



Chickadee Chatter

Volume 6 Issue 4

The Newsletter of the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society

October 2007

www.alleghenyplateauaudubon.org

Shaffer Mountain Wind Development Update

As many of you know, our chapter is taking a hard stand against improper siting of wind turbines. In that regard, we managed to get a rare hearing with the DEP, but only after 330 letters were sent demanding a hearing. Many of those letters came from our friends and members in Pittsburgh, especially the bird clubs. The fight continues, but I would like members to know why we're involved in this time-consuming project. Shaffer Mountain and its watershed are listed by the Nature Conservancy as a Natural Heritage Site of exceptional value, which should receive the highest degree of protection. Within the area are bogs, orchids, endangered plants, two EV (exceptional value) streams, and several BDA's (biologic diversity areas). It is also home to 56 mammals including the federally endangered Indiana Bat. From an Audubon perspective, it is an IBA (Important Bird Area) and a migratory corridor for both raptors and songbirds. It is a large tract of uninterrupted forest and simply the wrong place to put large industrial turbines with their 18 miles of 45 to 100 foot wide roads. The decision from the DEP will be given in January and we will keep members posted on future developments

 Tom Dick

Kudos to Special Members

All too often we fail to recognize the efforts of APAS members for their contributions. That has changed! The spotlight today is on the Gowartys, a father and son team who are relatively new to the APAS and found their niche at the hawk watch. Ed Gowarty Jr. has become a fairly frequent visitor and has acquired two grants from Wal-Mart for our hawk watch, the first was \$300 and the second was \$1100. And, for that effort we're deeply appreciative since we have hidden expenses like taxes, port-a-potty, and improvements. He is also a terrific photographer who has captured some exciting moments for us.

Ed Gowarty, Sr. has found his niche as well. He is developing into a top-notch counter who subs for regular counters as needed. Attrition is always a problem at hawk watches and his timely entrance into the group couldn't have come at a better time. It's tough being locked into a schedule each week if you want to plan trips or attend events, so relief is important. Not only is he a good hawk-watcher, but also he contributes to the aura of conviviality that exists there.

Our deep appreciation goes to both of the Gowartys.

 Tom Dick

Dear Members:

According Che Mincone, Hawk Watch Compiler, the fall migration season is progressing very well. In fact, we had the second best August on record. However, although the late summer/early fall weather has been glorious, winds have not been favorable to The Front and resulted in a somewhat lower than usual Broadwing count in September. Not to worry though, there are plenty more raptors on the way. And the trip to The Front is always worth it simply for the view and the wonderful camaraderie of APAS members.

Counters for the fall 2007 season are:

Sunday - Bob Stewart

Monday - Eric Hall

Tuesday - Bob Gorsuch/Dean Jobe

Wednesday - Tony Barle/
Rosemary McGlynn

Thursday - Tom Dick

Friday - Jim Rocco

Saturday - Gene and Nancy
Flament

The daily count numbers are available on hawkcount.org.

Hope to see you on the mountain!

Ev Merriman, Editor

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Dave Escherich Photo

APAS Website News

The web site has been redesigned and will be improved and expanded as material becomes available. Be sure to check the new blog/bulletin board on the site that all can join to discuss topics online and make announcements.

 Jack Julian

Christmas Bird Count Booster

Our Christmas Bird Count this year will also be a Chapter fundraiser to help boost our birders' enthusiasm and our treasury as well. As a booster you can make a specific monetary pledge per species or a flat donation. You may designate your contribution to the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch, Dunnings Creek wetlands, to chapter funds, or to any combination you specify. Your pledge will cover program costs and site improvements. So on Count day, whether you are out in the field or home by your feeders, you can be a part of this nationwide event and help our Chapter too. Last year our teams kicked the bushes and came up with 73 species, including a Northern Goshawk and a Lapland Longspur. You will receive a report and pledge total in January. Meanwhile, good health and good birding to all! And, as always, thanks for your support!

Please mail your pledge using the form below by December 20 to:

Rosemary McGlynn
1 Denali Lane
Johnstown, PA 15905

Or e-mail the pledge to Rosemary at:

denali@atlanticbb.net

I wish to make a CBC pledge in the amount of:

10¢/species 15¢/species 25¢/species 50¢/species Other

I wish to designate my donation to: (If you check two or more the pledge will be divided.)

Wetlands Hawk Watch Chapter

Name _____

Address _____

Phone/Email _____



2007 Calendar of Events

PROGRAMS

Programs are held at 7:00 p.m. in the Engineering and Science Bldg., Room 200, UPJ on the third Thursday of Sept., Oct., Nov., Mar., Apr. and May.

Oct. 18: Todd Katzner on Imperial Eagles in Russia. Todd is an Eagle researcher and head of the Golden Eagle Project at the Allegheny Front. He will describe the new technology for tracking eagles and its importance to conservation biology. Todd's project at the Allegheny Front is drawing attention throughout the state and he will also discuss this project. His project is extremely exciting, so make sure you don't miss this meeting. The October program will be preceded by

an APAS business meeting at 6:30 p.m. which is open to all members.

Nov. 15: The program for November has changed. We have an expert wildlife photographer from New York making a presentation on Asian Birds. He is known as Bird Bob. He also did a bird mortality study at the Empire State Building and is an associate researcher for Hawk Mountain. Please see article on Page 4.

OUTINGS

Aug. 15 to Dec. 15: Fall Hawk Watch: Join up with members and visitors (4,000/yr) and settle back to enjoy the great view and migrating hawks and eagles. The Allegheny Front is well known throughout the Eastern U.S. Excellent and friendly counters and good organization keep the site active.

