



Delaware Audubon Journal

Vol. XXVII No.4
May-June 2005

BIRDATHON '05

* START YOUR OWN BIRDATHON TEAM!

Competition is running strong between the two current Birdathon teams, but they welcome all comers. Get a couple of friends together and make a plan now. Contact the Co-chairs for suggestions.

Ruth Holden and her daughter, Maud Dayton, are the Co-chairs for Birdathon 2005. They have contributed thousands of dollars to the Birdathon over the past four years. "The key," Ruth says, "is to get your friends and neighbors involved. Ten- and twenty-five-cent pledges per species add up to big bucks. You don't need many species if they are worth five or ten dollars each."

For information on how to start your own team:
Leave a message at 302-428-3959 and Ruth will give you a call.

* SUPPORT THE BIRDATHON '05, MAY 1 – MAY 31

Make a copy of this page, fill in the form below, and mail your check or pledge today to: Birdathon '05, 99 Emerald Ridge Dr., Bear, DE 19701!

SUPPORT THE TEAM OF YOUR CHOICE!

Team I: Ruth Holden and Maude Dayton, mother and daughter, all-time champions for collecting the most money with the least number of species. A sure winner again this year.

Team II: Ann Rydgren heads up a group of expert birders including Dorothy Miller, Peggy Jahn, and Andy Urquhart, but their pledge numbers are dismal. Please help them out.

LET THESE PEOPLE KNOW YOU APPRECIATE THEIR EFFORTS!

They spend all day out in the field slogging around in any kind of weather to help maintain Delaware Audubon projects.

I'd like to pledge (\$.25) (\$.50) (\$1.00) per species to support Audubon and Team I Team II

I'd like to contribute a lump sum of \$_____ to support Audubon and: Team I Team II

Name:

Address:

Phone:

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



It is very easy to become discouraged when we drive through the state and see housing developments and shopping centers where once farmlands were all you could see for miles. Requests from the business community to encroach upon the Coastal Zone law have become commonplace. Delaware is no longer the tranquil, rural state it once was.

Yet there are many victories to celebrate, most of which began at the grassroots level. When developers wanted to convert Garrison's Lake Golf Club into a residential community, local residents put together a forceful coalition to stop this project. They succeeded beyond all expectations, and in the process, persuaded the State to purchase the property. There was a similar happy ending in New Castle County with the Delaware National Country Club. As of this writing, DNREC officials just announced their opposition to the proposed LNG terminal along the Delaware River. In Sussex County, private interests and the State have purchased hundreds of acres of undeveloped properties along the shoreline, with the commitment to preserve their unspoiled beauty. Each of these victories means that future generations will enjoy these rapidly disappearing areas. They all began with a few concerned individuals and mushroomed into a well-prepared, determined army.

We look forward to more triumphs. Thank you for your efforts.

Asha Iyengar

If there are any issues that you think Audubon should address that you feel strongly about, please write Issues, P.O. Box 1713, Wilmington, DE 19899, or call the office at 302-428-3959. Chairpersons can always be reached through the office answering machine, 302-428-3959.

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The Audubon Journal is published bi-monthly by the Delaware Audubon Society. Original articles may be reprinted without permission.

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Assistant Editor: Barbara Roewe
Design & Layout : Maryellen F. Birk
Printing:Sprint Quality Printing, Inc.

Delaware Audubon Society, incorporated in 1977, is a state- wide chapter of the National Audubon Society.

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We can receive contributions through your United Way payroll deduction designation. Our United Way designation number is 9017.

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<http://www.delawareaudubon.org>.

Sample educational, informative articles and features. Order books and other goodies from the Marketplace. Search the archive of past articles. Visit our photo gallery. Survey legislative updates and Action Alerts. Email policy makers.



PRIME HOOK CELEBRATES

Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge plans a continuing lecture series, “An Evening at the Hook,” for 2005 to highlight this nation’s abundant and diverse natural resources. On the second Thursday of every month at 7:00pm in the Refuge Auditorium, these hour-long programs provide an exciting opportunity to learn intriguing facts about our plants, animals, environment, and cultural history. The lectures are free, open to the public, and fun for the entire family. Check the Calendar in this issue or call the Refuge at (302) 684-8419 for more information.

Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge also has a wealth of interesting, and often unusual, bird life. Over 200 different species were cumulatively observed on Refuge field trips for 2003 and 2004. The goal is always to have everyone on the trips see all the birds encountered. Field trip leaders are Bill Fintel, Sally Fintel, and Ed Sigda.

All field trips are on a Saturday with a duration of 3 hours, except as noted. All trips originate at the Refuge Headquarters just off Route 16 (Broadkill Beach Road). Follow signs from Route 1. Trips will go rain or shine. The field trips are free and open to the public. Please call the Refuge at 302-684-8419 for more information or check out the website at <http://primehook.fws.gov> for a complete schedule of birding trips.

What You Can Do

- Attend the FREE “An Evening at the Hook” lecture series
- Take a FREE Birding Field Trip. Bring your family or a friend!

EXCITING SILENT AUCTION ITEMS!

It’s not too late to donate Silent Auction items! All Delaware Audubon members are on the auction committee. Merchants are usually happy to donate a gift certificate or an item to our auction. Restaurants, theaters, concerts, movies, food, art, crafts, and plants are all popular. Be creative and donate your particular skills or a special, guided field trip.

Don’t forget to bring your checkbook to the Annual Meeting Silent Auction. There will be a variety of things that you will want to take home with you. Something for everyone!

These are a few of the items that will be available for auction:

- **Four Phillies tickets** (with parking pass). Value: \$100. These seats are lower level, Section 141, on the aisle, all together, under the second deck, out of the sun. They are in home-run territory over the left field wall. You walk up to the top of the section into the biggest food court and Ashburn Alley.
- **Beautiful first-edition bird books**, valued from \$20 to \$60: *Lords of the Air*, First Edition, *The Wonder of Birds*, First Edition.
- **2 vol. Set, National Geographic: Song and Garden Birds and Water Prey and Game Birds**, Apparent First Edition, with Recordings.
- **Brandywine YMCA Family Membership**. Value \$850.

What You Can Do

- Call John Knox, 302-428-3959, and leave a message to make arrangements for your donation of merchandise or services.
- Bring your checkbook!

WE NEED YOU!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Join the fun!

Meet new people!

Do a great thing!



* NEEDED NOW!

Nick DiPasquale needs a few more people to work on the Conservation Committee. Please help!

* WILDFLOWERS

Wildflower enthusiast for special area in Dover.

* WELCOME WAGON

Fun loving, creative person needed to recruit and integrate new members.

* MARKETING/RECRUITMENT

Need someone with a “Type A” personality and marketing experience willing to help the environment in Delaware through member recruitment, targeted marketing and advertising for our annual birdseed sale, general member solicitation, and expanding our annual appeal.

* ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

Team of two people with 146 years of combined life experience wishes to hand off Adopt-a-Highway activity to team of four with 146 years or less life experience. In other words, we’re getting too old to do this!

Please call 302-428-3959 and leave a message if you are interested in helping.

APRIL

9 Saturday 8:00 am
Prime Hook NWR. *Early Returning Songsters*. Meet at Refuge HQ. For information, contact William J. Jones, 302-684-8419.

14 Thursday 7:00 pm
Prime Hook NWR Auditorium Lecture: *The Horseshoe Crab-Shorebird Connection in the Delaware Bay*. Greg Breese, Delaware Bay Estuary Project-U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For information, contact William J. Jones, 302-684-8419.

16 Saturday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Earth Day celebration. Killens Pond. Rain or shine.

23 Saturday 8:30 am
Adopt-A-Highway Pick-up on Creek Rd. Meet at Hopkins Rd. Visitor Center. Dorothy Miller, 302-366-8059.

23 Saturday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Milfords Parks & Recreation's Bug and Bud Festival. (Rain date is Sunday, Noon - 4:00 pm.) Contact: Don Abrutyn, Downtown Milford, Inc., 302-424-2053.

23 Saturday 6:00 am
Delmarva Ornithological Society. *Spring Migrants*, Nanticoke Watershed. All day. Meet at Boyd's Corner Park & Ride, Rtes. 13 and 301. Anthony Gonzon & Eric Braun.

MAY

1-31
Delaware Audubon Birdathon.

1 Sunday 3:00 pm
Delaware Audubon's Annual Meeting and Silent Auction. Atrium of the main building at Cokesbury Village. For information, please call 302-428-3959.

