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Delaware Audubon Journal

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GOVERNORS' TRIBUTE TO GRACE



Gathered around Grace Pierce-Beck are from left to right: Lorraine Fleming; former Governor, Russell Peterson; Secretary of DNREC, John Hughes; Governor, Ruth Ann Minner; John Flaherty, Common Cause; DAS Conservation Chair, Nicholas DiPasquale; Til Purnell, Ann Rydgren, June MacArtor.

It was a perfect day to celebrate and recognize the lifelong dedication and accomplishments of Grace "Bubbles" Pierce-Beck in protecting Delaware's precious environment. The spring sun was shining brightly in a cloudless blue sky and the air was fresh and cool. Governor Minner paid tribute to the diminutive woman who has been a powerhouse at the center of every major environmental issue facing this state over the past 30 years. Former Governor Russ Peterson spoke fondly of his friend and colleague and

recounted Grace's contributions at the national level as well.

Former DNREC Secretary Nick DiPasquale praised Grace for being an inspiration to several members of Delaware Audubon, such as incoming President Mark Martell, and countless others who witnessed Grace in action. Ann Rydgren presented Grace with a special Delaware Audubon designation by declaring her to be the organization's Environmental Advocate, Forever. Til Purnell joked about how people used to refer to her and Grace as the "Mutt and Jeff" of the environmental movement as they lobbied elected officials at Legislative Hall in Dover.

In addition to several members (and generations) of Grace's family, others in attendance included current DNREC Secretary John Hughes, who served as the unofficial MC for this informal gathering, Deputy Secretary David Small, long-time environmental activists June MacArtor, John Flaherty, and Lorraine Fleming, as well as June Peterson, Skip Purnell, and Molly Murray.

Grace continues her convalescence at Capitol Healthcare Services in Dover. Nick DiPasquale provides periodic updates to her and solicits her views and advice on current environmental issues. When briefing her recently on the decision by the Coastal Zone Industrial Control Board to uphold DNREC's denial of the status decision request on the BP LNG Import Facility, Grace commented, "They tried that back in the 1970s and got shot down. You'd think they'd know by now!"



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



My name is Mark Martell and I am greatly honored to have been chosen as the next President of the Delaware Audubon Society. I have served as the Treasurer on and off since the mid 1980's, and have run the Annual Birdseed Sale over that length of time. I came to the organization as a result of my life-long love of Delaware's environment. I grew up just outside the city of New Castle and can still remember the hot summer sunrises

over the Delaware River across from Battery Park where I often went to crab after delivering the Morning News.

Fellow Board member and childhood friend John Knox and I would often hunt for toads and frogs, marveling at their abilities to snag the flies out of mid-air when we fed them in our window wells. We would hunt for box turtles, for painters, for the elusive snapper. We would collect yellow jackets, bumblebees, wasps and praying mantises. It is often through misguided play and adventure that a bond develops not just between young men, but between young men and the environment. One learns to care for the environment the more one is active in it. Some of my fondest memories as a young man in New Castle have to deal with discovery of those creatures that tried to co-exist in encroaching young developments to the tidal marsh – The giant snapper we “bothered” that crunched a broom handle in half. The time while I was delivering papers that I literally crashed my ten speed bike into a raccoon that was merely foraging through garbage cans looking for a quick meal. The time we captured a misshapen toad that had additional limbs. The time my dog had a run in with a skunk that took a few days to live through.

I relate these stories in that it is these memorable incidents and accidents that frame us as young men and future environmentalists. Having two young boys now, I am often frustrated with their innate ability to whole-heartedly ignore their local environment, to focus on the immediate gratification of a Game

President continued on page 8

Delaware Audubon Society Officers & Committees

2005-2006

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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- Fundraising: Silent Auction.....John Knox
- Fundraising:Wildlife SanctuaryOpen
- Fundraising:Piping Plover SuiteAnn Rydgren

- Directors for service until 2006:
Dorothy Miller
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Leslie Savage



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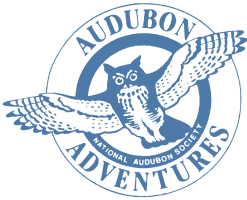
“Preserve Our Natural State”

WHAT YOU CAN DO...



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ATTENTION DELAWARE TEACHERS



Subscriptions to receive a free Audubon Adventures kit are still being accepted. Elementary teachers of Grades 3-6 are invited to renew their subscriptions for this year's edition of the popular environmental science newspapers. The kit includes 4 sets of 32 newspapers each devoted to a specific topic. The newspapers are written on a 5th-grade level and include a resource-rich teacher's guide. The following comments about last year's newspapers are from Delaware teachers:

Great newspaper! Valuable to the children and great for state standards. Fits well into the curriculum, especially habitat studies.

