



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

Chickadee Chatter

Results of the 2013 North American Butterfly Count

This count was the second highest of butterfly species, however, it ranked 10th in total numbers. Our counters did a great job, however, abundance of individual butterflies was very low. The following is the species and numbers: 9 Black Swallowtail, 27 Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, 15 Spicebush Swallowtail, 139 Cabbage White, 19 Clouded Sulfur, 34 Orange Sulfur, 70 American Copper, 15 Banded Hairstreak, 15 Coral Hairstreak, 1 Gray Hairstreak, 197 Eastern Tailed Blue, 94 Summer Azure, 1 Appalachian Azure, 189 Great Spangled Fritillary, 45 Aphrodite, 4 Atlantis, 25 Meadow Fritillary, 1 Compton Tortoiseshell, 9 Mourning Cloak, 148 Pearl Crescent, 2 Baltimore Checkerspot, 1 Silvery Checkerspot, 1 Question Mark, 1 Eastern Comma, 1 Gray Comma, 3 American Lady, 2 Painted Lady, 1 Red Admiral, 22 Red-spotted Purple, 5 Viceroy, 11 Northern Pearly-eye, 218 Wood Nymph, 1 Appalachian Brown, 8 Monarch, 66 Silver-spotted Skippers, 22 Wild Indigo Duskywing, 1 Dreamy Duskywing, 1 Horace's Duskywing, 2 Juvenal's Duskywing, 12 Common Sootywing, 3 Least Skipper, 24 European Skipper, 12 Peck's Skipper, 2 Tawny-edged Skipper, 5 Crossline Skipper, 1 Long Dash, 1 Northern Broken Dash, 27 Little Glassywing, 47 Dun Skipper, 3 Delaware Skipper, and 4 Black Dash. The total number of species was 52 with 2012 total butterflies.



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2014 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 4000. 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 and Jeff 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)

March 20—Dunnings Creek Wetlands Invasive Plant Removal-- Garlic mustard is still invading acreage and needs pulled. This dangerous invasive is 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 17 Meeting – Chincoteague Island -- An overview of the wildlife of the Island and the National Wildlife Refuge.

May 10—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 15 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.

May and August --- Moth Lighting at Night - Another way to appreciate biodiversity. Setups will be at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch. This event was highly successful previously, but it depends very much on the weather and equipment, so watch the chapter web site (www.alleghenyplateauaudubon.org) for exact date and time. Contact Dennis McNair at (814)255-4088 for more information.

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)754-5727 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 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 3 - Audubon Picnic (pig roast again 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, especially on East wind days.

September 18—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.

October 16---Disease Ecology—A presentation by Dennis McNair on how documented changes in our ecological relationships (external and internal) are promoting the emergence and increases in a variety of diseases seen globally and in Western society.

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 and parking area. 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 (watch the chapter web site). As we get closer to the date you can call Tom Dick at (814)754-5727.

(The following information results from tenacious effort by our chapter members. The emphasis includes an overview of Bedford Co. birding. Dunning Creek Wetlands and the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch contributed heavily to these results. The following report entitled 2013 Bedford Fall Bird report was published in the journal "Pennsylvania Birds."

2013 BEDFORD FALL BIRD REPORT

Locations: Allegheny Front (AF), Allegheny Front Hawk Watch (AFHW), Bedford-at-large (BAL), Dunning Creek Wetlands (DCW), Shaffer Mt. (SMR)

The weather for the period was warm and wet till the end of November when Winter Storm Boreas (11/28), produced a nasty mix of snow, sleet, freezing rain, heavy rain and high winds. The storm, however, created the first fallout of the season with 16 species of waterfowl, and approximately 1200 individuals at Shawnee State Park. Unusual birds for the period included **Long-billed Dowitcher**, **Dickcissel** and **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow**. Unless stated otherwise the observations are those of the author.



One **Snow Goose**, 2 **Brant** and 850 **Canada Geese** were seen at SSP (11/28).