6 Friday 8:00 am
White Clay Creek (National Important Bird Area) *Spring Migrants*. Meet at Visitor Center parking lot on Creek Rd. A park fee is required. Half day. A good bit of walking along Creek Rd. will be done. Please call Peggy Jahn if you wish to participate, 302-378-6474.

8 Sunday Reservations required.
Delmarva Ornithological Society. *Shorebird ID Workshop*. Bombay Hook NWR. Call Andy Urquhart, 302-239-2471 before May 6.

9 Monday 11:00 pm (note time)
Delmarva Ornithological Society. *Look for Rails*. Meet at Boyd's Corner Park & Ride, Rtes. 13 & 301. Bring long boots. Andy Ednie, 302-792-9591.

11 Wednesday 7:30 am Delmarva Ornithological Society. *Spring Migrants*, Brandywine Creek State Park. Meet at the Park's Hawk Watch parking lot. Don Vasallo, 302-478-1733.

11 Wednesday 8:00 am
Prime Hook NWR. *Spring Big Day*. Meet at Refuge HQ. For information, contact William J. Jones, 302-684-8419.

12 Thursday 7:00 pm
Prime Hook NWR Auditorium Lecture: *How to Build a Rainforest: Seed Dispersal & Reforestation in the Amazon*. Dr. Kevina Vulinec, Assoc. Professor at Delaware State University. For information, contact William J. Jones, 302-684-8419.

13 Friday 8:00 am
White Clay Creek (National Important Bird Area) *Spring Migrants*. Meet at Visitor Center parking lot on Creek Rd. A park fee is required. Half day. A good bit of walking along Creek Rd. will be done. Please call Peggy Jahn if you wish to participate, 302-378-6474.

14 Saturday
Delmarva Ornithological Society. *Spring Count and International Migratory Bird Day*. John Janowski, 302-834-9710.

20 Friday 8:00 am
White Clay Creek (National Important Bird Area) *Spring Migrants*. Meet at Visitor Center parking lot on Creek Road. A park fee is required. Half day. A good bit of walking along Creek Road will be done. Please call Peggy Jahn if you wish to participate, 302-378-6474.

21 Saturday 7:00 am-5:00 pm
Bombay Hook NWR. *International Migratory Bird Day*. Bird walks, boat rides, Horseshoe Crabs, and more. For events schedule, please call 302-653-6872.

27 Friday 8:00 am
Prime Hook *Horseshoe Crabs and Shorebirds*. Meet at Refuge HQ. For information, contact William J. Jones 302-684-8419.

28 Saturday 7:00 am
Birding Grass Dale. For beginners. Meet in picnic area at Grass Dale Center, Polktown Rd., Delaware City. Call, time may change. Ann Rydgren, 302-235-0242





News & Views

MORE THAN JUST BIRDS...

W. Barksdale Maynard

REED-BIRDS IN THE SNOW

On snowy late winter afternoons in suburban backyards, Dark-eyed Juncos descend in flocks, bouncing merrily across the drifts in search of seeds. When I come around the corner and startle one, it goes scurrying off to hide under the spruces, more like a little gray mouse than a bird. I still prefer the older name, Slate-colored Junco, as suggestive of the prevalent color of their favorite season. Of all birds, this is the most diagnostic of winter—down to its very name. Its scientific tag, *Junco hyemalis*, was applied by Mark Catesby in the 18th century and means “reed-bird of winter.” Juncos don’t really like reeds or rushes (Latin *juncus*), but maybe the pioneering naturalist was thinking of grasses more generally and their incessant diet of seeds.

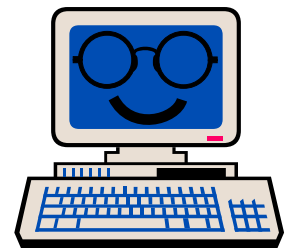
Juncos first appear in Delaware from the north in late September as days grow cool, and they remain with us no later than April—strays in May or June are extremely rare. Their tiny lives are bound up with our own. In the days when farms covered the state and every house had a vegetable garden, there must have been many desiccated stalks and seedheads where Finches could feed in winter; today’s birdfeeders are a vital substitute for this lost supply of food.