Karen Autman, Hartly Elementary, Capital School District

These newspapers are great! I used them to create a science learning center in my 5th grade. The kids loved reading them and doing the activities.

Linda Tonge, Showell Elementary, Indian River School District

Excellent non-fiction for applying non-fiction reading strategies.

Cheryl Mattern, Pulaski Elementary, Christina School District

The issue, “It's Only Water”, went well with our Land and Water Science kit. In fact, I could tie them into all our science kits.

Edith Mahoney, Anna P. Mote Elementary, Red Clay School District

If you would like to renew your subscription to receive the 2005-2006 Audubon Adventures program free of charge, our chapter will be delighted to sponsor you. The only thing we ask of you is the completion of an evaluation form to provide us with feedback on this year's program. Renewal forms and evaluations are being mailed in May to be turned in by August 31. For your convenience, you can fill in the evaluation and renewal form on line! Just go to our website, <www.delawareaudubon.org>, click on Audubon Adventures, then click on evaluation form and renewal form.

What You Can Do: Please share this information with new teachers in your building. Subscriptions will be filled as long as funding is available. Don't get left out—complete the forms by August 31.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- * Nick DiPasquale needs a few more people to work on the Conservation Committee. Please help!
- * Wildflower enthusiast for special area in Dover.
- * Fun loving, creative person needed to recruit and integrate new members.
- * 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.



What You Can Do: Call 302-428-3959 and leave a message if you are interested in helping.

H. B. DU PONT BAND PERFORMS SONG ABOUT ENDANGERED BIRD

The H. B. du Pont Middle School Honor Band performed the *Piping Plover Suite*, a piece that incorporates the song of the endangered bird, at their Spring Concert at Dickinson High School.

Band Director Pam Letts said her 75-member band learned the piece in about two months. “They really enjoyed learning it even though they didn't have much time,” she said.

Letts said pieces that incorporate more than one subject are becoming more common for composers of educational music. “We also have a piece on the Curse of Tutankhamen that ties into the sixth-grade social studies course.”

Flute player Catherine Horstman, an eighth grader, said learning the *Piping Plover Suite* was “a neat experience.”

“It's a really neat piece,” she said. “It's different than the other songs (performed by the band).”

Classmate Shefali Kapadia, who plays saxophone, agreed.

“The bird has a cool song, and the song really sounds like the bird,” she said.

The *Piping Plover Suite* and Teacher Resource Packet can be downloaded FREE from the Delaware Audubon web site, <www.delawareaudubon.org>.

Excerpts from an article in *Hockessin Community News* by Staff Reporter Jesse Chadderdon

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES 2004-2005

Delaware Audubon Society is a statewide, volunteer organization of over 1,500 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 by approximately 3,300 students in 130 classrooms of 46 schools in 14 of 15 school districts. This program provides curriculum enhancement materials to teach students about wildlife and their habitats and the importance of conservation.

Auduboners participated in the Christmas Bird Count, Great Backyard Bird Count, Spring Round-up, the White Clay Creek Clean-up, Coast Day, Christina River Clean-up (White Clay Creek), Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research Open House, Milton Horseshoe Crab Festival 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 included Motiva Scrubbers, Sunoco, Metachem task force, biodiversity, land use, birding, horseshoe crabs and shorebirds, and environmental regulations.

We testified and participated in public hearings in support of the environment on various issues, such as water conservation, land acquisition, and the master plan for White Clay Creek State Park.

Delaware Audubon continues monitoring of the area around the Grass Dale Center in Fort DuPont State Park, Delaware City, in order to document the changes in flora and fauna. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control have plans to modify and restore this degraded tidal marsh area to a wetland area of greater biodiversity.

The **Piping Plover Suite** made its world debut at Coast Day, October 3, 2004. The piece was presented by the Cape Henlopen Community Band under the direction of Barry Eli. A premier performance of the **Piping Plover Suite** was presented in May 2005 by the H. B. du Pont Middle School Honor Band under the direction of Pam Letts. The H. B. du Pont Honor Band is the first middle school band to perform this piece of music. The **Piping Plover Suite** has been downloaded from our website by people around the world.

