



# *The flyer*



Volume 51 | Number 7

April 2020



## *Letter* FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this letter, signs of spring abound. A Bluebird couple is checking out a nest box in the yard as my FOY Phoebe flits up and down the creek behind the house. Spring peepers call through the dusk on warmer evenings, and every day I notice a new set of buds starting to unfurl. I'm as aware of these accumulating milestones as I've ever been, now that the Covid-19 crisis and our new culture of social distancing has drastically reduced the circumference of my physical world. My calendar grows emptier with each new

announcement that a concert or play or talk has been cancelled, yet my wish-list of around-the-house projects steadily lengthens. With the likelihood of a statewide shelter-in-place order looming, even walks around the neighborhood feel like small luxuries. Under the layers of anxiety, I also feel lucky – I know that I don't have to go much farther than a window to witness a wider world unaffected by CDC warnings and government protocols, where winged visitors will soon begin passing through as they migrate to faraway breeding grounds. I feel fortunate to have my eyes and ears open to these curious backyard denizens, as they provide endless opportunities to learn and be amazed. The coming days will feel a lot less isolating because of what I know about birds and because of the communities I've found near and far who appreciate all these dynamic creatures have to offer.

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Still, there is no doubt that this will be an incredibly challenging

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Follow DOS on Facebook!



## **The Wilmington Peregrine Falcon Webcam is Back!**

The cameras are on and the action has started.

Watch live at:

<https://www.dosbirds.org/falconcam>



Follow the story @wilmfalcons





## Delaware Ornithological Society

### ELECTED OFFICERS

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

### COMMITTEES

Publications Committee  
Jean Woods, Chair  
Katie Bird, Flyer Editor  
Gene Hess, Delaware Ornithologist Editor

Conservation  
Matthew Sarver

Membership  
Ian Stewart

Field Trips  
Amy O'Neil  
Kathleen O'Neil

Christmas Bird  
Count  
Jim White

Programs  
Anthony Gonzon

Citizen Science  
Michael Moore

Delaware Records  
Frank Rohrbacher

Hawkwatch  
Sally O'Byrne

Webmaster  
Andrew Homsey

Delaware Bird  
Records Committee  
Frank Rohrbacher

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Delaware Ornithological Society is the promotion of bird watching and the study of birds, the advancement and dissemination of ornithological knowledge, and the conservation of birds and their environment.

**Flyer Inquiries:** *flyer 'at' DOSbirds.org*



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



FACEBOOK  
[@DOSbirds](https://www.facebook.com/DOSbirds)



MONTHLY *Meetings*

## \*April Meeting Canceled\*

The April meeting has  
been cancelled due to  
Covid-19.

The speaker will be  
rescheduled for the Fall.

### Save the Date:

**Wednesday, May 20**

**Dr. Shawn Dash**

7 PM - 9:30 PM

"The Forgotten Partnership  
with Insects and Birds"

\*Meeting date tentative,  
further information in May\*



Eastern phoebes have  
arrived in northern  
Delaware once more.  
Have you heard these  
charismatic flycatchers  
from your yard yet this  
season?

## 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)

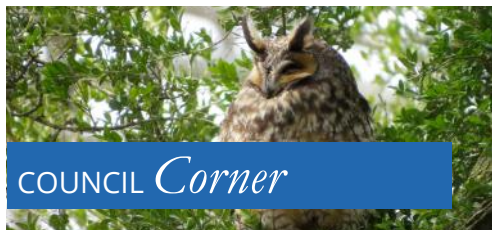
time for many individuals, businesses, and organizations. DOS is just one of many that is regretfully cancelling or rescheduling programs and long-planned events. We ask for your patience and continued support as we reimagine how we might 'lead' field trips through self-guided activities, and explore how we can continue to facilitate the sense of community for which DOS has long been known. We ask for your ideas as well – please feel free to be in touch to let us know how you would like DOS to remain a part of your birding journey, virtually or otherwise. (Suggestions may be sent to me at [meghann.matwichuk@gmail.com](mailto:meghann.matwichuk@gmail.com).)

