



ALLEGHENY PLATEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY  
*Dedicated to Biodiversity. The rich heritage of our Bioregion*

# Chickadee Chatter

*APAS 2013  
SPRING/FALL  
NEWSLETTER*

Meg Moses, Editor

## Hurricane Sandy effects on Shawnee State Park (SSP) And Dunnings Creek Wetlands

Hurricane Sandy was variously called a “Franklinstorm,” “Super Storm”, “Hybrid Hurricane”, “Post-Tropical Super storm” and now considered one of the largest Hurricanes in recent history. Its reach closed all the major eastern airports including New York’s JFK and LaGuardia airports. It originated from the Caribbean and had the lowest barometric reading ever recorded. Questions that were raised for this storm: are we going to see more hurricanes and what is the role of climate change. Scientists seem to agree that as the earth warms we will see fewer hurricanes (surprisingly), but those that we see will be powerful like Sandy.

What happened to migrating birds when Sandy arrived on October 30<sup>th</sup>? A website for birders called Ebird came up early with predictions of migrants that would likely be captured along the coast and transported inland. It was a simple equation that depended on birds migrating south over the ocean (pelagic) and over land being pushed west by strong east winds. Once Sandy passed over Pennsylvania there were sightings of rare birds dropped throughout the state. These birds were exhausted and escaped the storm as the intensity dwindled. Most birds were water-associated and the easiest to find since they would appear in lakes and occasional large ponds. Shawnee State Park appeared to be the epicenter for dropouts. Sally and I left early on 10/30 to visit SSP only to meet Mike Lanzone and Jeff Payne who were already gobbling up dropouts.

The most obvious birds were 145 Brant, which occur rarely in Pa. It’s a big lake and many birds were some distance away, but the more you looked the more oddities were seen. Among the oddities were Red-necked Grebes, American Oystercatchers, Pomarine Jaegers, Parasitic Jaegers, Storm Petrels, and Black-legged Kittiwakes. Consider that some birds have not been listed in Pa. and others were extremely rare. Other irregular birds seen were unusual in terms of the numbers such as 20 Redheads, 50 Ring-necked Ducks, 200 Hooded Merganser, and 82 Common Loon.

Dunnings Creek Wetlands had some highs for this time of year and were probably initiated by Hurricane Sandy on 10/30: 35 Wood Ducks, 26 Gadwall, 52 American Widgeon, 32 Northern Shoveler, and 89 Green-winged Teal. However, there was one bird that definitely was a storm bird and a new species for Dunnings

Creek wetlands and that was a Saltmarsh Sparrow. This bird was probably carried from the Eastern Coast.

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## Please note these changes to our events and outings policy:

In an effort to make our communications about events and outings more responsive, we are making these changes.

We will announce any changes and news about outings and events using the apasbulletins email lists as soon as possible. We will also make an effort to announce the news and changes on the main page of the website [allegenyplat-eauaudubon.org](http://allegenyplat-eauaudubon.org).

The previous policy of you calling the person running the event is just no working. Since many of the outings are weather dependent we want to be able to notify people quickly and a phone list is just not effective.

So, if you wish to attend an event or outing, just pay attention to the apasbulletin email list for updates and times. Those people running the event will use this bulletins list as the first move in announcing changes to the event. As an example, let's say a moth outing is scheduled and you want to attend, if conditions are not favorable, the sponsor of that outing will send an announcement stating such and maybe proposing an alternative time.

If you do not use email, you can contact the sponsor and they will try to accommodate you but we wish you to use the bulletins list instead. Many members already receive the bulletins but **if you would like to be added to the list, please contact Jack Julian and ask to be included. 814 242 5131** (call/text) or send an email to [skylark-flex@gmail.com](mailto:skylark-flex@gmail.com).

## 2013 APAS SPRING AND SUMMER PROGRAMS /OUTINGS

**February 26 to May 5—Spring Hawk Watch**—APAS is one of a very few Spring Hawk Watches. The earliest birds are our Eastern Golden Eagles in late February, and the latest are our May Ospreys. Join us on the mountaintop. Remember East winds are the best for migration.