Juncos are thought to be declining widely, but in my backyard after an early spring snowstorm they are abundant, full of cheerful life when nature still seems frozen and barren and the sky is the color of slate.



Happy Spring!

SITE SEEING



This column suggests Internet websites that may be of interest to readers.

Call us at 302-428-3959 or send the address to us at: <dasmail@delawareaudubon.org>, if you have a favorite site that you think will interest others.

For all of your viewing pleasure, check out this live Bald Eagle cam from Blackwater NWR. Currently, there are three eggs in the nest which you can see every so often when the Eagle adjusts its position.

<http://www.friendsofblackwater.org/>



JOIN DELAWARE AUDUBON NOW!

INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP OFFER

For \$20.00 Receive Membership to National Audubon Society and Delaware Audubon Society

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____

Referred By _____ Date _____

Please make all checks payable to: National Audubon Society

Send this application and your check to:
Delaware Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1713, Wilmington, DE 19899

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FROM THE CONSERVATION CHAIR

Nick DiPasquale

It is with great pleasure that I return to Delaware and to Delaware Audubon. I returned in October after working for more than two years in Pennsylvania. I'll be taking over as Conservation Chair while Grace Pierce-Beck ("Bubbles") convalesces in Dover. I am keeping Grace up to date on issues before Delaware Audubon and using her feedback to inform our positions and actions.

Clearly, one of the most significant victories for our organization was the decision by DNREC Secretary Hughes on the Coastal Zone status decision request regarding BP's proposed docking facility for the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Import Facility to be located in Logan Township, New Jersey. The applicant, Crown Landing LLC, a wholly-owned indirect subsidiary of BP, posited that this facility was a manufacturing operation and thus the docking facility was permissible in the Coastal Zone. Former Governor Peterson and the Board of Delaware Audubon, as well as numerous other environmental and civic organizations, argued forcefully and persuasively that this facility was clearly a bulk product transfer operation and therefore prohibited in the Coastal Zone. Secretary Hughes agreed and denied the request. The stakes are high enough that we certainly anticipate BP will continue to pursue the project.

This issue highlights the lack of a coherent U.S. policy on energy. There currently are over fifty proposals for the siting of LNG import facilities in North America. Even the most inflated estimates of increased demand for natural gas would result in the need for six to twelve facilities at most. Instead of a thoughtful and deliberate process that would give preference to the expansion of existing facilities or the siting of new facilities away from population centers and sensitive ecological areas, the process is a virtual free-for-all that would reward companies using heavy-handed tactics and exercising political influence to get these facilities permitted at the expense of public safety, energy conservation, and support for alternative and renewable sources of energy.

Closely related to this issue is the Bush administration's obsession with opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas drilling despite opposition from the majority of Americans. It appears the administration would put this unique and fragile ecosystem at risk for an oil supply that would satisfy current U.S. demand for a mere six months. Most Americans do not consider this risk acceptable especially when you consider that just raising the fuel efficiency of passenger cars and light-duty vehicles by one mile per gallon would more than equal the amount of oil available from ANWR and without the ecological destruction that comes with drilling. Nonetheless, Congress appears eager to support the administration's efforts to open ANWR to drilling, attempting to use a provision in the budget resolution that would allow drilling to occur without being subject to a full and open debate before the American public. Delaware Audubon requested that Congressman Mike Castle oppose this Congressional end-run by signing on to a bi-partisan letter to the House leadership. He obliged. We can be proud of Delaware's congressional delegation for their consistent opposition to converting one of this country's ecological treasures into an industrial wasteland.

ELLEN WRIGHT'S BACKYARD WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE LANDSCAPING: LEARNING FROM MY MISTAKES

When I purchased my 4.5 acre property—which consisted of a house, mowed grass and weeds, and a hedgerow—I had a vision of putting in wildflower gardens, shrubs, and trees that would benefit wildlife. I pictured all these plants quickly filling the gardens and choking out the weeds. Wrong! The reality was that the weeds were much more aggressive than I imagined.

Soon after I acquired my property, friends donated many plants to my wildlife gardening project. Since I was very enthusiastic and wanted to see quick results, it ended in some planning errors. Not realizing how difficult it would be to get the garden areas established, I planted too many areas at one time. It was impossible to keep up with all the weeding. I now see it would be better to start with smaller areas and get them well established before starting new areas.





