

ATLANTIC CURRENTS

Newsletter of the Atlantic Audubon Society
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Fall is with^{us}, foliage has been going through its color changes; crisp nights and sometimes pleasant days herald the oncoming cold season; and high overhead goose music fills the air. So the ever changing circle of the seasons proceeds - ever oblivious to the machinations of mortal man.

CALENDAR

- Program Meeting: Nov. 16 Africa Speaker is Ruth Stamps. Stockton College, Rm J203, 7:30 PM Slide program.
- Field Trip: Nov. 19 Birding at Brigantine Wildlife Refuge. Meet at 8:00 AM in the refuge parking lot. Bring binoculars, guides, and lunch if you wish to make a day of it.
- Field Trip: Nov. 26 Winter birding at Barnegat. Meet at Barnegat Lighthouse parking lot at 9:00 AM. Binoculars, hot drinks, and warm clothes- that wind can be cold!

PROGRAM NOTES: An excellent presentation on the beauties of the Pine Barrens was provided at the September meeting by Eileen and Lou Hand, and certainly should have stimulated all present to try to learn more about this unique area, and what can be done to preserve it. The October meeting featured David Kinsey of the DEP speaking on the coastal zone, wetlands, and the effects of current changes on these critical areas. He also outlined the programs now functioning to conserve these areas. Our conservation and education committees will be having some further say on these vital issues. They are now reviewing the draft version of the Coastal Zone Strategy which has just been made available. Coming up in November will be a program on Africa by our own Ruth Stamps.

FIELD TRIP NOTES: Our first children's beach walk was sparsely attended, but those who made it found out quite a bit about the shoreline community. This will be repeated in the spring according to Chairman Fred Hamer. The later beach walk was well attended with some 20 + people following Mark Pokras along the north end of Brigantine Island for a close look at the inter-relationship of life on a barrier beach island. Our Hawk Mountain weekend got off to a very soggy start thanks to that nasty coastal storm that zapped us. However, Saturday turned out to be a gorgeous day and those 20 hearty souls who made it up the mountain were treated to some fine birds and a beautiful view. Highlights included an immature golden eagle, a goshawk, several merlins, as well as good flights of sharpshins and red-tailed hawks. Coming up are trips to the Brigantine Refuge and Barnegat Light for some early winter birding.

Special note: The trip to the Brigantine Refuge on Nov. 19th is a particularly good one for beginners, those who feel they can't manage a walking trip, and for inviting a friend whom you would like to entice into bird-watching. Most of the trip will be spent traveling around the dikes so that you will have your car to provide shelter and to save your legs. There should be lots of experts to help you with identification problems.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS:

Inaugurated in 1900 in 25 areas with some 27 participants, this annual extravaganza last year expanded to 1200 count areas and over 31,000 participants. For the myriad details, see the July 1977 issue of American Birds.

For those of you who are not familiar with this fascinating exercise, the count was derived from an ancient English custom called the "side hunt" in which "sportsmen" would chose sides and then sally forth on Christmas Day to kill everything with feathers and fur that crossed their path. Dr. Frank Chapman, in 1900, urged readers of "Birdlore" (now Audubon magazine) to spend part of Christmas day counting birds and then reporting their results along with weather conditions for publication in the magazine. Besides initiating a sport to publicize conservation, he foresaw the value of obtaining data on winter bird populations correlated with the yardstick of coverage time. The growth of this program was so rapid that standards and rules became necessary in order to insure uniform reporting. Today, a count area must fill or fit within a 15 mile diameter circle and cover one calendar day. Care is taken to insure that adjacent areas do not overlap and new areas are accepted only after checking to insure that it is within these guidelines. The official count period is two weeks in December, usually extending from mid-December to the beginning of January.

This year will be the 78th annual count and the Atlantic Audubon Society will be active in three counts. The first is Oceanville on Dec. 17th; the second is the Marmora count which this society established, on Dec. 18th; and the third is the Tuckerton count on the 31st of December. In addition to those who will be in the field counting, we have need of feeder watchers, particularly those who have active feeders. Each participant must pay \$1.50 for each count in which he participates including feeder watchers. This money goes toward the cost of compiling the data and printing the over 500 page issue of American Birds in which this is reported.