**March to May 5—Waterfowl Outings--** Join Tom Dick for this seasonal phenomenon! We visit the Wetlands and Shawnee State Park three times weekly, spending about three hours on each survey. It's a great way to learn to ID waterfowl. There are days when the number of waterfowl exceeds 2000. Call Tom at 814-754-5727

**April 25 to May 10—Shorebirds of Dunnings Creek Wetlands---**Bittern Pool is drawn down to accommodate the potential 22 species of shorebirds. Thanks to Chris Payne's blind we can stay dry during rainy days while observing. Shorebirds travel thousands of miles from the tropics to their arctic breeding grounds and may stop over for a short stay to rest and feed. Call Tom Dick (814-754-5727) for dates.

**March 20—Dunnings Creek Wetlands Invasive Plant Removal--** Garlic mustard has infiltrated approximately ¼ acre and needs pulled. This is a dangerous invasive capable of out-competing the surrounding native plants and we need lots of people to help. Please notify Tom Dick at 814-754-5727 if you can help.

**March 23 – Wood Duck and Bat Boxes at DCW:** Wood Duck boxes fill up quickly at the wetlands and we need multiple workers to set them up. Bat Boxes lure bats to the wetlands where they have more protection from White-nose Syndrome. They tend to stay local and can over-winter in the milder climate in Bedford.

**April TBA - Wilmore Dam** - Join Debbie Bodenschatz on an outing to Wilmore Dam to search for the many species of salamanders and frogs. Wilmore is rich in wetlands, and Debbie knows the frogs and salamanders extremely well. This is also a great outing for kids and grandchildren. This will be a night foray and boots, flashlights, and rain gear are usually in order. Call Debbie at 814-495-5252 or email [debbodenschatz@hotmail.com](mailto:debbodenschatz@hotmail.com). When the weather is just right, she will notify us

**April 18 Meeting – Antarctica:** Join Brian Warshel and Sally Dick for a fascinating look at the wildlife and icy terrain of this fascinating continent. The images and variety of species are excellent and there is also Brian's big boat jump into icy waters of Antarctica

**May 12—Pa. Migratory Bird Day**--- This event takes place in Bedford Co. where we count all the migrants and resident birds for one day. This is a state sponsored event to gather information on all species for conservation purposes. One year Debbie Bodenschatz found the federally endangered Piping Plover at Shawnee Park so anything is possible. Join us for a fun filled day. Contact: Sally Dick or Tom Dick (814-754-5727)

**May 16 Meeting—Wildlife Photography by Jim Richie**----We all know Jim as a fastidious nature photographer. He is our premier photographer and his presentations have always been excellent. Join us for this presentation and you will be impressed!

**May and August (TBA)--- Moth Lighting at Night** - Another way to appreciate biodiversity. Setups will be at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch. This event was highly successful last year. The location and time change allows for different species. Contact Dennis McNair (255-4088)

**May to September: Dragonflies, Damselflies and Butterflies of Dunnings Creek Wetlands and Shaffer Mt**--- If you wish to accompany Tom and Sally Dick on these weekly forays please call 814-7545727 to get on the list of people we will call. You will be notified usually a day or two ahead. During most occasions we will also be looking at other species, specifically birds and flowers.

**July 3- Bog Outings on Shaffer Mt.**---In this outing we will be looking at several sphagnum bogs with their associated carnivorous plants, dragonflies and birds. We will also discuss when and how the bogs may have developed. If time permits we will visit some of the string bogs lining local creeks. Call Tom Dick for details at 814-754-5727

**July 13- North American Butterfly Count:** As most of you know our count is one of the highest counts in the Northeast. If you want to learn your butterflies this outing is perfect since we average around 50 species and there is no pressure. The count circle includes the high Allegheny Plateau and the hill and valley region of Bedford County. Contact Tom or Sally Dick at 814-754-5727 for information.

**August 4 - Audubon Picnic (pig roast this year) at Hidden Acres Farm** - This is a great outing for both children and adult. We collect snakes, fish, butterflies, and other insects only to be released unharmed later. There will also be fund raising events, book sales, great food, camaraderie and, hopefully, a beautiful day. This is our most attended event of the year and all are welcome. Bring a Covered Dish.

**August 15 - December 30 ---Fall Hawk and Eagle Count** at the Allegheny Front: The hawk watch provides an incredible view and is also the most important ridge on a yearly basis for the Eastern Golden Eagle. It's also known for its 17 species of raptors and the excellent close views on east winds.

**September 19 Meeting—The Florida Manatee**---By Kelly Warshel, Colby Warshel and Tom Dick—

This large aquatic mammal is a relative of the elephant and is Florida's State Marine Mammal.