In the meanwhile, here are a few ideas for how we can all stay ornithologically engaged in the coming weeks and months:

- **Reach out** to your birding companions virtually or by phone -- compare daily observations and share stories of past birding adventures. Invite them to go head-to-head in a [Backyard Birding Challenge!](#)
- **Renew** your commitment to contribute to citizen science projects like [eBird](#), [Nestwatch](#) and [iNaturalist](#). Your yard is packed with valuable data! Encourage friends and family who are homeschooling to incorporate these projects into their teaching.
- **Check in** with your local seed supplier – many businesses have adapted their service models, and they may be offering home delivery. Give your feeders thorough and regular cleanings.
- **Re-connect** with your immediate surroundings and get your hands dirty – identify and remove invasive plants to allow natives to flourish. (Native ecosystems provide crucial support to our avian neighbors, especially during nesting season.)
- **Advocate** for open space conservation – contact your representatives and let them know that it is more important than ever for communities to have dedicated space to enjoy nature and the health benefits it provides.

Be Well and Good Birding,  
**Meghann Matwichuk, DOS President**





# Chemours Grant Announcement

The Delaware Ornithological Society (DOS) is very pleased to announce that Chemours has awarded us three grants to be used to support of the DOS Falcon Watch, DOS Youth Birding Program, and the Delaware Bird-a-thon. Each grant is renewable for five years. These grants will greatly benefit birds, the birding community and the entire community as well.

The first grant is for the DOS Falcon Watch. This grant will fund the operations and maintenance of the Falcon Cam, support the end of season Falcon Watch event, and purchase optics for the end of season Falcon Watch event. We will be able to continue to provide the Falcon Cam, with a peak daily viewership of 10,000! We will also be able to expand the reach of the end of season Falcon Watch event, with the support of new binoculars for use by experienced and new birders alike. We anticipate bringing in more participants, including Chemours employees, both to the Falcon Watch and possibly as Fledge Watch volunteers.

While DOS has over 500 active members, new members and youth birders are especially important for the long-term health of the birding community. Chemours is committed to vibrant communities and to joining their

neighbors to cement community bonds and building a brighter shared future. These shared principals overlap in the second grant, for the DOS Youth Birding Program. In its first year, this grant will support the "Frontiers in Ornithology: A Symposium for Youth". In subsequent years, these funds will be used to support the DOS Red Knot Youth Birding Club (formerly the Dunlins).

A third grant was awarded to DOS from Chemours for the annual Delaware Bird-a-thon. This annual program of DOS is modeled after a walk-a-thon, but with donations given for each bird species identified. Individuals and teams compete to see who can identify the most individual species of birds in a 24 hour period, during a week in May. This program helps people become aware of the environment and environmental concerns, while also raising funds for the preservation of habitat for birds and other wildlife. These funds will also be used to form a team or teams of Chemours employees, getting new birders involved in birding and raising their environmental awareness.

**John Skibicki, Council Member**



# Chemours™



# DOS Membership News

## MEMBERSHIP *News*

### Welcome New Members!

We have no fewer than 9 new members (and sometimes their families) to announce!!!

Richard Calhoun, Chester Springs PA  
Mark Dysart, Lewes DE  
Tom Herlihy, Wilmington DE  
Nate Hughes, Wilmington DE  
Bill MacLachlan, Wilmington DE  
Laura Minker, Newark DE  
Patti Parziale, Wilmington DE  
Greg Shelnutt, Newark DE  
Leigh Uyeda, Hockessin DE

### Membership Renewal

We are thrilled that our roster of new members keeps increasing but the only way the society will grow is if our current members renew. If you still haven't renewed your DOS membership for 2019-2020 please do so as we depend on your dues to keep our society running smoothly. You can mail in a check (payable to 'DOS') to DOS, PO Box 4247, Wilmington DE 19807.

Alternatively you can renew your membership online using our new 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 logged into 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 'at' udel.edu and we will figure it out.

THANK YOU for renewing!!! And remember that if you renew at the Black-necked Stilt (\$100) or Peregrine (\$200) levels you qualify for a free DOS cap or binocular strap! And if you're feeling especially munificent, how about taking the plunge and joining the hallowed ranks of our DOS Life Members (\$500)? This comes with a free cap and binocular strap and means you never have to worry about dues payments or be troubled with reminder e-mails for the rest of your life!

