

ATLANTIC CURRENTS

Newsletter of the Atlantic Audubon Society
P. O. Box 63, Absecon, N. J. 08201

VOL V, NO. 2

November, 1978

Editor: E. Bristow

Goose music once again fills the air, magnificent color surrounds us as the leaves do their thing, and fall harvest time heralds entry into colder weather. As wild creatures prepare their winter quarters, we are reminded to prepare our own dwellings, not only to keep comfortable, but also to conserve energy.

PREVIEW OF COMING ATTRACTIONS

- Programs: Nov. 15th "Those Penguins" A slide program by our own Claire Gerber on her trip to the Falkland Is. and area. Room C-134, Stockton College. Coffee hour at 7:30 PM, meeting at 8.
- Jan. 24 Members Night A yearly favorite. Bring your slides to share with all. To insure that everyone desiring to present slides has an equal opportunity, slides must be in groups of 10 or less. We will present as many rounds as people will stay for, but everyone will get at least one.
- Field Trips: Nov. 18 Birding at Brigantine Wildlife Refuge. Meet in the refuge parking lot at 8:30 AM. Leader is Ed Bristow. Bring binoculars, scopes, cameras, etc. plus a hot drink if you wish. Be sure to dress warmly as November winds can be mean even when the sun is out. This is a good trip for novices.
- Jan. 20 Winter birding at Barnegat Light. Meet at lighthouse parking lot at 9 AM. Binoculars, scopes, and warm dress is the order of the day. It gets chilly!

IT'S COUNT TIME AGAIN

It's time now to begin preparations for our Christmas Bird Counts. Last year the Oceanville Count was tops for the state - we'd like to do it again, but it takes lots of eager eyes. If you wish to participate, contact the leaders listed below or drop a note to our box with your phone number and we'll contact you. Each participant must contribute \$1.50 which goes toward the cost of compiling and printing the massive count edition of American Birds.

Oceanville CBC	Dec. 16th	Contact Ed Bristow	641-4670
Marmora CBC	Dec. 17th	Contact John Danzenbaker	927-6047
Cape May CBC	Dec. 23rd	Contact Keith Seager	884-8778
Tuckerton CBC	Dec. 31st	Contact Fred Hamer	965-1948

Lets see a real effort this year, particularly on the Marmora count!

T. V. Program Note: For those of you who are subscribers to cable TV, there is a program scheduled weekly on Thursday evenings at 7 PM called Natural Harmony. This is on Channel 2 for Atlantic City and downbeach communities, and will be on 13 for mainland subscribers to Sammons Cable. Started previously by Carolyn Bassett, the Atlantic Audubon Society will now provide the alternate week programs. Through this effort, we hope to reach more people with programs of an entertaining and informative nature. Watch for it!

The council of Audubon Chapters in New Jersey will hold their quarterly meeting on Dec. 2, 1978 at Stockton College. This is a vehicle to exchange ideas and develop common goals and projects. A conservation workshop will be held concurrently for the committees to also exchange ideas. We will be the host chapter on this occasion.

REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

At the first meeting called by chairperson John Williamson, the ten members attending agreed to continue and augment the sound program pursued by the committee under June Carlton. Rather than tackle more than can be adequately handled, the group will concentrate on wetlands protection as the prime area of concern, with roadside environment as a second area of concern. Other projects will be taken up as time and manpower permits. More members are needed to help with these activities.

A wetlands slide program for education and awareness of adults and students is being developed in conjunction with the education committee. Members who would like to become active in this area are urged to attend meetings or contact John at 927-4323.

Conservation and environmental action by legislators and government agencies needs our letters of support. Action areas requiring such attention can be found in Audubon publications and on our Action Areas board set up at each meeting. In return for an information copy for the chapter files, each sender of a conservation supporting letter will receive 2 fifteen cent stamps to defray mailing expense. To collect, turn copy of your letter into our secretary, Nora Delesantro, or mail to society post office box.

John Williamson, Chairman

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The membership committee held its first meeting of the current year on Oct. 18th at the home of the chairman. Some of the projects are as follows:

Greeting and registering attendees at Audubon meetings.

Maintaining contact with members not attending meetings.

Obtaining new members and following up on lapsed members.

Placing back issues of Audubon Magazine in various public places.

Placing Audubon posters in public buildings, with a supply of application blanks.

Checking local libraries to ascertain whether newsletter is being posted.

The members of the committee are Evelyn Baldwin, Louise Bancroft, Marion Bartlett, Lester Block, Paq Bristow, Schuyler Dawson, Joseph Delesantro, Sr., Shirley DeMill, Marion Johnston, Peter Polisse, Martha Pokras, Rudi Salati, and Sarah Smith. Any of these people can be contacted for further information on membership, blanks, etc.

