boundary, we found Short-eared Owls, nine of them, coursing over the sagebrush flats interspersed with a scant few fields. Crossing the Narrows we soon reached the intersection of Harney Lake Road (right turn)/Narrows-Princeton Road (left turn, which leads to the refuge headquarters) and Route 205. We turned right to check out the reported Golden Eagle (see earlier) and Barn Owl nests in the rimrock one to two miles down this road. Just a few hundred feet from the massive eagle nest was a smaller nest (perhaps an earlier nest abandoned by the eagles) tucked into the cliff face with a Barn Owl (1) staring north. At headquarters we found the reported Great Horned Owl being harassed by a small group of Black-billed Magpies; the bird was very light. Later that same day at the southern extreme of Malheur in Paige Springs Campground we found one of three reported fledglings of a Long-eared Owl (1) near the nest. A day or two later and it would likely have been much more difficult to find although we did have another nest location further south on the 205. Since dinner the preceding evening, our owl total had gone from zero to five, but we
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did not get any target species. We would add yet another after dinner that night at Idlewild Campground about 17 miles north of Burns-Hines off Route 395.

Flammulated Owl (Flams) (2h) was a target species and it is present in eastern Oregon from late May until August preferring ponderosa pine forests of the Cascades and Blue Mountains. The closest location to Burns-Hines is Idlewild Campground and calling birds had been reported (Internet) here a week prior to our departure. Shortly after dinner the group headed north to search for Flams at Idlewild. Here a tactical error was made that may have cost us an additional species—Common Poorwill. The leader was deservingly flogged the following morning. The tiny, dark-eyed Flammulated Owl is strictly nocturnal and does not begin to call until it is quite dark, i.e. well after dusk when you can clearly see many stars. We drove directly to Idlewild after dinner and consequently had more than a two-hour wait until the birds began to call.

On the drive from Burns-Hines to Idlewild there appears to be good habitat for Poorwill with a few pull-outs in promising areas. We had a number of species while waiting till dark, including White-headed Woodpecker but we had previously seen all of these. Although we were able to lure the Flams in quite close and they called incessantly, we were not able to get one in the spotlight despite considerable effort. So our sixth owl was a heard-only bird.

Great Gray Owl is resident in open forests of the Blue and Wallowa Mountains and sparingly along the east slope of the Cascades. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife places monitored nest platforms for this species in Whiteman National Forest near the town of La Grande in northeastern Oregon. Interestingly, the Department also provides specific directions to a few active nest sites to the general public in the hope that increased public awareness will aid the conservation of this magnificent species. We came armed with detailed maps to four nest sites provided by Dave Herr although our arrival date on Spring Creek Road was at a time when many young would be fledged. Nonetheless, the fledglings normally hang around the nest area and can be heard begging for food.

We arrived at Spring Creek Road late in the afternoon of June 11 after checking into our motel in La Grande for a two-night stay. On the drive from Burns-Hines at Starr Campground off Route 395 south of John Day, we had bumped into a birder who had camped the previous night at the first campground (behind a split rail fence) just a mile or two down Spring Creek Road off of Interstate 84. He reported hearing a Northern Pygmy-Owl at this site and this was our immediate quarry. We planned on returning the next day to search for the Great Gray Owl. Despite a few hours search we did not see or hear the diurnal Pygmy-Owl and were headed back to La Grande when Tom, in the second car with Don and Frank, spotted a Great Gray Owl (1) perched atop a stump in a meadow just off the gravel road. We came to a screeching halt, backed up, and there sat the owl seemingly totally uninterested in our presence. Since the road was very dusty, we’d allowed a large distance between the vehicles and the first car was nowhere in sight. Fortunately we all carried walkie-talkies and immediately called the first car. No answer. Were Al and Earl out of range and already streaming down I-84 toward La Grande? We tried Earl’s cell phone. No answer; he had it off. Finally after what seemed like an hour, but was probably no more than 10-15 minutes, the first car appeared on the gravel road coming toward us. Al and Earl had waited for us at the entrance to I-84 but when we did not arrive they decided to check into our tardiness. As they approached the owl took flight but fortunately just crossed the road and landed in a small pine still very close to the road. We all watched the Great Gray for at least another 20 minutes as it sat perched and made several sallies seeking prey in the grassy meadow. Earl, our able photographer, was able to click off a number of shots including the ones shown herein. As Tom remarked, “Seeing Great Grays in tee-shirts sure beats freezing your $%^& off in the east in winter.”

This was a spectacular end to our next to last day and we celebrated with Dos Equis in an excellent Mexican restaurant in La Grande. But Northern Pygmy-Owl had still eluded us and it was a target species.

Tom had but two species on his wish list - Red-breasted Sapsucker (which we had already seen in the Cascades) and a ‘better-view-desired’ Northern Pygmy-Owl (he had, at best, a crappy look at one in Arizona). Northern Pygmy-Owl is resident throughout Oregon in forested areas. We had begun our search on the first day in the Coast Range, had our mystery toots at Cold Springs Campground and done much searching in the Sisters area. The last evening before leaving Sisters we had called Steve Shunk (a Sisters resident who runs Paradise Birding Tours) for his help. He did not know of any specific nest sites but kindly provided information on where they are often seen near Sisters. A check of these areas at first light the following morning produced nothing. During the drive to Burns-Hines and the day at Malheur we were not in appropriate habitat. We tried at Idlewild campground while waiting for darkness and the Flams. Tom’s sharp eyes and keen (Continued on page 24)
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ears had been the first to find many of the species on our list. Everyone felt badly that we could not find this owl for Tom—no one more than Tom himself. At every stop in appropriate habitat or after leaving Malheur Tom would wander off by himself and even when out-of-sight, one could periodically hear his ‘toot….toot….toot’ imitation. Being the baby in a group of ‘oldies’ and having the longest legs he could cover far more ground than if he stayed with the rest of us. But the rest of us would usually split into twos and go in opposite directions; we all wanted Tom to get his better-view-desired in payment for all the ‘better-views’ he had found for us. After failing at Spring Creek Road on June 11 and having information that the bird was in that area somewhere we decided to completely scrap the next day’s itinerary and spend the entire day looking for pygmy-owl in the Spring Creek area. Our plan was to begin by driving the roads looking for suitable habitat, stop and listen for the “toot„toot„toot” from the bird or for mobbing songbirds, and finally to try to call a bird in using imitation or the iPod. We already knew what the mobbing songbirds would sound like from the many previously failed attempts to call in the owl. Red-breasted Nuthatch was always the first bird in to imitations or iPod playbacks; whether this is because of their abundance in the preferred habitat or that they are a favored prey item was unknown to us but the nuthatch was, without fail, always in the vanguard of the mobbers. Three stops. No luck. The fourth stop, Playback. The nuthatch was here as well as Brown Creeper, Mountain Chickadee, Townsend’s Warbler, and at least five Williamson’s Sapsuckers. But, no pygmy-owl. The fifth stop, probably less than one half mile further. We listened. Stellar’s Jay. American Robin. Red-breasted Nuthatch. No pygmy-owl. Tom set out on a wandering excursion up the road imitating the owl. He didn’t get far. A Northern Pygmy-Owl responded from just a ways up the road. There was no mystery this time about the source of the call; no other human was in the area. The owl moved closer in response to the imitation. The iPod brought it within 25 feet to a lone pine just down-slope on the hillside. But it was still hidden in foliage. We closed in. As poetic justice would have it, Tom was the first one to see the bird. Its constant tooting attracted the usual mobbers. The bird moved to another pine but didn’t seem to mind our presence at all. We spent about 15 minutes with the bird and Earl again was able to get some excellent photos. A “better-view-desired” was certainly obtained as you could count its “toenails”. We completed our trip owl species that same night with a heard-only Saw-whet Owl, giving the “whetstone” or “shweeee” call along Spring Creek Road. In total we ticked nine species of owls, seven being seen. Of the Oregon breeders we missed Spotted, Barred, Boreal, and Western Screech-Owl.

Caprimulgids:
Of the two Oregon nesters, Common Nighthawk and Common Poorwill, we found only Common Nighthawk (42+). As the total number suggests they are not difficult in eastern Oregon.

Swifts:
There are three species of swift in Oregon. Vaux’s Swift (2) is the most common and we had hoped to see many of these; disappointingly we found only two single birds on June 4. White-throated Swift (10+) is a summer resident in the canyon lands of eastern Oregon. While traveling from Prineville to Brothers along Route 27 in the Crooked River Recreation Area a number of very high-flying swallows were accompanied by a smaller number of swifts. We tried hard to make these into Vaux’s but Frank was adamant they were White-throated Swifts. It is surprisingly difficult to see any white on high-flying birds. After many minutes of observation and discussion everyone agreed that Frank’s original call was correct.

Black Swift (2+) is a prized bird on any list. Although it occurs coastal in Oregon as a migrant in spring and fall, the only known reliable Oregon nesting site is at Salt Creek Falls. One possible itinerary for June 8 was to drive directly to Salt Creek Falls from Sisters (about 100 miles) then bird back along the Cascade Lake highway. This is what we elected to do. Al had visited Salt Creek Falls in July 2005 but not only failed to see the swifts but was unable to see even the falls because of fog. As we drove south on Route 97 through Sunriver and La Pine it was a beautiful clear morning with hardly a cloud in the sky. We reached Crescent and turned right on the Cutoff Road that connects with Route 58 about 10 miles south of the falls. Still clear. But, when we reached the northwest end of Odell Lake on Route 58 we could see ahead a huge fog bank centered on the Salt River. Our spirits sank. We would face the same fate as Al in 2005—nothing to look at but water vapor. As we approached the falls, the fog bank got closer and closer. We turned on the side road into the state park and still hadn’t reached the fog line although with the windows down you could feel the moisture in the air. We arrived at the parking area. Still clear. A several hundred yard walk to the overlook and we were still in the clear. The fog bank began just a few hundred yards further up the valley. How lucky could we get? But we still needed the birds. The only other person at the falls was a birder from Michigan who was in Oregon to attend a ‘Woodpecker Weekend’ near Sisters and whom we had previously met at our motel. He had been at the falls for nearly two hours and had yet to see a swift. But, barely ten minutes elapsed before the first swift appeared, then another. We watched them for more than fifteen minutes and at times they flew quite close for

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excellent views, then would disappear up the valley or side canyon, then reappear only to disappear again. I never saw more than two simultaneously so recorded our total as 2+ although I suspect a better number may be 4-6.