### Call for Fellows and Honorary Members

It's that time of year again when we start accepting nominations for DOS Fellows and Honorary Members! Nominations for either category can be submitted to me at istew 'at' udel.edu.

Nominees for DOS Fellow must be active members of at least two years standing who have made a significant contribution to the affairs of the Society, preferably as a Committee or Council member, and/or to the ornithology of the greater Delaware area. Nominees for Honorary Membership should be of national prominence in the field of ornithology or a closely related field and have been of service to the Society.

**Ian Stewart** DOS Membership Committee





2019 - 2020  
FIELD  
trips



Date	Event	Leader	Meeting Location	Description
APRIL				
All April events are cancelled.				
MAY				
<p>May events are cancelled through May 15th. All listed trips are tentative and depend on possible extensions of the Governor's stay-at-home order. See <a href="http://dosbirds.org">dosbirds.org</a> for updates!</p> <p>Birdwatch on your own safely: choose uncrowded locations and/or quiet times of day, maintain social distancing (6ft or more apart), and wash your hands with soap often. Now is a great time to work on your backyard bird list!</p>				
SUN May 24 8am to noon	Delaware Bayshore Shorebirds & Horseshoe Crabs	Chris Bennett	Little Creek Boat Ramp, Rte. 9	<p>Witness firsthand why the Delaware bayshore is critical to the shorebirds that stop here to fuel up for the flight to their breeding grounds every spring. Our target species will be Red Knot, and over a dozen other shorebird species, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, other resident and migratory birds, and spawning horseshoe crabs. Participants can expect to walk short distances on hard surface trails, loose sand dune crossings, and bay beaches. There are portable toilets at Pickering Beach and Ted Harvey W.A., and restrooms at the DuPont Nature Center and Slaughter Beach Fire Hall. Bring insect repellent, sunscreen, and plenty of drinking water.</p> <p>*Conservation Access Pass required.</p>

**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. Photo release: we take photographs of members on trips for promotional materials. If you do not want your photo taken or published, please tell your trip leader before or during the trip. 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)) and Facebook page for the latest information on any field trip, including weather related changes, extra details from leaders, maps, and the latest pop-up trips.



# 2019 - 2020 FIELD trips

Date	Event	Leader	Meeting Location	Description
<b>JUNE</b>				
<b>SAT June 6 at 7:30 am Half day</b>	<b>Secretive Marsh Birds of Blackbird Creek</b>	<b>Matt Sarver</b>	<b>Registration Required. Contact Delaware Wild Lands at info 'at' dewildlands.org or 302- 378-2736 DWL Hickey House lo- cated at 170 Stave Land- ing Road in Townsend</b>	Join Matt Sarver, Kate Hackett (of Delaware Wild Lands), and staff members of the Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve to scout secretive marsh birds of Taylors Bridge by canoe and kayak. Enjoy paddling among thousands of acres of tidal saltmarsh (including areas that DOS has helped protect!), birding from Blackbird Creek, seeking birdlife reliant on tidal and freshwater systems, and learning more about this part of southern New Castle County. This will be a minimum 2-hour paddling trip, boats will be provided.
<b>SAT June 13 from 7:30 - 11:30 am</b>	<b>Bobolinks at Fair Hill NRMA, Maryland</b>	<b>Carolyn D'Amico &amp; Ian Stewart (859) 333-8817</b>	<b>Parking Lot #3 (2895 Appleton Road) - Also known as the North Ap- pleton Parking Lot (see DOS website for more specific directions).</b>	Fair Hill NRMA hosts breeding Bobolinks, Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows all within close-up viewing from numerous groomed trails. Excellent photographic opportunities abound within a short walk from the parking area. Due to their multiple management practices throughout the 5,656 acres, our three and a half hour stroll should produce 60+ species. Much of the time will be spent enjoying the Bobolinks and sparrows tending to fledglings but we will also explore adjacent woodlands along the Big Elk Creek. *NRMA Daily Pass
<b>SAT June 20 from 8 am - noon</b>	<b>Breeding Birds of Norman G. Wilder Wildlife Area</b>	<b>Chris Bennett cpb2564 'at' gmail.com</b>	<b>Meet at the Wildlife Area parking lot at the corner of Firetower Rd. and Five Foot Prong Road north of Felton.</b>	Norman G. Wilder is a sprawling State Wildlife Area north and west of the town of Felton in central Kent County. It is a lightly birded area that is teeming with great breeding songbirds including Kentucky, Worm-eating and Black-and-white Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Scarlet and Summer Tanager and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. This area also looks like prime Hooded Warbler habitat. The only way to confirm its presence is to get out there and bird it more often. We will be walking on wide, flat and firm dirt roads up to several miles. *Conservation Access Pass required.
<b>SAT June 20 TBA</b>	<b>DOS Annual June Picnic</b>		<b>TBA</b>	Stay tuned for upcoming details on our annual June Picnic. Date is tentative!
<b>JULY</b>				
<b>SAT July 18 8am</b>	<b>Delaware Shorebirds</b>	<b>Bob Rufe rrufe1@aol.com</b>	<b>Meet at Bombay Hook NWR headquarters.</b>	What a tradition – don't miss being a part of Bob Rufe's 42nd Annual Trip to Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge! Expect a few rarities and learn to recognize the summer locals. Bring bug spray, sunscreen, & a hat. Half day. Don't forget that the NWR entrance fee is in effect (\$4/vehicle), or a Federal Duck Stamp will serve as a pass.
<b>AUGUST</b>				
<b>SUN Aug 30 7:30am</b>	<b>More Delaware Shorebirds</b>	<b>Frank Rohrbacher</b>	<b>Meet at Bombay Hook NWR headquarters.</b>	Join Frank Rohrbacher for another terrific chance to find out what's migrating through in late August, and expect a few rarities. We'll meet at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge headquarters at 7:30AM. Bring bug spray, sunscreen, & a hat. Please be aware that the BHNWR entrance fee is in effect (\$4/car, or Federal Duck Stamp).



