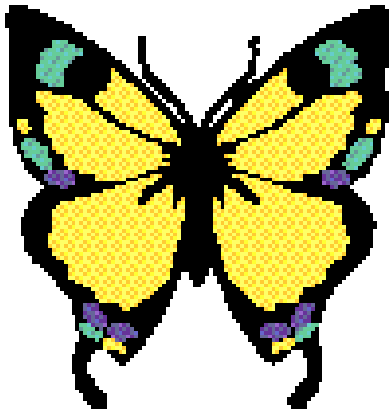


Delaware Audubon Journal

Vol. XXV No.6
July-August 2003

DELAWARE AUDUBON



PRESERVING OUR
NATURAL STATE



HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES 2002-2003

- ◆ Delaware Audubon Society is a statewide, volunteer organization of over 1500 members.
- ◆ The mission of Delaware Audubon Society is to promote an appreciation and understanding of nature; to preserve and protect our natural environment; and, to affirm the necessity for clean air and water and the stewardship of our natural resources.
- ◆ All of our activities depend on the devotion of our members to conserving and preserving the health of our environment.
- ◆ Our Audubon Adventures program was used in 209 classrooms in 13 school districts, 1 charter school and 2 parochial schools in grades 3-6. Two teacher workshops were held to familiarize teachers with the contents of the kits. This program provides curriculum enhancement materials to teach students about wildlife and their habitats and the importance of conservation.

Highlights continued on page 6

GRASS DALE 2002 SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

Ann Rydgren, Project Manager, Grass Dale Project



Data collected this year are available on a CD in Excel or .csv. retrievable databases. Results can be searched for in seven geographical sectors, ten categories of flora and fauna, twenty sub-habitats or any other criteria for information about species that occur at Grass Dale.

Special thanks are due to Peggy Jahn and Andy Urquhart for their time and perseverance, during all kinds of weather, to collect data for this project, and to Dave Brannan for his determination in getting such excellent pictures of the flora and fauna at Grass Dale.

Delaware Audubon made 30 visits to Grass Dale for a total of 200+ person-hours.

The catalog of flora and fauna now stands at 134 bird, 84 plant, 47 insect, 16 mammal, 9 amphibian, 1 minnow, and 1 crustacean species.



Grass Dale continued on page 4

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

DELAWARE AUDUBON SOCIETY 2002-2003 OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

Hello Everyone,



Well it has been a pretty tumultuous spring in the world of horseshoe crabs and shorebirds. Here in Delaware the emergency regulations proposed by DNREC to cut the horseshoe crab harvest by 50% to ensure enough eggs are available to migrating shorebirds got beaten in court. Fish and Wildlife responded with interim regulations. These, too, were shot down. The case was lost, like the first regulations, on procedure, not merit. Then DNREC decided to write new regulations, which, if accepted, will go into effect on August 10. The current harvest season has featured attempts by DNREC to do a better

job enforcing the existing regulations, national media coverage, and intimidation by some watermen who have run off birders on isolated stretches of Delaware's coastline.

Delaware Audubon has fought hard for protection of the shorebirds and horseshoe crabs for over ten years. We began by helping to enact the first laws in the world to protect the horseshoe crab. We supported the horseshoe crab sanctuary at the mouth of the Delaware Bay. Delaware beaches are the epicenter for Horseshoe Crabs and shorebirds in the world. Now we need new protection for the dwindling spectacle that every spring meets our shores.

Thanks for caring,
Matt Del Pizzo

If there are any issues you feel strongly about that you think Audubon should address, 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.

Honorary Chairman of the Board

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- President* Matthew Del Pizzo
- Vice President* Leslie Savage
- Secretary* Ellen Wright
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- Recycling* Open
- Dredging* Leslie Savage
- Proposal/policy Review* Dave Chambers
- Nest Box Projects* Peggy Jahn
- Armchair Activists* Open
- Adopt-a-Wetland*

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White Clay Creek Adopt-a-Highway

Dorothy Miller
Important Bird Area Program Ann Rydgren
PROGRAMS COMMITTEE Open

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mail@delawareaudubon.org

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EDUCATION COMMITTEE Kathy Tidball
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FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE Peggy Jahn
PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE Ann Rydgren

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Fundraising-Bird Seed Sale

Mark and Susan Martell
Fundraising Birdathon
Ruth Holden, Maud Dayton

Fundraising-Silent Auction Asha Iyengar
Fundraising-Wildlife Sanctuary Open
Fundraising-Piping Plover Suite Ann Rydgren

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Asha Iyengar, Leslie Savage

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Kay Tebbens Greene, Milford
Till Purnell, Millsboro



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

VISIT DELAWARE AUDUBON'S WEBSITE
<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.