Hummingbirds:
The only target on our list was Calliope Hummingbird (5), common in summer in eastern Oregon. We actually found them (less than expected) only at Calliope Crossing along Indian Ford Creek near Sisters in the riparian growth (their favored habitat) right in the streambed. Here we had excellent scope-looks at both male and female birds. Rufous Hummingbird (12) is a common nester in western Oregon and presented no problem. They were found each day before crossing the Cascades. We missed both Anna’s Hummingbird (present throughout western Oregon but more common further south than our route) and Black-chinned Hummingbird (locally uncommon east of the Cascades). Allen’s Hummingbird also nests in western Oregon but it is much further south than our route and was not expected.

Kingfisher and Woodpeckers:
We found only three Belted Kingfishers (3), far fewer than expected. Oregon birding is well known for its woodpeckers. There are twelve resident species. Several were on target lists—White-headed Woodpecker, Red-breasted and Williamson’s Sapsucker. The red-shafted form of Northern Flicker (46) is common throughout Oregon and we had at least one bird each day. Hairy Woodpecker (27) is also common and we had birds every day but June 9 and 10 (poor habitat). Downy Woodpecker (3) is much less common than Hairy and we found but three on only two days. Pileated Woodpecker (6) is also fairly common and we found ours at Mary’s Peak in the Coast Range and Moss Guard Station in the Wallowas Mountains.

Red-breasted Sapsucker (4), a target for two of the group, occurs primarily in western Oregon (Coast Range and west slope of the Cascades with a few spilling through to the east slope of the Cascades). The spill-throughs often mate and produce hybrids with Red-naped Sapsucker which is a locally common summer nester in eastern Oregon that prefers aspen and riparian areas. Although some in the group had seen Red-breasted Sapsuckers in flight at Hagg Lake on June 4 we failed in tracking them down for a satisfactory look. The first thing in the morning on June 7 we drove to Cold Springs Campground. Our target was White-headed Woodpecker. We knew the spring area here was a likely spot. We parked and started on the short walk to the spring. After less than 100 yards Tom spotted a sap-sucker and it flew to aspen along the stream and proceeded to feed young in a hole about 25 feet above the ground. It then flew off again in search of more food for the begging young. Another sapsucker appeared with food. This one was a Red-naped Sapsucker (2) and obviously had formed a mixed pair with the Red-breasted. We watched many feeding forays over the next twenty minutes then most of us continued to the spring. Tom stayed behind to carefully check the plumage on the Red-breasted and reported later that he was certain it was not a hybrid. Interestingly the only other Red-naped Sapsucker we saw on the trip was at Calliope Crossing. When we talked to Steve Shunk and reported the mixed pair at Cold Springs, he informed us the Red-naped at Calliope Crossing was also paired with a Red-breasted. We had not seen the Red-breasted here nor found a nest hole. We had our only other Red-breasted Sapsucker in the parking lot at Salt Creek Falls.

Although she had a late flight back to Philadelphia on June 7, Margie had decided to cross the Cascades to Sisters with us in hopes of finding a few lifters before she needed to depart for Portland. White-headed Woodpecker (3) was one of those species and that was the primary reason we had come to Cold Springs first thing on June 7. At the springs, after spending considerable time with the mixed pair of sapsuckers, White-headed Woodpecker was nowhere to be seen. We tried the call but there was no response. We all had walkie-talkies and decided to split up to cover more area in the pine-forested meadow. We hadn’t gone too far when we heard Margie excitedly say, “There it is!” She had found her own lifer and got all of us on the bird—a beautiful male. We would have another bird at Idlewild Campground north of Malheur.

Williamson’s Sapsucker (8) was also a target species. It seems to prefer somewhat drier areas and to be less riparian than the other Oregon sapsuckers. We had birds along Route 20 on the east slope at the Corbett Sno-Park, at Calliope Crossing, and along Spring Creek Road in the Blue Mountains. At Spring Creek Road where there were at least five birds, mostly juveniles, the sapsuckers were exhibiting an interesting behavior although we never figured out its function. The male bird would drum—seemingly to prompt the juveniles to utter drawn out rasping calls and to chase each other about. This behavior and the juvenile call does not seem to be described in any available references we were able to check.

Lewis’ Woodpecker (2) is a local summer resident throughout most of eastern Oregon. In 2005, Al Driscoll found this species along the Cascade Lakes Highway a few miles before it connected with Route 97. As we were approaching Bend on June 8, he radioed from the second car that we were in the area where he had seen the bird and nearly simultaneously Don noticed a crow-like bird in flight along a small butte. We
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stopped, the bird landed, and was readily identified as Lewis’ Woodpecker. Before leaving this spot we found one other bird and enjoyed superb looks at both birds. One of the birds was in a dead tree not 100 feet from where Al had had his the year before.

Three-toed and Black-backed Woodpeckers (1) prefer lodgepole pine forests of the eastern Cascades, Wallowa and Blue Mountains. They are local and uncommon in Oregon. We had several locations to search for these species on the eastern slope of the Cascades but failed to find either despite considerable effort on June 8. A couple of the areas we wanted to explore for these species were closed due to the heavy winter snows (Gold Lake, etc.); some had suffered recent burns (Davis Lake). Although fire and beetle infested areas are often good for these species we still found neither. Perhaps the fires were too hot and the burns too recent for the woodpeckers to find a sufficient food. On Spring Creek Road while searching a meadow behind the campground Frank saw a woodpecker fly across the meadow and into the campground. Don was able to see it was all dark-backed and both heard a growling call characteristic of Black-backed. We hustled back to the campground, played the iPod and were treated to close looks of Black-backed Woodpecker.

We failed to find a Three-toed Woodpecker (usually the most difficult of Oregon’s woodpeckers to find) and also failed to find an Acorn Woodpecker (usually one of the easiest of Oregon’s woodpeckers to find in the oaks of the Willamette Valley and in the foothill areas).

Flycatchers:
Empidonax flycatchers are well represented in Oregon; eight species are known to have nested in the state. Alder and Least are both rare and local; the status of the “Western” Flycatcher split (Pacific-slope and Cordilleran) is likely still being worked out. Sibley shows Cordilleran only in extreme southeast Oregon; the National Geographic guide shows it in extreme eastern Oregon (almost north to south) and just getting into south-central Oregon. In any event Cordilleran Flycatcher is a difficult bird to find in Oregon. We neither saw nor heard any of these three species—Alder, Least, and Cordilleran.

Pacific-slope Flycatcher (8+) is very common in western Oregon and most of our birds were found there in the Coast Range and its foothills. Our first were found along Gheen and Hayward Roads on the first day.

Hammond’s (20) and Dusky Flycatcher (9) are both common nesters and can be well studied in Oregon. Hammond’s nests throughout the state in appropriate habitat (thus generally are absent from the southeast except in migration) and is usually encountered high in tall conifers. Dusky prefers to nest in low chaparral and bushes. Dusky is very rare west of the Cascade crest in Oregon. We heard our first Hammond’s Flycatcher at Reecher Forest Camp along Cochran Road on June 4 while returning from the Mountain Quail chase. Responding to the iPod and tape playback the bird descended into a low sapling where it scolded us with its call note for 10-15 minutes. Tom was able to get the bird in his Questar and all were able to clearly see the tiny bill, long primary projection, notched tail and slightly crested head on this fairly plump diminutive bird. Our first Dusky Flycatcher came on the evening of June 6 at Indian Ford Campground and here again the iPod and tape playback brought two birds in close. The differences between the two species were obvious when we compared it to the Hammond’s we had seen earlier. The Dusky is much longer billed, has shorter primary projection and a round headed appearance. Or perhaps these features were obvious because we already knew the identity of the bird from its voice. Silent individuals would certainly be more difficult but, if we were westerners, would likely become easier with practice.

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We found Gray Flycatcher (2), a target bird for Earl and Margie, only at Calliope Crossing in the sagebrush under-storied pine habitat. Margie actually found her Gray Flycatcher here the day before any of the rest of the group as she returned to Calliope Crossing on her flight day after leaving the group at Cold Springs Campground while the rest of us headed for higher elevations. Here again the birds responded well to tape playback and excellent looks were achieved by all. Our lack of additional individuals was likely the result of not looking further rather than a reflection of actual population levels.

Willow Flycatcher (17) is a very common nester throughout Oregon in appropriate habitat and presented no problem as they were still singing strongly. We recorded none in the Blue and Wallowa Mountain areas only because we were not birding in good habitat.

Perhaps the most common flycatcher throughout all of Oregon is Western Wood-Pewee (59+). It was encountered every day and is easy to find because of its persistent speee call heard all day long. Say’s Phoebe (11) is found in open farmland and foothills of eastern Oregon often around bridges and farm buildings. Black Phoebe is local and uncommon on the South Coast and occasionally further north of Cape Blanco; we did not find it. Olive-sided Flycatcher (13) is fairly common in its preferred habitat-coniferous forest. Its song is similar to eastern birds but has equal emphasis on all song syllables. Ash-throated Flycatcher (2) is a summer visitor to eastern Oregon preferring dry juniper-sage areas. We found our only birds on Buckhorn/Barr Road off of Route126 between Sisters and Redmond. Both Eastern Kingbird (4) and Western Kingbird (21) occur in Oregon. All that we found were in eastern Oregon on June 9-12.

