

THE LINNAEAN
NEWS



LETTER

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DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

Sean Sime

Since moving to New Jersey in 2007 I have taken a very “local” approach to birding. While I would like to make the philosophical argument I have decided to forego Cape May to the south and Montauk to the east in order

to reduce my carbon footprint, the reality is far more mundane; my work schedule and two small children made the decision for me.

I did, however, decide to make lemonade from this proverbial birding lemon.



Speaking on the phone with a birding friend my plan was hatched when he sent me a very nice map of Essex County, NJ, where I live (it's just to the left of my computer screen as I type this).

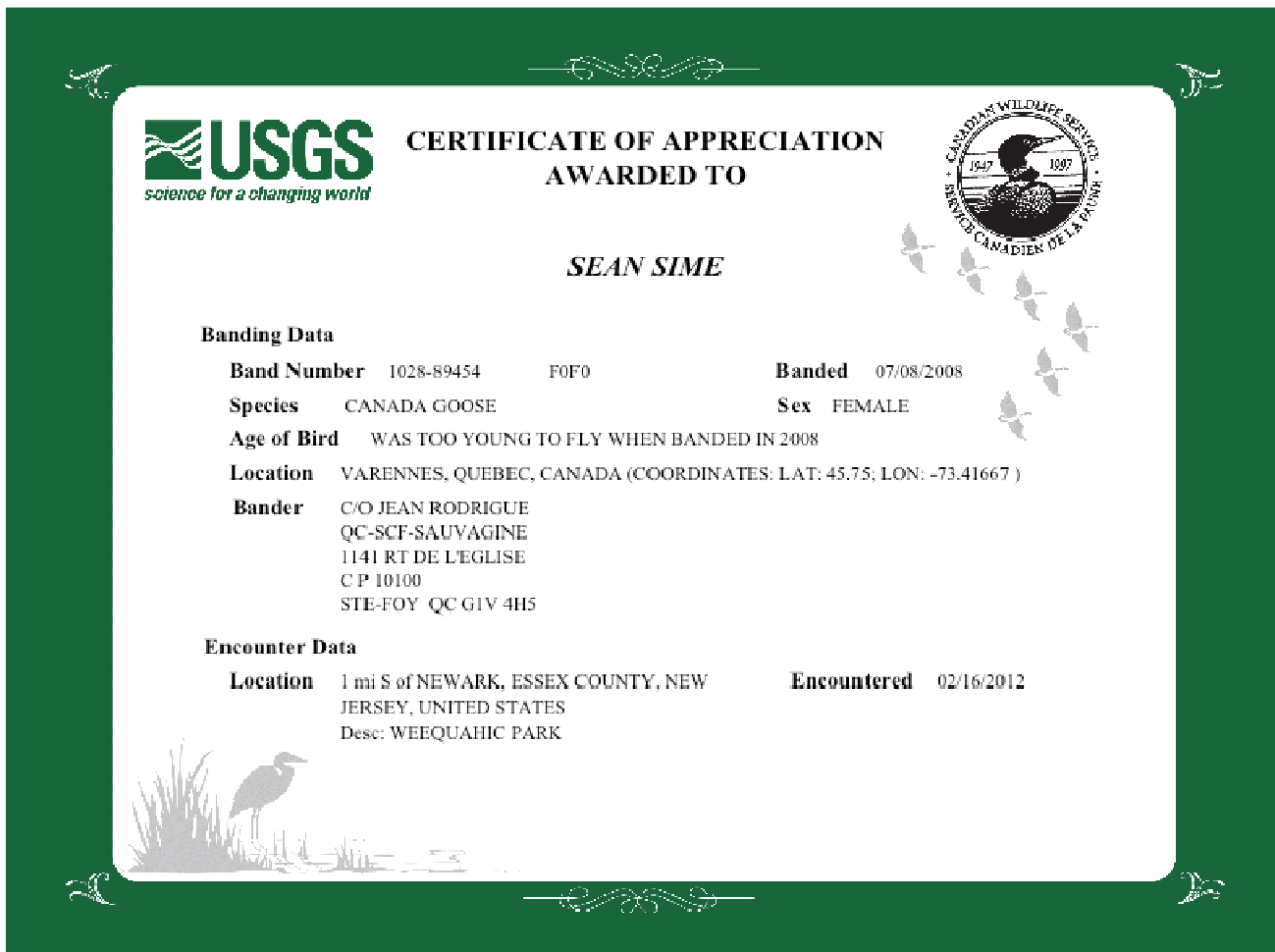
I began to search out places I could scope a pond or bird a brushy forest edge on my way to work. The "quick hit" approach. Where could I take the kids for a stroll on a weekend morning? Could I change the route I drive to make it more "birdy."

