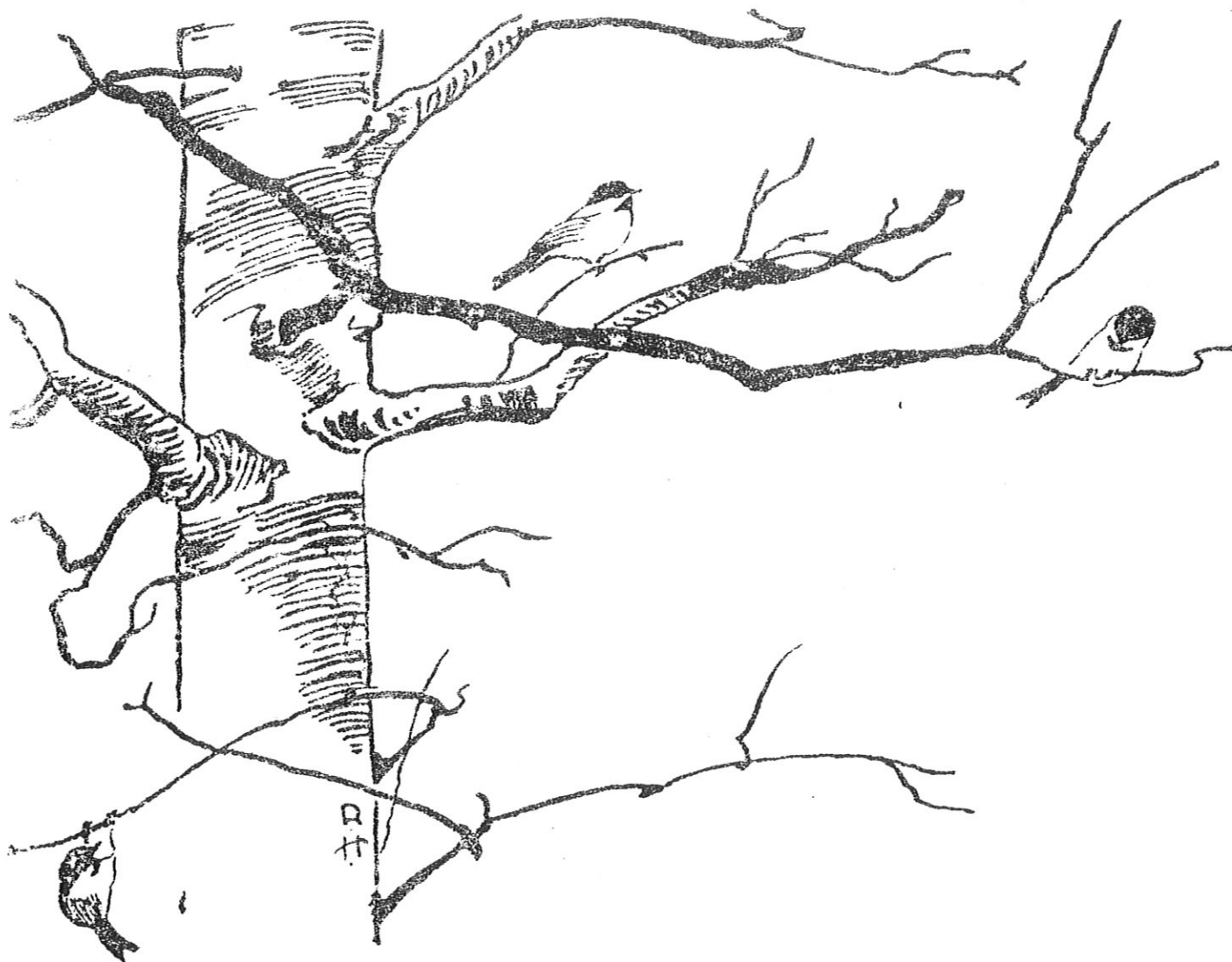


THE ORANGE FEATHER



Orange County, New York

2015 Spring – Summer

THE ORANGE FEATHER

A publication of

EDGAR A. MEARN'S BIRD CLUB

Orange County, New York

2014 OFFICERS

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Vice-President – Curt McDermott, 549-5596

Secretary – Kathleen Ashman, 294-6140

Treasurer – Linda Strohl, 496-3021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This "Feather" kicks off our FIRST e-edition, as some of you will be getting this in your IN BOX. I am hopeful that the trend continues to help save money, time, and trees! Perhaps this can also be a segue into an electronic newsletter in addition to the Feather or even a companion publication. Volunteers are being asked to let themselves be known so that this may become a reality.

As with anything in a club it is as strong as the members make it. The "Feather" is no exception. Jan is doing a terrific job in getting the "Feather" out twice a year. Dave Baker has done an outstanding job looking far and wide and flushing out great speakers to give presentations to our members. Our members themselves have stepped up to share their trips and adventures far and wide to fellow Mearnsers. Linda Strohl keeps and organizes our membership tallies and keeps the books balanced! Kathy Ashman is doing a wonderful job keeping the minutes and writing up the night's presentations for those who can't make it to a meeting for a variety of reasons. Curt McDermott has filled in admirably in taking the reins in my absence.

The "Feather" should not be any different in the support it gets. It is not fair for the editor to go begging for write ups from field trips. If members can write them up and send them in soon after the trip is complete, not only is the trip fresh in the mind of the leader but it would be one less thing Jan has to worry about when the Feather is being put together. I am guilty of this no doubt. To fluff out the publication, tidbits are needed from poetry to pen and inks to side bars. In recent issues this has been lacking. It would be great to see some more support for the "Feather" electronic or otherwise.

As the winter continues, gull populations grow on the Hudson River. A great viewing spot is along the Newburgh waterfront near the end of the day. Thousands of birds congregate on the ice and depending on which way the tide is going they ride the ice as if on a conveyor belt. In just the past few weeks Iceland, Glaucous and a Lesser Black-backed Gull have been spotted among the thousands of Ring-Billed Gulls. In very recent memory a Slaty-backed Gull was seen on the Beacon side of the river which drew a fair number of other birds from around the area. May we be so lucky this winter. and who knows, MAYBE an Ivory gull will make an appearance.

Good Birding,

Jeff Goulding

MEETINGS

Meetings begin at 7:30 PM at the Washingtonville Middle School, Washingtonville, NY.

March 9th: Lee Hunter will do a presentation on their trip to Svalbard, the Norwegian archipelago.

April 13th: to be announced

May 4th: Share-a-thon. Note change of date from May 11th. This program was postponed from January.

June 6th: Mearns Club annual picnic at Winding Hills Park starting at 12:00 noon. Contact Tracy Patsch or check the Mearns Yahoo site for more information as the date gets closer.

David Baker

EDGAR A. MEARNS BIRD CLUB
Financial Report 2014

INCOME:

Beginning Balance-January 2014	\$ 844.04
Dues (partial 2014 and 2015), Donations, Interest (\$.47)	1,625.66
Total Income:	\$2,469.70

EXPENSES:

Orange Feathers: Feb-\$440.64 Aug-\$456.80	897.44
Club Meeting Speakers 3 @ \$25 each	75.00
Donations NYSOA	35.00
Flowers for Ed Treacy's funeral	54.06
Club Picnic	49.73
Insurance	402.50
Total Expenses:	\$1,513.73

Ending Balance-December 2014 (combined Checking and Savings)	\$ 955.97
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Linda Strohl, Treasurer

FALL/WINTER FIELD TRIPS PAST

Delmarva – August 8-10 – Jodi Brodsky, Leader – We began the trip at the Forsythe parking area. As trip members began to arrive we were treated to a Blue Grosbeak singing along with Purple Martins flying around. Most of the typical birds you expect were seen including many Clapper Rails. There was not a lot of diversity among the shorebirds...most of them were Semipalmated Sandpipers. Dave Baker sifted through a group of Forester's Terns and picked out a nice Gull-billed Tern. We did hear of a reported White-faced Ibis, but none of the members of our group saw it. In the afternoon we took the Cape May Ferry to Lewes, Delaware. We met a resident of Delaware who is very knowledgeable of the area. Our first stop in Delaware was Cape Henlopen State Park to look for Brown-headed Nuthatches. It didn't take long for us to find them squeaking around in the grove behind the nature center. After that we drove to the other end of the park and walked out to the beach. Much to my surprise there was a Black Scoter. Along the beach were a few Piping Plovers. Then we headed to the boardwalk/bike trail. It was lovely to look at but a bit of a nightmare for those of us, me especially, who get caught up looking at birds and not paying enough attention to people cruising by on bicycles. Right next to the path was a very close Blue Grosbeak who perched and posed for quite a while. We also had a few Common Nighthawks. The next morning we all met at the Bombay Hook parking area. The area was bustling with cars and birders due to a shorebird workshop. Nothing could take away from the spectacular sight of HUNDREDS of American Avocets, dowitchers and probably over a thousand Semipalmated Sandpipers. Along the loop we found one Tundra Swan and a Snow Goose. Many people were excited to hear and see the Sedge Wren. We spent our last morning exploring Prime Hook. Our highlights included Black-necked Stilts, several Stilt Sandpipers and oodles of Osprey and Bald Eagles.