Two hundred and 20 **Tundra Swans** (DCW) were seen on (11/12), Eleven **Wood Ducks** (low number) were present at DCW on 9/7, 6 **Gadwall** at SSP (11/28), 3 **American Widgeon** at DCW (11/12), and 45 **Am. Black Duck** at SSP (11/28). Four Hundred and fifty **Mallards** were counted at SSP along with 15 **Blue-Winged Teal** on 11/28. Only 3 **Northern Shovelers** for the season were seen at DCW (9/27). Forty **Green-winged Teal** was a good count for 10/18 at DCW. Four **Canvasback** were observed at SSP and 2 **Redheads** at DCW on 11/28. Five **Ring-necked Ducks** and 1 **Greater Scaup** were seen at DCW on 11/12. Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were seen on 11/28 (SSP), 20 **Bufflehead** (11/12) at DCW, 3 **Common Goldeneye** (9/14) at DCW, 12 **Hooded Merganser** (11/12) at DCW. Twenty-two **Common Mergansers**, 20 **Red-breasted Mergansers**, 5 **Common Merganser** and 10 **Ruddy Ducks** at SSP on 11/28.

Ring-necked Pheasant, **Ruffed Grouse** and **Wild Turkey** were relatively abundant through the period and seem to be thriving due to milder winters. The following were seen on 11/28 at SSP: 4 **Red-throated Loon**, 2 **Common Loons**, 5 **Pied-billed Grebe**, and 7 **Horned Grebes**. The following bitterns and herons were found at DCW: 1 **American Bittern** on 10/20, 2 **Least Bittern** on 8/15, 5 **Great Blue Heron** on 11/12, 1 **Great Egret** 8/26, 1 **Snowy Egret** 8/26, 3 **Green Herons** persisted at DCW till 9/27, and 1 **Black-crowned Night Heron** on 8/21 at DCW.

The 2013 results from the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch are as follows:

40 **Black Vulture**, 532 **Turkey Vulture**, 102 **Osprey**, 133 **Bald Eagles**, 34 **Northern Harrier**, 1440 **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, 208 **Cooper's Hawk**, 7 **Northern Goshawk**,

44 **Red-shouldered Hawks**, 4407 **Broad-winged Hawks**, 1289 **Red-tailed Hawk**, 1 **Rough-legged Hawk**, 215 **Golden Eagles**, 98 **American Kestrels**, 40 **Merlin**, 26 **Peregrine** and 63 unknown. Additionally, this November was a record for Golden Eagles, despite reduced coverage, with 195 compared to the second highest of 188 in 2012

Two **Sora Rails** on were flushed at DCW in upland fields on 8/31. **Virginia rail** were heard and seen on 8/29 in Grebe pool at DCW. The only **Common Moorhen** for the season was on 9/14 at DCW. Six **American Coots** were seen on 9/14 at DCW's Teal Lake. Bittern Pool at DCW is a regulated impoundment in which water levels are lowered to expose mudflats rich in invertebrates. The exposed mudflats attracted the following shorebirds at DCW: 6 **Black-bellied Plovers** 9/18, 2 **Semipalmated Plovers**, 8/16, 72 **Killdeer**, 45 **Greater Yellowlegs** 9/23, 30 **Lesser Yellowlegs** 9/23, 1 **Solitary Sandpiper** 8/21, 2 **Willet** 9/23, 2 **Spotted SP** 8/31, 1 **Upland Sandpiper** (Buffalo Farm) 8/26, 2 **Ruddy Turnstone** 9/23, 2 **Semipalmated SP** (9/18), 5 **Least Sandpiper** 8/5, 1 **White-Rumped SP** 8/5, 2 **Bairds SP** (8/26), 2 **Pectoral SP** (9/7), 2 **Dunlin** 8/26, 3 **Short-billed Dowitcher** 9/7, 1 **Long-billed Dowitcher** 10/1, 3 **Wilson's Snipe** 9/23, and 4 **American Woodcock** 9/23 in the Alders around Bittern Pool.