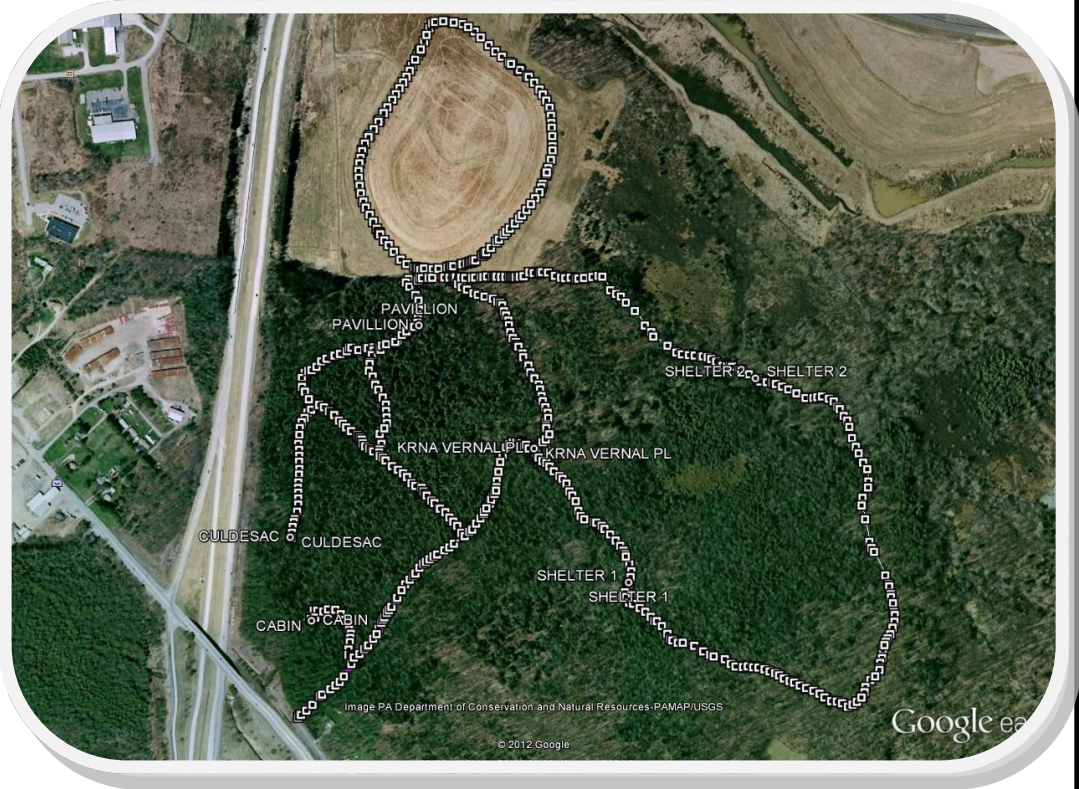
This presentation will include underwater photographs and information regarding their status, behavior, and biology as well. I think you will enjoy this presentation since they are among the friendliest and cutest mammals you could ever meet.

**October 17 Meeting----Member Slide Night**----Share your favorite wildlife images taken locally or on trips. This gives everyone a chance to show a few or a lot of images on any aspect of nature.

**Oct. to Nov.—Owl banding** with Dave Darney, our official bander at the hawk watch on weekends. Bring children and grandchildren! Members can really help with this outing by tending to the nets and helping to remove owls for banding. Dress warm, bring a folding chair, flashlight. Enjoy your nocturnal experience! Please park along Lambert Mt. Road rather than the hawk watch road. Banding starts around 7 pm. Late night helpers are particularly valuable on busy nights. Usually the banding starts around Oct. 12 and extends into the first part of November. As we get closer to the date you can call Tom Dick at 814-754-5727.

## Trails open at Kimberly Run Natural Area

The Somerset County Conservancy has announced that their property east of Somerset has a new access. On a 53 acre parcel purchased by SCC they have constructed a parking area at 174 Craig Road, Somerset, PA 15501 for those of you who use GPS. There is lots of work yet to be done at KRNA but the trails are open and marked. Mitchell Black Berlin Scout Troop 135 has completed cutting and marking the new walking trails that connect with the existing trails at Kimberly Run. The new trail is marked with blue markers on the trees and makes a loop around the Pavilion and back to the starting point at Elizabeth's Rock which has been relocated to corner on the Red-dog driveway. Mitchell will be building additional benches and signage to further identify the trails. We will be installing a Kiosk with Trail Guides at the parking area to guide trail users in the spring . The trails are open during daylight hours 365 days a year. During hunting season please wear florescent orange or bright colored clothing because some of the property is open to hunting.



