

## STATE-WIDE BIRDERS' MEET 1973

Gina Sprong, Littleton

Over 100 birders from all over Massachusetts gathered at Wachusett Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary on March 3rd, by invitation of the Nashoba Valley Bird Club. Dianne Gould, club president, led the activities, which included an excellent program by members of the attending clubs and of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, sponsor of the event.

Deborah Howard of MAS presented results of the Cardinal-Titmouse census, and James Baird told of the society's new Birder's Kit, which is an excellent source of information about field problems, directions for self-guided trips, and directions for feeders of birds. Mr. Baird later presented a bird quiz, allowing even briefer glimpses of his slides than we often get of real birds in the field.

House finches (a species that is increasing in Massachusetts) was the topic of Betty Smyth, Manomet Bird Observatory. Most of us learned that we "miss the boat" because we fail to check birds for bands. They might carry the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum band or colored ones that code special facts or projects.

The Allen Bird Club of Springfield presented an excellent film on Kirtland's Warbler (for more information, see the current issue of Man and Nature), a bird that precariously survives through careful management of its only known breeding site, the jack pine forest of Michigan.

The Ashby Bird Observatory was represented by Timmie Terrio, who showed slides of the banding operations there. Located away from the coast, this observatory provides information on birds that migrate through the central part of the state.

There was a reward for those who deserted the warm hall for the ice coated fields to go on a demonstration bird walk with Bradford Blodget. Brad's first lesson was how to adjust the binoculars. His instruction also included how to divert the attention of birders while the leader tried to make an identification. Some tips were, looking in the wrong tree, the wrong branch, a speck in the eye, and if all else fails, a hanky well shaken might flush the confusing species.

When the indoor program resumed, Michael Stolper and Timmie Terrio, students at Newton High School, described their chickadee research project, which has been exhibited at the Boston Museum of Science. They are studying how chickadee feeding habits are affected by the weather.

Gerald Mersereau and Donald Hopkins from Connecticut told about their studies of the New England hawk migration (see page 42 of this issue). This project now involves many individuals, clubs, radar surveillance, and may include aircraft in the future.

And then there was Eliot Taylor's bird calls that changed an anxious moment into merriment, after Gina Sprong had reversed the direction of her slide tray too hurriedly, popping some of the slides onto the floor. These were pictures of "goodies" photographed in the Nashoba Valley by herself and Gordon Seavey, another N.V.B.C. member. In the confusion, the slides were reinserted in the tray upside down. More bird calls!

Would-be bird photographers had a good lesson on how to take quality pictures with economical equipment. James Nye of Littleton supported his facts with some excellent slides illustrating how high-quality results require both proper equipment and correct exposure.

### BIRD WORDS

Austringer (ô's 'trîn-jër): One who keeps goshawks. This obsolete word is a corruption of the Middle English "ostreger." Old French: ostour = hawk. Webster III, 1961. Who would like to add to this trivia?