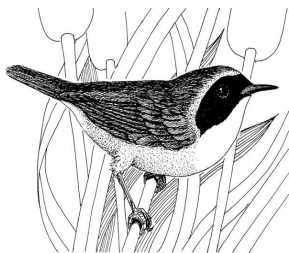


September 2012
Volume 15, Issue 1
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BIRDING CLUB

DELAWARE COUNTY

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The Birding Club of Delaware County is a birding club located in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, with the purpose of expanding individual interest in and study of wild birds.

The Birding Club of Delaware County is open to birders and bird watchers of all skill levels.

Membership is from September through August.

Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month from September through June at the Marple Township Library Meeting Room. Meetings begin at 7:30PM.

Visitors are always welcome.

For additional information regarding membership, please contact John D'Amico at 610-566-1461 or email membership@bcdelco.org.

Websites

BCDC: www.bcdelco.org

RTPHW: www.rtphawkwatch.org

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Programs

September - November

Wednesday, September 12

Bert Filemyr
Birding North Dakota

Join DVOC webmaster Bert Filemyr as he takes us on a journey through this very much under-birded part of the country. We can ask if the state's new status as the USA's second-largest petroleum producer poses any threat to its bird life.

Wednesday, October 10

Rob Bierregaard
The Barred Owl

Rob Bierregaard will let us know just "who cooks for you all" in his informative and entertaining presentation on this denizen of deciduous woods, and the creature that seems to be just as much a threat to Spotted Owls as real estate developers and loggers. Read up at: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/The-Spotted-Owls-New-Nemesis.html>

Wednesday, November 14

Ruth Pfeffer - Migration

Ruth will enlighten us about the twice-annual ordeal that is bird migration – something that delights us, but poses a real challenge for the birds themselves. The presentation will incorporate her original video footage.

PLEASE NOTE!!! All field trips are subject to last-minute changes. It is *your* responsibility to be sure the trip is being held as planned. Contact trip leader if you have questions. Plan to arrive about 15 minutes early.

UPCOMING BCDC FIELD TRIPS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| August 28 thru September 9 | Haverford College Nighthawk Watch Observatory bleachers from 6 - 8 PM. Use College Ave. entrance and park on right side of the road Leader: Sheryl Johnson 610-649-4621 or sbjohnson@haverford.edu |
| Saturday, September 15 | Connecticut Warbler Watch 7:30 - 11 AM Rushton Farm Banding Station , Newtown Square, PA @ SE corner of Delchester & Goshen Rds. Leader: Doris McGovern 610-565-8484 or mcgovern100@comcast.net |
| Sunday, September 16 | Fall Migration Watch in Nick Pulcinella's back yard@ 613 Howard Road, West Chester, PA 19380 Drop in at Nick's patio anytime between 7 AM and Noon Leader: Nick P. 610-716-0321 or nickpulcinella@verizon.net |
| Sunday, September 30 | Fall Migrants at Okehocking Nature Preserve (this is a Valley Forge Audubon program) Meet at the preserve at 9 AM directions: http://willistownparks.org/ Leader: Edie Parnum 610-964-8331 |
| Sunday, October 7 | Fall migrants at Haverford College Meet @ south visitor parking lot at 7:30 AM Leader: Sheryl Johnson 610-649-4621 or sbjohnson@haverford.edu |
| Friday, October 12 | Saw-whet Owl Banding Rushton Farm Banding Station 7:00 - ? PM Newtown Square, PA @ SE corner of Delchester & Goshen Rds. Leader: Doris McGovern 610-565-8484 or mcgovern100@comcast.net |
| Sunday, October 14 | Big Sit at Rose Tree Park 7 AM to 5 PM (all day if you can ID flyovers) No leader, just join the birders at the hawk watch in Rose Tree Park |

Please check our website at www.bcdelco.org for updates.

Field Trip Coordinators: Amy or Chris Langman, 610-566-4091 or birdgyrl@gmail.com

BCDC's June Challenge

by Al Guarente

Toward the end of May I received an email from a friend in Delaware who was participating in a birding event he called "The June Challenge". It sounded like fun to me so I invited the BCDC members to join in the fun. Out of over 100 members in the club, seven accepted the challenge. The rules were easy. See who could find the most species in a county during the month of June. The catch was you actually had to see the bird not just hear the bird. This puts a new little twist to the birding game.