Jays and Crows:

Pinyon Jay (28) was the bird in this group we thought we’d have the most problem finding as they are local and travel in nomadic flocks most of the year. We had solicited information from OBOLers and received several replies. None of the information would be needed. On the morning of June 7 while loading the vehicles three calling Pinyon Jays flew in front of the Best Western Ponderosa Lodge and landed in the ponderosas on the downtown side. Soon they had worked their way back to the edge of the motel parking lot. The total group numbered six and contained two brownish juvenile birds. The following morning a group of three was in the same location. On June 9 at Buckhorn/Barr Road (where we were looking for Sage Sparrow from directions provided by Charles Gates) we found another group of Pinyon Jays nestbuilding. Apparently their nesting period is quite long.

Other jays recorded included Stellar’s Jay (39+) every day but two and Western Scrub-Jay (14), a foothill and Willamette Valley bird. We had missed Gray Jay (7), a higher altitude bird of montane coniferous forests, primarily because of the heavy winter snow-pack which denied access to the higher elevations of the Cascades and campground closures. It became a priority in the Blue and Wallowa Mountains after leaving Malheur. Our first were found at Starr Campground en route to John Day. Although unaccustomed to “camp robber” behavior, this year a small group soon learned to come in for the pieces of bread Tom tossed while Earl snapped the accompanying photo. Black-billed Magpies (56) were a daily occurrence east of the Cascades. We missed Clark’s Nutcracker likely due to the snow-pack in the Cascades but also found none in the Blue or Wallowa Mountains. We had Common Raven (96++) daily and American Crow (16++) every day but three. We did not hear a Northwestern Crow although the Limosa tour in 2005 reported them at Ecola State Park. All of our calling crows at Ecola and other coastal locations were American.

Vireos:

Warbling Vireo (17+) and Cassin’s Vireo (8) breed throughout Oregon although Cassin’s is generally absent from southeastern Oregon except as a migrant. Hutton’s Vireo (2) is resident and restricted to areas west of the Cascades in Oregon. Our only two birds were found at Hagg Lake. Red-eyed Vireo is a very local nester in cottonwoods, willow, and alder mainly in areas along the Columbia River in eastern Oregon and Solitary Vireo nests only in extreme southeastern Oregon; we found neither.

Shrikes, Waxwings, and Dipper:

Northern Shrike and Bohemian Waxwing are strictly wintering birds in Oregon. Loggerhead Shrike (8) is a common summer species in eastern Oregon in open, dry country. All of our birds were found on June 9 along Route 27 and Route 20 while driving to Malheur or on June 10 at Malheur. Cedar Waxwing (30++) is resident throughout Oregon in good numbers although it is mainly a wintering species in the southeast. Interestingly we found five on June 10 at Malheur. American Dipper (2) is resident throughout Oregon along fast flowing rocky streams. Tom had seen one at Salt Creek Falls while searching for Black Swift. While not a target bird for anyone we had all hoped to see one on the trip. Therefore on the drive from Burns-Hines to La Grande on June 11 we made an effort to locate one. The Powder River on

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the east slope of the Blue Mountains along Route 7 provided the fast water. We picked a small recreation area with a bridge over the stream and soon had a dipper for all. It likely was nesting under the bridge.

**Thrushes:**
Mountain Bluebird (34) is a bird of eastern Oregon and present year-round. Our first birds-only 2-were found where the Cascade Crest Trail crossed Route 20 in a recent burn. On June 9 mainly along Route 27 from Prineville to Brothers we had an amazing total of thirty Mountain Bluebirds. Western Bluebirds (6) nest nearly throughout the state but are fairly local. Our first was at Hagg Lake. We found a couple at our motel in Sisters and a nesting pair in the meadow at the first campground along Spring Creek Road in the Blue Mountains.

Three species of Catharus thrushes occur in Oregon. Both Hermit (20+) and Swainson’s Thrush (41) are widespread in forested areas during summer with Hermit preferring much higher elevations than Swainson’s. Swainson’s is particularly common in the Coast Range. Veery is locally distributed preferring dense riverside riparian growth in the Blue, Wallowa, and Ochoco Mountains; we failed to see or hear a Veery.

American Robins are abundant and were found daily. Varied Thrush (9) is resident in wet forests throughout western Oregon including the eastern Cascades and in the Blue and Wallowa Mountains of the northeast. Varied Thrush is an easy bird to hear. Its single, long whistle is frequently repeated and carries a long distance. At least six birds were calling from Mary’s Peak and although they often sing from the very top of a conifer, they were difficult to see this particular day because of dense fog. Nonetheless most of us had one good look. Only a single Townsend’s Solitaire (1) was found by just a few on June 7. Perhaps our limited access to the higher elevations was responsible for this low tally.

**Mimic Thrushes and Starling:**
Gray Catbird is restricted to the valleys of the Blue and Wallowa Mountains in dense riparian broadleaf habitat and Northern mockingbird is rare throughout the state. We found neither. Sage Thrasher (8) is a relatively common sage nester in eastern Oregon; it was not difficult to find on the days we were in sagebrush habitat-June 9-10. Common Starlings were a daily occurrence.

**Tits, Nuthatches, and Creeper:**
Black-capped Chickadee (12) is resident nearly throughout Oregon while Mountain Chickadee (38) is resident in the mountains of eastern Oregon. Chestnut-backed Chickadee (14+) is most common in western Oregon but also occurs in the wetter portions of the Blue and Wallowa Mountains; all of our birds were found in western Oregon. Oak Titmouse occurs only in extreme southwest and south-central Oregon and we did not visit this region.

Red-breasted Nuthatch (103) is abundant in appropriate habitat throughout Oregon while White-breasted Nuthatch (5) is much less common. Pygmy Nuthatch (18) is resident in ponderosa pines of the east slope of the Cascades and in northeastern Oregon. As we pulled into our motel in Sisters a Pygmy Nuthatch greeted us by poking its head out of a nesting box near the office entrance. We found only a few Brown creepers (7).

Wrentit (3) prefers dense chaparral and was found along the coast and in Finley NWR. Bushtit was completely missed although they occur along the coast, in the Willamette Valley, and at Paige Springs.

Wrens:
No wrens were on any target list. We found Bewick’s Wren (3) the first day in the eastern coast range foothills; it does not occur in Eastern Oregon except along the Columbia River. All our House Wrens (8+) were found in eastern Oregon. Even at mid day Marsh Wrens (6+) were singing nearly constantly in appropriate habitat at McFadden marsh; they were abundant at Malheur NWR. Winter Wren (20) is abundant in the Coast Range where we heard at least seven on the drive from Newport on the coast to Mary’s Peak; we found two in the Wallowas. We had Rock Wren (5) primarily in the rock outcroppings in Malheur. At the Chukar location at Diamond Craters a bird scolded us at such close range (5 feet) that binoculars were a hindrance. Our most interesting sighting of this species was a single Rock Wren along Spring Creek Road on our last morning in the middle of forest habitat with no more outcroppings than a small road cut. In what I consider

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our biggest miss we failed to see or even hear a Canyon Wren despite being in considerable excellent habitat in eastern Oregon for several days.

Swallows:
Tree Swallows (50+++), Violet-green Swallows (10+++), Barn Swallows (100+), and especially Cliff Swallows (1000+) were nearly a daily occurrence. Purple martin (3) were found only on the coastal day as described there. Northern Rough-winged Swallow (4) was found on only two days. Bank Swallow (50+) is restricted to eastern Oregon and the only individuals we found were at a busy nesting colony in a road-cut on the road to Diamond on June 10.

Kinglets, Larks, and Pipits:
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (11) was found in the Coast Range, the Cascades, and most commonly (7/11) in the Blue/Wallowa Mountains. Golden-crowned Kinglet (29+) was most common in the Coast Range where we had twenty birds at Mary’s Peak although because of the snow-pack we were not in prime habitat at the other locations. Our only Horned Larks (5) were found on the way to Malheur NWR along Route 205 on June 10. American Pipit was not seen; at this time of year pipits occur only locally at very high alpine areas where they nest in tundra like habitat.

Finches:
American Goldfinch (24++) was numerous in the Coast Range and foothills and two were at Malheur on June 10. We found Lesser Goldfinch (5) at Paige Springs Campground at the southern end of Malheur (reportedly regular here) and outside the Comfort Inn-our motel at Burns-Hines. Pine Siskin (14) was found along the Cascade lake Highway on June 8 and behind the Comfort Inn in Hines-Burns.

Two rosy-finches nest in Oregon—Gray-crowned and Black—in alpine habitat similar to that used by American Pipit. We did not visit this habitat and neither was found. Common Redpoll occurs only as a winter visitor in northeastern Oregon.

The ranges of Cassin’s Finch (28) and Purple Finch (13) rarely overlap in Oregon. Cassin’s prefers mid- to high-elevation coniferous forests in eastern Oregon and Purple prefers more cosmopolitan habitat including coniferous forest in western Oregon. Our sightings of these species reflect this distribution except for two Purple Finches on June 9; unfortunately I do not remember the location of these two birds. House Finch (18++) is found throughout Oregon.

Red Crossbill (41) is resident throughout the mountainous regions of Oregon. We heard a few birds in the Cascades but had the vast majority of our birds in eastern Oregon in the Blue and Wallowa Mountains. At this writing the “type” is not known but should be ascertainable on the flock found at Starr Campground on June 11 since the calls were tape-recorded. White-winged Crossbill was not found and is rare in Oregon even in winter.

We failed to find any Pine Grosbeak. Pine Grosbeak is a rare and local summer nester in Oregon’s high elevation coniferous forests in the Blue, Wallowa, and Cascade mountains moving to lower elevations in winter. We were unable to reach high elevations due to the heavy snow-pack in the winter of 2005-2006. Evening Grosbeak (18) was not difficult to find in the Coast Range.