Ruth Stamps, Chairman

ACTIVITIES

Field trips thus far this year have had some weather problems. The Jeffers Landing trip led by George Bassett had a nice day and a good turnout to explore the marsh and upland plants of the area. Mark Pokras led a marsh walk at Brigantine Refuge and also had a good day and a good crowd to learn more about marsh plants, birds, and the interplay of the ecosystem. Cape May Birding and Hawk Mountain trips both suffered from poor weather conditions and small attendance, although each had its good features. Many hawks at Cape May with few small birds, and a golden eagle with a good variety of other hawks for the group at Hawk Mountain were the features.

The canoe trip led by the DeMills had better luck on the weather and a good turnout to paddle down the Wading River. No one turned over, and all enjoyed the day.

Our September program featured Terry Brown, president of Jersey Shores Chapter, with a fine slide program on the four seasons in the hardwood forests of New England followed by a stirring music and slide conclusion. This was undoubtedly one of the finer programs we've had over the past years.

The October meeting featured Bob Schoelkopf, head of the Marine Mammal Stranding Center, presently housed in Gardner's Basin. Bob showed slides of some of the mammals that have washed up on our beaches, and talked about the work he and his small group do. Our society has supported this work since its inception and have provided some crucial financial support in the early days.

A small group of individuals spent a couple hours on Oct. 29th shoveling out some sand from the shoulder of Great Creek Road in Oceanville, from the small bog located there. As rains had washed the fill into the bog and was threatening to bury some of the bog vegetation, our group with the assistance of Galloway Township helped to rectify the situation. This was a good example of the kind of good response that can be obtained when reasonable people can join together.

LEGISLATION

The congress recessed without passage of the Alaska Lands bill. After an overwhelming yea vote in the House, The Senate version was badly chopped up in committee in hopes of completing action this year. The efforts of the Senators from Alaska completely obstructed action with their filibusters and threats of more created an impasse that bottled up other legislation needing action. We are now left with the hope that the Interior Department will hold off any disposition of lands by administrative action. Efforts will be made in the next Congress to re-pass this vital bill.

Some good news did come out of the final days with the passage of the omnibus Parks bill which included some badly needed words on the Pinelands. Once again, we need to have good input on this issue in the coming months to insure that greed does not lead to the destruction of another unique area.

WANDERINGS OF THE UNTUTORED NATURALISTS

Travel this year took us to Michigan, an area we had not previously explored. Our primary goal was to see and hopefully photograph Kirtland's Warbler, a small bird in much trouble due to habitat loss and parasitism by cowbirds. We began our search in Mio, where a large statue of this bird graces the main street of town. At the ranger station, we saw a slide program and heard tapes of the male singing, and were given descriptions of the management programs in progress to aid this endangered species.

The ranger led our small group by car caravan out into the Jack Pine forests that the Kirtland's requires for nesting, showing us some of the management failures as well as successful areas, as we traveled. As we left our cars, the penetrating song of the Kirtland Warbler rang in our ears. This particular bird proved to be too elusive, so we headed for a second area. This time our chase was successful as we rapidly closed in on a beautiful blue and yellow male, flitting from stump to stump, and singing like Caruso in the bright morning sun.

For anyone wishing to see this lovely little bird, contact the U. S. Forest Service in Mio, or the Michigan State Forest Service office in Grayling. Both lead trips like ours from April to early July. All breeding areas are protected and chances of finding this bird without the guidance provided is difficult.

Other birding areas abound in the lower peninsula. Numerous small streams, bogs, woodlands, and shorelines abound with passerines, shorebirds, and hawks. Such places as Tawas Point, Waugoshance Point, Reece's Bog near Cheboygan, as well as numerous refuges and game management areas, can provide excellent birding. See Pettingill's "Guide to Bird-finding East of the Mississippi" for details. A fine area for visiting, especially with children, is the Kellogg Sanctuary just outside of Battle Creek. Here, some captive birds with injuries preventing release to the wild are easily observed. They also serve to decoy in wild birds to increase the enjoyment of the visitor.

Mammals also abound, particularly in the more northern sections, with porcupines, raccoons, skunks, woodchucks and others as frequent traveling and camping companions. Some deer were easily seen on the forest roads. Many animals were quite bold, like the skunk that invaded our trailer - one that fortunately had a very placid disposition.

In addition to the Kirtland's Warbler, there are numerous northern-nesting species to be found, as well as many that migrate through in spring and fall. Sandhill Cranes gather in some areas during fall migration, joining with a few nesting pairs that are hard to find.

The forests are mixed, ranging from Jack Pine to Maple and Beech, from cedar and spruce bogs to birch of marvelous dimensions. Numerous wildflowers and shrubs provide a fruitful experience for the botanist. Large farm areas in the south gave way to extensive forest areas to the north, mostly of second growth trees due to the heavy logging of Michigan in her earlier days.

This area provides a most interesting mixture of natural habitats, with ample streams for canoeing, camping areas all over, and a lot of peace and quiet, especially in the spring and fall.