# DOS Conservation News

Dear friends, it's been a while since we've regularly featured DOS conservation news in the Flyer, but we'll be working hard to include regular updates and important conservation and advocacy information here in the future.

At a time like this, it is more important than ever to continue to stand up for bird conservation.

Longstanding federal protections for birds, like the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), continue to be eroded at an alarming pace, and sweeping changes to regulatory interpretations of broader environmental laws like the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Clean Water Act are ongoing. Most of you probably saw the headlines that the EPA will stop enforcing rules on toxic releases during the covid-19 outbreak!

The combination of upcoming economic challenges with the already full-scale attack on conservation occurring at the federal level is likely to mean an uphill battle for bird conservation in the near future.

While it is difficult to worry about the fate of the planet and the safety of our families at the same time, many folks are looking for some things to do during quarantine. Here are a few ideas to help the birds:

**ACT.** Sign up for the American Bird Conservancy's excellent action emails at: <https://abcbirds.org/email-sign-up/>. ABC will help you keep abreast of issues at the federal level, and will give you easy ways to reach out to your legislators on topics of importance to birds! DOS works closely with ABC on federal bird conservation policy, but you can add your voice directly

by signing onto petitions and sending letters via their website!

**BIRD.** Go birding (safely) in your yard or local patch and submit your observations to eBird, with the knowledge that you are contributing to the single most important database for conservation science that the world has ever seen. There's no reason that flattening the curve of coronavirus should mean flattening the curve of eBird submissions. In fact, eBird has a great post up about how to use eBird and Merlin in your yard: <https://ebird.org/news/discover-the-birds-in-your-yard-or-garden>

**LEARN.** If you're stuck at home, why not take some deliberate time away from an otherwise depressing news cycle to delve into topics in conservation that interest you but which you don't normally have time to learn more about? Are you passionate about migrant songbirds like warblers? Look up [Partners in Flight](#). Maybe shorebirds are your thing? Check out the [Pacific Americas Shorebird Conservation Strategy](#). Google is your friend! The more time you take to read and think now, the better able you will be to help when the time comes for conservation action, or to educate your friends and family.

I hope that you find some moments in the coming weeks to reaffirm your passion for birds and their conservation, and that you and your loved ones stay safe and healthy!