The seven members participating represented four counties, Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery. They managed to find a combined total of exactly 100 species within those counties. My total of 29 for Bucks County was the only one submitted for the county. I did this while touring with my wife along the Delaware Canal.

In Montgomery County, Sheryl Johnson grabbed the lead with a total of 43 species seen mostly on the grounds of Haverford College. Steve Strawbridge managed 37 species, which included a Mute Swan and a late Common Loon. I finished in last place with two species, a Bobolink and a Grasshopper Sparrow that I chased one day.

In Chester County, Barb Elliot won the honors with 63 species, mostly from her yard. It must be nice to have a yard, which attracts so many species such as Brown Thrasher and Yellow-throated Vireo. But she did go elsewhere and managed to also find Bobolink. One day I joined Holly on her bird walk at Bucktoe Preserve in Chester County and managed to see a total of 58 species. As luck would have it we came across a pair of Blue Grosbeaks and a surprise Cerulean Warbler. Dale Kendall, who leads walks at Longwood Gardens, managed to find 52 species and managed to pull out a very late White-throated Sparrow.

Finally, in Delaware County we had three takers, Dave Eberly, Eric Weislogel and myself. I finished the month with 87 species, which included Caspian and Forster's Terns, a Chat and a Worm-eating Warbler. In second place was Eric with 79 species. He managed to pull out the Barred Owl on the bridge trail and Pileated Woodpecker and Red-shouldered Hawk. Dave, although out of the county for a lot of the time, found 52 species.

So I think a total of 100 species for June is darn good. Maybe next year we can get more members to participate and increase our total to 125. Mark your calendars now. Any takers?

UPCOMING BCDC FIELD TRIPS - CONTINUED

Saturday, October 20

Fall Migrants at the Darlington Tract

Meet at the parking lot of the Middletown Twp. Location at 8 AM

Leader: Dave Eberly 610-543-3499 or david.eberly@gmail.com

Saturday, October 27

Waterfowl and Rarities at Bombay Hook NWR

Meet at refuge HQ at 8 AM

Leader: John D'Amico 610-566-1461 or jsdam3@verizon.net

Birds and the Bard

How much do you remember from Hamlet? The following three lines are all from Shakespeare's play. Fill in the bird that completes the line.

Act 1, Scene 3 - Polonius: Ay, springes to catch _____ .

Act 4, Scene 5 - Laertes: And, like the kind, life rendering _____ , repast them with my blood.

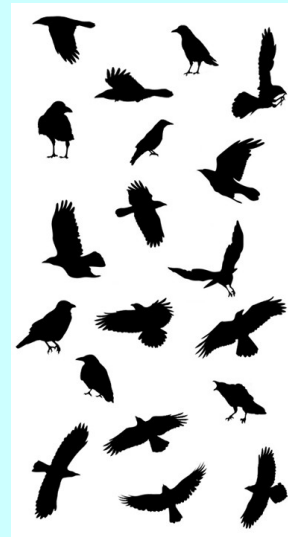
Act 5, Scene 2 - Horatio: This _____ runs away with the shell on his head.

Answers: Woodcocks, Pelican, Lapwing

Something to Crow About.....

Saving habitat for birds, thanks to the Cape Island Coyotes.

Again this year, BCDC was able to donate \$1000 to Natural Lands Trust for the purchase and preservation of Delaware Valley land which is exceptional avian habitat. This gift was made possible by our outstanding World Series of Birding team, The Cape Island Coyotes - namely, Bill Roache (captain), Dave Eberly and Gary Becker. Not only did these die-hard birders scour Cape May County south of the canal to find 130 species, but they solicited donations from friends and family to add to donations by club members. The Board decided to retain \$500 of the funds raised for possible consideration of another conservation cause later this year. Suggestions for the additional funds include Hawk Migration Association of North America and PA Young Birders. We welcome members' suggestions for how conservation dollars can best be invested.



We welcome members' contributions to our newsletter, so if you have reports, announcements, reviews, poetry, essays, or photographs that would be of interest to our BCDC birding community, please submit them to the editor:

Carl Perretta, e-mail: newsletter@bcdelco.org

The deadline for the November newsletter is Friday, October 26, 2012.

