

PROGRAMS

- December 7      Birds and Wildlife of Northern India, John Drummond
- December 21     Random Birding in the Southern United States, Jack Cadbury
- January 4       ANNUAL MEETING (and Christmas Count Reports)
- January 18      Annual Slide Contest    Participants can enter three slides in each of three categories: Birds, Natural History, and scenes.
- February 1      The DVOC Costa Rica Trip, Armas Hill  
  (Ladies Night)
- February 15     Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers: a New Perspective,  
Dr. Frank Gill

All meetings will be at 8:00 PM at the Academy of Natural Sciences.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Fred Arnold, Lima, PA  
 Thomas Evans, Riverton, NJ  
 Stephen Jennings, Flourtown, PA

David Moon, Rosemont, PA  
 Larry Shelton, The Philadelphia Zoo  
 William Stockton, Ridley Park, PA

CONGRATULATIONS to Dick Bell, the new editor of Cassinia. Dick, who teaches Biology, is already an active Fellow of the DVOC as Chairman of Ornithological Studies. He is also a very popular member of the Club (though he has been known to chase away Lazuli Buntings), and his long-distance running should give him the endurance necessary to see Cassinia into print.

1979 DUES                      \$10.00

Please remit to the treasurer:  
 Walter F. Lipski  
 485 Willow Drive  
 Cinnaminson, NJ 08077

By paying our dues on time we can save the Club the considerable expense of follow-up mailings.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:    John T. LaVia, 56 Millbrook Drive, Willingboro,  
 NJ 08046

FIELD TRIPS

- December 2                      Boat trip for pelagics. Contact Alan Brady on the off chance that there are any places remaining.
- January 20-21                    Pocono weekend. Meet at 9:00 AM Saturday at the Holiday Inn, intersection of routes 22 and 309, just east of the Allentown turnpike interchange. Bring Saturday lunch and a bed roll. Fee of approximately \$15 includes a cabin bunk, Saturday dinner, Sunday breakfast and lunch at the Pocono Environmental Education Center near Dingman's Ferry. Advise Phil Street (leader) by January 4 at 972-1739 (work) or 363-7776 (home). Rough-legged Hawks and winter finches will be the specialities. We have had a Northern Shrike on each of the last two trips, and Wild Turkeys are always a possibility.
- February 4                        Shark River. Meet at Pat's Diner on Route 35 in Belmar at 8:00 AM. Local guide--Bob Grant.
- February 17-19                    New England. Leader, Armas Hill. Details at meetings; Armas is working on a boat trip out of the Cape Cod area!

1978-1979 Christmas Counts

December 16 (Saturday)

Brigantine, NJ	Lower Bucks, PA
Glenolden, PA	Westchester, PA
Pennypack, PA	Wilmington, DE

December 17 (Sunday)

Upper Bucks, PA  
Marmora, NJ  
Bombay Hook, DE

December 23 (Saturday)

Cape May, NJ  
Central Bucks, PA  
Middletown, DE

December 30 (Saturday)

Rehobeth Beach, DE

December 31 (Sunday)

Barnegat Light, NJ

Cape Henlopen, DE

January 1 (Monday)

Tuckerton, NJ

With three of the above counts (Glenolden, Brigantine, and Bombay Hook) leading their respective states in number of species recorded in last year's Christmas Bird Counts, we would seem to receive our money's worth for the \$1.50 participant fee.

The injustice of being a weekend birder seemed particularly painful this fall. After a preview on September 24, I carefully planned for the two big weekends of the migration, September 30 and October 7. The journey to the always productive Cape May locations resulted in Sharp-shinned Hawks and very little else. The former date was the DVOC's Barnegat to Cape May weekend, and it was a laugher all the way. Good fellowship and the provisions of Kronschnabel, Logan, and Brady almost made up for the absence of birds, but even knowing that all of NJ Audubon was suffering with us was of scant consolation. After the next weekend, the conclusion was unavoidable: for all practical purposes, I never found the migration of the fall of 1978.