One such location is Weequahic Park in Newark. It is one of the few bodies of water in the county that is public and it conveniently has a road and ample parking along the eastern shoreline. Weequahic resides just west of Newark Airport and subsequently, Newark Bay. The area surrounding the park is economically depressed and depending on the way you drive in, you may question why you are even there in the first place! My apprehension disappeared as soon as I saw birds.

Over the course of the fall of 2011 I recorded seventeen species of waterfowl here. The big draw for me has been the Canada Goose flock that has swelled to over 1200 birds at times. On wet days the geese will leave the lake and graze on the surrounding ball fields. With the annual occurrence of vagrant geese in the Northeast, these birds always emitted an air of possibility. On December 21, 2011 there were a staggering nine Cackling Geese present!

I began to see Canada Geese with neck collars and thought I should try to report them to the Bird Banding Laboratory website at <http://www.reportband.gov/>. My first report consisted of four geese with yellow collars. Their numbers were almost sequential, so I assumed they were banded at the same location. Lo and behold, the birds were banded on June 28, 2011 in Bristol CT.

A few weeks later I saw a goose with an orange neck collar. It read "F0F0." I had never seen this color combo before and



thought it might not be a local bird.

I reported this collar, but never received any correspondence. After a few weeks I did some digging on the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) website and learned why. The Banding Lab keeps track of the metal leg bands on birds. The best it can do with a collar is to send it off to the researcher using that color/type collar. It is up to the researcher to reply. The website warns the reporter of possible disappointment: "In some cases, no banding information may be available because the band number was either mistyped or we have not yet received the banding data from the bander."

After seeing the bird on a subsequent visit I decided to attempt the impossible. I made a date with "F0F0" after a job in Newark. With scope in hand, I watched the goose from multiple vantages over the course of thirty minutes in the hopes of reading its' leg band number.

Note to banders: when placing a leg band on a bird please apply the band so the numbers are right side up when the bird is standing! I digress.

I picked out the last three numbers quickly. Eventually the bird turned around and began walking in another direction. I felt like I was on a roller coaster at times watching the band go up and down, up and down. Coupled with the band being upside down, I'm amazed I managed to make out the entire number while retaining my lunch!

I entered the new information later that day and received a response in minutes. The bird was banded in Varennes, Quebec, in 2008, a few miles northeast of Montreal.

What an awesome feeling! Nothing against Bristol, CT, but hey, this bird has been further north than I have.

One could say my "situation" has grounded me; keeping me close to home, yes, but also in re-establishing my birding roots as an observer. This simple change in perspective has had a profound effect. What I first viewed as a limitation I now see as a strong foundation. It seems completely counter-intuitive, but by reducing my coverage area

have I been able to broaden my understanding of Essex County's local birds. By briefly visiting the same locations over time I may have lost the ability to tally the big list, but I can sense the movement of birds on a more intimate level. I feel the seasons again.

These days there's bird song in the yard at first light. I can't imagine the geese will hang in for long. The Cackling Geese have moved on and the flock seems to be thinning. I hope I see "F0F0" one more time. I'd like to send her off with a proper, "Bon voyage!" And more importantly, "Merci!"

[Photographs by Sean Sime.]



JEFF KIMBALL'S *BIRDERS: THE CENTRAL PARK EFFECT*

Helen Hays

On occasion an individual has a vision coupled with the ability and drive to translate their vision into something we can all feel and understand. Jeffrey Kimball, Society member and former Council member, has done this in his excellent film *Birders: The Central Park Effect*. Jeff shot, wrote the narration, produced



and directed the film, scheduled to be shown at the Society's meeting on January 8, 2013. Daniel Baer edited the film. Jeff's wife, Pamela Hogan, and Tom Casciato are the executive producers. Since starting the film five years ago, Jeff has been totally committed to it. Working about half of each year on the film for the first four years, he took out a bank loan in the fifth year so he could work full time on the film and finish it.

