

Volume 2 Number 1

February 1985

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

Waterfowl Identification

8:00 PM Thursday February 21, 1985
Engineering and Science Building
University of Pittsburgh Johnstown

We will have a session on waterfowl identification, a discussion on arrival times, local gathering areas, and their final destinations. The slide/identification series will precede the scheduled movie. The following meetings will include 30 to 40 minute segments on identification of other species. We will focus on the migrant bird species that pass through our area during the spring migration period. "The Predators" is the movie for the evening. The film explores the relationship between predator and prey. The threats to these predators and their habitats are discussed along with the biological importance of preserving predators as part of the balanced diversity of an ecosystem.

Dr. Dennis McNair will discuss insects at the March 21, 1985 meeting.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The second Johnstown Christmas Bird Count was held Saturday, December 22, 1984, by the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society. The ten teams sent out to areas within the 15-mile diameter circle, with its center at Hollsopple, were filled with enthusiasm and more experienced than they were in last year's first bird count held by the newly-organized society.

Very thorough coverage of the different territories resulted from excellent planning by the team leaders, a competitive spirit of the participants, and greater familiarity with their individual areas. Although the mild, open winter resulted in few northern species and much lower activity at feeders, the 39 determined birders put in a full day driving, walking, beating the bush, and "plishing" their way along hedgerows, through the marshes, into woodlots, and up and down alleys to chalk up 16,861 individual birds, which was 1,948 more than last year's total. The total of 52 species was 5 short of the count on last year's official count day; and the total of 59 species was 10 less than for last year's count week.

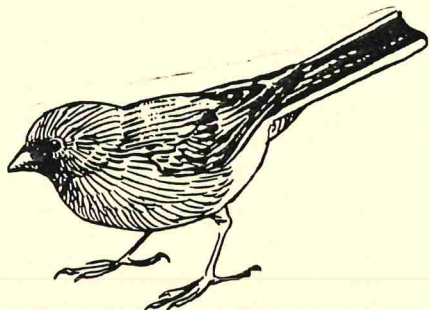
The weather was good and temperatures dropped through the day from 50 degrees to 30 degrees F. Water in all lakes and rivers was open and the wild food crop was excellent. These conditions contributed to a feeling of well-being and accomplishment as the birders trooped back to the home of Tom and Sally Dick for a welcome and delicious evening meal and re-hashing of the day's activities.

Among many interesting experiences, the groups reported seeing 1 gray fox, 1 fox squirrel, 4 gray squirrels, 11 red squirrels, 1 least weasel carrying a mouse, 1 frog, 1 mole, 1 raccoon, 1 mink, 2 rabbits, and 10 deer. Two cows were also described as "galloping gracefully" over Sunnehanna Country Club golf course, while the 9,189 crow count was being taken!!!!????

A comparison of our first two Christmas Bird Counts is made in the following report:

<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>		<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	
5	1	Common Loon	2	2	N (yellow sh.) Flicker
5	0	Horned Grebe	2	1	Pileated Woodpecker
1*	8	Pied-billed Grebe	0	1	E. Wood Pewee
1*	0	Great Blue Heron	1	0	E. Phoebe
1*	0	Tundra Swan	200	1*	Horned Lark
9	0	Mute Swan	38	44	Blue Jay
9	1	Canada Goose	10,650	12,388	Am. Crow
1*	0	Wood Duck	1*	0	Common Raven
1	0	Green-winged Teal	392	393	Black-capped Chickadee
8	8	Am. Black Duck	69	69	Tufted Titmouse
538	277	Mallard	9	3	Red-breasted Nuthatch
3	7	N. Pintail	67	80	White-breasted Nuthatch
0	1	Am. Wigeon	2	1	Brown Creeper
5	3	Canvasback	1*	0	Carolina Wren
0	1	Ring-necked Duck	1	0	Winter Wren
6	1*	Common Goldeneye	6	21	Golden-crowned Kinglet
13	9	Bufflehead	8	7	E. Bluebird
1	5	Hooded Merganser	1*	0	Thrush, sp.
0	1	Com. Merganser	1*	18	Am. Robin
0	2	Red-breasted Merganser	0	1*	Brown Thrasher
0	13	Ruddy Duck	32	19	Cedar Waxwing
0	2	N. Harrier	982	1,193	Eur. Starling
1	1*	Sharp-shinned Hawk	115	99	N. Cardinal
4	0	Cooper's Hawk	0	1	Rufous-sided Towhee
1	2	N. Goshawk	86	41	Am. Tree Sparrow
4	18	Red-tailed Hawk	4	11	Field Sparrow
0	1	Buteo, sp.	1	0	Fox Sparrow
0	1*	Rough-legged hawk	31	17	Song Sparrow
7	8	Am. Kestrel	2	0	Swamp Sparrow
2	5	Ring-necked Pheasant	25	104	White-throated Sparrow
2	13	Ruffed Grouse	0	6	Sparrow, sp.
1*	0	Am. Coot	246	249	Dark-eyed Junco
228	246	Rock Dove	3	0	Red-winged Blackbird
56	78	Mourning Dove	0	1*	Com. Grackle
1*	0	Screech Owl	97	84	Purple Finch
1*	1	Great-horned Owl	270	268	House Finch
2	1*	Barred Owl	14	0	Com. Redpoll
0	1	Red-headed Woodpecker	7	0	Pine Siskin
1*	0	Red-bellied Woodpecker	103	31	Com. Goldfinch
1	0	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	68	0	Evening Grosbeak
51	58	Downy Woodpecker	410	930	House Sparrow
8	10	Hairy Woodpecker	14,913	16,861	

