

# The flyer



Volume 51 | Number 4

DECEMBER 2019



*In Memoriam* BILL STEWART

**Tuesday, November 12, was a difficult day for the DOS family and a worldwide community of birders beyond our state lines** – we lost a local birding champion and conservation advocate whose boundless passion shaped the course of those who were fortunate to cross his path. Surrounded by dear friends and family, Bill Stewart passed away as the first snow of the season fell on a bitterly cold afternoon. If you were a regular participant on his many DOS field trips or a volunteer assisting with any of the multiple initiatives he spear-headed, you are no doubt familiar with his expertise and his joyful (some might say mischievous) laugh. You may not be familiar with the breadth and depth of his awe-inspiring roster of accomplishments. Please read on to learn about and be inspired by Bill's many achievements.

If you would like to help DOS carry on his impressive legacy, consider a year-end donation to the Bill Stewart Memorial Fund. Bill's energy and imagination were boundless -- it's no surprise that, within days of his death, his friends and colleagues began discussing multiple projects that would expand initiatives he championed. Your donations to this fund will benefit initiatives such as the construction of a hawk watch platform at Ashland Nature

Center, help ensure the continuation of the Frontiers in Ornithology Symposium in 2020, and provide scholarship support for students exploring ornithology and conservation. No matter the project, we can assure you that this fund will be allocated in a way that will honor the goals and passions of our departed friend. May his memory continue to inspire us as we celebrate the impact one person can have on a cause they cherish.

In gratitude,  
Meghann Matwichuk  
*DOS President*

**In Memoriam: Bill Stewart (1952-2019)  
DOS Conservation Legend**

Bill Stewart had a long association with DOS as an occasional participant in field trips and programs, but in the mid-2000's he jumped into birds and bird conservation "with both feet". One of Bill's first major DOS projects was as a key member of the steering committee for the development of the Delaware Birding Trail, which helped put the state "on the map" for birds!

It wasn't long until he was appointed Conservation Chair of DOS (2006). In this role, he was responsible for developing and implementing many of the signature programs of the Society, notably the annual Delaware Bird-A-Thon. Begun in 2007, the Delaware Bird-A-Thon has raised over half a million dollars for Delaware bayshore habitat preservation and protected nearly 2,000 acres and counting for migratory shorebirds and other coastal species of concern. The concept of a bird-a-thon was not new, but Bill's vision for it in Delaware was

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innovative in several ways. The Delaware Bird-A-Thon was the first to focus the competition on fundraising, rather than just number of birds seen, and one of the first to adopt a mission that could reach contributors from outside of the state and region.

Bill initiated the DOS funding relationship with DuPont Clear Into the Future (CITF), a lead sponsor of Bird-A-Thon during its early years. In addition, he spearheaded a partnership with DuPont CITF (and later, Delmarva Power and other sponsors) to install and maintain the Wilmington Peregrine Falcon Webcam, which provides a very popular and educational live feed of the Wilmington peregrine falcon nest box, and has greatly raised the profile of DOS in the City of Wilmington and beyond. Bill also conceived, funded, and implemented another signature urban program, the Lights Out! Wilmington campaign in 2011, applying for and receiving a State Greenhouse Gas Reduction Grant to get this project, aimed at reducing mortality to night migrating songbirds, off the ground.

*Continued on Page 3...*



# Delaware Ornithological Society

## ELECTED OFFICERS

President	Meghann Matwichuk
Vice President	Anthony Gonzon
Treasurer	Jim Lewis
Secretary	Holly Merker
Council 2020	Bill Stewart
Council 2021	John Skibicki
Council 2022	Carolyn D'Amico

## COMMITTEES

### Publication Committee

Jean Woods, Chair  
 Kelly Smith, Flyer Editor  
 Gene Hess, Delmarva Ornithologist Editor

### Conservation

Matthew Sarver

### Field Trips

Amy O'Neil  
Kathleen O'Neil

### Programs

Anthony Gonzon

### Delaware Records

Frank Rohrbacher

### Membership

Ian Stewart

### Christmas Bird Count

Jim White

### Hawk Watch

Sally O'Byrne

### Citizen Science

Michael Moore

### Webmaster

Andrew Homsey

## MISSION STATEMENT

The object and purpose of this Society shall be the promotion of the study of birds, the advancement and diffusion of ornithological knowledge, and the conservation of birds and their environment.