Warblers:
Suffice it to say we found no “eastern” warbler vagrants. These birds are usually found in spring and fall migration at prime vagrant traps in southeastern Oregon. Several areas in Malheur qualify as vagrant traps and a few vagrants were reported from here in the weeks before our arrival but we spent no time in search of them (likely they were gone before our arrival) preferring to spend our time with the birds we don’t see on the east coast.

Hermit Warbler (16) was a target species. We had excellent looks at this beautiful bird at Hagg Lake, Cape Lookout, and Salt Creek Falls. Yellow-breasted Chat (1) and Black-throated Gray Warbler (3) were the most difficult to find of the warblers. We had a single chat at Hagg Lake and Black-throated Gray Warbler at Hagg lake on June 4 and Finley NWR on June 6. Numbers of the others follow: Orange-crowned Warbler (14), Yellow Warbler (47+) with the highest daily count at Malheur NWR, Yellow-rumped Warbler (51 auduboni), Townsend’s Warbler (36), MacGillivray’s Warbler (11), Common Yellowthroat (17) with the highest daily total also at Malheur NWR, and Wilson’s Warbler (16). Among the Oregon nesters we missed only Nashville Warbler, Northern Waterthrush (a rare, but regular summer resident only in the area of the Little Deschutes River near Salt Creek Falls), and American Redstart (occurs in summer in brushy riparian growth and broadleaf woodlands only in northeastern Oregon and sporadically and locally at Odell Creek near Davis Lake).

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Sparrows, Towhees, Tanager and Buntings:
Orcas has thirteen species of breeding sparrows. We missed three—Grasshopper, Black-throated, and Fox. Black-throated and Grasshopper Sparrows have rather restricted ranges and relatively small populations although Black-throated occurs some years at Malheur in the Coyote Buttes area. Like the Canyon Wren, Fox Sparrow was another big miss. Fox Sparrow prefers a scrubby growth of ceanothus and manzanita in pine forests. There is an abundance of this habitat on the way to Big Lake, near Sisters and along the Cascade Lakes Highway. Ceanothus/manzanita is the same habitat preferred by Green-tailed Towhee and this bird was only heard. It appears in retrospect that we did not find these species because we did not spend sufficient time in this habitat.

The most wanted of the sparrows was Sage Sparrow (5). In Oregon Sage Sparrow is a locally uncommon summer species preferring, as it name suggests, extensive areas of sagebrush. Charles Gates had provided directions to an extensive area of sagebrush good for Sage Sparrow on Barr-Buckhorn Road (Barr is the road south in the Oregon Delorme) several miles south of its intersection with Route 126 between Sisters and Redmond. This was the poorest road we traveled on the entire trip but by proceeding slowly and carefully we were easily able to reach the area in our rental car and van. As soon as we emerged from the vehicles we could hear the hoarse rumbling notes with a jerky quality that signaled at least three Sage Sparrows were here. It wasn’t long before we all had superb views of several of these quite pretty sparrows. It is the “interior” race that is found in Oregon and while not as distinctly marked as the ‘Pacific” race-belli, it is striking nonetheless. We found more Sage Sparrows off the 205 into Malheur in the same area as the Short-eared Owls. Lark Sparrow (5+) was also singing here but we would have our best looks at this bird at the Diamond Craters area of Malheur. Brewer's Sparrow (13) was the most common sparrow in sagebrush habitat.

Song Sparrow (16++) was found every day as was Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco (58+) except on June 9 and 10. Chipping Sparrow (47++) breeds throughout Oregon but interestingly we only found ours in eastern Oregon. Savannah Sparrow (33) was found on five days and although the map in Sibley shows them as a migrant along the Oregon coast, we found six birds along Tideland Road near Nehalem. White-crowned Sparrow (45+) was abundant in western Oregon; we saw none in eastern Oregon.

We only found one each of Lincoln’s Sparrow (1) and Vesper Sparrow (1). This was quite surprising as both should have been more common in their preferred habitats. The Vesper was found along Scotty Creek Road and the Lincoln’s the same day at Starr Campground.

Spotted Towhee (20) was common in western Oregon; none were seen east of the Cascades although they should occur throughout the state. As mentioned earlier Green-tailed Towhee (2h) was only heard. The California Towhee is resident only in the southwest of Oregon and we were not in its range.

Western Tanager (30) was found every day but the coast day and the day at Malheur. Black-headed Grosbeak (14) was also nearly a daily occurrence in small numbers. We had but two Lazuli Bunting (2); the best look was at a bird in Finley NWR.

Icterids:
In a word, all the breeding Icterids in Oregon were found on this trip. Most are relatively numerous and not hard to find. Brewer’s Blackbirds (10+++), Brown-headed Cowbirds (40+++), and Red-winged Blackbirds (28++) were nearly a daily occurrence in large numbers.

Western Meadowlark (5++) is resident throughout Oregon although the majority of ours were found in eastern Oregon. Yellow-headed Blackbird is mainly an eastern Oregon but not hard to find in appropriate habitat. It is abundant around Burns-Hines and in Malheur itself. We managed to bump into Bullock’s Oriole on four days.

The two most-difficult-to-list Oregon Icterids are Bobolink (6) and Tri-colored Blackbird (at least 5 pair). Our Bobolinks were found on the Malheur day at a traditional location at the intersection of Diamond Road and the road to Diamond Craters. Tri-colored Blackbirds in large numbers appeared in Crook County near Prineville in the spring of 2006 at two lakes surrounded by fairly extensive cattail edge.

On the NAMC (The North American Migration Count) (May 13) 1000 Tri-colored Blackbirds were reported at Barnes Butte Lake a few miles north of Prineville and close to our route. On May 29 only 5 “Trikes” were reported at Barnes Butte Lake with the comment, “It looks like they are close to being done with their nesting sea-

Yellow-headed Blackbird © E. Harrison

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son and have moved on”. We wondered if any would be present on June 9 the day we would be in Prineville. There were. At least five pairs remained—most close to the road—and provided us with simply stellar looks.

Summary: We totaled 208 species counting the Blue Grouse split during our Oregon trip—not too shabby for a bunch of easterners.

Things to Alter on a Repeat Trip:
By any measure this trip was a huge success but it is always useful to consider alternatives in hindsight. Adding an additional day along the coast would be the most desirable change. If the trip were repeated, spend the second night in Seaside as on this trip but then only go as far south as Tillamook for the second night and spend the third night at Corvallis/Philomath (as close as possible to Mary’s Peak). This would allow two days for coastal species if the weather is bad (as it often can be; we simply were lucky) and also allow searching for Spotted Owl at Cape Meares or other location near Tillamook the third night. If one stayed at Corvallis/Philomath one could also search for this species pre-dawn at Mary’s Peak the next morning. Our single day along the coast was too rushed and we ran out of time before visiting Yaquina Head and other good sites near Newport.

The rather poor information on Mary’s Peak in Bird Finding in Forty National Forests and Grasslands and the vandalism there cost us precious early morning time searching for the correct trailhead. Ironically we ate breakfast only 50 yards from the trail we wanted but only found it a few hours later. More detailed up-to-date information would have helped (see Bibliography). The itinerary for our day trips out of Sisters had to be changed because of the snow-pack and relatively recent burns. Snow-pack permitting (the norm) I would stick to our original plan with alterations for burns. Our pre-trip itinerary allocated more time for high elevation habitats.

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Northern Oregon Birding Trip continued

Since Mountain Quail is so difficult to see at this time of year and the males apparently call all day, I would do Hagg Lake first thing in the morning (before dawn one could add Western Screech-Owl here) and then Hayward/Gheen road later. We were at Hagg Lake on a Sunday and the loop road was very busy (for Oregon) on our arrival near noon; traffic would likely be substantially diminished or nil early in the morning and bird song enhanced although song was strong when we were there likely because of the on-and-off rain showers. Hayward/Gheen Roads and Cochran Road would have little to no traffic any time of day. Also try to find an itinerary that would allow a 15-minute stop at Killin Wetlands. We specifically planned the trip to NOT do the coast on a weekend and this remains a wise choice.

By the time you arrive in northeastern Oregon (La Grande) there should be just a few species left on the want or missed lists. Great Gray Owl and Spruce Grouse are likely to be the main ones. We were lucky to get Great Gray Owl with no effort (we spent the time searching for Northern Pygmy-Owl and found a few other missed species in the process-Black-backed Woodpecker, Northern Saw-whet Owl, and Dusky Grouse in view of the split), so I believe the amount of time we allocated here was satisfactory. Nonetheless I would have loved an extra day here just to do some exploring of different areas.

Acknowledgments:
A most grateful “thank you” to all the Oregonians and others who publish their finds on the internet and especially to all those who answered Tom's specific requests for information on certain species-Marilyn Miller, Paul Jacobson, Cathy Nowak, Pamela Johnston, Lars and Gail Norgren, Dave Herr, Charles R. Gates, and Steve Shunk (operator of Paradise Birding Tours who provided information by telephone while we were in Oregon). Thanks also to Martin Seltzer and Lynn Jackson who provided information from a Field Guides tour in September along a similar route as far as Malheur.

Bibliography:
In addition to the resources listed below, other resources on Oregon birding can be found in the ABA Sales Guide.

1. *The Birder's Guide to Oregon*, Joseph E. Evanich, Jr., Portland Audubon Society, 1990—If you purchase one book for an Oregon trip, purchase this one. Although over 15 years old it is still the best overall guide to the entire state and most locations being national forests or state parks have not changed substantially. Supplement it with current internet information. Most of the habitat information in this trip write-up is based on a section of this book entitled “Oregon’s Bird Habitats”.
3. *Three Sisters Loop* available in pdf format at http://oregonbirdingtrails.org This information is an online guide to well over 50 birding sites reachable from Sisters as far south as Crescent and the Cascade Lake Highway. Note that recent burns, including one in 2006 after our departure, may have substantially altered the habitat of some of the listings. Other areas in Oregon are planned for this series.
4. *Bird Finding in Forty National Forests and Grasslands*, American Birding Association, 1994.—Note that the information on Mary’s Peak is too sketchy on trail locations. A more reliable map of the Meadow Edge Trail (recommended) and the summit area can be found at: www.fs.fed.us/r6/siuslaw/recreation/tripplanning/newptfl/trails/meadowedge1325.shtml

All the roads mentioned in this trip report can be found in this atlas.