## Christmas Bird Count Overview 2012

by

Jeff Payne

Allegheny Plateau Audubon's "Johnstown Circle" Christmas Bird Count on December 16 was a smashing success in terms of weather, birds found, and especially in the number of participants. We had a relatively warm day with temperatures from 39 to 52 F, light winds, mostly cloudy with partially frozen still water. Eight teams with 28 individuals set out to scour our circle. Over 61 party hours and 578 miles later we met at King's Family Restaurant to compile our results. We ended up with 8751 total birds and 72 birds on count day. In addition, we found 15 additional species for count week for a very impressive total of 87 species for our count!

Highlights of the count included 20 waterfowl species (due to open water), two Merlin (becoming more common in the county) and 2 different Red-headed Woodpeckers. Also found amongst the Horned Larks were American Pipits and a Lapland Longspur. Part of the large winter finch invasion this year were several Evening Grosbeaks, a flock of Red Crossbills, and many Pine Siskins. The absolute, unbelievable highlight of the day was an adult Parasitic Jaeger found and photographed by Mike Lanzone at Somerset Lake which subsequently flew over Debbie Bodenschatz's group and disappeared over Somerset. This was not only the first record for Somerset County, but also much later in the fall than would be expected for a migrant through Pennsylvania!

# Christmas Bird Count Totals

Species Counts	Total
Canada Goose	711
Mute Swan	5
Tundra Swan	8
Gadwall	43
American Wigeon	4
American Black Duck	12
Mallard	184
Northern Pintail	8
Green-winged Teal	1
Redhead	1
Long-tailed Duck	1
Ring-necked Duck	52
Greater Scaup	3
Lesser Scaup	1
Bufflehead	15
Common Goldeneye	2
Common Merganser	13
Hooded Merganser	119
Red-breasted Merganser	1
Ruddy Duck	50
Ring-necked Pheasant	4
Ruffed Grouse	1
Wild Turkey	19
Common Loon	1
Pied-billed Grebe	19
Horned Grebe	1
Great Blue Heron	10
Bald Eagle	2
Northern Harrier	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3
Cooper's Hawk	8
Red-shouldered Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	33
American Kestrel	16
Merlin	2
American Coot	19
Killdeer	1
Ring-billed Gull	4
Bonaparte's Gull	1
Rock Pigeon	581
Mourning Dove	419
Eastern Screech-Owl	2
Great Horned Owl	3
Barred Owl	4
Short-eared Owl	1
Belted Kingfisher	4

Red-headed Woodpecker	2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	21
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1
Downy Woodpecker	42
Hairy Woodpecker	15
Pileated Woodpecker	7
Blue Jay	141
American Crow	560
Common Raven	7
Horned Lark	501
Black-capped Chickadee	255
Tufted Titmouse	80
Red-breasted Nuthatch	12
White-breasted Nuthatch	48
Brown Creeper	1
Carolina Wren	7
Winter Wren	3
Golden-crowned Kinglet	20
Eastern Bluebird	11
American Robin	11
Gray Catbird	1
Northern Mockingbird	1
Brown Thrasher	1
European Starling	3602
American Pipit	9
Cedar Waxwing	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
Common Yellowthroat	1
Eastern Towhee	1
American Tree Sparrow	59
Chipping Sparrow	1
Field Sparrow	1
Song Sparrow	35
Swamp Sparrow	9
White-throated Sparrow	3
White-crowned Sparrow	1
Dark-eyed Junco	223
Lapland Longspur	1
Northern Cardinal	102
Red-winged Blackbird	1
Purple Finch	1
House Finch	52
Red Crossbill	18
Pine Siskin	40
American Goldfinch	142
Evening Grosbeak	3
House Sparrow	347
Parasitic Jaegar	1

## Some 2012 Outing Results

### Allegheny Front Hawk Watch, 2012 Fall Summary and Commentary

The following raptors were counted:

Black Vultures 16, Turkey Vultures 243, Bald Eagles 75, Northern Harrier 48,



Sharp-shinned Hawks 1176, Cooper's Hawk 166, Northern Goshawk 12,  
Red-shouldered Hawk 39, Broad-winged Hawk 3620, Red-tailed Hawk 1370,  
Rough-legged Hawk 3, Golden Eagle 223, American Kestrel 39, Merlin 32,  
Peregrine Falcon 35, Unidentified Accipiter 10, Unidentified Buteos 18,  
Unidentified Falcon 4, Unidentified raptor 80 for a total of 7305.