“Preserve Our Natural State”

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

3



CALLING ALL COUCH POTATOES AND NET NERDS

For less than an hour a month, and without leaving home, you can ACHIEVE something! Through activities such as letter writing, email and phone calls, Auduboners affect critical legislation and policy.

Be a Net Neighbor. Receive information about environmental issues and respond by email.

You needn't get off the couch to become part of a growing network of individuals working to protect our natural world. Call the office, (302) 428-3959, and leave a message that you want to “lift a finger” to protect our environment.

IN APPRECIATION OF SNAKES

A friend of mine ended up with a garter snake in her bedroom after her cat brought it in the house. This prompted me to research the best method for removal of a snake. You can use a broom to sweep the snake into a bucket or empty trash can. The snake can also be picked up using a broom handle and placed in a trashcan or bucket. Once caught, just release the snake outdoors away from the house. The most common snakes found around the home are the garter snake and the black snake. The garter snake is small and can be brown or brown with a green tint. They have three tan stripes running the length of the body. Black snakes can be up to five feet long. Snakes play a beneficial part in nature. They eat rats, mice, and other pests. They also provide food for birds and mammals such as raccoons. The snake uses its tongue to smell. Next time you encounter a snake, take a few minutes to see how much fun they are to observe!

Ellen Wright

SITE SEEING

This column will suggest Internet websites that may be of interest to readers. If you have a favorite that you think will interest others, please call us at (302) 428-3959 or send the address to us at mail@delawareaudubon.org.




<http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/boone/>

See how to design and build a vernal pond that looks and functions like a natural wetland.

This easy to understand book contains techniques that the educator, suburban homeowner, public land steward, and private landowner may use to establish vernal ponds (ephemeral wetlands). Vernal ponds provide critical habitat to many amphibian, reptile, waterfowl, shorebird and bat species throughout North America.

Visit:
<http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/boone/> to view the on online version of the book, or to download an order form.



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 _____

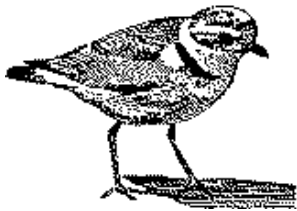
Please make all checks payable to: National Audubon Society
Send this application and your check to:
Delaware Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1713, Wilmington, DE 19899

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D90



PIPING PLOVER UPDATE

We currently have four piping plover nests (two at Gordons Pond and two at the Point of Cape Henlopen State Park). We have at least one more pair at the Point that have not chosen a nest site yet. Two of the nests have complete clutches of 4 eggs each, one has only three eggs, and the other had a single egg as of Thursday, May 15. We're hoping all the nests make it through today's coastal storm.



Five nesting pairs is not an unusual number for Delaware; we had six nesting pairs in 2001 and 2002, and only three pairs in 2000. The 13 year average is 4.3 nesting pairs.

There is also a single American oyster catcher nest at the Point.

For those of you unfamiliar with DNREC's piping plover protection efforts, all nesting areas are closed to the public in order to protect the plovers from disturbance. This year we are recruiting volunteers to guard the closed areas from people who try to go into nesting areas. The volunteers will be stationed at the fencing closing parts of the beach and will not be entering closed areas. If you are interested in volunteering to guard the closed beaches and inform the public about piping plovers, please contact Marnie Grezlikowski, Marnie0017@aol.com.

Thanks,
Holly Niederriter

Grass Dale continued from page 1

The number of Purple Loosestrife plants has dwindled to 12 plants from over 100 in 2001.