In his film Jeff highlights the green habitat that is Central Park in the midst of Manhattan's concrete pavements and buildings. It is an area for recreation for New

Yorkers, as well as a valuable habitat for migrant and resident birds. Jeff concentrates on the birds and birders in Central Park. His camera work is excellent. His narration and dialogue lead the viewer through the park in different seasons of the year, underlining through remarks by the people birding in the park, what a wonderful habitat it is for birds and birders.

Jeff was born in San Francisco and grew up in the Bay area. In high school he played drums in a band, but said he didn't have a sense of rhythm. He also tried acting, but felt self conscious in front of a camera. He went to Stanford for his undergraduate work. The summer between high school and college was a turning point for him. He became aware that what he really wanted to do was go into film. That summer he discovered three films, among the many he watched, that he found fascinating: *A Clockwork Orange*, *Casablanca*, and *Chinatown*. He found a different thing interesting in each. In *A Clockwork Orange* he admired how the music and visuals were used to create a technical tour de force. *Casablanca* had a compelling story and in *Chinatown* the camera work and music were skillfully combined to create a mood. That fall he entered college and took a course in film aesthetics. Later his first film production course was in the making of documentaries.

At twenty-five Jeff came to New York to enter New York University for his Master of Fine Arts in film. He met his wife, Pamela Hogan, who makes documentaries, in the larger film community of New York City. While living and working in New York, Jeff still does a lot of work in California, returning to San Francisco several times a year. When he began working he worked in editing rooms for a variety of types of films before doing music for feature films. He organized the

music for among others, *Good Will Hunting*, *A Bronx Tale*, *Flirting with Disaster*, and *Swingers*.

While in New York Jeff signed up for Joe DiCostanzo's American Museum of Natural History bird walks in Central Park. He was delighted at the number of birds it was possible to see there every day. During the winter after he joined Joe's walks, Chuck McAlexander called him and asked him if he wanted to go birding in the park in January. Jeff must have hesitated, because Chuck assured him you could see birds in Central Park in the winter. They saw twenty-six species that day. Again Jeff was impressed and excited that here was a place in the middle of New York City where you could see birds any day of the year and both his wife and Tom Casciato told him he had reached a stage where he was in a position to make a movie on the birds of Central Park. And so it began...

Jeff knew he wanted to film many birds for his production, and thought he might have to film birds in other places, and then include them by noting that they were also found in Central Park. As he worked he found there was no need to film elsewhere and he took many beautiful shots of birds, all in Central Park. After two years he had enough footage of birds for the film and began filming people birding in Central Park. There were definitely talking points he hoped to bring out in interviewing birders in the park and wrote out questions before he met people to walk and talk in the park. Sometimes he was surprised by the answers he elicited. When I saw the film I was impressed by how articulate the people involved were, which, in part, is a tribute to Jeff's skilled questioning in combination with excellent editing by Daniel Baer. Jeff said often the characters in the film came together in the editing room. All the people in the film sound natural and seem to be enjoying themselves.

In the first version of the film there was no narration. Those who attended a screening in 2011 thought narration would help to move visuals along, as for example, to make changes in seasons clear. Jeff world premiered his film

at the *South by Southwest Festival* in Austin Texas in mid-March of 2012. HBO picked up the domestic TV rights to his film for a year. HBO will be premiering the film on July 16, 2012 at 9:00 pm. It will then be available on HBO On Demand. They have exclusive rights for six months and after that it can be shown on iTunes or available on DVD. A number of other groups have expressed an interest in *Birders: The Central Park Effect*, so stay tuned.

Jeff fits birding in when traveling with his family by birding early and returning in time to have breakfast with everyone. When his sixteen year old son, Ryder, saw *Birders: The Central Park Effect*, he said: "I get it, I get why you do it." which pleased Jeff because he is concerned people understand the importance of parcels of land like Central Park and the value to humans and to wildlife in saving them. Jeff's stepson, Aaron Profumo, will enter the Yale Drama School this fall, an exciting step for the whole family. Who knows, in the future Jeff and his stepson may meet on a set on opposite sides of the camera!