PIPING PLOVER SUITE TO BE PERFORMED

The H.B. du Pont Middle School Band, under the direction of Pam Letts, will perform the “Piping Plover Suite” at their Spring Concert on Monday, May 9 at 7:00 p.m. at Dickinson High School. For more information, please call 302-239-3420.

Commissioned by Delaware Audubon, the four-minute composition is intended to help raise awareness of an endangered species, the Piping Plover.

A FREE Resource Packet/Study Guide and an audio CD is available from <www.delawareaudubon.org>. This is an interdisciplinary project for music, mathematics, language arts, science, and performing arts teachers K-12.

JOKES & ANECDOTES ...

Q. WHAT FOWL IS A NO-NO FOR THOSE ON THE ATKINS DIET?

A. *Phalacrocorax carbo*
[Great Cormorant]



Q. OWL WITH A BIG SINGING VOICE?

A. *Micrathene whitneyi houston*
[Elf Owl]



Q. HOW DO YOU TELL A GUEST FROM TORONTO TO HAVE A SEAT IN LATIN?

A. *Sitta canadensis*
[Red-breasted Nuthatch]



Q. MOVIE IN WHICH ARNOLD SCHWARTZENEGGER CHALLENGES A TRUMPETER SWAN?

A. “*The Terminator Meets The Buccinator*”
[*Cygnus buccinator*]



NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee recommends the following nominations:

President - Mark Martell
Vice President - Fred Breukelman
Secretary - Ellen Wright
Treasurer - John Knox

Directors for service until 2008:

Nicholas DiPasquale Peggy Jahn
Leslie Savage Michael Scali

Fred Breukelman, Leslie Savage, and Dave Brannan
Nominating Committee



Bird Tales ...

Mary Leah Christmas

“HOW THE EXPERTS TALK”

Just when one starts to get comfortable interpreting such ornithological lingo as “Sharpie” and “Sp” (yes, “Sp”), one barks one’s shins on a beaut like this: “We encountered five Snow Buntings fossicking the wrack edges along the dunes.” Impressive, isn’t it?

A thousand apologies to the very capable birder who made that statement—from one who isn’t—for my taking the liberty of borrowing it. I use it for illustration purposes. One knows one has “arrived” when one can say such things with deadpan seriousness and without a scintilla of doubt as to its meaning. In other words, I won’t be using that line any time soon.

I have learned recently that feather numbers are important. Not the number of feathers, as in quantity, but the numbers of the feathers, as in individual identifiers. A book by a Harrier Hawk expert states one can amaze one’s birding companions by using this specialized ID’ing method: “Before mid-June, in the Lake States, and probably throughout the breeding range, any Harrier with gaps in both wings at about Primaries Number 1 through Number 3...is an adult female.” Cool trick, but first one must be able to ID a Harrier.

Here is a statement combining both bird-name Alpha Codes and feather numbering: “The KEGU’s primary feathers are still growing in (P9 was about three-quarters grown in and P10 was only about a third grown out—no mirror was visible on P10) and faint head streaking was visible.” The faint head seen streaking out of view is mine, to yield more room to my birding superiors—the Kelp Gull included.

BOOKS OF INTEREST



Into the Woods: John James Audubon Lives His Dream. Robert Burleigh.
Paintings by Wendell Minor.
Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 2003.
36 unnumbered pages. Hardcover.

This fanciful book for children is a combination of poetry, biography, and art. The text pairs rhymed passages with actual quotations from Audubon's journals and sets them against idyllic scenes where emotions run deep. The poetic passages represent an imaginary letter from the naturalist to his father in which he justifies his decision to "devote the rest of his life to his art," with the journal excerpts providing the factual anchors for this reverie.

Different birds and habitats are represented, each poignant. Audubon observes a Cormorant taking care of its young. Egrets stand like statues against the sky. A live Hawk calmly poses for a portrait in Audubon's studio. A dying Mourning Dove found on a hill leads to a lament about the cutting of forests to make room for pioneer settlements.

A nice book for any budding naturalist aged 9 to 12, though adults can appreciate it as well.

MLC

I AM ONLY ONE

by Edward Everett

I am only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something;
And because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do,
the something that I can do.



Delaware Audubon Society
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