Species or sub-species noted for the first time in 2002 are: Seashore Mallow, St. Johnswort, Maiden Pink, Dogbane, Indigobush, Red Mulberry tree, Summer Azure butterfly, Eastern Comma butterfly, American Copper butterfly, Ring-necked Pheasant, Blue-winged Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Blackpoll Warbler, Coastal Plain Swamp Sparrow, Orchard Oriole, Pickerel Frog, Eastern Mud Turtle and River Otter. The highest number of bird species seen in one data-collecting period early in May was 54.

AmeriCorps personnel helped mark 1008 Bayberry bushes in Sector 4. Originally a field of Multiflora Rose and then a meadow of Goldenrod, more and more Bayberry bushes are appearing in the Sector 4 field. This native species, so beneficial to wildlife, should be preserved. A long-term plan for preserving this resource needs to be developed immediately. Special care must be taken for the duration of any construction at Grass Dale.

We greatly appreciate the cooperation of Superintendent Becky Webb and her staff at Fort Delaware-Fort DuPont State Park in giving us every possible assistance for this long-term project.

Grass Dale is a unique area where at least six different habitats are found within a 100-yard radius. Woods, tidal marsh, fresh water pond, hedgerows, meadow and scrub habitats can be observed by walking around the existing track. In combination, the variety and richness of these habitats make Grass Dale very attractive to wildlife. Such easy access to an abundance of wildlife makes Grass Dale an ideal teaching tool.



Wildlife continues to use this site at a very high level.

The area surrounding the Grass Dale Center in Fort DuPont State Park, Delaware City, DE, was adopted because the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Delaware's Division of Natural Resources and Environmental Control are planning projects that will

modify and restore this degraded tidal marsh area to a wetland area of greater biodiversity. The Habitat Suitability Index Models used are for Great Egret, Muskrat, juvenile Atlantic Croaker, Marsh Wren and Black Duck.

Plans are to document the changes in the flora and fauna as the area changes over time and produce an annual report. Our purpose is to contribute to existing information about the connections between wildlife and habitat.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Join the fun!
Meet new people!
Do a great thing!

We need help in the following areas.



WE NEED YOU!

* ATTORNEY

Experienced in trust and corporation law who will give advice pro bono. This is a limited project, not litigation.

* BIRDSEED

Marketing Manager for our fundraising birdseed sale in October. We need more customers. One month a year.

* WELCOME WAGON

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

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

BLUEBIRD TRAIL AT DEERFIELD GREAT SUCCESS

Thanks to Peggy and Fred Jahn, the number of Bluebirds hatched around the MBNA Deerfield golf course has quadrupled. In 1995, at the invitation of the golf course manager, Peggy and Fred installed four nest boxes on the course. Seventeen Bluebirds hatched that year. As an increasing number of boxes was installed, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of Bluebirds fledged. In 2002, seventy Bluebirds fledged out of 13 nest boxes. The 2003 season will see 15 nest boxes around the course.

Date	No. of Boxes	No. fledged	Date	No. of Boxes	No. fledged
1995	4	17	2000	11	63
1996	9	44	2001	13	65
1997	9	39	2002	13	
1998	11	40	2003	15	?
1999	11	56			

Jean Woods, Curator of Birds for the Delaware Museum of Natural History, reports that the Bluebird trail of nest boxes around Charis House and the Methodist Country House for 2002 produced 50 Bluebirds, 15 Tree Swallows and 22 House Wrens from 27 boxes. Jean was able to restrict House Sparrows to only two boxes by replacing their eggs with plastic ones.

Ralph Magnan reports that in 2002 at Killens Pond State Park, 65 Bluebirds fledged along with 62 Tree Swallows, 18 Chickadees, 10 House Sparrows and three Canada Geese. Hmmm.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY, 2002:

Cash & Savings 12/31/01:	\$51,836.75
+/- Change to the General Fund:	7.58
+/- Change to Restrictive Funds	-7,914.74
Cash & Savings 12/31/02:	\$43,929.59

General Fund Activity for 2002:

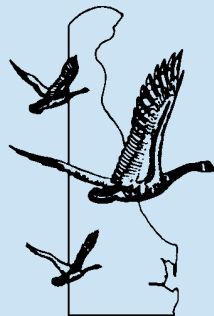
Contributions:	\$20,443.90
Expenses:	20,436.32
Net Contributions	\$ 7.58

Restricted Fund Changes for 2002:

Fund Change:	
Audubon Adventures Net Grants:	-\$7,926.5
Bird Sanctuary Fund	\$11.76

We have examined the financial records of the Delaware Audubon Society for the year 2002 and find them to be in excellent condition and have no comments.