When Jeff finished *Birders: The Central Park Effect* he treated himself to a trip to Texas where he saw seventeen life birds.

As noted above, Geoffrey Nulle has scheduled a showing of *Birders: The Central Park Effect* for the Linnaean meeting on January 8, 2013. It is a documentary that has never been done before; a film you shouldn't miss. Bring your friends. If they are not birders they will see an aspect of the park new to them. If they are birders they will appreciate Jeff's focus on the park as a wonderful place for birds and birders, something to be valued and protected!

[Photograph by Joe DiCostanzo]

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## SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER MARCH 13, 2012

Helen Hays

Alice Deutsche, president of the Linnaean Society of New York, ran the Annual Dinner meeting held March 13, 2012, at the Leiderkranz Club in her usual exemplary fashion. She timed the different parts of the program so that the business part finished in time for the speaker, Clive Minton, from Australia, to begin his talk a little after 8:00 pm. The meeting and Clive's presentation was a resounding success.

Many people helped in preparing for the annual dinner. Secretary Art LeMoine checked a number of locations and found that the Leiderkranz Club seemed the best place to hold the dinner. Alice Deutsche and Art discussed menu choices and costs with Philipp Haberbauer at the Leiderkranz. Their findings were presented to the council and the council voted to charge \$65.00 for the dinner, \$10.00 less than in 2011, hoping this would encourage members to attend. Kathleen Howley wrote a reminder about the annual dinner that Keelin Miller, our webmaster, emailed in hopes of getting as many people as possible to attend the annual dinner. As it turned out 93 people registered for the dinner and, in addition, two more attended the program giving Clive the largest attendance at an annual meeting in a long time.

For the last two years the Linnaean Society has been extremely fortunate in that Linnaean member Margery Silk has provided the Society with books for the auction. Gil Schrank and Jeff Nulle drove to Margery's house in Connecticut, where each year she has offered them a choice of books from a collection that belonged to her late husband George Silk. This year among the books Jeff and Gil chose were a few contributed by Margery as well. The books have done very well for the Linnaean in the auction, and the Society thanks Margery for her substantial contribution of excellent books in 2010 and 2011.

Jeff Nulle collected the raffle prizes, which included a photograph of a female Black-throated Green Warbler contributed by Deborah Allen.

A number of members participated in producing the invitation package sent to members. Lydia Thomas designed the invitation and had it printed. She also had the raffle tickets printed. Jeff Nulle wrote up the raffle prizes and listed the books to be auctioned. This year members could win raffle prizes whether or not they attended the annual dinner. In addition to the books the auction also included three charming wood resin sculptures of birds from Art Le Moine, modeled by Gary Stevenson, all of which sold! There were also prints for people to buy and Philipp Haberbauer at the Leiderkranz contributed a print which sold early. Kathleen Howley organized the raffle drawing during the meeting and we were fortunate in that Alice's niece Becky Tummen attended the dinner and was delighted to do the drawing.

Tom Endrey, who leads the team that mails the *Linnaean News-Letter* that are not emailed, organized the mailing of the invitation packet. Steve Chang accepted the checks as members registered for the annual dinner, and sent the names and dinner choices of those registering to Kathleen Howley, who in turn made final lists of guests for the registration table, and sent dinner choices to the Leiderkranz. She produced name tags with dinner choices prominently displayed and with registrars Star Saphir and Ann Shaw distributed them to guests as they arrived. Kathleen's name tags with the dinner choice in large letters made it very easy for the waiters to bring the right dishes to the tables quickly. Between dinner and dessert, Jeff, Gil and Thom Schuchaskie did an efficient and expeditious distribution of auction and raffle prizes as well as collection of reimbursements for items purchased - a most successful team effort.

The auction, the raffle and donations from individual members, together with near record attendance, all helped to more than balance the budget. This news was very

welcome, especially considering that the dinner charge was \$10.00 lower per person than in 2011.

Vice-president Jeff Nulle helped substantially to organize various activities for the dinner and handled problems as they arose. Upon learning that the Leiderkranz did not have a digital projector he called Steve Nanz in Brooklyn who agreed to loan Linnaean his projector. Jeff then talked to Tom Stephenson and Tom offered to bring his computer to use with the projector. Jeff then picked up the projector and brought it to Manhattan for our annual meeting. Tom did an excellent job with the projection, which meant Clive relaxed and thoroughly enjoyed giving his talk.