Club questions or suggestions? Contact Doris McGovern, President: mcgovern100@comcast.net

Suggestions for or leading of field trips? Contact Amy or Chris Langman, Field Trip Coordinator: birdgyrl@gmail.com .

Bird sightings to report? Contact Dave Eberly, Bird Reports Editor: david.eberly@gmail.com.

Be sure to check out the BCDC blog at: <http://bcdc-pa.blogspot.com/>

Guest blogging is welcome. Contact Al Guarente at:

owlguarente@yahoo.com

**April 21 Field Trip to Belleplain State Forest,
Heislerville Refuge, & East Point Lighthouse
by Amy Langman**



We held a field trip to check on the early migrants in South Jersey. The weather cooperated very well and we were treated to a nice sunny day that warmed up into the 70's. We had a great group of ten to enjoy the day.

Started the day with a few stops in Belleplain State Forest. There was moderate bird activity as would be expected for the time of year. We were greeted with nice looks of a Yellow-throated Warbler near the visitor's center. Also had good views of a Pine Warbler and got to compare the calls of the Pine Warblers and Chipping Sparrows that were calling consistently.

We next stopped in the campground area around the lake. One of the day's highlights awaited us in the parking area, with a Broad-winged Hawk perched about 10 feet off the ground having a morning snack. The same bird made a few other appearances to get more great looks. Other good birds from this spot included singing Louisiana Waterthrush, Black & White Warblers, Brown Thrasher, White-eyed Vireo, and Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers.

Next stop was at the famous creek crossing that normally harbors plenty of warblers, including Prothonotary. No luck with the Prothonotary at this location, but there was a calling though uncooperative bird at a nearby location. Otherwise, from the creek location we had more looks at Yellow-throated and Black & White Warblers. We were also able to track down a Worm-eating Warbler and several of us were able to get excellent looks of the bird.

We then traveled to Heislerville Wildlife Refuge to check on the shorebird activity. Limited mudflats failed to have the birds concentrated, but we did get to see Dunlin, Forster's Terns, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitchers, and a lone Bonaparte's Gulls. Up to three adult Bald Eagles gracefully cruised overhead. Clapper Rails were back and calling, and the rookery was full of Snowy and Great Egrets, as well as Double-crested Cormorants. The other highlight from the Heislerville refuge was a playful Otter in the one impoundment.

Last stop for the day was Eastern Point Lighthouse in hopes of catching flocks of shorebirds moving over the bay. No such luck, but we did get to watch some Boat-tailed Grackles playing in the area. Also, had a Marsh Wren calling as we started on the venture home.

Overall, a good early spring day with over 50 species tallied on the day. Thanks to all that joined the trip to make it a great time!



BCDC's Vegas Vireos return to the Silver State

Carl Perretta reporting



The group on Mt. Charleston

Back row, L to R – Carl, John, Kris,
Peter, Petra, Don

Front Row, L to R – Judy, Daryl,
Donna, Bettina

From May 10th to 14th, the 2012 edition of the Vegas crew again invaded southern Nevada for a trip to what is probably America's least likely birding spot. Bettina Heffner, siblings Donna Zwigart and Daryl Kezell, John Shenk, Judy Burns, Don and Petra DePietro, Kris and Peter Wade and I arrived on the 9th to begin birding in earnest the next day. Judy and I managed to get an early start on Wednesday, when we drove through Sunset Park, a municipal enclave that lies literally outside the fence surrounding the airport, and is a surprisingly good spot for birding. Judy started adding lifers right away, with very close looks at a cooperative **Greater Roadrunner** standing on a fence about twenty yards in front of us. We also got to see a male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** doing his impressive diving display flight for a female sitting in a tree. We continued to the South Point Hotel/Casino, which was to be our HQ for the duration. As you may know, Las Vegas has always been a bargain on these occasions, and this time was no exception. I was able to book rooms for \$296.80 per room, for the complete *five nights' stay*.