Oil City Road – August 30 – Joe Trapani, Leader – Twenty-one birders met at the platform at 8:00 AM. The weather was beautiful, sunny and mild. We had nice views of Great Blue Heron, a Swamp Sparrow, and to the group's delight, a pair of immature Black-crowned Night Herons. Walking the loop we realized how little water there was in the pools. Thirty to forty vultures, mostly Turkey, with some Blacks, were over the dried out back pond. They were attracted by the dead carp stranded by the lack of water. A quick stop at Missionlands Road got the group a sighting of an American Golden Plover. Our usual lunch spot, The Harvest Inn was still being renovated so the group had lunch at the Chinese restaurant in Goshen.

Storm King Art Center – September 6 – Bob Slechta, Leader – Into the gaping maw of Hades we marched...out onto the plains of desolation as the giant beasts of iron tried to stomp our sweat drenched bodies into the desiccated earth...sorry, I got carried away. However it really was a brutally hot and humid day with nary a bird, they having more sense than us to be out and about today. Of the meager 33 species we had the only ones of number were American Goldfinch, American Robin, European Starling, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Northern Flicker. We also had some Chimney Swifts overhead, a nice Pileated Woodpecker and our one and only confusing fall warbler, a Bay-breasted thanks to Bruce still having the lucidity to spot movement in the trees. We could really use some rain and a good strong cold front to improve our birding. I hope the October trip here turns out better.

Black dirt – September 7 – Joe Cullen, Leader – Twelve members met on Sunday morning to look for migratory birds. It was a pleasant day, partly cloudy with temperatures in the seventies. The birding however, was quiet with little bird activity. Besides a few distant Killdeer, no shorebirds were seen on the sod farms. Passerines were also very scarce. We did get good looks at a perched Merlin and some of us saw a Peregrine Falcon. We ended at the NWR on Oil City Road where we found a single Greater Yellowlegs and one “peep”. A Glossy Ibis was also seen there. We had a total of 38 species, a bit on the low side for this time of year.

Doodletown – September 13 – Gerhard Patsch, Leader – It was a cloudy morning as our group headed up the hill into Doodletown from the edge of Iona Island marsh. At the start, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos were seen and heard, but then, bird activity became sparse and rather quiet, allowing for friendly talk about how the hill seemed to be getting steeper and about the big numbers of birds we used to see. Nevertheless, we did come upon several “pockets” of bird activity and I was surprised when at the end of the field trip we still managed to tally 52 species. We had 13 species of wood warblers including Black and White, American Redstart, Worm-eating, Black-throated Blue, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green, Nashville, Tennessee, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded and Wilson’s. Other notables included Eastern Screech Owl, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Rain cancelled our plans to visit Bear Mountain Hawk Watch after lunch.

Bashakill – September 20 – Scott Baldinger, Leader – 15 members closed out the last official day of summer with an excellent morning of birding at the Bashakill. We met at the back parking area of the Deli Fields by the boat launch. Highlights at the fields included Brown Thrasher, PEREGRINE FALCON, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Bobolinks (3), Northern Flickers (7), Indigo Buntings (4), Palm and Black-throated Blue Warblers, Savannah, Field and White-throated Sparrows. From here we went to the Nature Trail and though there was not an abundance of birds, we did have nice looks at several species including Wilson’s Snipe, Veery, Wood and Swainson’s Thrushes, Scarlet Tanagers (5), Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (8), Pileated Woodpeckers (2) and Chestnut-sided and Nashville Warblers. We then made our way over to the Stop Sign Trail parking area and enjoyed nice views of a Northern Harrier, MERLIN, two more Pileateds and 6 Great Egrets. I was hoping for more wood warblers this morning and we had come up empty to this point. We walked across Haven Road onto the Long Path and we finally hit a fallout when we came upon a nice mix of warblers moving through, including BAY-BREASTD, TENNESSEE, Blackburnian (3), Northern Parula (4), and several each of Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, American Redstarts, Black-throated Green and Blue, Black and White and Common Yellowthroats. Some other good finds on this portion of the Long Path included Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Belted Kingfisher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Blue-headed Vireo (2). We finished with a total of 63 species.

Cape May – September 20-21 – Warren Cairo, Leader – The group consisted of John Tramontano, Joe Trapani, Claudia Burns and me. (We might want to consider taking this trip off the annual list. Most members know their way around CM and do it on their own schedule.) The weather was very mild with clear skies, not the best weather for migrants. Bird highlights,

in addition to the great run of terns (see more about the terns later in the Feather-ED), were good looks at Parasitic Jaegers close to shore, and hundreds of Tree Swallows still here while completing their primary molt before migrating south. A large number of Black Skimmers were seen skimming and bathing in the fresh water ponds. The boat trip on the Osprey added Whimbrels, both Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Tricolored Herons and Both Eastern and Western Willets. All told, we were over 100 species with a couple of rarities. Just this weekend we had a Zone-tailed Hawk over the hawkwatch platform, a state record. Twenty minutes later the hawkwatch in Delaware had it fly over for its first state record as well. Cape May is a wonderful place to bird, so come on down!!

Bashakill – September 27 – Jeff Goulding, Leader – A number of fellow Mearnsers gathered at the Deli Fields on a foggy and chilly morning. These were the same conditions as the previous year and all were confident that the fog would burn off. Upon arriving, Bruce Nott was out in the middle of the road, as all good birders do, eyeing Lincoln Sparrows. Following the arrival of the rest of the participants, these birds were seen again. In fact a total of 3 Lincoln's were seen for the day. Heading down the road to the Bashakill, Scott Baldinger found some White-throated and other sparrows. What was frustrating the group was that these birds flew from one spot to another and then promptly disappeared into the brush as if they were never there. It is what keeps us coming back! Heading back in the direction from where we came the Lincolns were spotted again along with Field, Swamp and Song Sparrows. An Eastern Bluebird or two was spotted as well as Yellow-rumped Warblers high up in the trees. At this time the fog was beginning to lift leaving behind dew-jeweled spider webs. Most everyone in the group made it back to the far stream bed at the back of the Deli Field area to find Eastern Phoebes perched perfectly on top of weeds and almost posing for photos. The real treat came a bit further back where a Vesper Sparrow was spied, to the delight of many. At this point some decided to "bushwhack" over to another trail as others went back and ultimately rejoined fellow birders to observe some Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers chasing each other around a tree. After the Deli Fields the group went over to the Nature Trail where there was little activity as was the case at the Stop Sign Trail. 55 species were tallied with a few more being picked up outside of the field trip.