Dec. 16: Christmas Bird Count: This is an adventurous way to spend a December day. At the end of a vigorous day of bird counting we meet at Hidden Acres Farm for a covered dish and tally. It is not only fun for experienced and beginning birders, but the information obtained is extremely important for determining trends in bird populations. This past year we had over 10,000 individuals and 70 species. A great way to learn your birds! Contact Tom Dick.

 Tom Dick

Thanks to the Weedwhackers

You just don't know fun if you've never joined the APAS crew for Weedwhacking Day at The Front which was held on August 4 this summer. Grooming the flat was followed by a great potluck picnic. And we were rewarded for our hard work with the first Broadwing sighting of the season -- a juvenile Broadwinged Hawk in a kettle of five TVs seen by the entire group and ided by Joe Sabo. Some of the folks also saw a Black Vulture. Thanks to the entire crew who made The Front look its best!



Kneeling: Bob Gorsuch, Joe Sabo, Jim Rocco Standing (left to right): Ed Gowarty Sr., Jack Julian, Nancy and Gene Flament, Eric Hall, Marion and Che Mincone, Tony Barle, Ev Merriman, Kevin Georg, John Lauffer, Dave Darney, Merle and Karen Jackson

Ed Gowarty Jr. Photo



The Birds of Southeast Asia --- or: Asia Birds West to East (and Back Again)

Robert DeCandido, PhD

Since the late 1990s with photographer Deborah Allen, Bob DeCandido has made several research trips to different parts of Asia, primarily to study raptor migration. In autumn 1998, they studied the migration of Steppe Eagles in Nepal. In spring 2000-01 Bob and Deborah studied the spring migration of birds returning to the Asian mainland on west Malaysia from Sumatra. In 2003, Bob spent much of the year in Israel where he helped band 10,000 or so birds in Eilat. In the autumn of that year, Bob and Deborah were off to Thailand, where they helped discover a raptor migration site of global significance. In winter/spring 2005, Bob and Deborah spent several months in the largest preserve in Sabah, Borneo studying the birds, insects and plants of that Malaysian state. In spring 2007, Bob and Deborah studied the birds of northern Thailand, and did a spring raptor migration study in southern Thailand. Their publications about Asian birds have appeared in *The Journal of Raptor Research*, *Forktail*, *Ardea*, and *The Journal of the Yamashina Institute of Ornithology*. The bird photos that will be shown at the APAS meeting were taken by Deborah and Bob, as well as a number of images from their digiscoping friends in Malaysia including the late Laurence Poh and Ooi Beng Yean. Included will be photos of several hornbill

species (Rhinoceros Hornbill; White-Crowned Hornbill), many kingfishers species, bee-eaters, babblers and, of course, raptors like the Black Baza and others such as owls and shrikes. In other words, if it flies through southeast Asia, they should have a photo of it.

Closer to home in New York City, Bob did his dissertation research on changes in plant species diversity in Pelham Bay Park, a place he especially likes. In autumn 1987 he began the first study of migrating birds of prey in NYC at Pelham Bay Park. In 1990 he counted more than 18,000 raptors of 13 species in migration over this coastal, urban park. He has also studied the owls of Pelham Bay, and is responsible for the successful (so far) reintroduction of the Eastern Screech-Owl (*Megascops asio*) into Central Park in Manhattan. In 2004-05 Bob and Deborah studied the night migration of birds from the Observation Deck of the Empire State Building. Important observations so far include the discovery that some Ospreys migrate at night, and that Peregrine Falcons regularly hunt night-migrating birds. Details about these discoveries have appeared in scientific journals such as *The Wilson Bulletin* and *The Journal of Raptor Research*.

Asian Birds West to East * * * * *



* * * * * (and Back Again)





Scenes from the APAS Annual Picnic



Beautiful setting, wonderful people, fabulous food!

Rosemary McGlynn out-did herself with the most beautiful APAS apparel yet.



The Chinese auction was a great success.

Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society
1003 Eisenhower Blvd.
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Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society Mission Statement

The APAS was founded in 1984. We are dedicated to protection and understanding of the earth and all its inhabitants. Through our series of meetings, programs, and outings, we hope to reach individuals of all ages to understand, respect, and protect the earth.

Through such activities as the Breeding Bird Survey, raptor counts, the Christmas Bird Count, and outings, members can do field work and learn first-hand about the wonders of nature.

Our Allegheny Front Hawk Watch count has become an important tradition over the past decade. We have 10 dedicated counters who cover the site daily during the Spring and Fall migration seasons. Currently we are participating in an important research project in cooperation with Powdermill Nature Reserve and Carnegie Mellon University to band Golden Eagles as they fly our ridges.

We also maintain the Dunning's Creek Wetlands, a Wetlands Restoration Project. Interest in local bogs, wetlands, and riverine habitats has led us to promote outings such as the annual Butterfly Count, dragonfly outings, and more recently, family outings to encourage the involvement of children.

Officers

Vice President - Dennis McNair	Recording Secretary - Shirley Houston
Corresponding Secretary - Sally Dick	Treasurer - Retta Payne
Fundraising - Rosemary McGlynn	Programs and Outings - Tom Dick, et.al.
Conservation/Activism - Jeff Payne	Newsletter Editor - Ev Merriman
Hospitality - Wanetta Escherich	Hawkwatch Compiler - Che Mincone
IBA Coordinator - Neil Woffinden	Sanctuaries - Tom Dick
Nature Photography - Dave Escherich	Membership - Bob Stewart
Web Master - Jack Julian	

Contact the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society at: wetmeadow@aol.com
or visit us on the web at: alleghenyplateauaudubon.org