**Matt Sarver, DOS Conservation Chair**  
[conservation@dosbirds.org](mailto:conservation@dosbirds.org)

# Wilmington Peregrine Fledge Watch Volunteers Needed!

Jacque Williamson of the Brandywine Zoo is excited to work with DOS this year in coordinating the monitoring of the Wilmington Peregrine Falcon Watch. Jacque works with several projects at the Zoo which utilize volunteers to monitor wildlife, including an American Kestrel nest box monitoring project and an urban wildlife monitoring camera trapping project. These projects provide opportunities for citizen scientists and community members to contribute to wildlife research and conservation.

If you're interested in volunteering this year for the first time, or if you are a returning volunteer, please complete a volunteer registration form via the Delaware State Parks volunteer system. The system utilizes the Zoo's volunteer management program to allow monitors to sign up for shifts online, but you must be registered in the system before you can access the signups.

Fledge monitoring usually occurs around Memorial Day, and lasts from 7-10 days. To register to monitor this year's Peregrines,

please visit [BrandywineZoo.org](http://BrandywineZoo.org).

For questions, please email **Jacque Williamson**, Curator of Education & Conservation Programs at [Jacque.Williamson@delaware.gov](mailto:Jacque.Williamson@delaware.gov).



## Red Knot Rambler: Coming your way!

(just not sure when....)

Red knot Rambler, a beer created by Mispillion River Brewing Company in partnership with DOS, has been in the works since Bill Stewart and Sally O'Byrne presented the idea to the the brewery in March 2019. The plan was to time the 2020 release of this special IPA to shorebird migration. April 18 was to be the launch date, with a follow-up tasting party at the REI store in Christiana during the Bird-A-Thon on May 8. However, with a now familiar announcement, all events have been canceled due to Covid-19 concerns.

The release of Red knot Rambler is up in the air as well as celebrations for this beer that was created to highlight shorebird conservation. Please stay tuned. DOS will make an announcement about the future of this beer and any events associated with it, as soon as we know. Currently we are discussing timing the beer with fall migration of 2020, or waiting until the spring of 2021.

Meanwhile, please be assured that migration will happen. Shorebirds, including the Red knot, will continue their yearly journey through the Delaware Bay. The Horseshoe Crabs will continue to spawn and feed the hordes of famished birds that alight on our shoreline. With luck and good weather, the birds will leave fat and ready for the rest of their journey to the arctic tundra to begin the breeding season. The conservation efforts of The Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife and the contributors to the Delaware Bird-A-Thon have all helped to protect this precious resource.

Thanks to all of you. **Sally O'Byrne** [Hawkwatch Committee](#)



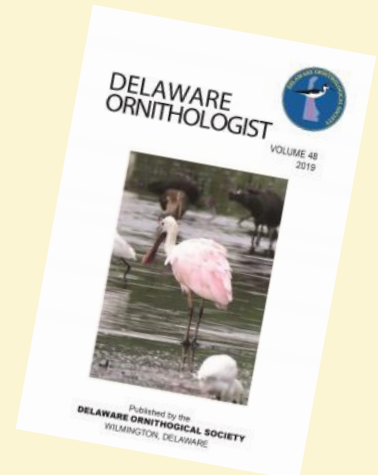
Bird safely—even data from your backyard or living room window is valuable. Be sure to log your sightings on [ebird.org](https://ebird.org)!

### Call for Ornithologist Articles

Do you have something to say about birds? The *Delaware Ornithologist* is looking for articles related to birds in the Delmarva region.

Anyone is welcome to submit articles. Past topics have included unusual bird nests, observations of interesting or unusual bird behavior, results of personal research projects or surveys, and descriptions of rare bird sightings. First-time authors are welcome and you don't need to be a scientist to contribute!

If you have an idea for an article please contact Jean Woods, Publication Committee Chair, at [jwoods 'at' delmnh.org](mailto:jwoods@delmnh.org). Articles should be submitted by June 15.

