

In Memory of Jim Clinton, Sr.
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Jim was born in Chicago, and was a lifelong fan of the Chicago White Sox baseball team—holding that conviction to the end, in spite of the many Yankee and Met fans who had him surrounded!

He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Biology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and his Doctorate in Radiation Research from Temple University in Philadelphia. He taught Biology at schools in Florida and Pennsylvania prior to securing employment at the Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL), in Upton, L.I., NY. He started in its Biology Department, before transferring into the Radiation Research Group, retiring from there in 2000. This last position required him (on a yearly basis) to travel to the Marshall Islands in the Pacific, to test for the current levels of radiation still present from the nuclear bomb-testing program carried out some 70 years earlier. The three huge up-sides of this assignment were: being routed through the Hawaiian Islands, enabling Jim to take vacation days on the return leg; seeing many of the bird species found in that part of the world, including pelagics, terns, shorebirds and endemics; and without trying too hard, he was able to observe many other animals in their natural settings, such as whales, porpoises, turtles, and fish.

Jim exemplified an intelligent, thoughtful, unassuming and caring person. I first met him in December, 1976, when I had the good fortune of having a special bird visit my feeders in Wading River. This led to meeting many of the area's serious birders, including the BNL contingent led by Gil Raynor. They asked if I would like to take part in the upcoming Christmas Bird Count, and this led to joining the Moriches Bay Audubon Society (MBAS), and the many, wonderful experiences with Jim through the ensuing years. He served MBAS (now known as Eastern L.I. Audubon Society) at many levels, including long-time field trip leader, delegate to The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, board member, Vice President, and even President, a position which really didn't suit his personality...but he accepted the nomination in order to help MBAS through a critical period in its history.

Jim was an excellent birder, in spite of having sight in only one eye. He also was the inspirational compiler of our chapter's Christmas, Breeding and "Big Day" Bird Counts for many years. As such, along with being our monthly field trip leader, Jim was always the patient teacher to many of our members, as they developed into responsible birders and naturalists. Two of these counts stick out in my mind as examples of his spirit and leadership.

The first count, like all the previous and future "May Day" counts led by Jim, lasted all day—starting by looking and listening for rails, bitterns, "goatsuckers" and owls before dawn, going "all out" the rest of the day, finishing after dark, and then looking and listening again for what we missed in *The Kingbird* 2013 December; 63 (4)

the morning. It had rained all night, and didn't stop until about noon. With raingear not being what it is today, we were drenched by daybreak! With Jim Sr. driving, Jim Jr. keeping score, and Clarence Swanson and myself praying for Jim Sr. to admit defeat, we "floated" out of Wading River and headed east, to cover the rest of the North Fork. Despite the weather, we were getting a fair number of species. Calverton, Baiting Hollow, Riverhead, Northville, Aquebogue, and Jamesport came and went, with the only thing not drenched being Sr.'s enthusiasm! Lo and behold, the rain stopped in Laurel and the sun came out in Mattituck, continuing to shine brightly for the rest of the day! We finished that day back in a Riverhead parking lot tallying up the day's species, under an old style lighting fixture (which did, unlike its replacements, attract insects) as we kept trying to record the day's first nighthawk. While I'm not sure of the final number (Jim Jr. thinks it might have been 154) we did exceed our earlier expectations. This of course, was due primarily to Jim's strong, quiet leadership.

The 2000 Orient CBC was held on December 30, with the weather, albeit snow this time, bringing out the quiet tiger in Jim. After Gil Raynor became incapacitated in 1984, Jim took over many of Gil's responsibilities, one of them as the Shelter Island (North Sector) leader. Keeping all of Gil's protocols in place, plans called for making the earliest (0600) ferry out of Greenport, birding till dark, catching the ferry back to the mainland, and getting to the compilation party at MaryLaura Lamont's house in Northville as quick as we could. It had been snowing since about 2 AM and continued as we left Wading River at 5 AM. With the questionable weather, Jim did have his doubts about getting in a full day. Once on Shelter Island, we found the snow coming down much harder and the wind blowing stronger—in my mind, the word "blizzard" came to the fore. Shortly afterward, it got so bad that we had to stop, finding an open luncheonette where we waited out the storm. About two hours later we resumed the count, finishing with a Screech-Owl—one of our morning misses! Upon reaching MaryLaura's, amidst all the snow, the absence of cars was a telling sign. When she came to the door, she was flabbergasted! Most of her participants had either not started, or pulled out mid-morning. A few had indeed finished their sector, after stopping at times, but skipped the compilation, phoning in their results. We (read, Jim) had "stayed the course" and now wanted to be fed—which Mary Laura was overjoyed to do.

Jim was predeceased by his wife, Loretta, and leaves behind daughters Karen and Kathleen, and sons Jim Jr. and Richard, as well as five grandchildren. Jim Sr.'s birding legacy is being carried on by Jim Jr., who has his father's personality and birding skills, plus one talent he has surpassed his Dad at—calling in birds with his Screech-Owl vocalizations!