Thursday

We birded Corn Creek Station of the Desert NWR, an oasis that is well known as a migrant trap in its arid surroundings. Sadly, Corn Creek was not as productive as it usually is, due to extensive "improvements" being made there. Much ground was torn up, and the stream that was impounded to make a pond is being directed through a new concrete catchment, the stated reason being to rid the area of invasive species, both plant and animal. They didn't seem to be improvements to us. We did, however, get the real target bird for this stop – **LeConte's Thrasher**. We managed to call in a few individuals for some really good looks at this secretive bird, which is far more likely to run away than to fly. We do not spot this bird on every trip, so this made the stop worthwhile. Also added at Corn Creek were **Crissal Thrasher**, **Black Phoebe**, **Lucy's Warbler**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, **Sage Sparrow**, **Phainopepla**, and **Ash-throated Flycatcher**. From Corn Creek, it was up Charleston Mountain for some birds found at higher elevations. We logged **Pygmy Nuthatch**, **Cassin's Finch**, **Broad-tailed Hummingbird**, **Western Bluebird** and more, while stopping for lunch in a much more comfortable environment than the desert floor. On the way back to the city, we tallied **Burrowing Owl** at a known nesting spot for this species, which seems to be under pretty intense development pressure there. After a dinner of barbeque, we traveled south on the interstate toward our hotel, with the sun getting quite low in the sky off to our right. I was driving the lead car, and Peter followed a few car lengths behind. It was then that the passengers in our car were treated to one of the most remarkable displays I have ever seen in over forty years of birding. Traveling at 70 MPH, right in front of us, no more than a couple of

hundred feet ahead, and no more than 20 or 30 feet off the ground, we saw a very large falcon take a bird out of midair just feet above the speeding traffic. The capture was so violent that I definitely saw bits of the unfortunate quarry fly off into the breeze. "Did you see that?," I shouted. Unbelievably, everyone in the car had seen it, even Judy who was sitting in the third row of the minivan. This was further evidence of just how low the bird was - that the person all the way in the back of the van still caught the action through the windshield! In the split second I had for ID, I saw a vertically streaked breast and overall brownish color. This made the possibilities immature Peregrine, or possibly Prairie Falcon, which can winter in the area. After consultation with one of the area's knowledgeable birders, I settled on **Peregrine Falcon**, which was then being hacked on the roof of a large hotel in the same area we had passed through. In an instance of bad luck, the birders in Peter's car did not see the falcon get its dinner.

Friday

Arizona Day. We headed off to Hualapai Mountain Park in Kingman, Arizona. The real target here is Zone-tailed Hawk, which we have gotten on only two occasions. We're usually just a little early in the year for this local breeder, and this time we didn't get to see one. We did, however see **Curve-billed Thrasher**, **Gambel's Quail**, and **Cactus Wren** at a stop we know that always produces these birds. On the road to Hualapai, a few stops also brought **Loggerhead Shrike**, **Black-throated Sparrow** and **White-winged Dove**. In a thick stand of junipers, Don got out his phone and played the call of **Juniper Titmouse**, and one came running to join the trip list. **Spotted Towhee**, **Black-chinned Sparrow**, and **White-breasted Nuthatch** also showed up at Hualapai, which did not seem to have much warbler action. We headed back toward Las Vegas via a small corner of California to try for a couple of Nevada rarities in the area near Searchlight, NV. After some off-road follies in the Wee Thump Wilderness Area (turning around two minivans on a narrow rocks-and-dirt unimproved road is a challenge), I headed for a spot called Walking Box Ranch, which had been reported as a good place to try for **Gilded Flicker** and **Bendire's Thrasher**. This is the only place in Nevada to find these birds. On our last trip, we got the thrasher, but not the flicker. Here at the ranch's entrance, with good viewing conditions all around, I played the thrasher's song. Bingo! A bird showed up almost immediately and circled us for a few minutes, giving everyone great looks. It was now the flicker's turn. After instructing everyone to look for the yellow wing linings if the bird showed up, I played the flicker's call. Double Bingo! A bird quickly alit on a pole about a hundred yards away, but gave us time to get scopes on her (no moustache mark). As she flew off, everyone got a bright yellow flash from her underwings. A pretty good day.