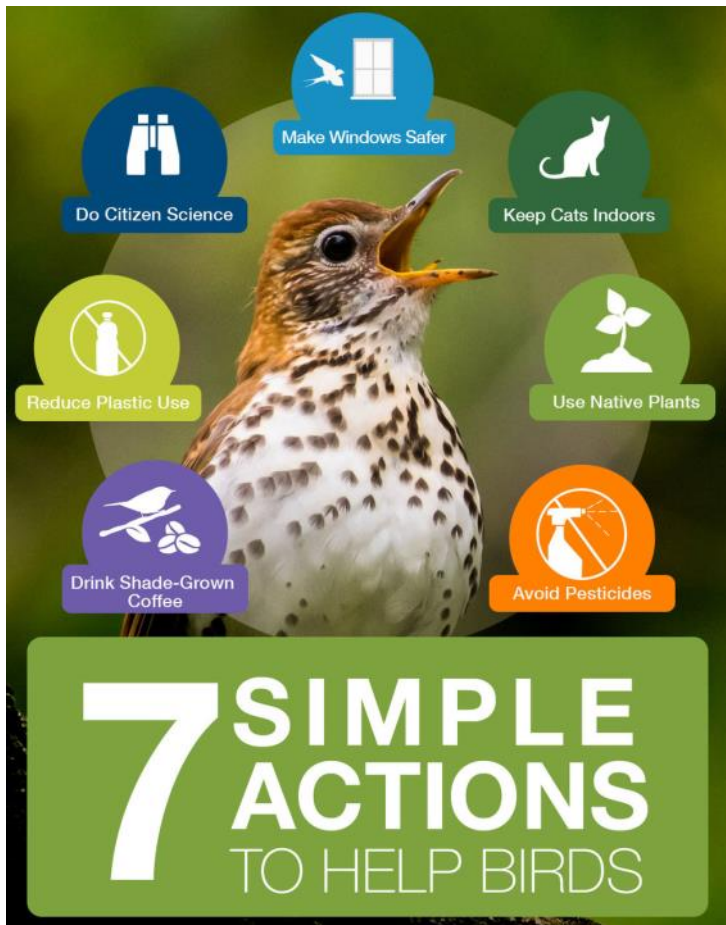


# DOS Needs You!

**Volunteers** are needed in the following areas:

- ◇ The **Citizen Science Committee** is looking for ideas and members. Contact Meghann Matwichuk, meghann.matwichuk 'at' gmail.com.
- ◇ **Peregrine Falcon Fledge Watch** in late May and early June. See article on page 8.
- ◇ **Breeding Bird Atlas fundraising** - Work is well advanced in writing up the results of the second Delaware Breeding Bird Atlas Project. Volunteers are needed to help raise funds to defray publication costs. Contact Jean Woods, jwoods65 'at' verizon.net.
- ◇ We want YOUR **American Kestrel sightings!!** See a kestrel? Be sure to report it on [eBird](http://eBird)!

Thanks to those of you who already volunteer with DOS!



**Bird ID Pop Quiz!** What species is this? See the answer on page 13. Photo by Katie Bird.

Do you have a good quiz photo? Send it to flyer 'at' dosbirds.org.



Member *Spotlight*

# Remembering Meta Little

(10/13/1925—2/29/2020)

**Meta Little** – DOS President (1991-1993) and Fellow (1993), was vivacious, upbeat, adventurous, witty, intelligent, good-natured and perhaps a bit mischievous. She was a highly skilled birder, especially by ear: she excelled at identifying bird sounds before the skill came into fashion. We shared a lot of laughs as our consecutive DOS terms of duty provided many years working and birding together.

The following lines from the trip report, dated February 25, 2002, sound routinely perfunctory as one might expect for a DOS weekend trip to Cape Ann:

“Balmy temperatures in the upper twenties and low thirties... little snow cover in Massachusetts - less than a foot in Downeast Maine. Snacks at gas stops and an excellent ‘lobsta’ dinner in Portsmouth, NH. Seventy-one species total and 1569 miles in three days (a new mileage record for this trip) - and a total of six ‘person-life birds.’”

But the next line introduces the more memorable and yet untold adventure of the weekend. “Unlike most years, only three participants ventured out - in one carload nonstop from Wilmington, DE to the Boston Design Center in South Boston, MA for the widely publicized dark morph adult Gyrfalcon which we found immediately, perched on a ledge.” (Official trip report). But let’s digress.

I still remember much of the weekend as if it were yesterday. My Spring Roundup “partner in crime” of many years - Andy Urquhart, “My” DOS Vice President - Meta Little and I took off on an unencumbered free-wheeling birding venture. We had done our homework, and there were good birds throughout New England, but NOT in the usual haunts of Cape Ann and Salisbury Beach.



