

1978 OFFICERS

President ----- Charles A. Wonderly
Vice President ----- James K. Meritt
Secretary ----- Frank B. Moody
Treasurer ----- Walter F. Lipski

PROGRAMS

March 2 IDENTIFICATION QUIZ: John Miller and Sam Orr
March 16 BIRDING IN WASHINGTON AND CALIFORNIA: Richard Bell and others (Ladies invited)
April 6 BIRDS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA: Arthur Bergey
April 20 BIRD STUDIES AT NEW CAPE MAY: Clay Sutton
May 4 MEETING AT RANCOCAS NATURE CENTER, MT. HOLLY, NJ
Box supper at 6:00 PM (cost to be determined). Rancocas Nature Center is located 1¼ miles east of Interstate 295 from Exit 44A. Notify James Meritt at least one week in advance if you will be attending. Director Karl Anderson will be our host.
May 25 MAY ROUND-UP REPORTS (4th Thursday)
Summer Informal summer meetings will be held the first Thursday of June, July, and August and the first and third Thursdays of September.

All meetings (except May 4) will be held at 8:00 PM at the Academy of Natural Sciences.

SPRING FIELD TRIPS

March 19 SOUTHERN LANCASTER COUNTY: Meet at the intersection of Pennsylvania Routes 999 & 441 at 8:00 AM. We will bird the Conejohela Flats, Safe Harbor Dam backwaters, Susquehannock State Park, and Muddy Run Reservoir. We should see Whistling Swans in numbers, Black Vultures, and Pileated Woodpeckers. Possible are Brant, Barred Owl, and all waterfowl species. Leader--Keith Richards.
April 29-30 POCOMOKE SWAMP, MARYLAND: For information call Rick Mellon----215-295-5533.
May 14 MAY ROUND-UP

CONGRATULATIONS

At the Annual Meeting held on January 5, 1978, Lester Thomas was elected an Honorary Member of the DVOC. James Akers, John Danzenbaker, and Kenneth Tischner were elected Fellows of the Club.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS - December 17, Oceanville (133 species) and December 18, Cape May (122 species).

While others were indulging in the seasonal parties traditional on the last weekend before Christmas, hundreds of local and thousands of American birders were engaged in a different kind of tradition - the seventy-eighth Audubon Christmas Bird Count. The entire idea of the CBC is impressive: some 30,000 individuals in some 1200 precisely defined areas braving the worst that December weather can offer in an attempt to establish a census of wintering birds. Whatever the scientific validity or value of such a count may be, those of us who participate know that the real attraction is the challenge of finding not only all that was listed in the years before, but also of adding something special.

The entire operation of a CBC is vaguely military with a count leader whose job is to ensure proper coverage of each area within his assigned territory. General Jim Meritt likes to meet with all of his junior officers at a pre-dawn breakfast in Egg Harbor City. He briefs each captain on what can be expected. It is always great fun to toss out the usual jokes about having the list made out beforehand in order to sneak off to a cozy watering hole to spend the day in comfort. Most participants know their areas so well that such a procedure would be quite possible, and in particularly foul weather the temptation of such irresponsibility is almost irresistible.

Saturday, the seventeenth, however, was mild by CBC standards, and my party followed Captain Sehl onto Brigantine Island for a day of excellent birding. Four kinds of warblers provided considerable interest: Yellow-rumped, Palm, Orange-crowned, and Nashville (the latter disallowed, as only one person saw the bird and it could not be refound). The weedy fields and a nearby marsh attracted all kinds of sparrows and their associates: Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, Goldfinch, Savannah (and Ipswich), Seaside, Tree, White-throated, Fox, and Song. A lone Winter Wren, which was surrounded on several occasions only somehow to walk away from us, several American Bitterns, Snipe, and Short-eared Owls, as well as one Louisiana Heron all helped us overlook the increasing grayness of the day. The usual bitter cold of the long walk to the northern tip of the island, however, was replaced by a different kind of problem - the overheating of some terribly overdressed birders. We should not have complained about the warmish gray weather; all complaints should have been saved for Sunday's Cape May count.