Flyer Inquiries: [flyer@DOSbirds.org](mailto:flyer@DOSbirds.org)



### ONLINE

[DOSbirds.org](http://DOSbirds.org)



### FACEBOOK

[facebook.com/DOSbirds](https://facebook.com/DOSbirds)



### TWITTER

[twitter.com/DOS\\_birds](https://twitter.com/DOS_birds)



## MONTHLY Meetings

### Wednesday, December 18, 2019 For DOS, By DOS

Each year DOS members present short programs of interest to the club in the Annual "For DOS, By DOS". Presentations can cover a wide range of topics dealing with birds, birding trips (local, national, international), or a topic at least tangentially related to birds and birding or other nature-related topic. Please contact Anthony Gonzon at [atgonzon@verizon.net](mailto:atgonzon@verizon.net) if you have a short 15-minute program to present at the meeting.

### HELP DECORATE & PROVIDE SPECIAL TREATS FOR THE DECEMBER DOS MEMBERS MEETING!

Do you enjoy decorating or baking for the holidays? Do you have fun bird ornaments or holiday decorations you'd be willing to display? This is your time to shine!

Bake to share, help us decorate the meeting room, and share in the

festivities for the December Members Meeting, Wednesday, December 18th, 2019!

Contact Holly Merker for more info: [HCybelle@gmail.com](mailto:HCybelle@gmail.com)

### DECEMBER DOOR PRIZES!

The December meeting is always packed with friends and festive cheer but as an extra incentive for attending, your DOS council has donated a series of door prizes, many of which have a bird theme! All attendants receive a ticket and these will be drawn throughout the evening - maybe you will be one of the lucky winners who gets to take a nice surprise home!

**Mark Your Calendars for the  
1st Meeting in 2020:  
Wednesday, Jan 15th**  
Check the DOS website for details

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month from September through May at Ashland Nature Center in Hockessin, DE. Social hour and refreshments are at 7:00pm, followed by the meeting and presentations at 7:30pm. If you'd like to bring snacks to share or contribute photographs to the pre-meeting slideshow, please contact DOS Vice President, Anthony Gonzon at [atgonzon@verizon.net](mailto:atgonzon@verizon.net).

...Continued from page 1

Bill has also been an active promoter of the Duck Stamp. He served on the Board for the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp and spurred DOS to contribute significant funding in 2009 to a successful nationwide marketing campaign designed to encourage birders to purchase duck stamps, thereby extending the reach of this powerful wetland conservation program. For his efforts, Bill was awarded the 2010 Conservation Champion Award from the USFWS and the 2010 Citizen's Award from the US Dept. of Interior.

Bill had a passion for education, as well as conservation. He was active as a leader for the Delaware Dunlins Youth Birders Club of DOS, and he regularly inspired youth and adult birders alike on field trips he led for DOS and for the ABA.



In 2013, Bill stepped down as Chair the DOS Conservation Committee to assume the role of Vice President (2013-2015), and then President (2015-2017) of the Society. Bill Stewart's leadership has been essential to redefining the conservation role of DOS over the past decade, and through his marketing savvy, his infectious enthusiasm, and his tenacious dedication, he helped position the Society to make an even greater difference for birds in the future. In recognition of his many accomplishments, Bill was elected a Fellow of DOS in 2009, and received the DOS Conservation Award in 2014.

From 2012 to 2018, Bill worked for the American Birding Association, serving first as the Director of Partnerships and Marketing, then as Director of Conservation and Community, where he pursued innovative and collaborative approaches to bird education and bird

conservation. While at the ABA, Bill led the Young Birder of the Year program as well as the Spark Bird Project. He was the founder and Director of the ABA's Camp Avocet based in Lewes, which brought together two dozen teen birders from around the US and abroad. Under Bill's direction, Camp Avocet was a six day experience of birding and conservation education along the Delmarva Peninsula, featuring his beloved Delaware as the crown jewel and home base.