Meta, mischievous and full of energy threw down the gauntlet to chase every good bird, wherever it took us, and we did - telling stories and laughing most of the time except when Meta was taking a short nap. The latter was particularly easy, as she had commandeered the back seat of my “chase car” - a particularly roomy and comfy 1994 Town Car. Meta was living in the lap of luxury, with a chauffeur and navigator to cater to her every whim, particularly the “most excellent hot chocolate I’ve ever had” as she described the McDonald’s whipped cream-topped brew she swooned over two or three times a day! These aren’t actual trip photos, but almost!

We adjusted the normal Portsmouth-based itinerary, driving directly to Maine to search for hotline rarities. The second trip highlight, a roving flock of 34 Bohemian Waxwings was spotted in “downtown” Machias at the Community Bank parking lot and afforded close (15 ft!) views until spooked by a Herring Gull. Meta spotted them and her plan was working. Spectacular!

*(Continued on page 13)*



(continued from page 12)

The other reflection I wish I had a picture for is the May, 1990 "Radical Reeve's" Big Day when Meta, Ellen (Short) Thompson, Kathleen Gordon and Karen Zeitler took a 24-hour Sunday to compete with the guys' team (unnamed!) for bragging rights

in Delaware's version of the World Series of Birding. Meta recounted a 2 a.m. encounter with Delaware's finest, as the ladies' quartet was searching out nocturnal species in Kent County. Meta and KZ were poring over maps in the back seat with a flashlight, and as Ellen, the driver, tried to convince the officer that she was, in fact, not speeding because she always used a radar detector. There was no good excuse for being stopped, but the cop was suspicious. Meta considered their circumstances – What's wrong with this picture? Four "middle aged" women on back roads in lower Delaware in the middle of the night – "Birdwatching?" They had all the appearances of trying to conceal a crime – perhaps dumping a body on a back road in a remote wood lot? When Ellen told the officer that the ladies were en route to Sandtown to search for a Barred Owl, Meta recounted she knew "the officer was tested!" Another Meta experience for the ages. I guess I'll always have this image of Meta, "testing" boundaries, and offering guidance, with a smile, from the back seat of a car!

**Bob Rufe**



## Backyard Birding Challenge

Looking for something to do while stuck at home? Why not join the Delaware Backyard Birding Challenge sponsored by the Delaware Ornithological Society? It is a friendly competition to see who can see the most yard birds in a year. It gets you outside in a safe place regularly and can be a lot of fun. Flyover Rock Doves become exciting! I have taken this very seriously for years.

My 2018 list was 140 species (my yard is mostly an acre of grass but does have a row of trees in the back – nothing special) and included such astounding rarities as Painted Bunting, Connecticut and Orange-crowned Warblers and Philadelphia Vireo. You never know what is out there until you look. It runs through eBird and you can get information about joining the fun here: <https://www.dosbirds.org/activities/delaware-backyard-birding-challenge/>

**Mike Moore, Citizen Science Committee**



Connecticut Warbler found in Mike Moore's backyard in September 2018 while he was participating in the Backyard Birding Challenge. He found another in his yard on nearly the same date in 2019!

# Wild Birds Unlimited

—Your backyard bird feeding specialist—



Give us a call, leave a message.  
Curbside pick-up and limited  
local delivery available. Your  
birds will thank you!

DOS Members Receive 10% Off  
Non bird food Items Every Day!\*

\*Sale price can not be used on optics or gift cards.  
No other discounts will be applied. Not good on previous purchases.

Lancaster Pike &  
Yorklyn Road  
Hockessin, DE  
(302) 239 - 9071  
[www.wbu.com/hockessin](http://www.wbu.com/hockessin)

Bird Photo ID Pop Quiz answer (see photo on page 10): Juvenile white-crowned sparrow. Note the clean breast, buffy cheek, and reddish stripes on the head. These sparrows are stockier than our more common song sparrows and white-throated sparrows. Look for them throughout the non-breeding season!



## Would you like to see *your* photo in *The Flyer*?

It's easy! Just send them to flyer 'at' dosbirds.org.  
Please include your full name for the credit.