Ernie Choate's Cape May Hilton was packed with birders on Saturday evening, and the renewed friendships and the good talk put everyone in the mood for a big count; there was even talk of a pre-dawn start to listen for owls. We were, of course, wiped out by one of the foulest days on memory - wind driving

heavy rain around all our expensive rain gear. There was no way to stay dry. There was also no way to watch birds. A White-crowned Sparrow was consolation, as was a fine male Marsh Hawk, but the highlight of the morning was easily the return indoors for breakfast. The afternoon was worse, but no one really complained. Any pursuit as dependent on the elements as birding tends to produce a rather hardy group of philosophers. I cannot think of any way I would rather have spent my weekend.

January 1, Barnegat (118 species). What an incredible date for a pre-dawn start for a birding count! To meet at the diner in Manahawkin at 6:00 AM most of us had to get up before 4:00 AM - New Year's Eve parties were out of the question. Worse than that, however, was the unavoidable truth that the only other cars on the road would belong to returning party-goers in various stages of inebriation. Our fears were confirmed at the diner - a charming little spot chosen by Alan Brady because of his partiality to greasy eggs and half-cooked sausage - where all the non-birding customers, the waitresses, and the cook were still actively celebrating the start of the new year. A man feasting on eggs and beer (probably his forty-third can of the night) was intrigued by our interest in birds, and in the formal tones that only a drunk can muster, was heard asking Jim Meritt if he planned to bring any of the birds he saw home to his wife. Jim's answer is not recorded though the picture of Jim driving home with a car full of angry Great Black-backed Gulls has its appeal.

The best thing about the actual birding was that every bird was a year bird, making it necessary to look carefully at least once at even the commonest species. Both loons, three kinds of scoters (with White-winged most abundant), a Short-eared Owl, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, a Pigeon Hawk, and a line of twenty-seven Mute Swans were all worth braving the cold to see, but the best sightings were a pair of Harlequin Ducks (Bob Sehl), a flock of Snow Buntings (Jay LaVia), and a flock of Red Crossbills (Alan Brady).

- John LaVia

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please keep the Secretary informed of address changes. Dr. Frank Moody's home address is 826 Spruce Ave., West Chester, Pa. 19380.

John LaVia, Newsletter Editor
56 Millbrook Drive
Willingboro, N.J. 08046

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

1977 was a successful financial year. Despite an expenditure for Cassinia and increased costs due to inflation, we realized a substantial net gain for the year. Bottom line figures are:

Balance as of 12/31/76	- - - - -	-\$7,919.90
1977 Income	\$4,097.98	
1977 Expenditures	<u>\$2,188.51</u>	
Net Gain	\$1,909.47	+\$1,909.47
Balance as of 12/31/77	- - - - -	<u>\$9,829.37</u>

How did all this happen? We had several things working for us. We had a very cooperative membership as far as dues payments (\$2,234); Interest from our accounts and from the Endowment Fund has grown to \$857 for 1977; and the Book Committee managed to snaggle \$1,007. Three cheers for Chris Caracino, Paul Harris, and Brian Moscatello!!

Some more encouraging news: Our net income for the past three years has been in the black and getting blacker. Compare:

1975	\$813
1976	\$1,455
1977	\$1,909

BLACK is BEAUTIFUL, yes indeed!!

Over in our investment department, Bob Sehl reported at the Annual Meeting some welcome news also. The value of the Endowment Fund at the end of 1977 was \$7,153.53, based on shares of Mutual Funds and accounts/certificates. Bob has been assisted by Ed Weyl and our late beloved John McIlvain. The vacancy on the Board of Trustees has been very ably filled by Steve Wing.

So far I've tried to keep the statistics to a minimum, but many of you may be interested in how many and what kind of members we have. As of the end of 1977 we had 54 non dues-paying and 193 dues-paying members broken down as follows:

Honorary	10	Regular,	
Life	38	Fellow, &	
Corresponding	6	Junior	
	<u>54</u>		<u>193</u> Total 247

Copies of the financial results for '75, '76, and '77 have been available at the past meetings. If you wish a copy, send a note, or include one when you send in your dues. Those who haven't yet paid '78 dues please make out your check to D V O C and send to 485 Willow Drive, Cinnaminson, N.J. 08077.

Walter F. Lipski