On 11/28, following the Winter Storm Boreas, the following gulls and terns were seen at SSP: 2 **Laughing Gulls**, 4 **Bonaparte Gulls**, 1 **Herring Gull**, 1 **Caspian Tern**, and 2 **Forester Terns**. Two **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** and 1 **Black-billed Cuckoo** were observed at DCW on 8/20. Dave Darney, the Sawhet owl bander at the AFHW, banded 1 **E. Screech Owl** on 11/4, 4 **Sawhet Owls** on 10/18, 2 on 10/25, 13 on 10/27, 28 on 11/3 and 8 on 11/4. Needless to say it was not a good flight year. Twenty **Night Hawks** were observed migrating on 9/15 along the AF near Lambert Mt. Rd. **Whip-poor-wills** were heard and found in several locations along the AF on 8/15 to 9/15. **Red-headed WP** still are common in Bedford, especially in the Buffalo farm along Rt. 30 where 4 were observed on 8/25. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** flew over the AFHW on 10/4. A **Pileated WP** was attacked by a Sharp-shinned Hawk at the AFHW, but the Pileated WP managed to fight it off (10/4).

The following flycatchers were seen: **Olive-sided Flycatcher** singletons were seen on 8/25 and 9/10 at the AFHW, 1 **Alder Flycatcher** on 8/7 at DCW Bittern Pool, 3 **Willow Flycatchers** on 8/15 at DCW and 2 **Least Flycatcher** at DCW on 8/7. Seven **Horned Larks** and 2 **American Pipits** were observed along mowed fields on Lambert Mountain Road (11/15). **Cedar Waxwings** were the predominant flocking birds in November at the AFHW. On 10/4 at the AFHW there was a fall-out of vireos which included: 10 **White-eyed Vireo**, 7 **Blue-headed Vireo**, 2 **Warbling Vireo**, 2 **Philadelphia Vireo** and 6 **Red-eyed Vireos**. On 8/15 the following Swallows were observed at SSP: 150 **Tree Swallows**, 6 **Northern Rough-winged Swallows**, 30 **Bank Swallows**, 12 **Cliff Swallows** and 22 **Barn Swallows**. The only **Marsh Wren** seen was at DCW on 9/11. Four **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were heard and seen in a loblolly grove at WTW on 10/2. Two **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were seen on Lambert Mt. Rd. on 8/14, a location where nesting takes place yearly.

The following thrushes were seen on LMR on the AF: 2 **Veery** (8/15), 1 **Gray-checked Thrush** (8/15), 2 **Hermit Thrush** (8/02), and 1 **Wood Thrush** (8/1). Twenty-four species of warblers were seen: 2 **Golden-winged Warblers** 9/6 (WTW), 2 **Northern Parula** 9/7 (SSP), 3 **Yellow Warblers** (SSP) 10/5, 5 **Chestnut-sided W.** (AF) 10/04. 2 **Magnolia W.** (SMR) 10/5, 5 **Cape May W.** (AFHW) on 8/29, 2 **Black-throated Blue W.** (SMR) on 10/4, 8 **Yellow-rumped W.**



(DCW) on 10/5, 4 **Black-throated Green** (AFHW) on 10/4, 7 **Pine Warbler** in Loblolly stand (WTW) on 10/04, 2 **Palm W** (SSP). on 10/20, 3 **Cerulean W** (LMR) on 9/5, 2 **Black and White W.** (DCW) on 10/5, 3 **American Redstart** (AFHW) on 10/4, 1 **Prothonotary W.** (DCW) on 8/15, 3 **Worm-eating W.** (LMR) on 9/2, 2 **Ovenbird** (LMR) on 10/5), 2 **Louisiana Waterthrush** (DCW) on 10/1, 1 **Kentucky W.** (SSP) on 10/1, 1 **Connecticut W.** (DCW) on 9/5, 3 **Common Yellowthroats** (DCW) on 11/4, 1 **Wilson's W.** (SSP) on 8/30, 2 **Canada W.** (SSP) on 8/20, and finally 1 **Yellow-breasted Chat** (DCW) on 8/20.