Dave Brannan
Fred Jahn



❖ MEMORIAL GIFTS

In Memory of

Mary Frances Hill Robertson

Dr. John W Alden, Jr
Mr & Mrs Tom A. Bither Jr.
Catherine Wheeler Bowen
Agnes Cadot
Jerry, Debbie, Hannah, and M.
Grossman
Ms. Scott Hubbar
Ms. Lee Hubert
Bob and Eleanor Kerr
Peter Macgaffin and family
Mr. & Mrs. Stuart P Miller
Gail Morrison
Bob and Melinda Penn
Libby and Jack Sly
Christian Straley
Stephen Straley
Johnathan Straley

❖ SILENT AUCTION

This year's Silent Auction offered a great variety of items and lots of fun. Please visit our donors and thank them for their generous support of Audubon.

Astro Power
Delaware Nature Society
Jessop's Restaurant
Oasis
Gifts for the body, mind & Spirit. Fairly traded handicrafts from around the world.
Trader Joe's
A grocery store with products from the exotic to the basic.
Wild Birds Unlimited
Olaine Becker, *Artist*
Ruxana Bhatti, *Artist, photographer*
Senator Joseph Biden
Albert DelPizzo
Nancy Frampton
Mary Pat
Linda Whaley

Highlights continued from page 1

- ◆ Auduboners participated in the Christmas Bird Count, Spring Round-up, the White Clay Creek Clean-up, Coast Day, Christina River Clean-up (White Clay Creek), and picked up at our Adopt-a-Highway location.
- ◆ We presented or participated in a number of workshops, press conferences, presentations to groups, and conferences all over the state. Topics include Motiva Scrubbers, Sunoco, Metachem task force, finding solutions to waste reduction, Citizens Right-to-Know legislation, Delaware River dredging, wetlands, biodiversity, land use, birding, horseshoe crab & shorebirds, environmental regulations.
- ◆ We testified and participated in public hearings in support of the environment on various issues, such as, water conservation, the Delaware River main channel dredging project, democratic process in public hearings.
- ◆ Delaware Audubon was represented on the following regional and statewide boards and committees:
 - Bi-State Advisory Council for White Clay Creek Preserve
 - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Horseshoe Crab Advisory Council
 - Chronic Violators Regulatory Development Committee
 - Coalition Opposed to Deepening the Delaware River
 - Delaware Wastewater Facilities Advisory Council
 - University of Delaware Sea Grant College Advisory Committee
 - Water Resources Agency Citizen's Committee
 - Governor's Water Supply Coordinating Council
 - Delaware Water Resources Center Advisory Committee
 - Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys
 - Delaware Inland Bays Citizen's Advisory Committee
 - Research monitoring for the Inland Bays
 - Save Our Wetlands and Bays
 - Delaware Partners in Flight
 - Delaware Important Bird Area Committee
 - Christina Conservancy
 - Christina River Clean-up Committee
 - Russell W. Peterson Urban Wildlife Refuge Advisory Committee
 - White Clay Creek Watershed Wild and Scenic River Management Committee
 - Pea Patch Island Special Area Management Plan
 - St. Jones River Greenway Commission
- ◆ Delaware Audubon continues to operate two nest box projects to re-establish the historical range of the purple martin and the bluebird in New Castle County.
- ◆ We offered field trips and environmental education for members, elected officials and the general public.
- ◆ Delaware Audubon maintains a web page at delawareaudubon.org.



Bird Tales ...

2/14/03

Today was Day One of the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)—an especially good project while being held captive by a snow storm—and I submitted my first list. Apart from the usual crew, we had one “mystery bird” this morning. I noted that something was unusual, so I trained the binoculars on him. He was similar to a Brown-headed Cowbird, but his head was white and mottled and had the appearance of being drizzled with chocolate sauce. He sat in the tree for a few moments, and then flew off. Some sort of color mutation?