Goosepond - October 1 – Bill Iannone, Leader – Based on the weather it was not the best of days with some drizzle and a lot of clouds but 7 Mearnsers said "go for it". The Goosepond trip is always a challenge. We meet at McDonald's with binoculars in hand and usually see a number of species that we usually do not see in the park such as a squadron of Double-crested Cormorants flying overhead. Entering Goosepond from the Laroe Road entrance we found some warblers still hanging around the area: Yellow-rumped, Black and White, American Redstart and Common Yellowthroat. Later Bob and Bruce found Northern Parula and Blackpoll while walking the boardwalk at the north end of Goosepond. They also added Field and Song Sparrow as Amy found the Lincoln's Sparrows that I had seen the previous day. The multitude of berry-bearing vines at this time of year provides a feast for birds to prepare for winter. There were many American Robins, Gray Catbirds, Blue Jays, Eastern Towhee and Cedar Waxwings digging in. Woodpeckers love the area also, such as Red-bellied, Downy, Northern Flicker, Pileated and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. A Scarlet Tanager was in fall dress and the Eastern

Phoebes were in their fall family groups. And, of course, the Red-tailed and Sharp-shinned Hawks were enjoying the hunting season. We tallied 50 species for another good outing.

Chadwick Lake – October 4 – Bruce Nott, Leader – The field trip went on as planned despite the rain showers with 5 birders. Temperatures were in the mid-50's. We birded the north end of the lake finding 39 species. Some of the species we saw were Canada Geese, Mute Swans, Wood Ducks, Double-crested Cormorants, and one Ring-billed Gull. We also had Winter and Carolina Wrens, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Cedar Waxwings, and several Yellow-rumped Warblers. At our next stop, Little Brook Lane about a mile or so south of Chadwick, and one of Bob Slechta's hot spots, we added 11 more species including Brown Thrasher, Eastern Bluebirds and Palm and Magnolia Warblers. We also saw Field, Swamp and Savannah Sparrows.

Kenridge Farm – October 8 – Joe Trapani, Leader – It was a beautiful fall day but a bit windy. Fourteen members met at the parking lot for a leisurely walk on the trails. We saw 7 species of sparrows. It was very active at the platform overlooking the ponds. A great deal of time was spent watching a Merlin chasing a bunch of Blue Jays. He never caught one. Maybe he was just playing with them. We had lots of looks at Eastern Phoebes plus a great look at a Northern Waterthrush working the edge of the island in the back pond. At the end of the trip a Green Heron was spotted. In all we had 44 species. It was a good day.

Oil City Road/Winding Waters – October 11 – Curt McDermott, Leader – cancelled due to rain

Croton Point - October 18 – Peter Johnson, Leader – Peter tried but was unable to find his notes on this trip.

Oil City Road – October 25 – Kathy Ashman, Leader – 14 members gathered on a beautiful sunny fall morning. Temperatures for the day ranged from 42 – 63 degrees with a light northwesterly breeze. After having several days of rain it was hoped that water levels would have risen at the refuge, but that was not the case. As a result, the only waterfowl seen were a pair of Mallards toward the end of the trip. From the platform Northern Harriers were seen on both the New Jersey and New York sides of the refuge. A small flock of American Pipits flew overhead, and a Great Blue Heron was flushed at the far end of the pool of water near the platform. We proceeded along the liberty Loop toward the western side of the refuge. As we made the turn at the corner, 2 Greater Yellowlegs were spotted wading in a small puddle. We managed to get quite close to them as we were shielded by the grasses and got good looks at the birds before they flew away. There were a large number of sparrows feeding on the berries and in the grasses on either side of the trail. Seen were White-throated, Swamp, Field, Savannah and Song Sparrows. We were lucky enough to spot a Fox Sparrow as well as a Hermit Thrush as we walked through the wooded area. Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers were spotted, but were few in number. The highlight of our walk through the woods was when the group heard an Eastern Screech Owl calling. Unfortunately, we were unable to spot the bird. As we left the woods we saw several large flocks of Canada Geese flying south on the eastern side of the refuge. We checked, but there were no Snow Geese among them. At the southern end of the refuge we continued to have large numbers of assorted sparrows. Carol Weiss spotted another Fox Sparrow and many of the group got good looks at the bird. In the south impound, we saw a

good number of American Pipits feeding on the ground in the new growth. Sharp-eyed Bruce Nott spotted A Wilson's Snipe sitting quietly at the far side of the impound, and everyone in the group was able to get good looks at the bird through the scopes. While walking up the eastern side of the loop we were treated to more sparrows. A female House Finch was spotted high up in a leafless tree. Another bird perched nearby feeding on seeds proved to be a beautiful male Purple Finch. Everyone was able to get on the bird. Further up the trail, a very cooperative, nicely plumage Blue-headed Vireo was sighted. Overhead we sighted a Sharp-shinned Hawk attacking an American Crow. It was an enjoyable sight to watch. On the right side of the trail in a small shrub we spotted several White-crowned Sparrows. Among them was an adult with a stunning crown which made it stand out. Completing the trip were the two Mallards spotted in a channel not far from the platform and a Lesser Yellowlegs. Although the presence of waterfowl was limited, we did manage to see 50 species of birds during our 4 hours at the refuge. When we finished, several members adjourned to the recently reopened Harvest Inn and enjoyed a nice lunch in good company. All in all it was a great day!

Storm King Art Center – October 26 – Bob Slechta, Leader – Today's trip was the opposite of the September trip here when it was beastly hot. Today the clouds rolled in as the wind started to howl...and the birds disappeared. With the temperatures in the low 50's it was not a very pleasant or productive day. We did have a good number of Black-capped Chickadees though and lots of Blue Jays flying about. We also had a Brown Creeper, a Golden-crowned Kinglet and Dark-eyed Juncos, but not much else worth mentioning as we ended the day with 29 species.

Kenridge Farm – November 1 – Amy Greher, Leader – Nine Mearnsers and 3 visitors braved a chilly, raw day of birding at Kenridge Farm also known as The Outdoor Discovery Center. The temperature ranged from 42 degrees to a balmy 46 degrees. The one good thing about the weather was it didn't rain! The one bad thing was it got breezy and then somewhat windy as our walk progressed! In spite of it all, a good time was had by all!! We counted only 35 species of birds, low for this area but understandable considering the weather conditions. Highlights included 50 plus Cedar Waxwings, Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets, and numerous Northern Mockingbirds. A Cooper's Hawk landed in a distant tree and with the help of a scope we were able to identify it with certainty. One Hermit Thrush was spotted briefly and so was a single Swamp Sparrow. The mockingbirds uncharacteristically followed us everywhere and really stood out against the grey sky and remaining all leaves. Eastern Bluebirds too were abundant. Crows, both American and Fish, and a Common Raven were spotted by some of the birders. Turkey and Black Vultures and a Red-tailed Hawk were also spotted flying over the center.

Black dirt – November 8 – Joe Cullen, Leader – Twelve members met at the Jolly Onion. It was clear to partly cloudy and cool in the mid 30's. The temperature rose to about 50 by noontime. The early part of the trip was the most productive. We began at Skinners Lane where we found good sized flocks of American Pipits and Horned Larks, many at close range. At Skinners we also saw a Merlin, two American Kestrels and Northern Harriers. Sparrows were generally sparse, but we did see Savannahs, a single White-crowned, several Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated. Bob spotted a single Lapland Longspur among a flock of larks, but unfortunately he was the only one who saw it. At the former Warren Sod Farm we found additional, although

fewer pipits. The birding became quieter for the rest of the trip with few birds seen. We ended at Oil City Road where we found our first and only Killdeer. A couple of additional harriers were there also. We ended with a total of 38 species.

Eastern Orange lakes – November 15 – Linda Strohl, Leader – Our first lake are on today's field trip gave the ten of us our best bird for the day: a Red-throated Loon at Beaver Dam Lake. We stopped at a few good viewing areas around this lake to observe Pied-billed Grebe, Ring-necked Ducks, Mute Swans, Mallards, numerous Ruddy Ducks, Wood Ducks, Canada Geese, American Black Ducks, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, and the usual neighborhood species. We were disappointed to find so few species at Brown's Pond and to see the water level so low. Here, we added to our list Great Blue Heron, Bufflehead, Double-crested Cormorant, Common and Hooded Mergansers. The Clark Street pond by the Stewart housing area was empty except for a camouflaged Killdeer along the shore. Next, it was Crestview Lake where we spotted an Eastern Bluebird and more Ring-necked Ducks in the farthest corner. Orange Lake had a raft of Hooded Mergansers and a Herring Gull. Our last stop before lunch was the pond at Walmart. It produced Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Gadwall, American Coot, an American Pipit flying overhead and a calling Fish Crow. At our usual Neptune Diner lunch stop, a bran muffin was purchased as a surprise birthday treat for one of our members. After this we headed to several ponds/lakes that only produced one new species, a Great Black-backed Gull. All in all, we stopped at 6 places before lunch and 6 afterwards. We ended our day's adventure with 48 species on this chilly but pleasant November day.