In 2011, Bill founded Red Knot Outfitters Birding Guides, a Delaware-based custom tour company that specializes in education-based birding tours. Through this company, Bill was able to share the significance of Delaware as critical habitat for migratory and nesting birds along the eastern seaboard in a more intimate and focused "Bill Stewart" way. Red Knot Outfitters has worked with hundreds of school students and adults each year, in all three Delaware counties.

Bill was extremely proud of his last professional endeavor as a co-founder and Chairman of the highly successful *Frontiers in Ornithology: A Symposium for Youth*, held in late September 2019. The mission of the symposium was to provide middle school through college students with exposure to cutting-edge technologies being used in avian research and study, careers in ornithology and conservation, and advice on how to pursue that focus and take their passion for birds to a higher level. Registration for the event was sold out in 2019, and drew students and presenters from across the United States. At the time of his death, Bill was helping plan the 2020 *Frontiers in Ornithology Symposium*.



With his easy, humble nature and infectious enthusiasm, Bill Stewart had a special gift for making people feel welcome in the birding community. At the same time, his focus on conservation and personal responsibility for the well-being of the birds we all enjoy meant that he could also encourage new birders to immediately feel that they had a central role in conservation. He ran meetings, field trips, and programs with a strong sense of purpose, and he recruited all of us to his causes easily, leading by example with his Herculean work ethic. Bill was at the very heart of Delaware's birding community. We hope that every member of DOS joins us in honoring his memory by taking a little more time to spread the word about birds and birding, and to engage more fully in actions to protect birds and their habitats.

*By Matt Sarver and Holly Merker*





### NEW DOS CAPS TURNING HEADS!

Our members have been turning cartwheels over the new selection of DOS caps! The latest caps are high quality, comfortable, and one size fits all, plus they proudly feature the renamed Delaware Ornithological Society logo. They are available in a much-expanded range of colors and are for sale at indoor meetings for \$20 each, and through the DOS website too (+\$5 S&H). The new caps are a great way to treat yourself to some winter color and would also make an unusual Christmas gift!

We are also selling off our inventory of Delmarva Ornithological Society binocular straps for just \$10, so grab a bargain before they all go!

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you still haven't renewed your DOS membership please do so, as we depend heavily on dues to keep our society running smoothly. You can pay in person with cash, check, or credit card at indoor meetings, or can mail a check (payable to 'DOS') to DOS, PO Box 4247, Wilmington, DE 19807. Alternatively you can renew your membership online using our new membership management system at <https://dosbirds.z2systems.com/np/clients/dosbirds/>

login.jsp. Your email address should already be in our system, so if you click 'Forgot Username or Password' and enter your email address you should get an email allowing you to reset both. Once you are in your account, you can renew using the drop down menu in the 'Memberships' tab on the left hand column. Any problems just drop me a line at [istew@udel.edu](mailto:istew@udel.edu) and we will figure it out. THANK YOU for renewing!!!

### SUPPORT DOS WHEN YOU SHOP AT AMAZON

If you are shopping on Amazon this Holiday Season you can also help DOS by shopping on "smile.amazon.com", Amazon donates 0.5% back to DOS for every purchase and it costs you nothing.

To sign up directly without searching through every organization on Amazon go to this link - <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/51-6020258>



## Stuck For Gift Ideas This Holiday Season?

Why not give a friend or relative a gift membership to DOS? You could stimulate a lifelong interest in birds, birding, and conservation. Give your loved ones a gift they'll love, and that the birds will thank you for, too.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Melanie A, Newark DE  
Lorrie B, Lincoln DE  
Bethany T, Newark DE  
Kate H, Wilmington DE

Hannah R, Coatesville PA  
Ann and Ted W, Landenberg PA  
Phil and Mary D, Kennett Square PA  
Elaine H, Newark DE                      Rob D, Lewes DE

## A Big Thank You to DOS for its support and numerous contributions to the Frontiers in Ornithology: A Symposium for Youth!



