

The Flyer

Newsletter of the Delmarva Ornithological Society

Volume 35

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Number 4

www.DOSBirds.org

Birdline Delaware: 302-658-2747

Listening in on Council

Robert G. Rufe, President

As you receive this edition of *The Flyer*, plans are well in place and participants designated for this year's Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). DOS' involvement with this international project fits well with the stated purpose of our society - "... the promotion of the study of birds, the advancement and diffusion of ornithological knowledge, and the conservation of birds and their environment." Science! Data! Trend Analysis! Fresh air and sunshine! Fun!

I have been a Christmas Bird Counter since my first involvement in birding in the mid 1970s, setting aside the dates each year to join with friends and family to "run" our traditional areas, and filling in with other Counts as schedules allowed. One of these traditions had become "Wilmington on Saturday, Upper Bucks County (my boyhood home in PA) on Sunday" on the first of the CBC weekends in late December and early January. This plan worked fine for 25 years! - until last year when, due to safety concerns in the field related to hunting seasons, the Wilmington CBC was moved to Sunday! This posed a personal dilemma - which Count do I give up?

So - What's the point of this little reflection? I just heard the rumor again last week that there is talk of establishing Sunday hunting dates in Delaware. This would pose a most difficult situation for DOS and anyone participating in CBCs, not to mention the challenges for compiler's trying to find satisfactory dates and willing participants! We already juggle field trip schedule dates with special hunting season dates set in, for example, Bombay Hook.

I would propose that this is an issue we should be in front of and not have to react to after the fact. If any of you knows the truth or fiction behind the rumor, I would appreciate being brought up to date (rrufe1@aol.com). This is an area in which your

Council can be effective in making sure our interests are known and represented.

As this is written in late November, I am packing for my annual deer hunting outing, which always includes a full measure of birding, but our hunting is - never on Sunday!

Bob (302-998-9298)

Monthly Programs

Programs are held on the third Wednesday of each month from September through May. Refreshments are served starting at 7:00PM, and programs start at 7:30.

We meet at the Ashland Nature Center, 3511 Barley Mill Road, Hockessin, while renovations take place at the Delaware Museum of Natural History. Other sites may be visited and would be announced well in advance in *The Flyer* and on the DOS website at www.DOSbirds.org.

December 17, 2003

Annual DOS Book Sale

This is an excellent opportunity to acquire additions to your birding library, or to stock up on birding related Christmas gifts. Now is the time to start sorting through bird-related books, periodicals, and other materials to donate to the auction.

All of the money raised by auctioning your donated items will go directly into the DOS Conservation fund where it will be earmarked for projects such as the Scout project to build bluebird nest boxes. Mark your calendars for the meeting on December 17, and plan to join us. You can donate items at the membership meetings in October and November.

DOS Program Contact:

Sally O'Byrne

302-658-8286

obyrne@dca.net

Field Trips

Saturday, December 6, 2003

Edwin B. Forsythe (Brigantine) NWR

Trip Leader: Tom McParland

Meet At: Del. Swim Club, I-295 at Del.
Memorial Bridge, Rte 9 exit.

When: 6:30AM sharp

Winter waterfowl & raptors. Bring/Buy lunch.
Dinner with group. Joint w/BCDC. Entrance fees in effect.

Sunday, December 7, 2003

John Heinz (Tinicum) Wildlife Refuge

Trip Leader: Karen Zeitler

Meet At: Refuge Headquarters

When: 8:30AM

Look for a variety of wintering species, visit the new Wetlands Exhibit Center. Half Day. Entrance fees in effect.

Saturday, December 13, 2003

Gulls

Trip Leader: Mike Smith

Meet At: Fox Point State Park; Edgemoor Rd
exit from I-495

When: 8:00AM

This is the first of 3 gull trips to look for and study gulls, both rare and common. Half Day.

Saturday, December 13, 2003

Youth Bird Count

Trip Leader: Joe Sebastiani & Derek Stoner

Meet At: Ashland Nature Center

When: 7:30AM

Help count birds for the national event; contribute findings to DOS and National Audubon Society. RSVP by December 10th.

*Sunday, December 14, 2003 through Sunday,
January 4, 2004*

Christmas Bird Counts

Contact the count compiler if you are interested!
See below for more details.

Saturday, January 10, 2004

2004 List Head Start

Trip Leader: Frank Rohrbacher

Meet At: Boyds Corner Park & Ride, Rtes 13
& 301.

When: 7:30 AM

Get an early start on your 2004 list. Various Delaware sites. Full Day

Sunday, January 11, 2004

Winter Feeding Station Tour

Trip Leader: Karen Zeitler

Meet At: Contact trip leader for details of
meeting place and time.

When: --

Winter passerines. Will cover Ashland and/or the home of Esther & Stanley Speck Half Day.