Goosepond – November 22 – Bob Slechts, Leader – Even though it was a bone-chilling 18 degrees when I left my house at 7:30, eleven brave Mearnsers came out for this pop-up trip. Thankfully it was sunny, not windy, and the temperature moderated into the mid-thirties. We first hit the boardwalk at the north end of Goosepond, then Round Lake and Walton Lake, finishing up with a walk at the south end of Goosepond ending with a tally of 43 species. On the lakes we had a nice mix of ducks: Ring-necked, Ruddy, Buffleheads, Common and Hooded Mergansers, Mallards, American Black and some Wood Ducks. While on our forays into Goosepond our highlights were: Golden-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Cedar Waxwings, American Robins, Eastern Bluebirds, Red-winged Blackbirds, Hairy Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, American Tree, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows, plus Dark-eyed Juncos. The cold morning was a bit intimidating to start, but it was a nice trip and always good to be out with fellow Mearnsers.

Cape Ann – November 22-23 – Jodi Brodsky, Leader – Our annual trek to Cape Ann began as usual with the club members meeting at the Fisherman's Monument. As we were gathering, another club from Massachusetts was leaving and heading out to a spot where a Dovekie had been reported. I wish I could brag and say we saw the bird, but lo and behold that was not the case. As a result, the rest of the day seemed a bit off. The weather was very cold and windy, plus we did not see the usual numbers of birds. We did enjoy lots of Red-necked Grebes, Red-throated Loons and Common Loons and of course the show stopper, Harlequin Ducks. All three scoter were there with the majority being White-winged. We ended the day with excellent looks at numerous seals resting on the rocks along the beach. On Sunday morning we headed up to

Parker River. The weather was warmer and much less windy. Our final birds of the day were two owls. There was a Snowy Owl in the dunes by Emerson Rocks and a very close Barred Owl perched in a tree along the road. There were 66 species recorded for the weekend.

Black dirt – November 29 – Bob Slechta, Leader – Gobble, gobble, gobble! Six slightly off kilter Mearnsers met this Thanksgiving weekend at the Jolly Onion amidst a winter wonderland and a temperature of 10 degrees. Even though it was cold there was no wind and the fact that it was basically a “bird by car” trip made it very tolerable. The 4-6 inch snow cover also worked in our favor as it forced the birds to the edges of the road where there was exposed ground. We spent most of our time birding Missionlands and Oil City Roads where we had most of the day’s birds. We had nice looks at good numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos American Tree, Song, White-crowned and Savannah Sparrows, a few Brown-headed Cowbirds and American Pipits, at least a dozen Snow Buntings and probably 100 Horned Larks. We also picked up a few Northern Harriers, one American Kestrel, a Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawks and a Pileated Woodpecker. We next checked out the Camel Farm and Turtle Bay where we added Canada Geese, American Crows, White-throated Sparrows, American Goldfinch, Mourning Doves, European Starlings and a Cooper’s Hawk to finish up the trip with 30 species while the air warmed to a sweltering 18 degrees.

Shawangunk Grasslands – November 29 – Tom and Jane, Leaders – It was a typically cold, blustery November day and 7 Mearns members gathered to try to see Short-eared Owls and other raptors at the refuge. It was a relatively short trip since it met late, near sunset, but we saw a number of Rough-legged Hawks perched in the trees east of the parking lot. There were also a number of Northern Harriers coursing over the land. Finally we got to see our target species: Short-eared Owls. Added into the mix were one American Tree Sparrow, one Dark-eyed Junco and many Canada Geese.

Southern Orange Christmas Count – December 14 – Herb Stein, Compiler – The Southern Orange County Christmas Count was a mild disappointment. We ran it 2 weeks earlier than we used to hoping that we’d get some late fall birds as well as some early winter ones. We got neither, partly because many bodies of water were iced over, so no loons, grebes, cormorants, herons Snow Geese, etc. We recorded only 65 species, the 2nd lowest count ever, compared to 81 in 2008, on a gloomy, overcast day. The numbers of individual birds of most species were down by well over ½. The only positive, small as it was, was that we raised the maximum number of Pileated Woodpeckers from 8 to 9. It is very unlikely that we get 2 bad years in a row, so join us for a great 2015. (Like the Brooklyn Dodgers will win the next World Series!)

Eastern Orange Christmas Count - December 20 – Bob Slechta, Compiler – Despite the cold snap and 8” snow storm in late November, this year’s Eastern Orange County Bird Count turned out to be quite normal with 79 species and 20,103 birds counted. Fortunately the weather moderated after Thanksgiving and all our lakes had open water providing us with a nice mix of ducks which always adds to the count numbers. In fact, we had a record setting 881 Common Mergansers this year. Other notable sightings for the count were: 1 Snow Goose, Green-winged Teal, Common Goldeneye, 4 Peregrine Falcons, a Wilson’s Snipe, and new to the count, a Cackling Goose. The numbers for each species this year fell within the range of normal

fluctuations for this count except for the previously mentioned Mergansers, plus Downy Woodpecker, Dark-eyed Junco and Common Grackle whose numbers were at the upper end of their range. I can't finish without thanking Herb and Ronnie Stein for hosting the countdown for all to enjoy after a long chilly (27-32 degrees), gloomy (overcast) day in the field.

Jamaica Bay/Jones Beach - January 1 – Herb Stein, Leader – One big advantage about arriving at dawn at Jones Beach is that the Snowy Owl is sitting overlooking the parking lot. Soon some jerk runs at it with his phone to snap a picture so off the owl goes. This caused me to walk all the way to the breakwater and then inland for 200 yards from the westernmost parking lot into a nasty, freezing headwind. But there was a beautiful adult Snowy Owl! There were also some Northern Gannets and Black-legged Kittiwakes fishing at the end of the breakwater! Black Scoter and Long-tailed Ducks kept flying past, as did a Great Cormorant. A birder told me that there were Snow Buntings out there but I had no luck. A flock of dark finches flew over but the Snow Buntings they were not, and I could see no ID markings. As I was nearing the parking lot 5 Tree Swallows fluttered by. Two Northern Harriers were the only raptors and land birds were few and far between. 1,000s of Brant, 100s of Canada Geese, 100 Red-breasted Mergansers, 12 Mallards, and finally 4 American Black Ducks were the only waterfowl. There were much fewer gulls than at any other time. I didn't see a Greater Black-backed Gull until I was leaving the beaches. An interesting flock of 100s of European Starlings, Brown-headed Cowbirds and dozens of House Sparrows was at the bath house, but little else. There was not a single shorebird! Point Lookout had two flocks of Common Eiders, one having over 100 birds. The path along the inlet had been trashed but both Common and Red-throated Loons were there as well as over 20 Horned Grebes. At this point I felt it was getting too late and windy to go to Jamaica Bay so home I went with only 29 species but some of which I may not see again this year.