DOS was the Partnering Organization for the Frontiers in Ornithology Symposium

held at Ashland Nature Center September 28, 2019. The event was a one day symposium that brought students together from across the country, to learn from, and engage with, 17 presenters and keynotes known for their cutting-edge work in avian science and conservation. Registration for the event was sold out (125 registrants), and enormously successful. Fifteen dedicated volunteers

from the DOS membership were an integral part of the success of the event, and to them, we are grateful!

The 2020 Frontiers in Ornithology Symposium date has been announced for September 26th at Ashland Nature Center. Stay-tuned for more information! [www.frontiers-in-ornithology.org](http://www.frontiers-in-ornithology.org)

*Holly Merker, Co-chair, and the Frontiers in Ornithology Symposium Planning Team*



2019 - 2020  
FIELD  
trips



JANUARY				
<b>SAT</b> 1/11/2020 7:30am <b>NEW DATE!</b>	<b>2020 List Head Start</b>	<b>Frank Rohrbacher</b>	<b>Park &amp; Ride at Rte 299 &amp; Rte 1 in Middletown, opposite Wawa</b>	Get an early start on your 2020 list! Visit various DE sites in the race to get as many year birds as possible. Full day.
<b>WED</b> 1/15/2020 8:30am - 12:00pm	<b>Midwinter Bird Walk</b>	<b>Sally O'Byrne</b>	<b>Blue Ball Barn, Alapocas State Park</b>	Come out and get to know some of the birds that are at home in the woods & fields during winter! Meet Sally O'Byrne at the Blue Ball Barn, near traffic circle on Rte. 141 at 8:30AM.
FEBRUARY				
<b>SUN</b> 2/2/2020 8:00am	<b>Owl Trip</b>	<b>Jim White</b>	<b>Registration Required. DOS members only due to space limitations. Meeting place to be determined.</b>	Full day search in various locations for as many species of owls as possible, and other raptors along the way. Registration Required. Must call Jim if you are attending (302-593-9622). DOS members only due to space limitations. Carpooling is encouraged. Bring snacks, lunch, etc., although typically there is a stop around lunchtime at Wawa/Royal Farms/etc. to refuel. Make sure to dress appropriately for being outside for extended periods in mid-winter! Full day trip will start at 8am.
<b>SAT</b> 02/8/2020 8:00am - 12:00pm	<b>Sea Watch II</b>	<b>Anthony Gonzon &amp; Chris Bennett</b>	<b>Delaware Seashore State Park lot on the south side of Indian River Inlet along the ocean (Southeast Day Use Area)</b>	Join Anthony and Chris to count seabirds migrating along Delaware's coast – collecting invaluable data as well as seeing thousands of migrating loons, gannets, grebes, sea ducks, gulls, terns and hopefully an alcid. Limited walking on soft sand to get to viewing spot on beach. Portable toilets available.
MARCH				
<b>SAT</b> 3/14/2020 7:30am - 12:00pm	<b>New Castle County Waterfowl Extravaganza</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>To Be Determined. Registration Required.</b>	Benefitting from overwintering and staging waterfowl from the southern regions, New Castle County can host heavy concentrations of ducks and other waterfowl in early March. Join in the fun as we experience this spectacle in both private and public habitats to enjoy some first-time ever views of what promises to be a memorable birding experience! *Conservation Access Pass required. See website for registration details. Rain Date March 15.
<b>SAT</b> 3/28/2020 8:00am - 12:00pm	<b>Sea Watch III</b>	<b>Anthony Gonzon &amp; Chris Bennett</b>	<b>Delaware Seashore State Park lot on the south side of Indian River Inlet along the ocean (Southeast Day Use Area)</b>	Last chance this winter to bundle up and join Anthony and Chris to find, ID & document seabirds such as Northern Gannet, scoters, loons, gulls, & cormorants, plus maybe spot a rarity or two. Limited walking on soft sand to get to viewing spot on beach. Portable toilets available. DE state park fee in effect.
<b>SUN</b> 3/29/2020 7:30am - 11:30am	<b>Marina Park &amp; Susquehanna River, Port Deposit, MD</b>	<b>Joe Sebastiani</b>	<b>Marina Park, Port Deposit, MD</b>	Join Joe on this trip to the Lower Susquehanna in MD, searching for gulls, including winter specialties like Little Gull, and watching for migratory waterfowl.