Now that the days are getting longer we're looking  
for some spring birds.

*Thanks!*



# Winter Birding in Northern NY

Early on the morning of Friday January 17 five DOS members left the Christiana Mall Park and Ride for a long weekend of birding across the northern tier of New York State. Not long after sunrise and a few miles after crossing into New York we had the first “northern” bird of the trip when we spotted a Common Raven flying above I-87. A few hours later we made our first stop at a spot along the Mohawk River in Crescent where white-winged gulls can often be found resting on the frozen river. Problem was, upstate NY was experiencing the same mild winter as Delaware and the river was uncharacteristically ice-free and there were precious few birds of any kind.

We left there and drove around the totally ice covered Saratoga Lake where we able to scrape up two Common Goldeneyes and a few dozen Common Mergansers and Mallards. From there it was on to the Fort Edward Grasslands Important Bird Area where we got good looks at two light-morph Rough-legged Hawks, a few American Tree Sparrows and a large flock of Wild Turkeys among other birds.

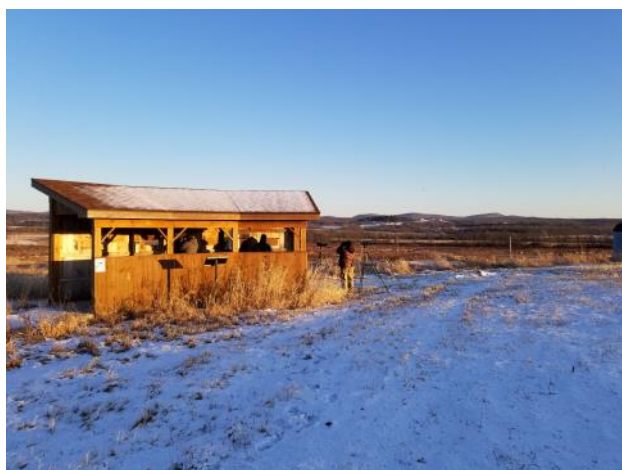
Saturday morning we continued north into the Adirondack Park and real winter. Temperatures in the morning just barely made it into double-digits and the forest was shrouded in several inches of snow. Along Tahawus Road and the upper reaches of the Hudson River near Newcomb in the heart of



the Adirondack Mountains we found Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, Golden-crowned Kinglets, American Goldfinches, a Common Raven and both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches. While the birds were few and far between for a few of the participants the northern hardwood and boreal forests, frozen bogs and mountains were a new and novel experience. After a brief stop at the Adirondack Visitor Center in Newcomb we headed to Sabattis Bog where we found one of the primary targets of the trip. There we found a half-dozen inquisitive Canada Jays that entertained us for nearly an hour. That evening a winter storm swept in and dropped five to eight inches of new snow across the region.

Sunday we birded the area between Lake Placid, Saranac Lake and Paul Smith's in the northern Adirondacks, including the boreal habitats around Bloomingdale Bog. Here we had another close-encounter with two different family groups of Canada Jays. Unfortunately we were unable to find the Black

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-backed Woodpecker and Boreal Chickadees that had been recently reported there. We departed the mountains that afternoon and headed east to the Champlain Valley where we would spend the final day of our trip.

Monday morning we drove the western shore of the Lake from just south of Plattsburg to Crown Point. At stops at Ausable Point, Wickham Marsh, Port Kent, Essex and Westport we saw large rafts of Common Goldeneyes, Common Mergansers, a few Bald Eagles and five Common Loons. Around noon we finally ran out of open water as the Lake between Westport and Crown Point was frozen solid. We took a quick run into Vermont for lunch where we added two Dark-eyed Juncos and an American Crow for our Vermont list. We drove through horrendous holiday traffic on the interstates in New York and New Jersey but made it back to Delaware late on Monday evening. While we did not find all of our target species, everyone in the group had a rewarding experience.



**Chris Bennett**

## The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Delaware Bird-A-Thon: Rescheduled for September 5-12

- ❖ Form a team and gather pledges
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In recognition of the seriousness of our new culture of social distancing, the Delaware Bird-A-Thon is moving to the Fall! Stay tuned for more details.



King Rail by Jerry am Ende; Red Knot by Jean Woods