We would like to encourage every one interested in participating to contact the compilers who will make assignments on coverage areas, collect fees, etc. If you are interested, contact the following:

Oceanville Count: Dec. 17th Ed Bristow 641-4670
Marmora Count: Dec. 18th Jim Akers 266-7859
Tuckerton Count: Dec. 31st Ben Hiatt 296-4016

You do not have to be an expert to participate. Those who have less experience will be placed with more expert birders. The more eyes we have looking, the more accurately our results will reflect the bird populations. Finally, there is no rain date!! Counts go as scheduled regardless of weather.

ODDS & ENDS:

We have now reached a total of 402 chapters in National Audubon and membership continues to grow. This represents a lot of people across the country who are active and concerned about our environment and what will happen in the future.

Alaska Lands bills are now under study in Congress. Mining, logging, and development interests are pushing for much smaller amounts of land to be set aside so that they can get into whatever areas they deem necessary to their interests. Remember that you have an interest also, and you can help protect that interest by writing your representatives in the House and Senate and let them know where you stand. Just remember that it can saved now, but once destroyed, that wild beauty will be gone forever.

MEMBERSHIP:

A warm welcome is extended to those individuals who recently became joint members of the Atlantic Audubon Society in addition to their membership in National Audubon. We hope you will join us for meetings and other activities.

A special welcome to the following new members:

Robert Fish of Absecon	Victor Garlitos of Pleasantville
Carole Haneman of Brigantine	Terry Johnston, MD of Margate
Diane Kleiner of Absecon	Lois MacFarland of Absecon
Wesley Meis of Ocean City	Clara Proebstle of Ventnor
Betty Reale of Ventnor	Mary Ellen Reilly of Ocean City
Mrs. W.J. Ridgway of Absecon	E. Rosenfeld of Pleasantville
D. Christie of Pleasantville	Robert Specht of Pleasantville
Robert Van Gilder of Mays Landing	Blair Van Valkenburg of Lusby, Md.
Deborah Vareha of Bordentown	Joseph Vaughan of Absecon
Elizabeth Voight of Longport	H. R. White of Brigantine

We hope you will all be able to join in meetings, field trips, committee work or whatever your interests dictate.

Particular attention is called to the fact that all chapter activities are open to the public regardless of membership status. Please extend invitations to any of your friends and neighbors to attend - once they have been out to activities, it is much easier to encourage joining. Membership is based on National Audubon Society dues and brings Audubon magazine, joint membership in Atlantic Audubon and this newsletter, all for one low price. It should also be remembered that a portion of your dues paid to National is returned to the chapter to help our activities.

Consider giving a membership as a gift for Christmas or any other special occasion, or if you wish to thank someone special. If you need applications, contact our membership chairperson Ruth Stamps at 927-4966 or any of the officers.

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THE AVIAN REHABILITATION CENTER, INC

The Avian Rehabilitation Center, working in conjunction with the Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge, has been caring for sick, orphaned, and injured wild birds in South Jersey since 1973. The Center is operated by Mark and Martha Pokras of the Atlantic Audubon Society. Mark and Martha teach in the Natural Science Department at Stockton State College.

If you find birds in need of care, PLEASE remember that they can be helped. The Center returns as many birds as possible to the wild. However, even those that are permanently crippled are valuable. They are placed in zoos and nature centers where they receive good care and serve an educational purpose.

The Center is authorized to care for wild birds under Federal Permit #PRT 2-495 NY and N. J. Permit # 206, but they need your help to keep going. If you would like to know what you can do to help, talk to Mark or Martha after any Audubon meeting. The A. R. C. is a non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.

If you find a hurt bird, call the following:

Weekdays: Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge 652-1665
Evenings and weekends: Mark and Martha Pokras 652-7655

THE TRIP LOG:

Your editor and wife recently had an opportunity to visit Point Pelee in Ontario, Canada, one of the major focal points of migration. Much as Cape May acts as a funneling point on the Atlantic flyway, Pt. Pelee serves in a similar fashion in the midwest. It has been long renowned as a "birding hotspot".