**Field Trip Info:** All members and guests are welcome! Just a few trips that are noted are restricted to DOS members due to space limitations. Field trip descriptions alert you to locations that are known to require entrance fees, but be aware a leader on any trip may choose to go to a location that requires fees/tolls. The Conservation Access Pass must be purchased in advance. Participation in field trips is at your own risk. We love pets, but we cannot allow them to come on our field trips. Please help our leaders and environment by carpooling, especially on trips which include several locations - it's a great way to get to know other bird lovers! Half day trips will usually end before lunchtime unless otherwise noted. Please feel free to contact trip leaders if you have any questions. Thanks for joining us! Be sure to check our website ([www.dosbirds.org](http://www.dosbirds.org)) for the latest information on any field trip, including weather related changes, extra details from leaders, maps, and the latest pop-up trips.



**When the raptors are slow at Cape Henlopen, birders have the advantage of watching the ocean** for seabirds that put on a show as they follow the coastline south. In fact, if raptors aren't really your interest, the hawk watch platform is the perfect place to scan the ocean for other things.

From mid-October through November, there are typically great flights of Surf Scoter and Black Scoter, when up to 5,000 of these sea ducks can be observed in one day. White-winged Scoters are also observed in small numbers each year, generally in November. Common Eiders (just a few) are seen in late November during most years, and this year eiders were seen on November 4. Gannets are present daily from late October through November and it is fascinating to see the different ages of the gannets all in one location, from the dark immature birds to the mottled sub-adults to the beautiful white adults with the black wingtips. Brown Pelicans are seen almost daily early in the season.

Large flocks of Snow Geese arrive in late November where up to 6,000 will gather and "raft up" on the ocean to float by the platform. Occasionally they take flight and fill the sky with their raucous calls. In 2018 there were huge Snow Geese



flocks with several days of over 35,000 geese. The CHHW spotters managed to find a Greater White-fronted Goose in a Snow Goose flock last year. The flocks were so close they also saw a few geese with readable yellow numbered neck bands that they reported to the USGS bird banding lab.

Common and Red-throated Loons will migrate past in high numbers - Jen Ottinger was surprised at how many Red-throated Loons were observed from Henlopen in her first year. They often out-number the Common Loon in late November when hundreds can be seen in one day. At the end of November in 2017, they counted almost 700 Red-throated Loons in a single day!

Jen and her crew also saw a good variety of ducks from the platform during November including Redhead, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck and Red-breasted Merganser.

Of course gulls are a daily occurrence and Henlopen is the place to go for the Lesser Black-backed Gull. With the presence of gulls come Jaegers. Parasitic Jaegers are seen in October and early November and there have been a few isolated sightings of Pomarine Jaeger in recent years. A Long-tailed Jaeger flew past in November 2014.

A few rare non-raptors have been documented over the years including a Wood Stork in 2017 and a Red-necked Grebe in 2013. American White Pelicans are seen most years during November, and on November 5 this year (2019), a Great

Shearwater was seen loafing on the water and preening for over an hour.

Sea Mammals add interest at the platform. Dolphins are present daily and sometimes come in close to shore. Whales are also seen yearly from the hawk watch, generally in late November, and occasionally we also observe a seal head pop up out of the water. A rarely seen fish, the giant