The Society is most grateful to Neil Emund for taking pictures of Society members throughout the annual meeting. These pictures later appeared on Facebook.

At the beginning of the business meeting Steve Chang gave a concise treasurer's report.

Alice regretted Art LeMoine is resigning as Secretary of the society, and thanked him for doing a great job during the last year and for reading his report at the annual meeting. His report included committee chairman reports by Lenore Swenson- Field Trips, Lydia Thomas – Membership, and Helen Hays – Great Gull Island. Alice was pleased to announce that Sherry Felix has agreed to become Secretary of the Society.

Society members were excited and pleased to elect Guy McKaskie an Honorary member of the Linnaean Society of New York. The Society presented Mickey Maxwell Cohen with the Natural History Service Award accompanied by enthusiastic applause.

President Deutsch appointed Richard Lieberman to head the nominating committee and Ardith Bondi and Gil Schrank to serve on the committee to nominate three Council members to fill terms of members rotating off the Council: Keelin Miller, Starr Saphir, and Susan Scioli. She thanked those members for their participation in Council meetings throughout their terms.

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CLIVE MINTON AT ANNUAL MEETING

Helen Hays

How was the annual dinner program? ABSOLUTELY MARVELOUS!

Absolutely is one of Clive Minton's favorite words, providing a positive emphasis to the views he expresses. The audience at the Linnaean annual meeting was enthusiastic and appreciative. At the end of the evening someone asked a member of the audience if they thought the talk went on too long? "Of course it went on too long, was the reply, but we loved every minute of it!"

Clive took six days out of his field season in Australia to come to New York to accept the Society's Eisenmann Medal and speak at our annual meeting. The medal is given to a person who has achieved in ornithology as evidenced by their publications, but, in addition, has made a particular effort to help amateurs and encourage them in their pursuit of ornithology. Eugene Eisenmann did this and Clive Minton's career closely parallels Gene's. Both men retired early so they could spend full time on birds. Both published their results and both made a particular effort to help and train amateurs.

Clive's life-long interest in birds began when he was a boy in England and his enthusiasm and excitement in delivering his story at the Linnaean annual meeting was infectious. After obtaining a degree in metallurgy from Cambridge University he took a job with a metallurgy company in England and after a few years was sent to Australia to manage a branch of the company there. Once in Australia he introduced banders to cannonets. His work on the northwest coast of Australia, where hundreds of thousands of shorebirds stop annually, makes a challenging story. Not only did Clive recruit large banding teams to mark these birds, but the recoveries of some of the birds formed the basis for establishing the East Asian Wetland Bureau in recognition of the importance of the East Asian Flyway through China to Siberia. His

records as well as those of the Victorian Wader Study Group, facilitated migratory bird agreements between Australia and Japan, Australia and China and the formation of the East Asian-Australian Shorebird Site Network. More recently, by attaching geolocators and satellite transmitters, he is expanding knowledge of routes and timing of movements of some of the shorebirds he works with on the northwest coast of Australia. Clive and his group have trained people from over 20 countries in cannon-netting.

When Clive finished speaking many in the audience thought what fun it would be to band with him in Australia or on Delaware Bay. He had warned us that there were no observers on his expeditions – everyone participates! Given the fine turnout and audience enthusiasm this was clearly a most successful annual meeting and dinner.

After returning to Australia Clive reported that 4,000 Banded Stilts, a species that takes advantage of wet conditions to breed, were nesting in an area he had shown us in his talk. Two of the Banded Stilts were now wearing satellite transmitters. Later he reported they had put forty-four geolocators on Sanderling and captured two turnstones wearing geolocators. For Clive, banding somewhere is almost constant; next stop Delaware Bay May 8 – June 2, 2012.

[Photograph by Angela Watts.]



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**FIELD TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT**

There has been an addition to this summer's field trip schedule.  
Saturday, August 25, 2012: Jamaica Bay Roving Butterfly Trip. Leader: Rick Cech. Registrar: Lenore Swenson (212-533-9567). Registration opens Monday, August 13, 2012. Ride: \$15.00. (Rain date: August 26, 2012.)

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