Commissioned by the Delaware Audubon Society, sponsored by the Brandywiners, Ltd., Delaware State Parks, The Delaware Coastal Programs, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife Natural

Heritage and Endangered Species Program, and Maryellen F. Birk Graphic Design Services, and composed by Scott Roewe, this symphonic work is intended to stimulate an emotional response and establish sensitivity to the preservation of beach ecology in Delaware. Approximately 1,100 audience members attended these performances.

Delaware Audubon was represented on the following regional and statewide boards and committees:

- Greenwatch Institute
- Kent County Conservancy
- Center for the Inland Bays Capital Campaign Advisory Committee
- Delaware City Eco-Tourism Project Advisory Committee
- Bi-State Advisory Council for White Clay Creek Preserve
- Coalition Opposed to Deepening the Delaware River
- Water Resources Agency Citizen's Committee
- Governor's Water Supply Coordinating Council
- Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys
- 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
- Environmental sub-committee for the Slaughter Beach Planning Committee

Delaware Audubon continues to operate two exceptionally successful nest box projects to re-establish the historical range of the Purple Martin and the Eastern 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 <www.delawareaudubon.org>.



News & Views

MORE THAN JUST BIRDS...

W. Barksdale Maynard

A BACKYARD WHIP-POOR-WILL

As birds fly north in spring, suburban yards provide oases for weary migrants. In our little yard in a Brandywine Hundred development, former owners allowed the shrubs to grow big, for which I am grateful. Birds need “cover” and shun the manicured lawns of our neighbors. Last spring, the cover behind our house harbored a migrating Fox Sparrow, Parula and other warblers, and, to my complete astonishment, a Whip-poor-will that sang loudly two nights in a row.

Cover has another advantage: it can disguise leaf and compost piles that critters like and that can absorb much of the homeowner’s annual yard waste. As our Delaware landfills near overflowing, there has been much talk of banning yard waste—which accounts for some 15 percent of municipal solid waste in the state. And yet virtually none of my neighbors has a leaf-pile or compost heap in his or her miraculously tidy yard. I am all for tidiness, but every lot should have its back corners reserved for cover and mulching.

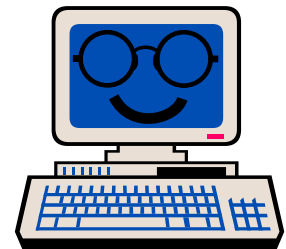
How to create backyard cover? One national environmental organization will help for a \$15 processing fee. You can take an online course, buy their books and videos, or purchase a “habitat kit” for \$150. They’ll even send you a “handsome, personalized Certificate of Achievement suitable for framing.” But all this seems complex. Just start by planting shrubs (especially ones with berries birds like), allow them to grow big and dense—and then hope for a Whip-poor-will.

CONSERVATIONISTS WORLDWIDE CELEBRATE REDISCOVERY OF IVORY- BILLED WOODPECKER

April 28, 2005 — Little Rock, AR. The confirmed sightings of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker on an Audubon designated Important Bird Area which encompasses the Cache-Lower White Rivers National Wildlife Refuge is like “finding the Holy Grail of Ornithology,” said Ken Smith, Director of Audubon Arkansas. Frank Gill, of the U.S. National Audubon Society, added: “This is huge, just huge. It is kind of like finding Elvis.”

Discovery continued on page 7

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.

An estimated 85% of the Rusty Blackbird’s global population breeds within the boreal forest of Canada and Alaska and it is one of the fastest declining songbirds in North America!

Learn about “boreal” birds at
<www.borealbirds.org/birds.html>

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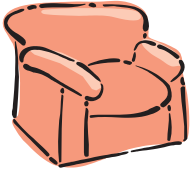
Send this application and your check to:
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P.O. Box 1713, Wilmington, DE 19899

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News & Views



FROM THE CONSERVATION CHAIR

Nick DiPasquale

In a victory for Delaware's Coastal Zone Act, BP decided

recently not to pursue any further challenge of the state's denial of its status decision request for locating a pier and docking operation to support the proposed **Crown Landing LNG Import Facility** in Logan Township, New Jersey. Unfortunately, this does not end the controversy. BP is evaluating a variety of other options, including moving the pier and docking system landward, thus removing it from Delaware waters and state jurisdiction.

While Delaware Audubon supports the increased use of natural gas over traditional fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, we believe that clear criteria should be established for the siting of these facilities away from population centers and sensitive ecological areas. There are presently over 50 proposals for the siting of LNG import facility in North America. Even the most extreme demand scenarios would require the siting of only six to twelve of these operations. The federal government has failed to take any responsibility for developing rational siting criteria. Instead, Congress has proposed the use of a federal override of state authority in pending energy legislation.