Pelham – January 10 – Peter Johnson, Leader – The temperature was near single digits with a strong wind coming in off the bay as 7 hardy birders showed up at Pelham Bay/Orchard Beach in the Bronx, NY. As soon as we left the parking lot and headed into the woods the wind abated somewhat and we started picking up birds. American Tree Sparrows were mixed in with Dark-eyed Juncos, Song and White-throated Sparrows. Rounding the corner Bruce spotted a Brown Creeper. No owls were to be found in the first patch of pine woods so we moved on down to the water where almost right away Killdeer and Gadwall were seen. Some of the birds were far out in the water, but thanks to Bruce for bringing and sharing his scope we were able to see them. We had Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Mergansers, Long-tailed Duck, Pied-billed and Red-necked Grebes and Common Loon. We did spook up one Great Horned Owl out of a small spruce grove, but I may have been the only one to see it fly off. On the water in a close section of the bay we came across a giant raft of mixed ducks which for the most part were Greater Scaup. It could well have been 2000 to 3000 ducks. As we were standing on the sand not far from them a good half of these birds took flight, circled and landed right back where they started. The sight and sound of all those birds taking off at once so close at hand will stay with me a long time. It's funny how when you are out in the cold the sight of birds will make you forget all about the temperature. Thanks to all for coming: Bob, Chris-Ann, Liz, Bruce, Carol and Zenon. In total we had 41 different species. Peace, Peter

Duck Count – January 18 – Curt McDermott, Compiler – no data was available

Eagle Trip – January 31 – Gerhard Patsch, Leader – It was a bitter cold and windy morning as 16 members and friends met at the Route 6 scenic overlook for our annual Hudson River Bald Eagle trip. Bright sunshine and a clear blue sky made for excellent visibility. It was 10 degrees F and I turned my back into the wind more than once to dry me tearing eyes. A week of sub-freezing temperatures resulted in considerable ice on the river, especially in some of the coves. We stopped at ten different locations along the river and counted a total of 134 Bald Eagles for the trip! There was a lot of eagle activity in the Peekskill Bay area and near the Croton railroad station. Significant numbers, a dozen or more, of perched eagles were found at George's Island and Oscawana Park, where the eagles found some protection from the strong winds. An especially memorable sighting occurred at the Croton Reservoir, which was mostly frozen, when we spotted 16 Bald Eagles jostling with one another over a big piece of red meat. In addition to the many eagle sightings we also had 11 species of ducks. Duck sightings are always part of this trip and we enjoyed seeing Common and Hooded Mergansers, Ring-necked Ducks, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks, American Wigeon, Gadwall, 2 Redheads and a single Red-breasted Merganser. The Croton River had the most variety and numbers of ducks along with many American Coots and 2 Pied-billed Grebes. Other notable sightings included Common Raven, Cedar Waxwings, Eastern Bluebirds Carolina Wren, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Pine Siskins, heard by Bob Slechta. Our final count for the day was 47 species. Good sightings and good friends certainly helped take the edge off of a very cold winter day.



Black and white oil "Mallards on Lake" by Lisa O'Gorman-Hofsommer

THE CBC

The Count again? It comes so soon- -
No more sleeping up 'til noon- -
Time to howl at the moon- -
At least it's only once a year.

It's truly good we can't remember - -
How cold it gets in late December- -
Or our leader we'd dismember- -
Let's just hope the weather's clear.

Can't roll over and close the shutter- -
With boots and clothing all-a-clutter- -
As for folly this is "Utter!"- -
But what the heck the day is here.

So up it is to join the crowd- -
No sense screaming "Help!" out loud- -
Face the music with head unbowed- -
After all there's naught to fear.

It's layer on layer to beat the cold- -
Yet the secret's still untold- -
Where are your bins within the folds?
Now the need to bird-by-ear.

But first it's coffee hot & black - -
Maybe a munchkin for a snack- -
Never know when you'll be back- -
A quick "Goodbye" to persons dear.

The photogs hope for birds a-pose'n- -
The day's been planned- the routes all chosen- -
A shame that all the lakes are frozen- -
Ducks Unlimited? – Not likely here.

The searchers cover lots of ground- -
With some birds missing - -others found - -
Though laughs and friendships both abound - -
Vigor slows as sunset nears.

All day long with little rest- -
You and team have done your best - -
And Honesty's been put to test- -
It's time to tally and stow the gear.

Who saw what and where and when - -
Was that "quacker" drake or hen? - -
Was it seen, or heard, or Zen? - -
The Count's all done! – A collective prayer we hear- -

"Thank God it's only once a year!"

* * * *

COOx2 (Dec '12)

Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club Christmas Count

December 20, 2014



SPECIES	TOTAL	SPECIES	TOTAL	SPECIES	TOTAL
Common Loon		<i>Virginia Rail</i>		American Pipit	
Pied-billed Grebe	1	American Coot	13	Cedar Waxwing	28
Horned Grebe		Killdeer		Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Red-necked Grebe		Wilson's Snipe	1	<i>Common Yellowthroat</i>	
Double-crested Cormorant	1	<i>Bonaparte's Gull</i>		Wilson's Warbler	
Great Cormorant	1	Ring-billed Gull	1,174	<i>Yellow-breasted Chat</i>	
Great Blue Heron	3	Herring Gull	615	Eastern Towhee	
Great Egret		Iceland Gull	CP	American Tree Sparrow	118
Snow Goose	1	Great Black-backed Gull	38	Field Sparrow	5
Canada Goose	3528	Rock Pigeon	184	Savannah Sparrow	
Mute Swan	45	Mourning Dove	290	Fox Sparrow	CP
Wood Duck		Eastern Screech Owl		Song Sparrow	60
Gadwall	9	Great Horned Owl	CP	Swamp Sparrow	1
American Wigeon	2	Barred Owl	2	White-throated Sparrow	407
American Black Duck	56	Short-eared Owl		White-crowned Sparrow	1
Mallard	715	Belted Kingfisher	3	Dark-eyed Junco	1,542
<i>Blue-winged Teal</i>		Red-headed Woodpecker		Lapland Longspur	
Northern Shoveler		Red-bellied Woodpecker	110	Snow Bunting	
Northern Pintail		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4	Northern Cardinal	192
Green-winged Teal	2	Downy Woodpecker	188	Red-winged Blackbird	13
Canvasback		Hairy Woodpecker	23	Eastern Meadowlark	
Redhead		Northern Flicker	35	Rusty Blackbird	
Ring-necked Duck	17	Pileated Woodpecker	14	<i>Brewer's Blackbird</i>	
Lesser Scaup	22	Eastern Phoebe		Common Grackle	282
White-winged Scoter		<i>Say's Phoebe</i>		Brown-headed Cowbird	28
Black Scoter		<i>Northern Shrike</i>		<i>Baltimore Oriole</i>	
Long-tailed Duck		Blue Jay	463	Pine Grosbeak	
Common Goldeneye	2	American Crow	3609	Purple Finch	8
Bufflehead	20	Fish Crow	371	House Finch	112
Common Merganser	881	Common Raven	2	Common Redpole	
Hooded Merganser	65	Horned Lark	150	Pine Siskin	
Red-breasted Merganser		Black-capped Chickadee	375	American Goldfinch	187
Ruddy Duck	17	Tufted Titmouse	311	Evening Grosbeak	
Black Vulture	16	Red-breasted Nuthatch		House Sparrow	630
Turkey Vulture	42	White-breasted Nuthatch	150		
Bald Eagle	10	Brown Creeper	5	Additional Species:	
Norther Harrier	1	Carolina Wren	35		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	<i>House Wren</i>		<i>ACKLING GOOSE</i>	1
Cooper's Hawk	5	Winter Wren	6		
Northern Goshawk		Golden-crowned Kinglet	5		
Red-shouldered Hawk	6	Ruby-crowned Kinglet		CP - COUNT PERIOD	
<i>Broad-winged Hawk</i>		Eastern Bluebird	96		
Red-tailed Hawk	87	Hermit Thrush	6		
Rough-legged Hawk		<i>Wood Thrush</i>			
American Kestrel	2	American Robin	50	Total number of birds counted	
<i>Merlin</i>		<i>Varied Thrush</i>		20,103	
Peregrine Falcon	4	Gray Catbird			
Ring-necked Pheasant		Northern Mockingbird	31		
Ruffed Grouse		Brown Thrasher			
Wild Turkey	19	European Starling	2557	TOTAL SPECIES:	79

Italicized Species Require Details

Ed Treacy - - - Husband, Father, Brother, Uncle, Teacher, Birder, Opera lover and Friend. The last of ten children and the last of the founding members of the Edgar A. Mearns Bird Club whose very name is because of Ed. Born in Highland Falls and a lifelong resident and history buff he introduced the name and story of Dr. Mearns and his history to those beginning birders, students at the bird identification class run by Martha Earl.