Field Trip Committee Chair:

Donald Ohlandt
302-998-3247

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2003 Audubon Christmas Bird Counts

Sponsored by the Delmarva Ornithological Society

It's that time of year again-- when families get together for the holidays and enjoy great meals, stories of days gone by and of course, football. However, if by mid December you are starting to tire of all this holiday cheer I have just the thing for you -- the 2003 Christmas Bird Counts sponsored by the DOS and nearby bird groups. Enjoy the camaraderie of fellow birders (usually not family) and escape into the wilds of Delaware (far away from the TV and in-laws) and join us on one or more of this year's counts. Whether you are an experienced or beginner birder these counts are a great way to build your year list, improve your identification skills, or just enjoy the large diversity of birds and birding areas that can be found in Delaware. If you are interested in participating in any of this year's counts please contact the count compiler listed below.

Sunday, December 14th, 2003

Middletown Bruce Lantz
(302) 378-8469
emdb2lantz@aol.com

Wilmington Howard Brokaw
(302) 655-8076
hbrokaw@aol.com

Sunday, December 21st, 2003

Bombay Hook Andy Ednie
(302) 792-9591
ednieap@witnet.com

Saturday, January 3rd, 2004

Rehoboth Joe Swertinski
(302) 292-1592
Swertinski.j@mcd.gen.de.us

Sunday, January 4th, 2004

Cape Henlopen Frank Rohrbacher
(302) 475-5771
rohrbaf@aol.com

Jim White

Christmas Count Dinner

We will be hosting a dinner for any participants in the Rehoboth/ Cape Henlopen Christmas counts at

my place in Dewey Beach on Saturday January 3 after the Rehoboth Count. Come any time after dusk. The address is 229 Elizabeth Street. This year, we will ask people coming to chip in a few dollars (probably \$10) towards the cost of the dinner and beer. If you think you may come, please contact me, Sally O'Byrne by email or phone (658-8286, cell - 584-4761). Last minute people are welcome, but we would like to get a rough count before the weekend.

Good birding, Sally

Pelagic Birding Trips

See Life Paulagics has a pelagic trip scheduled from Lewes, DE on Sat., Dec. 6 for winter seabirds. The time is from 6:00 AM to about 5:00 PM and the cost is \$90.

For more information, call 215-234-6805, email info@paulagics.com, or visit www.paulagics.com.



PO Box 9021
Wilmington, DE 19809
Phone: (302) 529-1876
Fax: (302) 529-1085
E-mail: FONT@focusonnature.com

**UPCOMING BIRDING TOURS
IN 2004
IN THE AMERICAN WEST**

COLORADO Apr 16-25 \$1675
*(our annual spring tour for grouse specialties
& other interesting birds. A great tour!)*
PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY REGISTERED

WEST TEXAS Apr 25-May 3 \$1495
(Big Bend & Davis Mtns at a prime time for birds.)
JUST A FEW PLACES STILL AVAILABLE

SO. ARIZONA Jul 23-Aug 2 \$1675
(mountains & desert, hummingbirds & more)

*A complete schedule of tours worldwide,
itineraries, & photo galleries, are on our
web-site: www.focusonnature.com*

Committee News

Conservation

Susan Peterson

Annual DOS Conservation Award

It's time again to make your nominations for the annual DOS Conservation Award. You may use the enclosed nomination form, or download it from our web site. You can nominate a group, individual, or organization for this award. The deadline for nominations is March 1, 2004.

December Membership Meeting.

The December meeting of our bird club will be a very special one: our book auction. This marks the third bi-annual book auction we have held during the holiday season. We will be serving home-baked goodies and holiday beverages for you to enjoy while you peruse the books and other bird-related materials and make your silent bids. Then we will announce the winners of the silent auction. Our own Jeff Gordon and Mike Smith will share the honors as auctioneers, and they will be auctioning off the rare book offerings in a live auction. The bidding promises to get fierce at times! Please come prepared to try your luck at bid and to have a good time! If you have books to donate, you can bring them with you on auction night, but please contact Susan Peterson at 302-368-2515 or peterston@peccs.com, to let me know you will be bringing books, and approximately how many.

Report on the Annual Meeting of the ABC

Bob Rufe and I represented DOS at the November 13 meeting of the National Policy Council of the American Bird Conservancy in Washington. Some highlights from that meeting:

- There was exciting news the ABC is developing something called the Bird Conservation Alliance, which is envisioned as a way to involve many more bird clubs in the activities of ABC. The concern has been that while the National Policy Council is truly meant to include bird clubs and other bird-related interests from all over the United States, large and small, only so many people can actually make it to the meetings in Washington. The new Alliance (BCA) will be web-based, with action alerts going out to all members. It will eventually replace the National Policy Council. We will keep DOS members abreast of the developments with this new alliance.
- *Mountaintop Mining*: Melinda Walton gave us an update on the shocking destruction of mountaintops and creek valleys that has currently been approved in states like West Virginia and Tennessee. Entire mountaintops will be removed, and valleys filled, unless this mining can be stopped.
- John Neilson, science reporter for NPR, gave a fascinating insider's look at how science stories get into the news in his lunchtime talk.
- Linda Winter gave an update on the Cats Indoors efforts. She reminded us that those in favor of Trap, Neuter, Release programs continue to be highly organized, and that we need to give support to local and state agencies who are attempting to protect public health by limiting the release of feral cats.
- Daniel Klem, Jr., gave us an update on research involving window strikes by birds. Here is a helpful hint: one thing Bob and I learned that surprised us is that the safest distance between our windows at home and bird feeders is actually three feet. When the feeders are that close, the birds are either slowing down on the approach to the feeder or just leaving from the feeder, so that if they do hit, they will not be injured. Bob and I both thought the distance should be significantly greater, and that is consistent with where I see most people put their feeders. As far as the windows themselves, there still is no commercially available type of glass for business or home applications that makes windows more visible to birds. Any clear or reflective glass is subject to bird strikes which frequently result in death. Hawk silhouettes or other attempts to make the windows visible to birds need to be no greater than 4 inches apart vertically, and no greater than 2 inches apart horizontally, to be effective.
- For a current version of ABC's publication *BIRD CALLS*, see the link at www.abcbirds.org/birdcalls, or join the ABC by visiting www.abcbirds.org/membership.

Cape Henlopen Hawk Watch

UNOFFICAL Raptor Count Totals for Fall 2003:

Species	Season Total
Black Vulture	0
Turkey Vulture	60
Osprey	286
Bald Eagle	24
Northern Harrier	62
Sharp-shinned Hawk	257
Cooper's Hawk	67
Northern Goshawk	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	4
Broad-winged Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	10
Rough-legged Hawk	0
Golden Eagle	0
American Kestrel	75
Merlin	45
Peregrine Falcon	40
Unknown	37
TOTAL	969

Thank you Liz and Wayne for posting all those daily reports and organizing the hawk watch coverage crew. November 18th was the last official count day for the fall season and on that day Liz shared this little doggerel with us:

A SALUTE

Henlopen Hawkwatchers, here's to you,
to Wayne, Ed and David, to Bruce, Ruth and Lew,
To Jim and Lorraine, George, Kathy and Sue
The Hawkwatch is lucky to have such a crew

Henlopen Hawkwatchers, although you are few,
Your skill, perseverance and patience ring true.
Cape May may count thousands, we only an few,
But I'd never trade their counters for you.

Here's to the hawks that occasionally flew,
Here's to the east winds that most often blew.
Here's to the ducks, deer, and cormorants too
That brightened up dull days with something to view.

Spring skies will be warming, the ocean deep blue,
We'll watch for the hawks to return into view.
From the south to the north we'll log them anew.
Please join us in March, when the winter is through.

Liz Dumont

Shorebird Counts

DNREC has asked DOS to join them this spring in restarting the Delaware Shorebird Count. For a period of five years in the late 1990s DOS was instrumental in collecting this spring sighting data. The proposed count for this spring is only in the planning phase and no survey protocol has been shared with us at this point. We are looking for your input, comments and also volunteers who would be interested in doing census work for this project. This data has value and will be timely. As we found out at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting last month, shorebird survey data will become part of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crab, as currently proposed in Addendum III. That's right - DOS birders could help add insight into decisions impacting this current Horseshoe Crab harvest mess. So get on board and give me a call, (Bruce Lantz 1-302-378-8469).

The DOS welcomes the following new member:

Gail Berkman
321 North Bedford St
Georgetown, DE 19947
302-855-9228
marigolds2@aol.com

Also, please note the following directory changes and corrections:

Dr. & Mrs. Gerald M. Whitman
~~726 Loveville Rd Cottage 49~~
726 Loveville Rd Apt 207
~~Hockessin, DE 19707-1515~~
Hockessin, DE 19707-1505

Dick Parker
~~Rvbppark@aol.com~~ rb.parker@verizon.net

Dr. & Mrs. Lloyd & Eleanor Falk
e-mail: lloydffalk@aol.com

~~Pamela Thompson~~ Pamela Gill
~~413 Geddes St.~~ 413 Geddes St.

Mrs. Eugene F. Oates
Membership status: **Life Member**
Phone: (610) 274-0357 (h)
(302) 432-5289 (w)
home e-mails: frances.oates@verizon.net
birdlady@birdlady.com
work e-mail: frances.oates@mbna.com.

Philip & Betty Klabunde
~~philklabvb@aol.com~~
philklabvb@comcast.net

Winter Hummingbirds

Once again I am asking that anyone who has a non-Ruby-throated Hummingbird or any Hummingbird at all after November 1 e-mail me at live4birds@aol.com. I am very interested in documenting western hummingbirds in the east, and have banded 28 individuals of 3 species and Ruby-throated in the MidAtlantic. Each and every individual bird allows us to learn more about the western birds that appear in the east. Many of these birds are best identified in the hand.

Mary Gustafson