Delaware Audubon has also been active on a number of other state issues. Delaware Audubon and the Delaware Nature Society sent a joint letter to Governor Minner's Policy Advisor for Natural Resources, Lee Ann Walling, which articulates what we believe to be the essential elements of a **Curbside Recycling** program. The development of this set of essential elements was guided by a desire to minimize cost increases to the general public, to end the windfall to wholesalers (beverage distributors) who are allowed to

retain unclaimed bottle deposits (estimated to be as high as \$5 million per year), to rationalize and make more efficient the collection of residential waste through the creation of trash districts, and the use of economic incentives so household will benefit economically from greater recycling through a "pay as you throw" pricing system. The essential elements are posted on our website.

We are also participating in the development of the state **Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS)**. The Strategy is a requirement enacted by Congress that states must meet to be eligible to receive State Wildlife Grants from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Strategy must be submitted to a review committee by October of this year. The CWCS must identify and focus on "species in greatest need of conservation," while at the same time address the "full array of wildlife" and wildlife-related issues. Conservation actions identified in the CWCS will strive to keep common species common and prevent species from becoming endangered. Please visit the state website at the following address and share your comments and suggestions.
<<http://www.dnrec.state.de.us/NHP/information/CWCS2.asp>>

Delaware Audubon is one of several partners working with Main Street Delaware City, Inc. on the development of an **Eco-Tourism Program**. A Community Environmental Project grant for \$112,000 was recommended by the Community Involvement Advisory Committee and awarded by DNREC to support the program. Delaware City recognizes the economic value and ecological importance of the Pea Patch Island Heronry, Dragon Run and Dragon

Run Marsh, Grass Dale Wetland, and the Thousand Acre Marsh to the sustainable development of the community. In addition to conducting an ecological assessment of the area and identifying restoration priorities, an advisory committee made up of the program's partners will design hiking and biking trail systems, interpretive programs, outdoor programming activities, such as kayaking and nature education and other passive recreation programs. This project will position Delaware City to serve as the trailhead for access to the **C&D Recreation Area** being promoted by Congressman Castle.
<<http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Projects/C&D/index.htm>>

Finally, Delaware Audubon and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) are currently reviewing the results of studies identified by a court appointed expert to determine the impact of non-complying water discharges by the **Delaware City Refinery** on the health of the Delaware River. In 1988, NRDC and Delaware Audubon filed an action against the refinery in federal court under the Clean Water Act for on-going violations of its NPDES (water discharge) permit. The Court found that numerous violations had occurred between 1983 and 1991 and that the Refinery had failed to make any attempt to determine the impact of the permit violations on the river by conducting required monitoring studies. NRDC and Delaware Audubon considered a monitoring plan developed by the Refinery in 1993 inadequate. The independent expert appointed by the Court outlined an appropriate series of studies to evaluate the impacts. The studies were performed and the results compiled. We are now assessing our next course of action.

I welcome and appreciate your support and active participation in these issues.



GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT DISCOVERY OFFERS SECOND CHANCE TO PROTECT AMERICA'S LARGEST WOODPECKER

"All of us who share this planet owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the individuals and organizations, especially the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the Nature Conservancy, whose tireless efforts led to the rediscovery of this bird," said John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society. "Thanks to their dedication, we all have a second chance to save this magnificent woodpecker from extinction. As it inspires our hopes, this resilient Ivory-billed Woodpecker must also inspire our commitment to protect the habitat it needs for survival."

National Audubon Society, BirdLife International, and other conservationists around the globe joined in celebration at the announcement that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker has been found in eastern Arkansas. The last accepted sightings of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker were in Cuba in 1987 and 1988, and the last fully documented United States sighting occurred in Louisiana in 1944. While there have been a number of reports of possible Ivory-billed Woodpecker sightings since then, none have been confirmed.

A large, approximately 20-inch bird, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is dependent on old-growth forests of very large trees, such as cypress, for its habitat. Destruction and fragmentation of virgin bottomland forests throughout the southern United States, including floodplain forests along the Mississippi River and its tributaries, led to its decline and eventually to its believed extinction.

"The discovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker will make this site an Important Bird Area of global significance," said Flicker. Launched in 1981 by BirdLife International, the Important Bird Areas (IBA) program is a global effort to identify and protect critical bird habitat. Audubon fosters the protection of more than 1,800 IBAs coast to coast by engaging individuals, communities, organizations, and agencies in the stewardship, restoration, and conservation of Important Bird Areas.