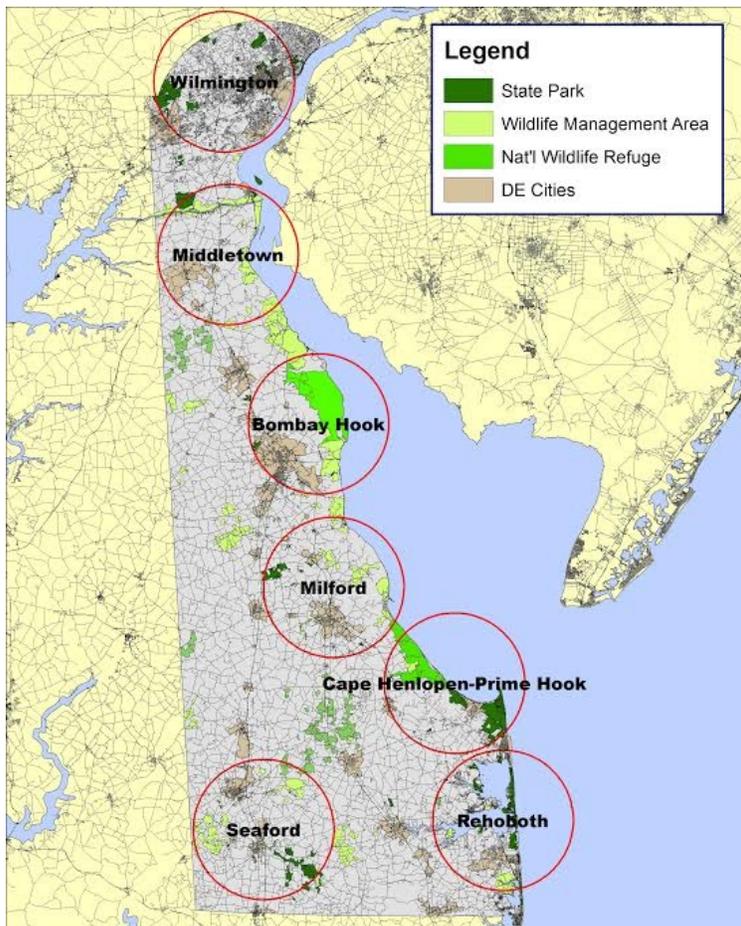
Sunfish has also been seen gently moving its top fin up and down in the ocean waves.

The highest number of sea birds is observed on a strong east



wind, but the strong east winds of November are also the coldest time to be watching from the hawk watch platform. Cape Henlopen Hawk Watch counts plenty of raptors, but if you want a total experience of fall migration along the coast, turn your optics towards the ocean every so often and look low over the waves for mammals, fish, and other birds!

Jen Ottinger,  
Cape Henlopen Hawk Counter  
Sally O'Byrne, Hawk Watch Oversight



# Get Ready, CBC Season Is Coming!

DOS sponsors six Christmas Bird Counts: Wilmington, Middletown, Bombay Hook, Rehoboth, Milford, and Cape Henlopen/Prime Hook. All of the counts are looking for birders to participate. Contact the appropriate count compiler if you are interested in joining any or all of this year's Christmas counts. Also, if you live in one of the count circles and you would rather count birds from the comfort of your home (who wouldn't), just tally your feeder birds and report them to the appropriate individual count compiler listed to the right.

**The counts are free to all participants and new birders are always welcome!**

Jim White, *DOS Christmas Count Coordinator*

**Send Us Your CBC Photos!**  
Email us at: [Flyer@DOSBirds.org](mailto:Flyer@DOSBirds.org)

- 1 WILMINGTON - 14 DEC 2019**  
**Compiler:** Jim White  
**Contact:** (302) 593 - 9622  
or [hylajwhite@aol.com](mailto:hylajwhite@aol.com)
- 2 BOMBAY HOOK - 15 DEC 2019**  
**Compiler:** Andy Ednie  
**Contact:** (302) 792 - 9591  
or [ednieap@verizon.net](mailto:ednieap@verizon.net)
- 3 REHOBOTH - 28 DEC 2019**  
**Compiler:** Sally O'Byrne  
**Contact:** (302) 945 - 3236  
or [salobyrne@gmail.com](mailto:salobyrne@gmail.com)
- 4 CAPE HENLOPEN/PRIME HOOK - 29 DEC 2019**  
**Compiler:** Bruce Peterjohn  
**Contact:** [bpeterjohn@verizon.net](mailto:bpeterjohn@verizon.net)
- 5 MILFORD - 4 JAN 2020**  
**Compiler:** Chris Bennett  
**Contact:** (302) 424-1126  
or [cpb2564@gmail.com](mailto:cpb2564@gmail.com)
- 6 MIDDLETOWN - 5 JAN 2020**  
**Compiler:** Anthony Gonzon  
**Contact:** (302) 598 - 5893  
or [atgonzon@verizon.net](mailto:atgonzon@verizon.net)



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