Joan and I met Ed at Cornwall Bay on Mar. 21, 1976 by a pre-arranged agreement. The who's and why's of which are long forgotten. What I do remember was that when we got there his scope was set up looking at a 1st year ICELAND GULL. As I looked through the eyepiece I could see NOTHING. A puzzlement to Ed until he also looked and noticed that the eyepiece had fallen out! It was the beginning of a very long relationship during which we shared many wonderful sightings like being on the causeway at the Bashakill awaiting the official start time for the Break-100 and having a first ever for Sullivan County Glossy Ibis fly by headed north. That was May 13, 1978 and it was also the same day when in the woods at the edge of Moosehead Cove we all saw four SNOWY EGRETS flying north. This may also have been a first for Sullivan County.

How many know that it is directly because of Ed that birding hotspots Mine Torne Road, Iona Island and Doodletown became known to the public. Because he lived so close he walked those places with great regularity and came to discover their treasures. As newbies he also

introduced us to such outstanding birding spots as Pokemoke, the Del-Mar-Va Peninsula, Piermont Pier, Cape Ann, Newburyport, Bombay Hook, Blue Chip Farm and Galeville.

Our first Christmas Count on 12/19/76 was done with Ed and on it he found our lifebird Barred Owl and I discovered our lifebird Long-eared Owl, both in the pine stand on Drury Lane. The next day upon our return to home in the afternoon there was a wrapped package at the door - - a Christmas ornament with the year on it. It is a wonderful reminder every year of that first Christmas Count. The following year Ed and Tom Storey and Joan and I covered our route again. At some point in the afternoon Tom and I found it necessary to excuse ourselves and go to the back of a stand of pines. While there we heard an odd(to us) call of "dear, dear, dear" and we knew it could not be Gtr. Yellowlegs. What we found was a small flock of PINE GROSBEAKS. When we returned to the car we found Ed pacing on the road and when we related our good news Ed paced more rapidly repeatedly saying, "Pine Grosbeaks. That's my yearbird and now I will never see it"!!!

Ed was great at details when birding and once when we went to Alley Pond Park on Long Island we were up in a tower looking over the feeding Herons, Egrets, Ibis, ducks and shorebirds when he put his scope on a bird and said to me, "what is this"? Gazing through the lens I was faced with an all white medium sized wader. Somewhat new I was aware of this being a test so I was careful to note the details - - - a heron in shape, legs are greyish, feet are in water so I can't see them, size of Snowy Egret but this bird does not look familiar. Further investigating shows cere is also greyish but bill has a long black tip but 3/5 of the basil portion is grey. Cautiously I answer in more of a questioning mode than in conviction - - - "immature Little Blue Heron"? Ed beamed, gave that special short laugh of his and said, "You nailed it"! I felt as brilliant as Peterson himself! Sometime later on a different day he said something that I have held in my mind ever since, "There is nothing wrong with making a mistake(he was talking about bird identifications) but there is nothing right with insisting upon it"! I love that one!

For many years Ed did a yearly Breeding Bird route starting in New Hope and ending in Walden. One year he invited me to go with him to see how this worked with the intent of passing it on to me which he did. At the end of the route he thanked me for joining him and commented, "Wait until they see this report. It's the first time in YEARS that I've reported E. Wood Pewee"! Ah the payment of age which today I fully understand, especially for that bird! Though his ears may have failed him his eyes didn't. After all it was Ed who on Jan. 12, 1981, independently from Beezer Sequin, being on the heights in Newburgh spotted the imm. IVORY GULL on the Hudson. The difference was that Beezer sounded the alarm and over the next week many people got to see that outstanding gull. That was a bit of an oddity about Ed. He would see some wonderful birds and not let others know when, at the same time he complained to me that NO ONE was calling him when there was something good around!

On Apr. 16, 2001 based on news that a BLACK-TAILED GODWIT had been found at Eastport, Long Island Joan and I and Diane Bradley picked up Ed at his home and off we went. When we got to the area where the bird was being seen and seeing several people along the road seemingly looking in a certain direction, I had the passengers debark as I went a bit further to find a parking spot. In far less than a minute I heard a well know voice loudly announce, "# 697" and I knew that the bird was there and ED was enjoying it! His lifelist ultimately was a bit over 700 with some extraordinary finds. Ed was also an artist and a short time after this trip he gave me a signed copy of his "Screaming Eagle", a wonderful head study of our national bird. It is proudly displayed in my kitchen and enjoyed daily.

On Sept. 5, 2014, after a few years of failing health, Ed closed those sharp eyes for the last time and a treasure of knowledge closed its' doors. What was to be given, had already been done. I asked him once what would happen with his records and, having been the Region 9 editor for The Kingbird, the New York State Ornithological Assoc. quarterly report of avian activities for over ten years, he said, "All of my records have been reported". Each of us have our own Ed Treacy Stories and I know that we will be passing them on for years, just as Ed would have liked.

Rest in Peace and thanks Ed.

Ken McDermott

CAPE MAY FIELD TRIP – SEPTEMBER 20-21, 2014

THE YEAR OF THE TERNS



Pictured here are a Whiskered Tern being followed by a Black Tern. While Black Terns are annual visitors to Cape May, this Whiskered Tern is only the 3rd record in North America and all three occurrences have been in Cape May.



Here's the Whiskered Tern among Common and Forster's Terns, note the darker belly. This will continue to get lighter as it completes its molt.

We had good looks at the terns on both Friday and Saturday during the field trip. Since many of us have "chased" rarities you might enjoy this story:

Claudia and I were in Ulster County attending my niece's wedding when the tern was first reported. This would be a "lifer" for both of us! We stayed for the wedding but had to return to Baltimore because Claudia had to go to Indianapolis, IN for a conference. After taking Claudia back to Baltimore, I returned to Cape May and saw the bird. Claudia didn't return from the conference until Saturday (9/20) arriving about 2:30 PM at BWI. She drove directly from BWI to Cape May arriving about 5:00 PM. We went directly to the Hawk Watch platform. No, "The" tern had not been seen for a while. We went to the beach and scanned the tern flocks, no luck there either. So we headed back to the car to try the Coral Avenue beach where it had been seen in the morning. As we were putting the scope in the car, Mike Crewe shouted to us from the platform that the tern was now at Bunker Pond. We raced onto the Hawk Watch platform and enjoyed great looks, watching it plunging into the fresh water of Bunker Pond apparently bathing to remove the salt from its body. We watched it fly off toward Cape May. Claudia stayed on it using the scope until it was out of sight. This was the very last sighting of the Whiskered Tern.

Warren Cairo

REMEMBERING PHIL FAUROT

A long time club member and friend passed away on December 24th. Phil enjoyed peaceful walks through the forest where he could observe all of nature. He knew many of the bird species of North America and liked to encourage others to enjoy them too. He was a rather quiet gentleman who had vast experience in many fields and was quite the conversationalist one on one. For those of us who knew Phil we have many fond memories and will miss his company, acts of kindness and good sense of humor.

Linda Strohl

Remembering Ed

Back in the early 60s Ed Treacy became a good friend and mentor in our new found hobby of bird watching. He was a Biology Teacher with the Ramapo Central School District in Ramapo, NY. At that time he sported a short buzz haircut that was probably left over from his World War II United States Navy days. He drove a small black Renault and when birding wore a black jacket with orange epaulets. We kidded him by calling him "Redstart". He had a great sense of humor and seemed to always have a joke to tell, probably from the Ramapo Central teacher's room.

He used his teaching ability to pass on his great knowledge of birds to everyone who birded with him or asked him, a question about a particular bird. There were always questions about birds that others had seen, often with weird descriptions. But, Ed always had an answer. We had a member that insisted she use her binoculars backwards. She told Ed she could see the birds better ??? How do you handle a statement like that.? Ed did in a very diplomatic way.