Saturday

I like to add a new stop on each of these trips, and this year the Red Rock Audubon Society was running a field trip to Pahrnagat NWR, and we were welcome to tag along. Christiana Manville led the trip, and acted as gracious hostess to our group, which actually outnumbered her own. This is another example of a desert oasis, and it is a large one. Shorebirds and waterfowl started joining the trip list. **Gadwall**, **Redhead**, **Killdeer**, **Black-necked Stilt**, **Avocet** got recorded, along with **Black-crowned Night Heron**, **Spotted Sandpiper**, **Vermilion Flycatcher**, **MacGillivray's Warbler**, **Verdin** and **Marsh Wren**. The *real* target bird for this part of the trip was **Western Willow Flycatcher**, a subspecies which is actively managed here. Refuge staff member Darrell Freeman escorted our group to a stand of willows known to have active nesters. Of course, with the Empidonax flycatchers, hearing is believing, so we all perked up our ears to listen for the sneezy "fitzbeu" call from this bird. Sure enough, the bird started calling around us, and we added a new species for the trip, and I got a new bird for Nevada. Many thanks to Darrell who changed his schedule to lead our group, and to his wife Trish who volunteers at the refuge. This refuge I believe, is a great addition to the trip, and will be kept in the future. On the way back we birded a bit in the Moapa Valley, the area where our group produced Nevada's best-documented record for Upland Sandpiper on our last trip. Sadly, no "uppies" this time, but a brief visit to Moapa Valley NWR did get us another target bird, **Hooded Oriole**. After walking around the small visitors'

area for about half an hour, and only seeing one female – I was the only one who saw it, but I promise I'm not making it up – we caught sight of an adult male literally as we were leaving the parking lot. Again, we managed to get scopes on it so everybody got a look. We enjoyed a good and inexpensive dinner at China Mama, a restaurant universally recommended by all of the city's restaurant critics.

Sunday

...and our last day of birding. This day we made the obligatory stop at the Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve. JeAnne Branca, the preserve's guide, and now a friend after so many visits, put our group into her electric "birdmobile" and took us into the preserve along with Kyle Burt, a high school student and excellent birder whom we met at the refuge when he was just a wee lad of about seven. Kyle has grown into an impressive young man, and agrees to visit with us when we come to town. The group had a fun visit to what is essentially a sewage treatment plant (who else but birders, eh?), while I, the ostensible leader cooled my heels and rested my aching back at the visitors' center, doing my birding from the shaded picnic table. **Clark's** and **Eared Grebes**, **Cinnamon Teal**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Ruddy Duck**, **Common Moorhen**, **Forster's Tern**, **Black-tailed Gnatcatcher** and **Yellow-headed Blackbird** were just a few species seen here and at the Wetlands Preserve a few miles away. Henderson is a must see if you visit the area, as is the beauty of Red Rock Canyon, our next destination. Two birds I try to get there are Gray Vireo and Chukar, but they weren't cooperating on this visit. We had better luck with **Ladder-backed Woodpecker**, **Western Kingbird**, **Bullock's Oriole** and **Say's Phoebe**, though. After having lunch and making the beautiful drive around Red Rock, we headed off to a park just next-door – Spring Mountain State Park. Here we tallied **Brown-crested Flycatcher**, **Anna's Hummingbird** and, surprisingly, our only **Western Tanager** of the trip. Don got busy again with his recorded calls and brought in a beautiful **Summer Tanager** that he had glimpsed, and we added another new bird for this trip and my Nevada list. This bird made a nice end to what I hope for everyone was an enjoyable trip. In total, we bagged 111 species for the trip. Not too shabby for out-of-state birders.

Our group's members graciously consented to donate the leftover travel kitty of \$88.86 to BCDC to support the efforts of the World Series team's fundraising. We also bought Kyle a Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology tee shirt for acting as our guide at Henderson Preserve.

Some links you may find useful:

Jim Boone's excellent page on Birding Las Vegas puts just about all of it together for you. Follow as many links as you like for the good info here: http://www.birdandhike.com/Bird/_Bird_index.htm

Henderson Preserve: http://www.cityofhenderson.com/parks/parks/bird_preserve.php

Pahranagat: <http://www.fws.gov/desertcomplex/pahranagat/>

Red Rock Audubon: <http://www.redrockaudubon.org/>

BCDC was deeply saddened to learn of the deaths of three club members:

Josie Johnson, after a long illness early in 2012. Condolences can be sent to her husband Chet at chefjohnson@cf.com

Jim Molyneaux also passed in April <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/philly/obituary.aspx?pid=158909741#fbLoggedOut>

We lost Bob Hopkins in August <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/delcotimes/obituary.aspx?n=henry-robert-hopkins&pid=159035663>

We were glad to know them and share birding adventures with them. We send sympathy and wishes for comfort to each family.