Editors Note:
I want to thank the following photographer’s (non-members) for allowing one-time use of their photographs in this article:
- Peter LaTourrette—Ash-throated Flycatcher, page 17, http://birdphotography.com/
This trip ran from Friday, August 4 to Thursday, August 10. We covered various habitats in both Utah and Nevada including alpine zones, spruce-fir, pinyon-juniper, upland desert shrub, and the lower elevations including the Great Salt Lake. We traveled from 10,500 feet to 2,700 feet and because of the diverse areas visited, our trip list was about 180 bird species.

This report covers the highlights of our journey. It also gives information for those who would like to make the trip on their own. The tour was run jointly by Jaeger Tours and Westwings. As you read through this report, I hope I am successful in conveying my opinion that, with specialty birds such as Snowcock, you can maximize your chances of seeing the bird if you go with these tour companies. One participant on the tour - the friend of mine who talked me into going on the trip – tried for the Snowcock twice on his own without success. Westwings runs a shorter three day trip specifically for the Snowcock for those with limited time.

Although the official trip report and species list for 2006 has not been posted to the Jaeger Tours website yet, prior trip reports are available at http://www.jaegertours.net/. Or you can contact either Adrian Binns or Mark Stackhouse http://www.westwings.com/ for more information. We were lucky to have David Wheeler from Westwings as our third leader for half the trip.

You can get an idea of where we were by looking at either http://maps.yahoo.com/ or http://www.multimap.com/. To start, just enter Utah and then set the zoom scale to an appropriate level to allow for easy reading.

This trip was my sixth with Adrian and Jaeger Tours and I highly recommend them. This was my first with Mark and Westwings and I look forward to more tours with them. The leaders were extremely professional, knowledgeable and people oriented. The itinerary was superb and we covered a lot of ground in seven days.

Day 1 - Most participants, including myself, arrived the night before the tour began. I took advantage of the free morning to get familiar with such local birds as Cliff Swallow, Brewer’s Blackbird and White-faced Ibis, all of which were on the hotel grounds.

Our drive to Elko, Nevada, which was to be our base for the Snowcock hike, gave us additional opportunities to learn the common birds. A stop at Mark’s house yielded our first study of Black-chinned Hummingbird which is the main hummingbird at feeders at lower elevations. Mark knew right where to stop along I-80 – the Groatsville exit – for Snowy Plover. Utah had unseasonable amounts of rain during July, so whether this area is always good for shorebirds or not, I do not know.

We had our first Bank Swallows which turned out to be the most numerous swallow on the trip. Other birds in this area were the Great Basin race of Canada Goose and Swainson’s Hawks perched on telephone poles along with Red-tailed Hawks. This was interesting as I am so accustomed to Red-tailed being the default “highway” raptor back home in NJ. I was studying identification points that would enable me to separate the two species while driving along at 70 miles per hour. It wasn’t easy!

Late afternoon birding along the Humboldt River in Elko yielded California Quail, Common Nighthawk, Black-billed Magpie and Yellow-headed Blackbird – all in the lowland riparian areas. We had Lark and Brewer’s Sparrows back in the upland desert scrub habitat. If you are only interested in the Snowcock and you plan to do this trip on your own, you might consider flying into Elko if possible since that would save a lot of driving.

Day 2 – The Himalayan Snowcock was first introduced from Asia to the Ruby Mountains as a game bird in 1963. Now that it is well established and accepted by the ABA, birders go to major efforts to see it and add it to their ABA lists.

We started the hike before...
Utah/Nevada for Snowcock continued

dawn since we wanted to be at the Snowcock spot at first light. We were in the Humboldt National Forest on the Lamoille Canyon Island Lake trail and it was not easy going. The trail is rocky and it ascends 2,000 feet or so from the parking lot. I took my time and made it to our search spot at 10,000 feet in one hour and forty-five minutes. Others pushed themselves and made it in an hour. Most of the hike is on a trail, but we went off trail at the Island Lake. This section is steeper and even more rocky, but quite manageable if you take your time. By the time I reached that point it was light. It is a hard hike, but anyone with a reasonable degree of fitness can make it. Mark has had an 80 year old able bodied friend that he birded and made the hike and got it. Mark has had an 80 year old birder make the hike and get the bird!

A scope is necessary to spot the Snowcock and since I was lugging mine, it was just another good reason to take my time hiking up. Mark explained where to look for the birds but initially we were unable to find them. It wasn’t a normal year due to all the rain, but Mark didn’t quit. He knows the bird’s habits from all his years of experience with this species. That was why we were all on the tour and not on our own. Three hours after we got there, at 9:40 a.m., Mark spotted them along the ridge. A collective sigh of relief was heard and suddenly there were some very happy trip participants. If you decide to do this on your own, the trick is to keep scanning the rocks above the tree line. The easiest way to pick up the birds is when they climb to the ridges. They are very hard to spot when perched lower in the rocky terrain. Just keep scanning.

Other species up in the alpine zone were Black Rosy-Finch, Pine Siskin, White-crowned Sparrow, Mountain Bluebird and Dusky Grouse.

Our hike down was quite cheerful and we took our time and enjoyed the wildflowers. Mark knows his mountain wildflowers and the late, extensive rains this summer had them showing nicely for us. When we hit the aspen zone, we started hearing and seeing many Dusky Flycatchers.

After a well-deserved two hour nap back at the motel, we were off to the South Fork Reservoir for some late afternoon birding. This fresh water wetland spot gave us nice looks at Eared, Western, and Clark’s Grebes.

We picked up a lot of waterfowl at the reservoir including Cinnamon Teal – confusing in their eclipse plumage - and Common Goldeneye, rare this time of year. Other highlights were Common Merganser, Sora, Black Tern, Baird’s Sandpiper and Long-billed Dowitcher.

Day 3 – This was a travel day and we birded our way east to Brigham City, Utah. We didn’t need this second morning for another shot at the Snowcock, so we had time to hit some different areas like the Humboldt picnic area for Lewis’s Woodpecker. We also birded the Lamoille Grove picnic area for Western Tanager, Cordilleran Flycatcher and nice looks at the red-shafted race of the Northern Flicker. The Farm Road - yes that is actually its name – provided desert shrub and a cattle pasture area for Vesper Sparrow, Bobolink and Loggerhead Shrike. We stopped in some pinyon-juniper habitat that Mark knew about off of I-80. This area is not on the regular birding track as far as I know but it was a good stop since it produced Juniper Titmouse, Mountain Chickadee, Black-throated Gray-Warbler, Gray Flycatcher and a flock of 82 Pinyon Jays that came streaming over us in small groups for about ten minutes or so. I was pleased to get such great flight looks.

Back in Utah, our first actual birding stop was in the Curlew Valley, along Rt. 30. I dubbed this next five mile stretch as “raptor alley” since in a one hour and thirty minute period we had approximately eighty individual raptors including Ferruginous, Swainson’s and Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers, Prairie Falcon and American Kestrels. Some late afternoon birding in the White’s Valley area produced another introduced game bird, the Gray Partridge, which was a lower 48 bird for me. We also found Sharp-tailed Grouse which was spotted clear across some fields by one eagle-eyed participant. As far as I can tell, this area is not in the Birding Utah book, so here again, a guide with firsthand knowledge of the area proved indispensable.

Day 4 – Our morning was spent birding the Willow Bay Park which provided a nice change of pace with some riparian areas next to the lake. It can be good for migrant passerines given the right winds and time of year - neither of which we had this morning! Some highlights that we did enjoy were Orange-crowned Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager and “Audubon’s” Yellow-rumped Warbler.

The late morning and early afternoon was spent at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Anyone interested in some numbers? I can only estimate them here: 2000 White Pelicans, 200 Wilson’s Phalaropes, a few hundred Coots with young, thousands of Avocets, Black-necked Stilts and White-faced Ibis. We had Eared, Western and Clark’s Grebes along with one Virginia Rail which showed nicely. Early August is not the best time to bird here, and yet I thoroughly enjoyed the

(Continued on page 35)
SUMMER 2006 by Adrian Binns

**PA**

FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER - Morrisville, Bucks Co, June 3-7 – 1st PA RECORD

BLACK BELLIED WHISTLING- DUCK (4) - Oley, Berks Co thru June 18


WOOD STORK - Bedminster, Bucks Co, June 28

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER - Philadelphia, Phila. Co, Sept 2 – 4th PA Record

SOOTY TERN, ROYAL TERN - Philadelphia, Phila. Co, Sept 2

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL - Delaware River, Bucks Co, Sept 2

Tropical Storm Ernesto passed through the area on Sept 2

**DE**

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD - Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, July 1

CURLEW SANDPIPER - Bombay Hook NWR, Kent Co, July 30

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER - S. of Odessa, New Castle Co, Aug 7-17 – 1st New Castle Co record and 5th State Record

**NJ**

EARED GREBE - Round Valley, Hunterdon Co, thru June 8

SWAINSON'S WARBLER - Locust, Monmouth Co, June 12

WHITE-FACED IBIS - Cape May, Cape May Co, June 26

FRIGATEBIRD sp - Cape May, Cape May Co, June 29

MISSISSIPPI KITE - Cape May, Cape May Co, June 29

SWAINSON'S WARBLER - Cape May, Cape May Co, July 2

WHITE-WINGED DOVE - Alpha, Hunterdon Co, July 14

ARCTIC TERN - Wreck Pond, Monmouth Co, July 19

CURLEW SANDPIPER - Cape May, Cape May Co, July 27

EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE - Cape May Point, Cape May Co, Aug 11

SABINE'S GULL - Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co, Aug 26

WILSON'S PHALAROPE - Cape May, Cape May Co, Aug 27

HUDSONIAN GODWIT - Cape May, Cape May Co, Aug 28-30

Utah/Nevada for Snowcock continued

enjoyed it! I like numbers…. I can only imagine this place at the height of both spring and fall migration. According to Birding Utah: “In the minds of most, this refuge is the crown jewel of Utah birding.”