If you are wondering how we got started going to all the good birding spots that the Mearns Club visits today, Ed was responsible. He did his research and lead us on many new adventures from sailing the Blue Nose Ferry to Nova Scotia or driving south to the birds and wild ponies of Chincoteague, Virginia and all points between.

In the 1970s Ed was approached by Chandler Robbins who was representing the North American breeding bird survey centered in Patuxent, Maryland, to organize and conduct a breeding bird survey that would cover small areas of Orange and Sullivan Counties. They were 25 mile auto routes picked at random, with each making 50, three minute stops and recording every bird seen or heard. Birds encountered between stops could not be counted. We had to be at the starting point of each route by 5 minutes before sunrise. Each stop had to be described so that it could be duplicated each year. I remember one stop that Ed had described that first year when there wasn't much you could use as a landmark: "Stop by the one-eyed white horse near the water trough in the field." It was a funny description that gave us lots of chuckles, but over the years that old white horse was nearby and we always could depend on seeing or hearing Grasshopper Sparrows there.

Did you know that Ed was the *Kingbird* editor for Region 9 for 25 years and during that period of time wrote 100 regional reports for the association now known as the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. It wasn't an easy task back then. There were no electronic gadgets, only land phones and snail mail. Ed was also an excellent artist. He did it on the "QT", but one of his daughters sneaked his drawings of birds out of the house and had them printed up as note cards by her printer husband. One of the drawings was that of a screaming Bald Eagle that he had sent to us a few years ago as a token of friendship. We lost track of him after we moved to Vermont in 1979 and it was only by chance meetings at the Bashakill that we got to see and talk with him.

One time when birding on Mine Road, Treacy parked his car to walk the road into Weyants Pond. When he returned to the car he found that the Military Police had given him a parking ticket. Getting a ticket was bad enough he related, but it read "The United States of America vs. Edward D. Treacy".

In later years Ed lost most of his ability to hear the birds and his eyes started to fail as well. Ed was never the same after his wife Mary died. We have many, many fond memories of our field trips and our bird walks with Ed. Weekends in May were spent in the field with Ed birding our favorite spots. Many times breaking 100 each day.

When the Club was formed Ed was much in favor of naming it after Mearns and keeping it as a fun birding group. He realized it in both cases and we hope that it never changes. Ed was one of a kind and he will never be forgotten

Al & Barb Merritt
Brattleboro, Vermont

MEMBERSHIP

Our club ended 2014 with 163 members. As of February 5th we have 102 members. We hope to see many more join us in the coming weeks.

We would like to welcome our newest Mearns Bird Club members: Sandra Wright, Dobbs Ferry; Danny Albantides, New City; and the Loomis family: Mario, Donna, Gabriel and Teresa from Goshen. Welcome one and all! We look forward to meeting you We hope you will come and take part in some of our many club activities in the days ahead.

Linda Strohl

COLOMBIA – SANTA MARTA GETAWAY !

Last month I had the pleasure of spending 12 days in one of the most unique and bird rich areas of the world: Colombia's Santa Marta region. In the last few years, Colombia has by and large shed its reputation as a lawless frontier and has experienced a renaissance in tourism; thanks in large part to having the world's biggest birdlist (around 1876 documented species), Colombia is rapidly returning to the mainstream birding circuit. The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is the world's tallest coastal mountain range and the most important region of endemism on earth, with 36 bird species (and 55 subspecies) that are either endemics or restricted range species. Many of these subspecies are slated to be split by the International Ornithologist's Union (the taxonomy that I use when world birding).

After a 5 ½ hour flight from JFK to Bogota (a surprisingly modern, clean city), I met my buddy/guide Dusan Brinkhuisen from Mindo Bird Tours and connected with our flight to Santa Marta, a city of 300,000 on the Caribbean Coast that reminded me of Miami with its collection of high-rise hotels on the beach. Our plan was to bird the mountain from the foothills up to the El Dorado Bird Reserve at 6200 ft elevation, up to the San Lorenzo Ridge at about 9000ft, then down to Minca town at 2000 ft. The latter part was to be spent in the Caribbean lowlands, where the arid, desertlike parks offered chances to see endemics unique to xeric habitat. A stop on the coast gave us looks at shorebirds and seabirds. The ride from Santa Marta to El Dorado was on a rough, rough path that required a high clearance 4x4, and our driver navigated us with good graces. El Dorado Lodge is run by Fundacion Pro Aves, a Colombian NGO committed to bird conservation (they partner with the American Bird Conservancy) and is a rustic arrangement that caters to individuals and birding groups. Fantastic to see the Caribbean from a bird lodge in the mountains! Meals were basic, but good, and they nicely arranged for my vegetarian meals (even had WiFi despite spotty electricity). The main event is the array of hummingbird feeders that are magnets for endemics (we had 9 endemics, including one of the rarest, the BLACK-BACKED THORNBILL).

Bird ranges in the tropical mountains are usually elevational, not latitudinal, so to see the diversity one must explore the altitudinal bands from top to bottom. Atop the ridge, we had rarities such as SANTA MARTA PARAKEET, SANTA MARTA WARBLER, SANTA MARTA ANTPITTA, and SANTA MARTA TAPACULO (we can see a pattern developing with the names). The reserve was the place to see SANTA MARTA WOODSTAR, BAND-TAILED GUAN, SANTA MARTA BRUSH-FINCH, and SANTA MARTA TOUCANET.

Minca gave us great looks at MILITARY MACAW, COPPERY EMERALD, BICOLORED WREN, LONG-BILLED HERMIT, and the elegant BLACK-BACKED ANTSHRIKE. We also had no shortage of northern migrants, with many Blackburnian, Tennessee, Black-And-White, and a lifer for Dusan, MAGNOLIA WARBLER. This was reported to E-Bird and SACC as a mega-rarity due to its lack of documentation in this range. YELLOW-THROATED VIREO also was a life bird. While not exclusively a bird lodge, Hotel Minca was pleasant and clean.

Down to RIOHACHA, the jumping off point for the coastal areas of the Guajira Peninsula, where we wasted no time in changing into summer clothing and heading off to Las Flamencos Park and Isla de Salamanca to bird the dry areas; we were treated to a VIOLET-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD, whose taxonomy is still in debate, and the 'REY DE LA GUAJIRA', the elegant VERMILION CARDINAL, an equally beautiful cousin of our Northern Cardinal endangered by habitat loss and its value in the caged bird trade.

On the coast, we birded a spit of sand and were doubly surprised when we came across LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL and KELP GULL, both extremely rare and seldom documented in the region. Dusan, who is deeply involved with the South American birding community, immediately reported these to the rarities committees for further discussion. An interesting aside: when Dusan went to put on his shoes after wading to the spit, we found that some enterprising citizen appropriated them and negotiated their return for the price of a beer!! Birding isn't pretty.