Fifteen **Scarlet Tanagers** were seen in flight on 10/9 at WTW. Flocks of **Tree Sparrows** were seen flying over the AFHW on 11/20. Connie Hunt and I had an incredible day on 10/5 counting sparrows on a newly purchased acreage adjacent to and now belonging to Whitetail Wetlands. On 10/5 we had the following Sparrows: 12 **Chipping Sparrows**, 15 **Field Sparrows**, 1 **Vesper Sparrow**, 1 **Savannah Sparrow**, 2 **Grasshopper Sparrow** and 1 **Henslow Sparrow**. A great find was a **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** on 10/13 at DCW by Alex Lamoreaux. (Interesting enough when the hybrid Sandy came through in 2012 we had a Saltmarsh Sparrow). Additional sparrows were 22 **Fox Sparrows** on 11/3, 32 **Song Sparrows** on 10/5, 1 **Lincoln's Sparrow** on 10/5, 3 **Swamp Sparrows** (DCW) on 10/6, 12 **White-throated Sparrow** and 10 **White-crowned Sparrows**. **Dark-eyed Junco** migrants arrived on 10/15. **Twenty Snow Buntings flyovers** at the AFHW were seen from the AFHW (11/20). On 9/15, 15 **Dickcissels** arrived and settled down in a small marsh near Teal Lake at DCW. It was our first Dickcissels and to have so many was very exciting. Three **Bobolink** were seen in fields near the Buffalo farms off Rt. 30 on 9/2. Twenty-two **Rusty Blackbirds** were seen on 10/25 at DCW.

Observers: Tom Dick, Hidden Acres Farm, 123 Hummer Lane, Cairnbrook, PA 15924, (814) 7545727, Thomasd102.d@gmail.com, Dave Darney, Sally Dick,

Anna Fasoli, Bob Gorsuch, Ed Gowarty, Connie Hunt, Tom and Janet Kuehl, Alex Lamoreaux, Mike Lanzone, Rosemary McGlynn,, Trish Miller, Jim Rocco, Bob Stewart, Kim Van Fleet and George Wiley

Johnstown circle Christmas Bird Count 2013

On Sunday December 15th we had a respectable 75 species on a rather unpleasant day. Job well done by all! Our waterfowl species were not quite as numerous as some years and there were not the number of winter finches as last year but everyone worked hard for a very respectable count. New for our count were 2 Brewer's Blackbirds well observed and described in Section 5. We see Rusty's some years but this common western icterid is rare in the east.

Species Counts	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team	Team 5	Team 6	Team 7	Team 8	CW	Total
Canada Goose	151	257	11		516					935
Mute Swan		1								1
Tundra Swan									1	1
Wood Duck	10									10
Gadwall		4								4
American Black Duck		2								2
Mallard	77	40	16		45	23	6			207
Redhead		2								2
Long-tailed Duck		15								15
Ring-necked Duck					1					1
Common Goldeneye		7								7
Common Merganser		9								9
Hooded Merganser		44			4					48
Red-breasted Merganser		3								3
Ruddy Duck		20			10					30
Ring-necked Pheasant	1				1	2				4
Ruffed Grouse		1								1
Wild Turkey	10		23			13		4		50
Pied-billed Grebe		2								2
Great Blue Heron							1			1
Bald Eagle		2								2
Northern Harrier					3	1	1			5
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1	1					1		3
Cooper's Hawk		3	1		1			4		9
Northern Goshawk							1			1
Red-tailed Hawk	4	2			3	8	1	4		22
American Kestrel	1	3						1		5
Rock Pigeon	74	192	2		10	14	2	22		316
Mourning Dove	24	25	19		38	18	7	35		166
Eastern Screech-Owl							2	4		6
Great Horned Owl							2	2		4
Barred Owl							1	2		3
Belted Kingfisher		1								1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2	4	1		1	2	4	3		17
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		1								1
Downy Woodpecker	2	3	1		5	3	10	7		31
Hairy Woodpecker	1	1			1	2	1	2		8
Northern Flicker		3						1		4
Pileated Woodpecker								1		1

