

John T. LaVia, Ph.D.



With regret, we announce the death, on September 9, 2000, of John T. LaVia, Ph.D., of Moorestown, New Jersey, life member, fellow, and past president (1986–1987) of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, of a sudden heart attack while birding on Attu,

Alaska. John was 61.

A native of Elizabeth, New Jersey, "Doc" LaVia graduated from Rutgers University in 1961 and received his doctorate in English literature from Duke University in 1965. He taught at several educational institutions, including the University of North Carolina, the University of Maryland, Rutgers University, and St. Mary's Dome Academy. From 1990 until 2000, he taught at Moorestown Friends School, where he was chairman of the English Department.

John had retired from that position in 2000 to be part of what was expected to be the last birding trip to Attu.

John began birding in the late 1960s while at the University of Maryland. He "migrated" to the Delaware Valley area in 1970 and joined the DVOC in 1971. He was very active in the club, often offering his witty comments, whether as a member in the audience, in his colorful minutes while secretary, or during his presidency. In addition, he served as the editor of the club newsletter for many years, was a past Annual Banquet chairman (with assistance from his wife, Jo), and, at the time of his death, was serving another round on Council. He was a regular at club meetings, although he favored the shadow meetings at the Cherry Street Tavern. John had birded on six continents, and his world life list was well over 3,000. His ABA area list stood at 716.

If John could have scripted his death, it may have differed from reality only in the timing. John died while birding with his sons, Jay and Vern, in Attu. He died in the field, boots on, binoculars at

the ready, chasing rare birds with good comrades and loving sons.

Johnny, you're gone too soon.

In addition to his wife and sons, he is survived by a daughter, Wendy LaVia Archer; and three grandchildren. — *Bill Tannery*