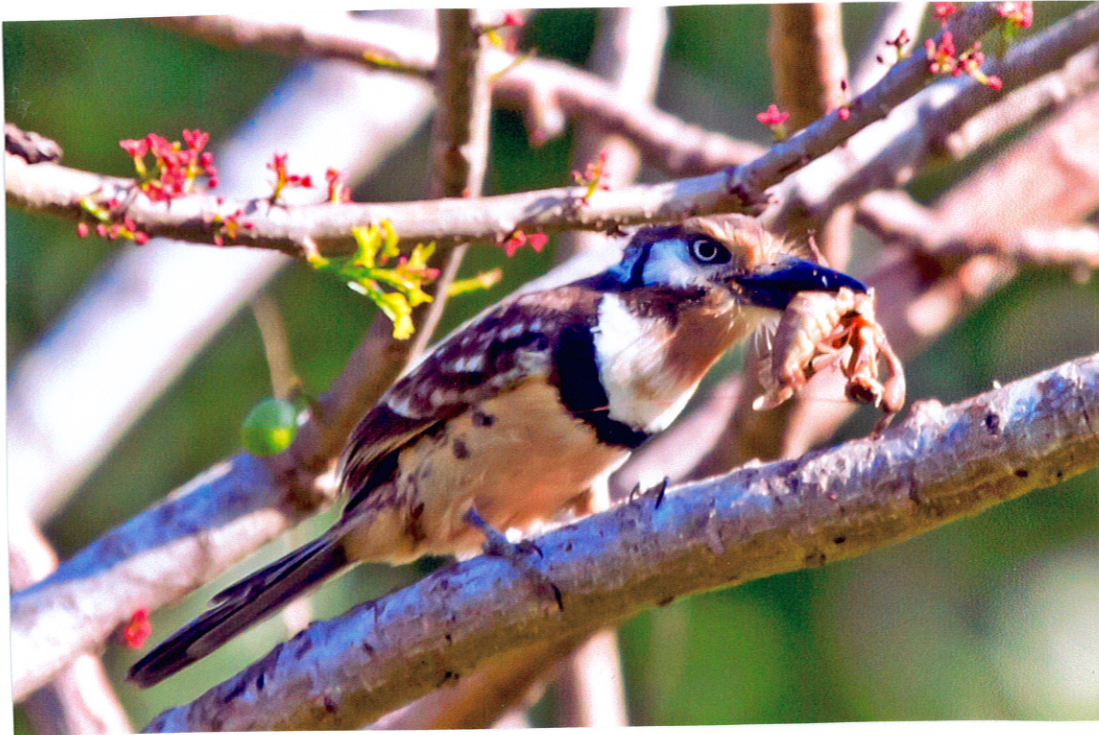
The last day was spent cleaning up some target birds in the Guajira area, and (as I came down with a nasty respiratory infection midway through) some needed downtime.

PS: if you ever go to Colombia, you HAVE to stay at the Playa la Roca hotel in Palomino! One of the funkiest, most unique lodgings I have visited, right on the Caribbean shore.

I took an overnight flight back from Bogota to JFK , met Jayne at the airport, and just like that, I was done. BUT, I'll say that I had the best birding trip so far, and am in the process of preparing my lists for further study. All in all, of the 331 species seen, I added 88 life birds to my list and had many photo-ops (with varying degrees of success). Of the 36 endemics we tallied 21, with 10 near endemics.

It was a fairly difficult itinerary, with many rides on barely passable roads and long hikes through tough terrain in a wide range of temperatures, but I'd like to return to bird the other areas of this mega-diverse country, and I'm told that if I avoid southern Amazonia, where there may be a few unreconstructed leftist Guerrillas, I should be able to continue to be a Colombian pajarero !!

William Fiero



Russet-throated Puffbird

Santa Marta Mountain-Tanager



SPRING & SUMMER FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE – E.A. MEARN'S CLUB

March trips (see last Feather for details): 3/7-black dirt region; 3/14-Rye; 3/21-Oil City Road; 3/21-Shawangunk Grasslands; 3/2-eastern Orange lakes.

April 4 – open – possible “pop-up” trip

April 11 – Bashakill – Meet Joyce Depew (978-9952) at the Stop Sign Trail at 8:00 AM. Look for waterfowl, Rusty Blackbirds and early migrants.

April 15, Wednesday – Oil City Road – Kathy Ashman (294-6140) will lead us around the loop. Our special quarry will be Blue-winged Teal. Be at the platform at 8:30 AM.

April 18– 6 ½ Station Road – Meet Linda Strohl (496-3021) where the Heritage Trail meets 6 ½ Road at 8:00 AM for swallows, ducks, sparrows and some early warblers.

April 22, Wednesday – Chadwick Lake – Meet Bruce Nott (542-0583) at 8:00 AM at the town park at the south end of the lake for kinglets, Pine Warbler and other early arrivals.

April 25 Kenridge Farm – If we are lucky things will be hopping with swallows, kinglets, warblers, etc. Meet Amy Greher (783-6363) at the Hudson Highlands Discovery Center's Kenridge Farm at 8:00 AM.

April 29, Wednesday – Winding Waters – Barry Babcock (534-2734) will hunt down some interesting sparrows and warblers as they follow the Wallkill River north. Be there at 8:00 AM.

May 2 – Stewart State Forest – Walk this great preserve of land with Curt McDermott (549-5596) as the spring push starts heating up. Watch the Yahoo site for the meeting place and time.

May 6, Wednesday – Goosepond – Meet Bill Iannone (783-7467) at the Chester McDonalds at 8:00 AM, then join him for this always enjoyable walk.

May 9 – Bashakill – Join Gerhard Patsch (225-5840) at the Stop Sign Trail at 7:30 AM at this premier birding spot and see 75+ species.

May 13, Wednesday – Linear Park – Meet Scott Baldinger (888-2333) at the Rte. 209/17 commuter parking area at 7:30 AM and explore Linear Park for a different mix of birds than at the Bashakill.

May 15-16 – Break 100!! – Contact Jeff Goulding (764-7207), Bob Slechta (534-7029) or Linda Strohl (496-3021) for information on this fun/challenging birding event.

May 23 – Doodletown – Want great look at Cerulean and Hooded Warblers? Join Barry Babcock (534-2734) at the Rte. 9W pull-off at 8:00 AM.

May 24, Sunday – Shawangunk Grasslands – This is the place for grassland breeders like Grasshopper Sparrow and upland Sandpipers. Meet Jeff Goulding (764-7207) at the Grasslands at 7:00 AM.

May 30, Sunday – Brigantine – Contact Greg Prelich (732 668-1199) or gprelich@gamil.com for meeting place and time. It's a bit of a ride but well worth it for the great looks at breeding plumage shorebirds.

June 6 – Mearns Club Picnic – Meet at Winding Hills Park, Montgomery at 12:00 noon. Bring a dish to share and maybe a lawn chair. Contact Linda Strohl (496-3021) or Tracy Patsch (255-5840) if you have any questions.

August 15 – Jamaica Bay – Contact Herb Stein (496-7986) for meeting place and time to catch the shorebirds' southward push.

August 29 – Bashakill – Meet Joyce Depew (978-9952) at the Stop Sign Trail at 8:00 AM for the first movement of fall migrants.

September 5– Doodletown & Bear Mountain – Be at the 9W pull off at 8:00 AM so Joe Trapani (446-3929) can lead us up into Doodletown for plenty of birds.

September 5 – Black dirt/Oil City Road – meet Joe Trapani again but this time at 4:00 PM at the Jolly Onion to search for shorebirds, etc.

September 12 – Black dirt – Joe Cullen (236-4869) will hunt down Golden Plovers, etc. on the black dirt. Be at the Jolly Onion at 8:00 AM.

September 19 – Basha I – Be at the Stop Sign Trail at 8:00 AM to meet Scott Baldinger (888-2333). We'll look for warblers, thrushes and vireos!

September 26 – Basha II – Meet Jeff Goulding (764-7207) at the deli fields at 8:00 AM for more thrushes, vireos and sparrows!

September 30, Wednesday – Stewart State Forest – Be at the North Ridge Road parking lot at 8:00 AM to meet Bruce Nott (542-0583) and explore an area we seldom visit.

October – Hudson Highlands Discovery Center's Kenridge Farm – Meet Amy Greher (783-6363) at 8:00 AM for Palm Warblers, Lincoln's Sparrows, etc.

October 7, Wednesday – Goosepond – Meet Bill Iannone (783-7467) at the Chester McDonald's at 8:00 AM and bird Goosepond when it is most productive.

October 10 – Winding Waters – Join Curt McDermott (549-5596) at this relatively new and birdy trail. Be there at 8:00 AM for some "good" sparrows.

NOTES

The phone number is given for each leader. If you have any doubts about a trip happening due to weather CALL either the night before or in the morning (the leader will be up checking the weather too, so CALL!) You can also keep an eye on the Mearns Yahoo site for trip cancellations or changes.

If you lead a trip you are responsible for sending a write up to Jan Fitzpatrick, 1 Keith Place, Campbell Hall, NY 10916 or fjfitz@frontiernet.net. Please include the number of species seen, number of participants, weather conditions and highlights of the trip. If you post the trip on line please send me an expanded report fleshing out the details of the on-line posting. Thank you!