We continued south east to the Desert Ranch. We had to stay in a motel in Evanston, Wyoming since the guest inn at the Desert Ranch burned down last winter. I hope they rebuild! It must be a treat to stay on the property itself and wake up to the birds. Night birding at the ranch yielded Poorwill and Flammulated Owl.

Day 5 – I was ready after a couple cups of coffee at the motel and we were off to the Desert Ranch for the day. This place is comprised of 250,000 acres and is privately owned and managed for wildlife and non-destructive sustainable cattle grazing. It covers a multitude of habitats including riparian-desert scrub, pinyon-juniper and spruce-fir. A birding trip to the Desert Ranch can be booked only through Westwings. Some highlights at this place: 25 or so Rufous Hummingbirds feeding on a patch of Bull Thistle, a Northern Pygmy-Owl that responded when Mark imitated its call, Sage Thrasher, Brewer's Sparrow and a few Virginia’s Warblers (an ABA bird for me) that Adrian managed to call in for us. These skulkers were difficult to see well, but with a little persistence we got them. More highlights for me included MacGillivray’s Warbler, Burrowing Owl, Olive-sided and Hammond’s Flycatchers, Greater Sage-Grouse and Golden Eagle.

On a night birding expedition we experienced moonrise at the Blue Grass Pond on the ranch property. We were enjoying the birds as they came in to roost for the night when a Short-eared Owl flew in and scared the roosting birds up again! Six Great-horned Owls, one calling Long-eared Owl, and Common Poorwills on the sand roads were all enjoyed. With the numerous specialty birds that can be had on the ranch property itself, this place is a welcome addition to any birding trip to Utah. I hope to get back some spring.

(Continued on page 36)
Day 6 – We got to sleep in and leave late…so off we went at 6:30 a.m. We headed west and south to the Uinta Mountains and hit various locations there that are covered in the Birding Utah Guide. That guide and a good map should be enough to get you exploring hotspots on your own if that’s how you want to do it. For example, one of the parking lots for Mirror Lake had Pine Grosbeak and Red Crossbill. We had nice looks at the spruce-fir zone specialties in the scopes and hiked a couple of trails looking for Three-toed Woodpecker without success. The woodpecker eluded us the whole trip – it was not really the best time of year to track them down since they aren’t calling much. Lincoln’s Sparrow in a mountain pond was a great treat and one of my personal highlights. Although I see this species regularly on migration in New Jersey, I enjoyed seeing it on its breeding territory.

Another of my highlights for the trip was our hike along the Bald Mountain Trail. We were around 10,700 feet when we spotted Black Rosy-Finches at a pond area well below us. After much discussion Adrian and Mark decided to alter the itinerary and allow whoever was interested to make the hike down for closer looks. And yes, I was the one who suggested the change. It turned out that half of the group went with Adrian for the hike and the other half stayed with Mark near the cliff face where rosy-finches occasionally visit. It wasn’t a bad hike down and even coming up was ok – we took it slow. We were somewhat used to the altitude by then.

We did see many rosy-finches when we got to the pool of water along with American Pipit, Vesper Sparrows, Cassin’s Finch, and the gray headed race of Dark-eyed Junco. I would highly recommend this hike to birders if you are in the area in August. Directions are in the Birding Utah book – page 202.

Our afternoon was spent driving back to Salt Lake City and the Great Salt Lake with Antelope Island and the causeway still to be birded. Do you need Chukar – yet another introduced game bird? Well then, head straight to the Antelope Island visitor’s center. We had the birds there in the rocks at the parking lot. Be sure to scan for Burrowing Owl there also.

The historic Fielding Gar ranch on the island is worth exploring for Barn and Great Horned Owl and we had nice looks at both of these birds. Explore the outer areas of the ranch for the owls on the “tree islands”. Back at the ranch, check the trees by the buildings which can be good in migration.

We birded the causeway back to the mainland as our final birding spot of the day. We didn’t have too many species there – maybe eight or so - but there were a few hundred thousand birds. Feeding on the Brine flies were Eared Grebe, both Red-necked and Wilson’s Phalaropes (50,000 or so of each) and loads of Franklin’s Gulls. It was a good opportunity to compare the phalaropes – the bigger, longer necked Wilson’s vs. the smaller bodied, shorter necked Red-necked. A scope was essential for seeing these birds. If you go to this area, keep in mind that the closer birds will flush if you get out of your vehicle.

Day 7 – On our last day we had a final morning of birding at the Silver Lake area of the Big Cottonwood Canyon near Salt Lake City. This was our last try for Three-toed Woodpecker. No luck! But this spruce-fir zone did net us Stellar’s Jay and more Red Crossbills. We next

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Utah/Nevada for Snowcock continued

worked our way back to Salt Lake City via the Olympus Cove housing development for Band-tailed Pigeon, more California Quail and Western Scrub-Jay. The pigeons are regular in the area, but they change feeding and roosting locations. Check with the hotlines before heading up.

We repacked at the motel and although I originally planned to spend a few hours birding in the Salt Lake City area before my flight, there were some new security precautions in effect and we all decided it was best to get to the airport and through security. I was home early Friday morning after a wonderful trip!

Reference materials:
I brought the Sibley Guide to the Birds of Western North America, an iPod Nano with the Stokes Guide to Bird Songs West loaded on it, and the Falcon Guide – Birding Utah, 1998. This book was indispensable not only for all the location info (although we did hit some areas that were not in the book) but also for the status and distribution graphs and the write-ups on the Utah specialty birds. I didn’t bring a wildflower book, but should have. Mark had a small, basic reference to Rocky Mountain wildflowers which was great! Adrian had the Utah Delorme Atlas and I used this to follow our progress instead of the regular maps. He also had many other reference books on butterflies, trees, etc. as he always does, so I never have bring any of mine.

Odds and ends:
Here are some hints and suggestions for making the trip go smoothly that worked well for me. Layering clothing works the best. The hikes in the morning were chilly, yet after a couple hours I was removing layers. The North Face Hyvent jacket worked great. It’s extremely thin and rolled up nicely into my small daypack after a couple hours up at the Snowcock search site. A winter hat and gloves were used. A headlamp would be better for the trails at night than a flashlight since it would keep your hands free. I wore my heavier hiking boots for the rocky trail. Other than that, light-weight boots are fine. For those prone to altitude sickness, some chocolate packed in your daypack will work. Adrian and Mark supply trail mix, but plain chocolate is best for those feeling dizzy. One of the participants was a bit sick, but ate chocolate and started feeling better shortly after. I pack a bottle of Gatorade in addition to water for these hikes.

I am a vegetarian and didn’t find the food to be that good. I should have brought more snacks as I usually do. Mark and Adrian pack a great picnic lunch! It was breakfast, mainly, that was the problem. Power Bars are always a standby for me and I didn’t have them this trip.

For those after good bird shots, both a digiscoping setup and a handheld longer lens with camera body are both musts. I only have a digiscoping setup and couldn’t get many passerine shots.

A few participants flew in a couple days early, rented cars, and hit the higher elevations to try to get acclimated before the Snowcock hike. They said it worked for them.

I always enjoy answering queries, so if anyone has specific questions on what I have written, comments, and suggestions for future trip reports, etc. please feel free to email me, sandrakeller@verizon.net.

Newcomers to the Delaware Valley: by Hook or by Crook
by Adrian Binns

Several species have expanded their range into our area in the last century by various means.

The most recent species to colonize our area is the Cattle Egret which reached Florida in the 1940’s and our area by the mid 1950’s with breeding records shortly thereafter. Though their numbers have fluctuated and they are sporadic in our area, this is a good example of natural range expansion, in this case worldwide.

Though there were rare reports of Red-bellied Woodpeckers in the tri-state area as early as the late nineteenth century and breeding in the early twentieth century, it was not until the 1950’s that they expanded their range northward from the southeast into the Delaware Valley.

Northern Cardinals on the other hand were recorded breeding in Delaware and Southern New Jersey in the late nineteenth century but they only began colonizing Southeastern Pennsylvania in the 1920’s. The increase in backyard feeding stations surely had something to do with this expansion as it made it easier for them to survive the winters.

(Continued on page 39)
We have had a diverse group of birders express interest in DVOC over the summer months. Based on info in their applications, they see our club as a valuable resource for increased birding knowledge, field exposure and exploration of nature through the world of birds; hey…that sounds like all the rest of us! They should fit right in with the flock. Help me extend the hand of welcome and offer camaraderie to the following new DVOC members.

Douglas E Johnson
Doug writes, "I have been birding in NJ for ten years with occasional business trips allowing me to see birds in California, Texas, the UK and France. I am currently helping David White with the Teen Birder's Club at NJAS's Rancocas Nature Center."

Jonathan D. Schau
Jonathan writes: "I've always been interested in birds, but never had the opportunity to expand my knowledge until now. My birding consists of a pair of binoculars by the bedroom window."