2/15/03

The highlight of today’s GBBC was standing outside in the snow while two “slate-colored” Dark-eyed Juncoes had a disagreement. The physical

appearance of Juncoes is appealing enough, but the miniature-Star-Wars-laser-sounding battle cries as they made little running charges at each other was as amusing to me as it was serious to them. Fascinating, the small but significant struggles of life that play themselves out, right in our own backyards.

2/19/03

We have had another “mystery bird” in our yard for the past three days. My best guesses are, this is either a common thing in winter plumage, some sort of hybrid, or a bird from elsewhere that blew in with the storm. This ground-feeding fellow looks something like a fancified cross between a Semipalmated Plover and a Ruddy Turnstone: black, downturned spectacles, a brownish cap, a yellowish face and throat, and a single, black breastband holding his brown

“cape” over his white body.

I am beginning to suspect these “mystery birds” are examples of avian practical jokes played on beginning birders! That is, the birds in the thicket at the farm behind our house have a theatrical makeup kit stashed in the overgrowth, and they draw straws for the privilege of confusing us. What’s next: A Cardinal in a miniature Ivory-billed Woodpecker getup?

Mary Leah Christmas

SAVE THIS DATE!

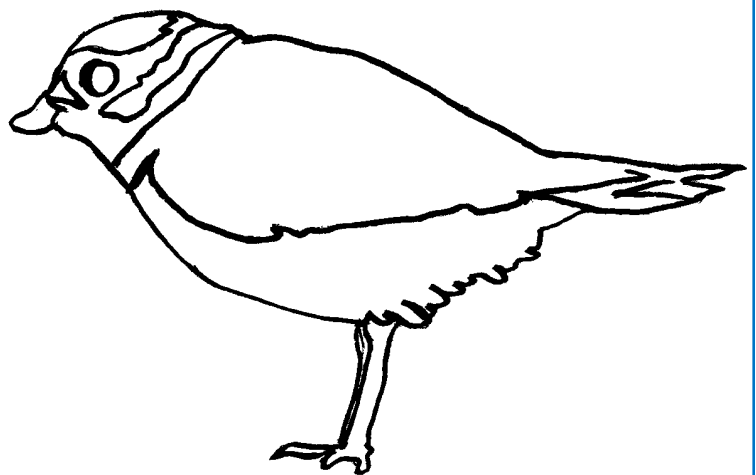
Mark your calendar now for the Fall Birdseed Sale on October 18, 2003. Order forms will be included in the September-October issue of the Delaware Audubon Journal.



HERE IS A
BIRD FOR YOU
TO COLOR.

Bird Tales ...

The Piping Plover Charadrius melodus is a small attractive bird that nests on sandy or gravelly beaches and feeds at the water's edge.





Vista Nieve: The Remarkable True Adventures of an Early Twentieth Century Naturalist and His Family in Columbia, South America

by Dr. Melbourne R. Carriker;
Rio Hondo, TX: Blue Mantle Press, 2001.
Softcover. 318 + xiv pp. with B&W photos.

Dr. Carriker, professor emeritus of the University of Delaware's College of Marine Studies, has written a warm tribute to his childhood in South America and the lives of his pioneering ancestors who established coffee plantations and made contributions to natural science.

The perceptive author has made "*Vista Nieve*" available in English and Spanish versions. The front cover of the English edition depicts Dusky Parker's Antbirds (*Cercomacra parkeri*), "a new species collected by M.A. Carriker, Jr., in Antioquia, Columbia in 1951." The sepia-tone cover and contents of the Spanish edition underscore that one is peering through the mists of time.

The book is pleasant, soothing reading for anyone interested in other cultures and other times. "*Vista Nieve*" is written with a keen appreciation for detail. One can almost smell the rain dripping off the banana leaves and hear the gong of the old hoe-blade used for the plantation bell. The author's reference to "pleasant climate, magnificent vistas, and warm plantation hospitality" says it all!

Ordering information:
English edition \$22.95
Spanish edition \$23.95 (includes \$4.00 shipping/handling each)

Available from the author by check or money order to:
Dr. Melbourne R. Carriker
23 Hoornkill Avenue
Lewes, DE 19958

Phone inquiries:
(302) 645-4274/office or
(302) 645-8768/home.

Mary Leah Christmas