Although spring is reported to be the most exciting time in terms of variety of bird species, fall has its own attractions, not the least of which is the much smaller numbers of people. Infact, on weekdays, there are very few except for birders.

On our recent trip we were treated to a fall spectacular of thousands of Monarch butterflies migrating south across Lake Erie. Numbered among them was a wing-tagged beauty. Overhead and zooming low along the beach and through the trees were hundreds of Sharp-shin hawks. Around the point were large numbers of ring-billed gulls and royal terns as well as common terns and an occasional courmorant. From time to time an osprey would glide overhead or a peregrine would flap steadily southward across the lake, ignoring all the activity below. Large flocks of blue jays swept down the east side of the point and back up the west side in a parade of their own.

Some of the other features of this jewel in the Canadian Park system include a mile long boardwalk out through the marsh, a tram to provide transportation between the various major points (thereby reducing car traffic considerably), and a couple of swimming beaches away from the other activities. Several beautiful picnic areas were scattered throughout the park.

A most agreeable place, a great spectacle, and mostly nice weather combined to make this a visit we will long remember, and recommend to anyone.

CURRENT ISSUES:

1. Pine Barrens - Legislation has been introduced in Congress regarding means for preserving this important and unique area. All members should watch news items regarding this and let your representatives know how you feel. Be specific in your comments and recommendations. We will have more on this in subsequent issues.
2. Federal Water Pollution Control Act - Efforts are still continuing to preserve Section 404 which authorizes the Corps of Engineers control over wetlands including inland wetlands. This time they are the good guys - letters are needed to support maintaining the status quo.
3. Cecil Andrus, Secretary of the Interior, is under heavy pressure from various groups such as ranchers, mining interests, timber people, etc. because of his strong efforts to rectify some of the poor policies followed by previous administrations which led to degradation of federal lands in some areas. Your letters supporting his positions will be most helpful.
4. Least Tern Project - As a result of our efforts to protect nesting areas of the least terns and black skimmers, and the information compiled in the process, and with the help of other groups, both of these birds have now been placed on the endangered species list in New Jersey. Efforts will continue to provide protection to these colonies in our areas through fencing where practical, through education of children in school by means of a slide show put together by members of the Education Committee, and by patrolling nesting areas.

COASTAL ZONE STRATEGY:

Drafts of this important document are now available for review prior to the dates for public hearings for comments, suggestions, criticisms, etc. Members of this organization are in the process of reviewing this document with intentions of providing some input at the public hearing in Atlantic City on November 29th. This will have a most important bearing on how many issues affecting the coastal zone, the wetlands, and the waterways of both this and other coastal areas will be resolved in years to come. Preliminary scanning indicates that it is generally a strong statement for preservation, but there will most certainly be many attacks on this by developers.

For those interested in coastal problems, our Education Chairman Mark Pokras has recommended the following books to help you understand what this is all about.

Life and Death of the Salt Marsh: by J. & M. Teal. Ballantine Paperback. \$1.95

This is a less technical book and everyone should read this for basics.

Coastal Vegetation: V. J. Chapman Pergammon Press, N.Y.C. 1976 \$9.95

Ecology of Salt Marshes and Sand Dunes: D.S. Ranwell 1972 \$16.00

These are more technical, but still useful. These should be available at the Stockton Bookstore if not at your local favorite.

In addition, if you are interested in books on nature and the environment, the bookstore at Stockton has a whole new stock including the Peterson Field Guide series which are very useful, especially to novices.

POTPURRI:

American Birds has available a booklet entitled "On the building of a basic ornithological library". Cost is \$1.75 and can be obtained by writing to American Birds, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10022.

Newest sanctuary in the National Audubon group is now opened in South Carolina's Four Hole Swamp. The Beidler Forest is a 3600 acre preserve protecting the largest known tract of virgin tupelo-bald cypress left in the world and is located some 35 miles northwest of Charleston, South Carolina. It features a long boardwalk through the swamp, similar to the arrangement at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, thus allowing people to observe the major features with a minimum amount of disturbance to the environment.

Do you have something to share with our members? These pages are open to anyone who has an interesting report, recommendation, etc. Please remember that the editor reserves the right to refuse unsuitable material, or edit down where necessary.