Because Cape May had been so dull for three weeks in a row, I decided not to waste a rare mid-week birding opportunity trying to recoup the disappointments of the three previous visits; and although I have been told that the sightings improved in the second week in October at the Cape, I am not sorry to have opted for Monday, October 9, on the ridges.

Bake Oven Knob can sometimes be between peaks in this second week, with the Broad Wings having passed through and the late season rarities not yet on the scene. Again, however, timing is everything in birding, and not even a disastrous start could ruin this perfect day.

As we climbed to the observation point, I watched Dick Bell and my boys disappear as I dropped back with the distaff side of my family. When we reached the north face, I was greeted with the news that our advance party had already seen a close Golden Eagle. Clearly my bad timing was continuing, and I could not fully enjoy the hundreds of geese and sharpies that were putting on an outstanding performance on this bright, comfortable day until a second close Golden Eagle appeared. Now I could appreciate the variety of a good October day on the ridge: Red-shouldered, Red-tailed, Rough-legged, Broad-winged, Cooper's, Sparrow, Pigeon, Marsh Hawk, and Osprey were all sighted.

Poor luck at Cape May induced me to visit Bake Oven Knob on a date I would usually have spent around the lighthouse at the Point. The upshot was a thoroughly satisfying day, with a good list and such memorable sights as several Sharp-shinned Hawks attacking our propped up stuffed owl, two young Red-tailed Hawks testing their powers by dive-bombing each other, a dark phase Rough-legged Hawk, and of course, that second chance Golden Eagle. I was surely in the right spot at the right time; timing is everything.

Post Script: November 5 DVOC trip to Bake Oven Knob

The Club closed out a lackluster fall field schedule with this most unproductive day on the ridge. Instead of watching Goshawks and Golden Eagles while shivering in a stiff breeze, we had to settle for a few Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks while basking in summerish temperatures. The many members present could not remember such poor hawking without rain or fog; we can only hope that our timing improves and leads us to a winter of rare sightings.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

In February of 1951 the DVOC had a publication similar<sup>to</sup> this Newsletter called The Crow. Dale Coman offered "Some Thoughts About the DVOC" that could well have been written today:

"In regard to the problems which at present confront the DVOC, I think that before anything else can be decided upon, the fundamental purpose for the existence of the club must be established in the minds of the members.

There seems to be an urge among some members to make the club into a scientific society. This attitude has been expressed almost exclusively by those who have no professional background in science. The DVOC is not a scientific group, nor can it become so with its present membership.

Other members feel that the club should function chiefly as a conservation agency; I would point out that it has neither the financial nor political potential to permit it to perform in this capacity. In addition, I believe the large majority of members are not primarily interested in the frustrating martyrdom of active conservation work; their interest in conservation is a calm and balanced part of their general interest in natural history.

There are others who look upon the club as a body that should be actively engaged, as a group, in doing things; making population studies, going on field trips, compiling observations on specified projects, etc. The answer to this has already been given in the response of the members to such proposals in the past. Only a few go on field trips; cooperation on club projects, like our attempt to study the starlings in the city, has been limited to a handful of people--so few indeed that the projects have had to be abandoned. I think it safe to say that the bulk of the club membership is not eagerly interested in such activities.

What then is the DVOC? I gather that it is a club composed of men having an avocational interest in birds particularly, and perhaps in nature generally. It is a gathering of kindred spirits looking for information and entertainment, and a sharing of mutual interests in their hobby. Our members come from all walks of life; they cover a wide span of social, economic, intellectual, business, and professional backgrounds. The one and only constant is an interest in birds. That some of us are amateur bird photographers, others of us operate banding stations, others compile census records, others make population or other field studies, while still others concern themselves with conservation, egg-collecting, painting, literature, or simply going out and listing species, is the real reason for the club's existence; it is what brings the members to the meetings, and gives the club the healthy spirit that carries it along. To attempt to restrict the club to any one of these fields could only destroy it entirely."

Dr. Coman goes on to examine some of their specific problems, problems we seem to have solved quite well over the years: more democratic elections, more open membership for teen-agers, and an open discussion of the question of women members. The spirit of the DVOC would seem to have weathered another quarter of a century quite well.