

ATLANTIC CURRENTS

Newsletter of the Atlantic Audubon Society
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Editor: E. Bristow

An excellent program on the Osprey was the feature of the October meeting. Mark Pokras provided some background for the excellent film "The Empty Nest". The November program was great as Jim Akers and John Danzenbaker took us on their safari to East Africa via slides, complete with sound effects. Well done to all! For those of you who have missed these programs, try to make our coming ones. We are lining up some fine talents- most from among our members.

Field trip to Hawk Mountain was highlighted by a Golden Eagle as well as a fair flow of other hawks. The Brigantine Refuge trip was most notable for the great lack of people. Our beginners birding session was good and we will continue these. Future ones will be noted in the newsletter as the Press cut the last one out of our news release.

COMING ATTRACTIONS:

Field trip: Jan. 4, 1975- Barnegat Light area for winter seabirds. Meet at Barnegat Light Parking Area at 9AM. Bring lunch, Scopes and binoculars. Dress warmly.

Monthly programs: Save these dates for regular meetings. All Wednesdays.
Jan. 22 Feb. 26 Mar. 26 April 23 May 28

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS: We need more participants! These counts provide valuable data on bird populations and changes, and more eyes and ears mean better counts. We can use feeder watchers also in the appropriate areas.

- Dec. 15 - Marmora Count. This our own project. Contact Jim Akers @ 266-7859 or be at the Board meeting Dec. 11- Stockton, Rm G201 7:30 PM
- Dec. 18 - Tuckerton Count. Contact Ben Hiatt @ 296-4016
- Dec. 21 - Oceanville Count. Contact Ed Bristow @ 641-4670

Post-count get-togethers are planned after each (same day). Leader will have information.

CONTEST! CONTEST! CONTEST! We need a design for use as a shoulder patch, as part of official stationary, and other similar use. As example- Great Egret used by National Audubon. Open to all members. Submit entry(s) on 8 x 11 sheet with no identification on sheet. Enclose name and description on a separate sheet. Design may be in color or black and white. Subject should be representative of this area. Send entry To club address- P. O. Box 63 Absecon. Deadline is Jan. 15. Voting will be on Jan. 22 at regular meeting. All entries will be numbered for voting identification.

HELP WANTED: Yes, we need help for our various committees. If you can give some time in any capacity we will be delighted. Committees include publicity, field trips, membership, fund-raising, education. Drop a note to above address or contact one of the officers.

PRESIDENTS CORNER: Participation is essential if this organization is to survive and grow. Those of us who have been in since the beginning felt that there was a need for this type organization in this area, and judging by the

initial response and growth in membership our feelings were correct. However, we must provide as broad an educational experience for our members and the public in general as possible in order that everyone becomes aware of our natural resources and the need to preserve what little we have left. Only in that way can we continue to thrive and fulfil our function.

In line with recent trends toward openness in meetings, we will provide a copy of minutes of all meetings at the regular monthly meeting so that anyone wishing to know what goes on at the board meeting or to find out what they missed at the regular meeting will have the opportunity to do so.

In order to make the review of bird sightings, etc. which we started doing, more useful for future reference, I would request that all who have any contributions to please provide a legible written copy to the secretary so she can incorporate this info into an appendix of the minutes.

Field trip committee is planning the 1975 program and suggestions are welcomed. We also need fund-raising ideas. We are starting a Sanctuary Fund-collection container will be present at all meetings for contributions.

FIELD NOTES:

That stranger in Brigantine has created considerable discussion. Initially reported by Jim Akers, this gull has been the object of much scrutiny and and controversy as to its identity. No- it is not Jonathan Livingston! There are presently several schools of thought as to species, but it would appear that nothing will be definitely settled unless it can be captured for closer exam, measurements, etc.

Large numbers of snow geese are at the Brigantine Refuge along with good numbers of whistling swans. An immature Bald Eagle and immature Golden Eagles have also been sighted.

Ed Bristow

By mid-October our banding reflected a distinct change in local birds. Large numbers of White-throated Sparrows were banded. Very few were captured a second time reflecting the fact that the birds were rapidly moving and had not settled in the areas they will occupy for the winter. Our last Towhee was taken on Oct. 18 but one late male was seen on Nov. 11 near Oyster Creek. The first three days in Nov. yielded our first Fox Sparrow, House Finch, and Dark-eyed Junco although Juncos have been observed since Oct. 15. An injured Saw-whet Owl was brought in from Brigantine Island on Nov. 9. On the 17th of Nov. we still had a few Grackles and one Catbird hanging on and Nov. 19 brought the first Evening Grosbeak to our feeders.

Notice to members- what to do for sick or injured birds:

If you find a sick or injured bird, do two things right away.

1. Put bird in a dark place (box, bag, etc.) and keep it warm.
2. Call Brigantine Refuge 652-1655. It is illegal to keep wild birds without a permit and the refuge staff can arrange for the bird to receive proper care. It is important to have the bird taken care of quickly so please do not hesitate.

For more information contact Mark and Martha Pokras at 652-7655.

Mark and Martha Pokras

South Jersey Botany: "Oak Barrens" would be the name of our famous South Jersey vegetation if the number of species present had had anything to do with the name. Nine species of oak occur in the Pine Barrens, but only two pines, pitch and short-leaf, naturally occur there. These nine oaks

are: black, white, scarlet, blackjack, chestnut, dwarf chestnut, post, Spanish, and scrub.

A number of other oaks occur in South Jersey outside the Pine Barrens. Among these is the red oak, the New Jersey state tree. The others are pin oak, willow oak, swamp white oak, and basket oak. The latter two are local and not common. So, there are a dozen common oaks in South Jersey.

These may be readily identified through the late fall and winter since many of the oaks hold their dead leaves until spring. Those that shed their leaves leave many long-lasting clues to their identity scattered about on the ground beneath them.

These oaks along with virtually all native and some introduced trees growing east of the Rockies may be easily identified by using the Master Tree Finder by May T. Watts. This inexpensive little guide is available from Nature Study Guild, Box 972, Berkeley, Calif. 94701. Other illustrated booklets in this series that I recommend are Flower Finder and Winter Tree Finder.

Frank Knight

(Editor's note- Botany walks will be on the spring field trip schedule as well as bird walks.)

Finally, in this coming holiday season, we express our good wishes to all and would leave you to ponder this quote from Aldo Leopold concerning his children:

"I hope to leave them good health, an education, and possibly even a competence. But what are they going to do with these things if there be no more deer in the hills, and no more quail in the coverts? No more snipe whistling in the meadow, no more piping of widgeons and chattering of teal as darkness covers the marshes; no more whistling of swift wings when the morning star pales in the east? And when the dawn-wind stirs through the ancient cottonwoods, and the gray light steals down from the hills over the old river sliding softly past its wide brown sandbars- what if there be no more goose music?"