Species Counts	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5	Team 6	Team 7	Team 8	CW	Total
Blue Jay	11	14	16		33	16	12	24		126
American Crow	19	80	68		51	36	20	35		309
Common Raven							3			3
Horned Lark	23	470			68	75				636
Tree Swallow										0
Black-capped Chickadee	9	56	44		51	38	27	27		252
Tufted Titmouse	4	6	9		6	9	18	12		64
Red-breasted Nuthatch			3							3
White-breasted Nuthatch	5	2	3		11	6	13	4		44
Brown Creeper		3								3
Carolina Wren	1	1			1	2		2		7
Winter Wren		1								1
Golden-crowned Kinglet		13			2			1		16
Eastern Bluebird	2	1				1				4
Hermit Thrush										0
American Robin		7						8		15
Gray Catbird							1			1
Northern Mockingbird									1	1
European Starling	93	211	81		25	262	350	37		1059
Cedar Waxwing		10								10
Yellow-rumped Warbler		4								4
American Tree Sparrow	17	6	4		18	11	3	9		68
Song Sparrow	11	2	2		10	2		2		29
Swamp Sparrow								1		1
White-throated Sparrow	5	10	3			5	8	7		38
White-crowned Sparrow							2			2
Dark-eyed Junco	54	70	78		83	77	50	46		458
Lapland Longspur									1	1
Snow Bunting									1	1
Northern Cardinal	11	13	17		8	17	23	10		99
Red-winged Blackbird		18								18
Brown-headed Cowbird		3					2	8		13
Purple Finch		1					1	3		5
House Finch		25	4		4		5	38		76
Pine Siskin	2									2
American Goldfinch	8	10			54	5	26	38		141
House Sparrow	20	25	176		29	38	42	23		353
Common Redpoll							5			5
Red-necked Grebe		1								1
Cackling Goose		1								1
Brewer's Blackbird					2					2

	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5	Team 6	Team 7	Team 8	
Total Species Per Sector	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!	#REF!	
Total Birds Per Sector	652	1712	583	0	1095	686	650	428	

Total Species Count	#REF!
Total Bird Count	5808

We have been contacted from several birding communities in PA asking us to take action to protect endangered and threatened species in PA. Please read the following message from Scott and consider acting on it.

**Urgent Message from Scott Weidensaul to the Birding Community
HB 1576...the final push
Folks,**

It seems as though we've been talking about PA House Bill 1576 (which would gut protections for rare species in Pennsylvania) since, well, forever -- though it's only been since August. It now appears that it will come up for a final vote in the state House March 11, which means this is our last chance to kill this misbegotten piece of legislation.

Here's the good news, and something everyone should be proud of. According to the people who are following this issue closely, the **only** reason this wasn't rammed through and into law last autumn was the incredible outpouring of opposition from the PABIRDS and Audubon Action community. They've been bowled over by the response from all of you. We are up against some powerful forces, especially extractive industries (particularly shale gas) with very deep pockets, and so far we've stopped them.

But now we need everyone to make one final push between now and March 11. **The gas industry is pulling out the stops** -- my sources tell me that they are withholding funding from representatives who won't agree to vote for the bill, and sent a very clear and pointed message to legislators at a recent dinner that this bill is perhaps their biggest priority, and they will make those who oppose it pay a price.

I'm told we're maybe 10 to 15 "no" votes away from killing it in the House -- but they will be tough votes to get. And even those reps who in the past said they were against the bill may be reconsidering in the face of threats from industry. If we can get 95-100 reps to say they'd vote against it, chances are it wouldn't even come up for a vote. There are 80-84 "almost no" votes -- meaning that while the representatives have indicated that they are against it, we shouldn't assume that's the case. So:

ACTION NEEDED BY YOU

--If your state rep said he or she was against the bill in the past, please contact them again (by email or phone) to say you're touching base, that you're still following the issue, that you care about wildlife, and that you hope the bill is not brought up for a vote. Get their opposition on the record again.

--If you haven't taken any action on this bill yet, please do so now. Republicans in the shale gas districts may be a lost cause, but please contact them anyway if you're one of their constituents. To find your state representative, go to www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/. (Note, this is the state House, not your Congressman.) Even if you can't sway their vote, it's important because...

--Everyone who contacts their representative should also cc the email to the following people: Mike Turzai, House Republican Floor Leader, mturzai@pahousegop.com; Frank Dermody, House Democratic Floor Leader, fdermody@pahouse.net; Sam Smith, Speaker of the House, shsmith@pahousegop.com; William F. Adolph, Jr., House Republican Appropriations Committee Chairman, wadolph@pahousegop.com; and Joseph Markosek, House Democratic Appropriations Committee Chairman, RepMarkosek@pahouse.net.

