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New Jersey Birds is now available online on the New Jersey Audubon Society website.

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New Jersey Birds: The Final Printed Issue

by PETE DUNNE

Dear *New Jersey Birds* Reader, It is with very mixed feelings that I inform you that in your hands is the last printed issue of *New Jersey Birds* magazine. Starting with the Winter 2009 issue, *New Jersey Birds* will be published only electronically, available to New Jersey Audubon members online, as has been the case since 2006. No major changes in the content, presentation, information, or style of the regional reports are anticipated. (Which is to say that it is only the messenger, not the message, that will change). Readers who are, for any reason, unable to receive their issue electronically can request a printed copy mailed to them, and we will be pleased to comply.

The decision by New Jersey Audubon Society to offer *New Jersey Birds* only on-line comes at the end of several years of discussion. Certainly matters relating to cost and the environmental efficacy of printed vs. electronic format figured in the decision. But the change from print to electronic presentation is much more a reaction to changes in communication than a new initiative.

New Jersey Birds, formerly *Records of New Jersey Birds*, formerly *Field Notes*, commenced publication in April 1953. Its primary purpose was to serve as a vehicle to communicate information relating to bird occurrence and distribution in New Jersey to a small, but intensely bird-focused audience. It was intended to be both informational and social. It evolved, in time, to serve a more serious and archival function. Beginning in the mid-1970s, under the guidance of Rich Kane, it became both an information crucible and biological archive dedicated to documenting the changes in New Jersey's bird and birding landscape.

Because of the Internet, the communication landscape has evolved more rapidly and dramatically than the one upon which this publication focuses. Now, information relating to bird sightings is available widely, daily, and instantaneously on various list-serves and websites. Students of birds have no need to wait for a quarterly publication, delivered six months after the fact, to find out what the hawk count total at Montclair was or what rare or unusual birds appeared

in Cape May. In addition, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's universally acclaimed *e-Bird* service has caused a data-gathering information revolution. As a communication vehicle, our publication has lost both audience and a measure of relevance.

But not all. The revolution in information gathering and dissemination has actually increased, not diminished, the need for a publication that offers a seasonally calibrated, intelligent, consolidated, peer-reviewed, vetted, and archival-minded summary of New Jersey's birds. Central to the decision to go to an electronic format was the understanding that what matters most to present and future birders is how information relating to New Jersey's bird-life is gathered and compiled, not the manner in which it is presented. In our ambition to provide an authoritative, on-going information-base relating to New Jersey's breeding, wintering, and migrant bird populations, we remain uncompromising. In the interest of providing a printed, archival summary of bird happenings in New Jersey, we invite readers to look forward to a new, annual issue of *New Jersey Audubon Magazine* which will serve this need. This special issue, whose inauguration should occur in the fall of 2009, will include a thoughtful and thorough summary of the year's bird sightings and distribution in the state, the annual report of the New Jersey Bird Records Committee, plus occasional papers focused on New Jersey's dynamic bird landscape.

New Jersey Birds will be available on New Jersey Audubon's website and found, as it is now, on www.njauadon.org Members whose e-mail addresses are known to New Jersey Audubon will have a notice of publication sent to them via e-mail. Members who would still like a printed, unbound copy mailed to them are invited to notify us by writing to: New Jersey Birds, 600 Rt. 47 North, Cape May Court House, New Jersey 08210.

Sincerely,

Pete Dunne

Vice President, Natural History Information
New Jersey Audubon Society

COVER PHOTO: The late autumn of 2007 was another good year for Cave Swallows in New Jersey, with widespread reports and documented records in the state and a three-figure total in the Cape May area. The species was removed from the review list at the end of the 2007 season. This individual was superbly photographed at Sandy Hook on 27 November 2007. Photo/Peter Schoenberger