The total count was a low due to a poor Broad-winged showing, however, our premiere Bird, the Golden Eagle was the second highest count in 10 years. Make sure you visit the hawk watch this fall, we can always use extra eyes for spotting even if you don't know your raptors.

### 2012 North American Butterfly Count

08 July 2012; 0900-1500 hours; sun AM 10%, PM 10%; 79-85°F; wind 2-7 mi/hr. 14 observers in 5 parties. Total party-hours 30, total party-miles on foot 13.

Observers: G. Bercik, D. Bodenschatz, E. Cochran, S. Dick, Thomas Dick (123 Hummer Lane, Cairnbrook, PA, 15924; thomasd102.d@gmail.com), K. Jackson, M. Jackson, S. Johnson, J. Kuehl, T. Kuehl, Mike Lanzone, C. Lehman, D. McNair, K. Moore, P. Petrusci, and Sarah Westel



Pipevine Swallowtail 1, Black Swallowtail. 38, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail.93, Spicebush Swallowtail, 22, Cabbage White 401, Clouded Sulphur 80, Orange Su. 64, Cloudless Sulfur 1, Little Yellow 3,

American Copper 64, Coral Hairstreak 4, Banded Ha. 2, E. Tailed-Blue 75, 'Summer' Spring Azure 62, Variegated Fritillary 14, Gr. Spangled Fr. 176, Aphrodite Fr. 45, Atlantis Fr. 6, Meadow Fr. 11,

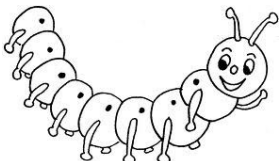
Silvery Checkerspot 1, Harris' Ch. 1, Pearl Crescent 328, Question Mark 7, E. Comma 6, Gray Comma 3, Mourning Cloak 3, Am. Lady 2, Painted La. 5, Red Admiral 14, Com. Buckeye 4, Red-spotted Purple 24, Viceroy 5, N. Pearly-eye 19, Eyed Brown 1, Common Wood-Nymph 132, Monarch 104,

Silver-spotted Skipper 96, Horace's Duskywing 1, Wild Indigo Dustywing. 13, Common Sootywing 4,

Least Skipper. 2 European Skipper, 8 Fiery Skipper, 1 Peck's Skipper. 9 Tawny-edged Skipper, 2,

N. Broken-Dash 6, Little Glassywing 5, Delaware Skipper, 14, Hobomok Skipper. 1, Dun Sk. 38.

Total 50 species, 2021 individuals.



Immature butterflies: Harris' Checkerspot 21 caterpillars on aster.

# News from Somerset Lake

## New Birding Trail at Somerset Lake Opens

The Somerset County Conservancy has just completed phase one construction of a Birding Trail along the western shore of Somerset Lake. The trail has been cut through the forest. Phase two will be done in early spring, it will consist of grooming the trail surface and erecting trail markers along with adding some benches and viewing areas. This project began two years ago with talks between the Conservancy and the Pennsylvania fish and Boat Commission. After a lot of negotiations the Conservancy signed a land use agreement for the trail and was granted permission to erect a Purple Martin Bird House near the PAF&B Southwest Regional Office Building.



## Osprey Nesting Tower to be repaired

The Somerset County Conservancy is leading the effort to straighten the leaning Osprey Nesting Platform. They have partnered with the PAF&B Commission, the PA Game Commission and Somerset Rural Electric Co. The dam at Somerset Lake has some serious leaking issues that may take years to address. Because of the leaks the water in the lake has been drawn down six feet which leaves the Osprey Tower on dry land. Since the drawdown the tower has been leaning more and more, and last year was the first time in many years that the Osprey's failed to fledge their offspring. Mammal predication appears to be the cause so once the tower has been straightened the Conservancy will install predator guards before the Osprey's return to nest in 2013.

Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society  
1003 Eisenhower Blvd.  
Johnstown, PA 15904

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