"We must work to protect other remaining tracts of mature contiguous forest, and the IBA program is an important tool in this endeavor. Audubon pledges to work with state, local, and federal agencies and other conservation organizations involved with this effort to protect this bird and its habitat," Flicker continued.

Audubon and BirdLife International are urging members of the public to ensure the safety of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker by respecting its privacy. Stress from human disturbance poses a threat to its survival.

More information from Audubon Arkansas
<http://ar.audubon.org/press/news_release_20050429.html>

Discovery continued from page 5

With a distinctive white bill and a dramatic crest, the large woodpecker was thought to be globally extinct with the last documented sighting in Cuba in 1987.

Gene Sparling, of Hot Springs, Arkansas, made the discovery on February 11, 2004, while kayaking in a reserve in Big Woods. He saw an unusually large red-crested woodpecker fly towards him and land on a nearby tree. He said the creature did not look quite like anything he had seen before, so he contacted Cornell University's Living Bird magazine. After a team of experts interviewed him, they felt they might be onto something special.

John Fitzpatrick, of Cornell University, headed the search party, which included Tim Gallagher, editor of Living Bird. Within a month, Dr. Gallagher had seen the ivory-billed woodpecker for himself. The team finally went on to capture the bird on video, which allowed them to confirm its identity.

An American legend, sometimes called the "Lord God" bird because it is so spectacular people exclaim, "Lord God!" when they see it, the Ivory Bill disappeared when the big bottomland forests of North America were logged, and relentless searches have produced only false alarms.

AUDUBON'S 'CACHE-LOWER WHITE RIVERS IMPORTANT BIRD AREA' IS HOME TO IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER

The Cache-Lower White Rivers Important Bird Area is described as "a large contiguous stand of bottomland hardwood forest that makes it one of the few prime locations in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley capable of supporting populations of all forest breeding birds within breeding range."

"Finding the Ivory-billed Woodpecker on an Important Bird Area reinforces the urgency for conservation of such sites. While Important Bird Areas vary greatly in terms of land ownership, habitat type and bird usage, they all are critical for the survival of birds significant not only to Arkansas but, as we now know, to the world," said Dr. Daniel Scheiman, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Arkansas.

BOOKS OF INTEREST



The Grail Bird by Tim Gallagher of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 288 pages, Houghton Mifflin, 2005, goes behind recent headlines to tell the story of Tim Gallagher's pursuit and discovery of the bird.

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker . . . ghost bird of the swamp. Big, beautiful, iconic, and mysterious, the bird is a symbol of everything that has gone wrong with our relationship to the environment. First plundered by nineteenth-century collectors and then a victim of massive habitat destruction, the bird has been sought for decades by those trying to determine whether the remarkable species still exists. Their findings have been met with ridicule and scorn; since the early twentieth century, most of the scientific world has believed that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is extinct.

But when author Tim Gallagher set out to write *The Grail Bird*, he mounted his own quest for the elusive bird and discovered the amazing truth: The Ivory-billed Woodpecker lives!

Boy, a PSP (Play Station Portable), the Game Cube, Cartoon Network, etc. As parents, it is difficult to pass along to our children our love of the environment simply through outdoor play and adventure. Clustered communities and safeguarded children have resulted in a generation of kids that are the most-watched children in modern history. To think that at the age of 11 a buddy of mine and I walked to Brandywine Creek from New Castle and camped on our own for a weekend with no parental supervision (yet complete parental backing). If I even suggest such a course of action for my 12 and 10 year old sons today, my wife would have me drawn and quartered. Child Services would be breathing down my neck before the weekend was out. The summers were our own to do with as we pleased then, not to be placed in Summer Camps and baby-sat most of the business day. It is this generation that will bring the next group of environmentalists.

So my tenure here will be marked by attempts to reach out to the generation(s) behind me. To somehow get them to understand the need for personal involvement. To motivate them

to take time to understand their local environment and the encroaching growth and commercial development underway. To show them how easy it is to participate in the public process of holding government officials and corporations to account for environmental actions. The only way to achieve this, in my estimation, is to focus and target our message to the youth of the State. While we currently provide our wonderful youth program "Audubon Adventures" to middle-school aged children through the schools as a free educational tool, I personally feel that it is the older kids, the graduating classes from high school and local colleges, that need to be targeted. How we achieve this is a challenge, but a necessary one if Delaware Audubon is to remain a viable force in the environmental community of this State.

My future messages here will be to outline actions taken in this regard, and to suggest personal steps each and every one of us can take in helping to protect the environment. I further hope to bring some commentary from those operating in the environmental community from all sides of the environmental equation.