Beth Russell
"I got started in birding late in life (I am 41). My uncle, a long-time resident of North Carolina, is a dedicated birder with over 500 species on his life list. During a week-long visit to his home a year ago, he took me birding. My first unassisted sighting was a plastic owl perched on top of a roof (I was so sure it was real)! I wasn't sure that this hobby was for me, but as I stood by some reeds at a marsh, trying to focus my binoculars on an egret, a red-shouldered hawk rose from the grasses directly in front of me and perched there for several minutes I was enthralled by this regal and beautiful bird and hopelessly hooked. When I returned home to Pennsylvania, I found myself constantly noticing birds - in the air, on the ground, and perched on wires and trees. It became a problem when I was driving! I bought several field guides and a pair of binoculars and started visiting Peace Valley Park/Lake Galena, Tyler State Park and Carpenter's Woods in Philadelphia so I could practice. I also visit Barnegat Light, NJ frequently. I consider myself strictly a novice, but am enjoying the learning experience of recognizing species and adding them to my list."

Mark Pensiero
"Got interested in birding in the mid-nineties. I have always enjoyed the natural world and the outdoors, birding provides me a new venue into the natural world. My first CBC was in 2000 where I did the Moorestown count, tagging along with Frank Windfelder and Tom Bailey. My favorite local spot is Palmyra, which I can reach in 10 minutes from home."

Andy Smith
"I have been a birder for many years and lead several trips each year for Valley Forge Audubon. Over the years I have birded on four continents. Since retiring from my long-time profession of social activist/minister/ethicist, I have been pursuing nature photography professionally, concentrating on birds. See my website, www.andysmithphotography.com for some examples of my work. I see birds as creatures of beauty themselves but also as key indicators of what is going on in the environment and therefore an important source of information as we seek to create a sustainable society, another of my passions."

Alex Ewing
"I got hooked on birding around age 15 thanks to a Boy Scout trip to Bombay Hook for a bird study merit badge. I have been birding for about 20 years. Before moving to New Jersey in 2003, I birded mostly in Maryland, Delaware, and North Carolina. My favorite birding locations in the Delaware Valley are Bombay Hook, Brigantine NWR, and Barnegat Light."

Frank J May
I have been an avid birder for about 25 years. I started about the time my family and I moved from the Chicago suburbs to Alberta Canada, and began keeping a life list in 1980. I am a native Philadelphian and when we returned to the area in 1985, I continued to pursue my hobby. My in-laws owned a home at Buck Hill Falls in the Pocono's, where we now reside. We also have a home in Ocean City NJ and I became active with the Cape May Bird Observatory, taking a number of workshops and birding hikes with them. I am a member of the National Audubon Society, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the Pocono Avian Research Center. We enjoy occasional nature vacations to destinations such as Costa Rica and most recently Trinidad. I am currently President of the Buck Hill Conservation Foundation, a public 401(c)3 Land Trust and I write a periodic column "The Buck Hill Birder" for our community newsletter "The Breeze."

Joseph Ryan OSH
I am an Augustinian priest living at Villanova. I teach in the history department there. I am a novice birder. In my high school years, I introduced my younger brother Patrick to birding. He and his two sons are now avid birders in Rockville Center, New York. I took up the hobby this summer. Locally, I've visited the Heinz Sanctuary in Tinicum, PA. On a recent vacation at the New Jersey shore, I picked up a copy of "Birding & Wildlife Trails for New Jersey and Delaware." and I spent most of my mornings in nature sanctuaries in the vicinity of Cape May. The experiences give me a greater appreciation for nature and wildlife. I wish to join a club so that I may improve my knowledge of birding.
How ’Bout Them Swifts! by Jane Henderson

The Chimney Swift field trip on the evening of Monday, September 18 turned out to be a rather spectacular success. There's never been a better attended DVOC field trip!

Thanks to Don Sapatkin’s article in the Saturday, September 16 issue of the Philadelphia Inquirer, over 125 people turned up at the John Story Jenks Elementary School in the Chestnut Hill section of Philadelphia to witness the annual Chimney Swift extravaganza.

A few people in the gathering, maybe 10, were actually DVOC members. But the rest were interested folks, who were there because they had read Don’s well researched article. Some had also seen the update on the DVOC website; others heard about it at the previous Friday night’s Wyncote Audubon meeting. The DVOC people, including Bert Filemyr, Connie Goldman, Nick Haas and me, as well as other swift aficionados, including Judy Stepenaskie and my husband Bob Cohen, circulated among the crowd and did their best to answer the many questions people asked.

The swifts arrived, one or two at first, circling the chimney around 6:45, and joined by others little by little. A bit later they began to fill the sky, making a big circle around the chimney. They finally got organized and performed on cue, the last ones funneling down the chimney around 7:30 PM, when everybody applauded. It was great.

To find out why the swifts opted for Jenks, rather than the sites they have preferred in previous years, Dobson and Shawmont Schools, you’d have to ask a swift.

As September goes on, if past experience serves, more and more swifts gather each evening at the Jenks chimney. So going to see the concentrations of swifts is an option later in September, too.

Newcomers to the Delaware Valley by A. Binns

(Continued from page 37)

The next two species, which were introduced from Europe to New York City, certainly do take full advantage of our generosity as well. The House Sparrow was introduced to Brooklyn in 1851 by those believing that they would be beneficial controllers of pest insects. By 1869 they had reached Philadelphia, becoming abundant by the end of the century. The European Starling was introduced to Central Park in 1890, as part of The American Acclimatization Societies goal of establishing in the United States every species mentioned in Shakespeare’s works! They reached the Philadelphia area by 1904. This may not come as a complete shock, but by the mid-1920’s it was one of our most abundant birds!

Our final species and most recent newcomer is the House Finch. A native to the southwest, it was introduced to New York as the ‘Hollywood Finch’ by pet dealers in the 1930’s. They soon came to realize that these birds did not retain their bright red coloration while kept as cage birds, and they promptly released the birds. By the late 60’s they were breeding in southeastern Pennsylvania and the rest as they say, “is history”.

So what is the next species? It is likely to be the Eurasian Collared Dove, a species that reached Florida in the early 1980’s (after being introduced to the Bahamas in 1974) that has been expanding its range north and westwards ever since. Though it has been recorded a few times in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware since 1996, the number of sightings has not increased and there has yet to be a resident population (other than a very small colony of two to six birds in Selbyville, Sussex County, Delaware) or confirmed breeding. The largest concentration of Lesser Black-backed Gulls in the United States is centered on the Delaware Valley (though not likely to breed here), with numbers sharply increasing each winter in our area since 2000.
November 16, 2006, 7:30 pm
Annual Banquet – Our speaker for this year’s banquet is the renowned Pete Dunne. Pete is the author of nine books, including *Pete Dunne on Bird Watching*, *Hawks in Flight*, and *The Wind Masters*. He is the vice president of the New Jersey Audubon Society and the director of its Cape May Bird Observatory. Pete has written columns and articles for virtually every birding magazine as well as the New York Times. Pete’s program is entitled "20 Things That Changed Birding" and you are going to want to be there. For additional information and to sign-up for this event, please go to [http://www.dvoc.org/Banquet/Banquet.htm](http://www.dvoc.org/Banquet/Banquet.htm).

December 7, 2006, 7:30 pm
Mary Gustafson - "Vagrant Hummingbirds in Eastern North America"
Once considered to be rarities in the eastern U.S., there are now records of many species of western hummingbird from the Canadian Maritimes all the way down to Florida. Rufous Hummingbird is now expected each fall in a number of eastern states. Mary Gustafson will discuss the records, as well as banding and returns, of vagrant hummingbirds throughout eastern North America.

Thursday December 21, 2006, 7:30 pm
Scott Weidensaul – *Return to Wild America: A Yearlong Search for the Continent’s Natural Soul*. In 1955, naturalists Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher published their bestselling book *Wild America*, chronicling a now-legendary 30,000-mile trip across North America. Fifty years later, author Scott Weidensaul has retraced their epic journey to see what we’ve gained and lost, and to catch a glimpse of what the future holds for wildlife and wild lands. From the great seabird cliffs of Newfoundland to the cypress swamps of Florida, from the cloud forests of the Sierra Madre in Mexico to lonely islands far out in the Bering Sea, Scott searches out the wild heart of the continent - and finds it strong.

Scott Weidensaul is the author of more than two dozen books on natural history, including the Pulitzer Prize-nominated *Living on the Wind*, about migratory birds, and *The Ghost with Trembling Wings*, about the search for animals that may or may not be extinct. He writes for such publications as Smithsonian, Audubon, Nature Conservancy and International Wildlife; he lives in the mountains of eastern Pennsylvania, where he studies the migration of hawks, owls and hummingbirds.

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**Update Your Contact Information!**

The time is rapidly approaching when we will issue an updated DVOC Membership Directory. In the interest of ensuring that information is as up-to-date as we can possibly make it, we are asking that you use this form to submit updated contact information. Please include any changes in your name, mailing address, day time or evening telephone number and email address. Send your update sheet to:

Naomi D Murphy  
234 Orlemann Avenue  
Oreland, PA  19075

Alternatively, you can send any changes to Naomi Murphy at ndmurphy3@hotmail.com.