Why? For example, any bill must go through the House Appropriations Committee before it can be brought to the floor for a final vote -- so pressure on the Appropriations chairs could help scuttle its chances.

Speaker of the House Sam Smith, who has announced his retirement, has said he doesn't like the bill. All these pressure points make a difference, and if the House leadership sees the magnitude of statewide opposition, that increases the chance they won't bring it to the floor.

--Those in the districts of Matt Gabler (R-75, Elk and part of Cameron Co.) and Gary Haluska (D-73, Cambria Co. in part) should make a special effort to convey their opposition to the bill with the reps. Haluska has said he wouldn't vote against the bill, but may change his mind if he hears from enough constituents.

WHY YOUR STATE REP SHOULD OPPOSE THIS BILL

--The most effective talking point is that you care about wildlife, this bill puts rare species in Pennsylva-

nia at risk, and you will take your rep's vote on this issue squarely into account at election time. It reduces protection for rare plants and animals, prolongs and politicizes the process through which they are protected, and actually reduces the chance to do proactive conservation to prevent species from being listed by requiring agencies to consider impacts and mitigation only for the few species that make it through the listing process. It jeopardizes critical federal funding of the Game Commission and Fish and Boat Commission; increases the likelihood that federal agencies will exert greater authority on rare species protection in the absence of good state protection; and weakens protection for high-quality streams.

One especially bad aspect of this bill is that it requires agencies to create a redundant database of the location of all threatened or endangered species in the state and share that information with anyone who asks, thus placing sensitive species at risk. There are black-market smugglers (of rare herps like bog turtles, orchids and more) who would love to have that become law. It's a road map for poaching.

At this point, I wouldn't get too lost in the weeds on the many bad features of this bill -- just make clear to them that you vote, you care about wildlife, and if they vote for this bill you will remember that at election time.

Thanks, on behalf of Pennsylvania's birds,

Scott Weidensaul
Schuylkill Haven, PA

Somerset Lake Needs Your Help

Somerset Lake's dam has been listed as a high risk dam by PA Department of Environmental Protection. The lake has been drawn down 6' and will remain there until fixed or a new inspection warrants draining further. Many other dams in the state are in the same predicament and only limited funding is available for repairs. This leaves our lake in limbo.

Why is this important? Somerset Lake is a 200 acre jewel of a birding and fishing lake in the center of Somerset County. Nearly 250 species of birds have been found on the lake property (242 by Mike Lanzone in 2012 alone!) and the lake hosts incredible waterfowl migrations with fallouts of 10,000 and more birds occurring some years. The lake is listed as both an Audubon Important Bird Area and a Somerset County Biological Diversity Area. In addition there are fishing, boating, hiking and hunting opportunities on this property less than 1 mile from uptown Somerset.

The Somerset County Conservancy has taken on the leadership role in forming a citizen's group, Somerset Lake Action Committee (SLAC), to spearhead the effort to replace the dam and improve the uplands around the lake by establishing a County park with hiking trails, picnic areas and possibly a canoe/small boat livery. They have built over a mile of hiking trail in the past year. They have also met with multiple public officials, service groups and clubs and have built a consensus for a future vision for the lake and surrounding uplands. Now we have to figure out how to get it funded.

There is some money allocated to PA Fish & Boat to fix the problem dams, but unfortunately not enough. We need to get Somerset Lake high priority and need some money allocated from the state's capital budget to kick start this effort. The Somerset County Conservancy is also raising some money to help show there is local support for the effort. Letters need to be sent to the governor and other politicians to show that we care. Letters from people living out of the county are actually very helpful to try to get more politicians on board.

We are asking folks to help by sending a letter to us at lakeletters@somersetconservancy.org or by creating a letter at the SLAC site on the Somerset County Conservancy website. We will take care of sending the letters to all the representatives and officials it needs to go to for you. It is very important to include your name and address in the letter, without it the letter cannot be used. Tax deductible contributions are also welcome as both the amount we raise and the number of people donating will help raise our position on the priority list. Written letters or contributions can be sent to the SCC at Box 241, Somerset PA 15501. We will copy and send each letter to all your representatives so please include your address.

Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society

1003 Eisenhower Blvd.

Johnstown, PA 15904

Non-Profit Organization

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