Name ________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Name ________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Street Address________________________________________________________________________________________________

City______________________________________________________________________ State________ Zip Code _______________

Day Time Phone Number___________________________________ Evening Phone Number __________________________________

e-Mail Address _________________________________________________________________________________________________
Field Trips ...Adrian Binns, Field Trip Chair

November 18 – Franklin's & California Gull Trip (half day)
These Western species are most likely to turn up in late fall and we will make a special trip to search for them. This is also a good chance to study plumage and molt in gulls at a time when at least Herring Gulls are actively molting and most people do not look at gulls. Meet at 8:30; location to be announced. Leader: Matt Sharp

November 24-26 – Niagara Falls Gull and Waterfowl Extravaganza, Ontario, Canada
The tremendous numbers of gulls to be found at Niagara at this time of year is really a treat. There is good chance of a dozen species and we will search for California, Thayer's, Little, Black-headed Gulls amongst the thousands of flying and sitting birds. One never knows - maybe there is even the possibility of a Ross'. Large numbers of waterfowl can also be seen. We leave in the early hours of Friday and return late evening Sunday. Expenses will be shared. Leader: Adrian Binns

January 5 – Pelagic Christmas Bird Count - Hudson Shelf Valley to the Hudson Canyon
Explore the underwater trench called the Hudson Shelf Valley that extends from near shore all the way to the Hudson Canyon, covering mostly the Mud Hole and Glory Hole areas. We'll be looking for Fulmar, Gannet, Razorbill, murre, Dovekie, Puffin, Red Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger, Great Skua and Black-legged Kittiwake. We leave from Belmar, NJ and the trip runs from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM approximately. Fee. Leader: Paul Guris

January 6 – Philadelphia Mid-Winter Bird Census (PMWBC)
Help count birds within the city limits. Contact: Keith Russell

January 13-15 – Montauk (Long Island), New York
We'll be on the lookout for winter finches, eiders, scoters, alcids and any Eurasian accidentals. Space is limited due to lodging constraints – first come, first served – and we will car pool from northeast Philadelphia at 6 AM. Expenses will be shared. Leaders: Erica Brendel and Chris Walters

January 20 – Southern Bucks County – Geese & Gulls
This trip will focus on combing through the large groups of gulls for rarities such as Thayer's, California, Slaty-back and Yellow-legged Gulls. We'll also spend time on the geese and other waterfowl that concentrate on the water lakes, rivers, fields, and landfills in Southern Bucks County and the Florence area of New Jersey. Basically we will go where the big groups of birds are to look for rarities and study variation. Trip will start at 9 AM. Meeting location TBA. Leader: Matt Sharp

January 21 – Barnegat Light, New Jersey
This is a half day field trip for new members to the best location in Jersey to see Harlequin Duck and Purple Sandpiper. Common Eider is regular here and we may get lucky and see King Eider, too. An assortment of ducks and loons can be found in the inlet and the dunes often hold “Ipswich” Sparrow, Snow Buntings, and in good years, longspurs. Dress warm. Meet at the Lighthouse parking lot at 9:00 AM.

January 24 – Southern Bucks County – Geese & Gulls
This trip will focus on combing through the large groups of gulls for rarities such as Thayer’s, California, Slaty-back and Yellow-legged Gull. We’ll also spend time on the geese and other waterfowl that concentrate on the water lakes, rivers, fields, and landfills in Southern Bucks County and the Florence area of New Jersey. Basically we will go where the big groups of birds are to look for rarities and study variation. The trip will start at 9 AM. Meeting location TBA. Leader: Matt Sharp

January 27 – Cape May, New Jersey
Meet 8:30 am at the Wawa Parking Lot (Rtes 47 and 347). Targets for this trip are the seabirds and wintering waterfowl that occur at Cape May. Dress for the weather and bring lunch and scopes. We will end the day at Jake's Landing Road looking for short-eared owls. Leader: Martin Selzer

February 10 – Delaware City, Delaware
This will be a morning trip around the freshwater ponds which can be very productive. Meet at 8 AM at Veteran's Park (Delaware River end of Clinton Street) in Delaware City. Leader: Colin Campbell

February 17-19 – Algonquin Park & Amherst Island, Ontario
On this three day trip over President's Day weekend we will look for winter finches, raptors and owls. In Algonquin we hope for crossbills, redpolls, Pine Grosbeak, Boreal Chickadee, Gray Jay, Black-backed Woodpecker and Spruce Grouse. In the south the woods and fields should hold Saw-whet, Long-eared, Short-eared and Snowy Owl. If they are around we’ll also search for Boreal, Great Gray and Hawk Owl. Quality, not quantity! Limited registration. Fee. Leader: Adrian Binns

February 24 (Saturday) – Indian River Inlet & Northern Delaware
Join us as we search for wintering waterfowl, gulls, seabirds and other late winter visitors. We will meet at the parking lot of the North Jetty at the Indian River Inlet at 9 AM. Besides birding Indian River Inlet and Rehoboth Bay, we will stop at Silver Lake, Cape Henlopen State Park, Prime Hook and Bombay Hook as we bird our way back north. Meet at the Super WAWA west of Route 1 as you are heading toward the inlet at 9 AM. Leader: Martin Selzer

February 24 – Geese & Gulls – Southern Bucks County, PA
This trip is geared to Youth Members and the focus will be on combing through the large groups of gulls for rarities such as Thayer’s, California, Slaty-back and Yellow-legged Gull. We’ll also spend time on geese and other waterfowl that concentrate on the water lakes, rivers, fields, and landfills in Southern Bucks County and the Florence area of New Jersey. Basically we will go where the big groups of birds are to look for rarities and study variation. The trip will start at 9 AM. Meeting location TBA. Leader: Matt Sharp

February 25 – Mill Grove & the John James Audubon Center, PA
Join Jeff Holt, our own local expert ornithological historian, on a tour of the John James Audubon Center. Mill Grove was John James Audubon’s first residence in America. It was here that Audubon began to develop his talent as an artist and his unique style of drawing birds. Now a Museum, Mill Grove houses one of only 120 surviving complete sets of Audubon’s Birds of America. Produced from 1827 to 1838 in England on double elephant folio paper, each plate measures an astonishing 29 1/2" X 39 1/2". In addition, samples of Audubon’s other works are on display including prints from his quadruped project and prints from the Royal Octavo American addition of Birds of America. Meet at the Millgrove at 1 PM. There is a $4 admission fee. Be sure to bring your binoculars, as we’ll no doubt (weather permitting) get a chance to bird the sanctuary trails afterwards. Leader: Jeff Holt

March 10 - Geese & Gulls – Southern Bucks County, PA
This trip will focus on combing thru the large groups of Gulls for rarities such as Thayer’s, California, Slaty-back and Yellow-legged Gull. We will also study geese including possible Cackling, Greater White-fronted and maybe Ross’s, too. You never know what may show up and we will look for such extreme rarities as Pink-footed Goose and Barnacle. There is plenty of other waterfowl to study since the water lakes, rivers,

(Continued on page 48)
**Field Trips continued**

fields, and landfills in Southern Bucks County and the Florence area of New Jersey are home to large congregations of these birds in late winter. Basically we will go where the big groups of birds are to look for rarities and study variation. Trip will start at 9 AM. Meeting location TBA

Leader: Matt Sharp

March 10 – Conowingo Dam & Muddy Run, PA

After birding the dam we will head north to Muddy Run, a Pennsylvania Power and Light reservoir. Meet at 9AM at Fisherman’s Park. Leader: Tom Reeves. Directions: From Route 1. Immediately after crossing the dam, turn left on Fisherman Park Road for .07 mile and follow signs to Fisherman’s Park.

March 31 – Pedricktown & Mannington Marsh – Southwest New Jersey

This is a good time of year for possible winter stragglers (Ross’ Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, blackbirds) and any early migrants (Ruffs, etc). Leader: Frank Windfelder

**Project Feeder Watch—Cornell Lab of Ornithology**

The 20th season of FeederWatch begins on November 11!

The number of FeederWatch participants is currently lower than last year, and we are asking for your help to recruit new friends to the FeederWatch family. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has issued four press releases highlighting recent findings and calling for new and continuing participants to join in as we embark on our 20th season. To read the press releases, visit [http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/MediaCorner.htm](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/MediaCorner.htm).

Project FeederWatch needs your help to keep track of the birds at your feeders this winter. Count birds as often as two days each week from November 11 to April 6. Your counts will help scientists monitor changes in feeder bird populations. New participants receive a research kit with easy to follow instructions, the FeederWatcher’s handbook, a bird identification poster, a calendar, and a subscription to the newsletter of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (U.S.) or Bird Studies Canada (Canada). For more information or to sign up in the U.S., please visit [http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/) or call (800) 843-2473; a $15 fee makes the program possible.

**Christmas Bird Counts by N. Murphy**

The CBC season is rapidly approaching and you all are, no doubt, interested in knowing the dates, contact info, etc. for our local counts. Since this is the last Larus-on-Line of the year and most of the CBC info is not yet in hand, there is no listing of this info in this issue.

Information will, however, be posted on the DVOC website and reminders relative to where to find the information will no doubt be included in the weekly DVOC emails as the CBCs get closer. So check the website ([www.dvoc.org](http://www.dvoc.org)) often.
Fifty years ago, foreign travel meant a trip to the Everglades. Now there is hardly a corner of the planet not visited regularly by birders. Thirty years ago, close focus binoculars meant under 25 feet. Today, it means shoe tops. What were the pivotal decisions, products, people, and events that transformed a quaint, closet avocation in North America’s fastest growing and second largest outdoor activity? Pete Dunne, Director of New Jersey Audubon’s Cape May Bird Observatory and our speaker for the annual banquet offers his list of “25 Things that Changed Birding”. Join us for what promises to be a memorable program.

Three Course Dinner

First Course: Cherry Tomato & Mozzarella Salad

Second Course (Choice)
- Pot Roast
- Sweet Thai Chili Glazed Salmon
- Chicken Breast with Marsala Sauce
- Vegetarian

Sides
- Roasted Herb Potatoes
- Broccoli

Dessert
- Sherbert

Time: Cocktails – 6:00 p.m. (cash bar)
Dinner – 7:00 p.m.

Cost: $43.50 per person—all entrees (includes 7% tax and all gratuities)

Parking: Free

Directions: Delaware River waterfront just south of where Washington Avenue intersects Columbus Boulevard.

Banquet Reservation Form (Submit no later than Tuesday November 12)

| Name: ___________________________ | Entrée: ___________________________ | @ $43.50 |
| Address ___________________________ | City, State, Zip: ___________________ | Phone: ______________ |

| Name: ___________________________ | Entrée: ___________________________ | @ $43.50 |
| Address ___________________________ | City, State, Zip: ___________________ | Phone: ______________ |

Make your check payable to DVOC

Mail reservation form and check to Bernice & Joseph Koplin, 251 St. Joseph’s Way, Philadelphia, PA. 19106

Home Phone: (215) 922-7803  Work Phone: (215) 985-3900