* Seen during count week,
but not on count day -
not included in totals



COUNTS OVER 200

<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	
650	12,388	Am. Crow
982	1,193	Eur. Starling
538		Mallard
410	930	House Sparrow
392	393	Black-capped Chickadee
	277	Mallard
270	268	House Finch
246	249	Dark-eyed Junco
228	246	Rock Dove

OBSERVER INFORMATION

<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	
43	39	Number of Observers
27	51	Party Hours on Foot
38	39	Party Hours by Car
18	18	Party Hours at Feeders
31	54	Party Miles on Foot
387	476	Party Miles by Car

Many thanks to the following, who were on the birding teams or who did feeder watches: Cindy Alt, Doris Brown, Chris, Dwight & Tom Dick, Albert, Dave & Wanetta Escherich, Matt Golias, Roz Gordon, Margaret Haines, Lin Hunt, Alberta Long, Iris Marr, James Mayer, David Mikesic, Richard Mock, Richard Murphy, Jim Rocco, Wayne Rosenberger, Dean Ross, Nancy & Ron Rovanseck, Glenn & Ruth Sager, (Compiler), Michael & Noreen Sankovich, Linda Sell, Paul Sheesley, Stanwyn Shetler, Eileen & Eric Stuver, Barbara Sullivan, Bob Thompson, Charles Voytko, Betty & Michael Wolfe, and Colleen & Jill Van Scoyoc.

Submitted by Glenn & Ruth Sager

WINTER WATERFOWL COUNT

A BLUTHTERY DAY OUT-THIDE

Linda Hunt and Dick Mock conducted the local Winter Waterfowl Count on January 5, 1985. It snowed the night before, and must have kept all the local birders down on the farm. However, since the storm came up the Atlantic Seaboard, a number of waterfowl species were blown into

the area from the southeast. Other members of the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society were at Chincoteague, wondering what happened to all the birds. Dick and Lin would like to report red-throated loons, red-necked grebes, double-crested cormorants, Atlantic brant, European widgeon, harlequin ducks, king elders, etc., but they knew that no one would believe them. Well, so much for the "bluthtery".

Since the outing was scheduled to leave Abex at 7:45 AM, and no one had shown by 8:15 AM, and Dick and Lin were 15 minutes late themselves, they went to Carole's Coffee Shop in Davidsville for a brief respite of coffee, donuts, and discussions about fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria*). Considering the early morning weather, they knew if the ducks were going anywhere, they had better already went. So, at 9:15 AM, Richard and Linda proceeded back to the Quemahoning Dam.

The first two birds that Dick and Lin saw, through the heavy snow at the breast of the dam, were marked down as two common loons; one in partial winter plumage, and the other in full winter plumage. Upon seeing the same two birds later, from the opposite side of the breast of the dam, in better light and weather, revealed not two common loons, but two common mergansers; one male and one female. Well see, "This-thide was better than that-thide". Plus, they observed two female (or possibly immature) hooded mergansers, two pied-billed grebes, and one male bufflehead on the Quemahoning.

Dick and Lin also observed 134 mallards comprised of 85 at Laskey's (There may have been some black ducks mixed in this flock, but it was hard to distinguish them through heavy snow and direct sunlight- so they were all counted as mallards), 15 at Stoughton Lakes Playhouse, and 34 along Rt. 985 near Sammi's Marsh.

A total of 141 waterfowl. Is that the same as a brace of cattle? As one Daffy Duck would say to another, "Oh Boy! Oh Boy! Ith a Bluthtery Day Out-thide".

Submitted by Dick Mock

APPROXIMATELY

The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society Local Winter Waterfowl Count of Saturday, January 12, 1985, got under way at 8:00 AM sharp. Members who came out of hibernation were: James Mayer, Linda Hunt, and Richard Mock. The weather was windy at times (15-20 mph), snowing, and solid overcast throughout the day.

Temperature varied from 12 degrees F in the morning, to 22 degrees F in the early afternoon. Those of us watching just got continuously colder. Total accumulation of snow was around six inches. Most of the species of birds that we observed on open water were always diving. I think they were diving to keep warm (water begins to freeze on the surface when the water body reaches 34 degrees F). This made counting them almost impossible. We were surprised at how much of the Quemahoning Dam had frozen since last Saturday. Quemahoning Creek Cove, Two-mile Run Cove, and Higgins Run Cove were entirely frozen over. The shallow cove on the breast side of Bethco Pines was open, but there was not a single bird on it! At the mouth of Higgins Run Cove, we observed approximately 7 pied-billed grebes. We also observed a sharp-shinned hawk. We saw approximately 5 female buffleheads (one mixed with the grebes and four with ruddy ducks). We observed 6 ruddy ducks (4 female and 2 male). On the Quemahoning, we also saw 12 evenly paired mallards, one pair of hooded mergansers, and a group of 7 "pochards". I say pochards because we are not sure what they were. I believe it was a group of 7 lesser scaup ducks. The lighting was very poor, in heavy snow, and the birds swam directly away from us. One bird looked like a male scaup, the other 6, I do not know what they were. When they finally turned broadside, I could observe a wing stripe on one exercising bird, but no white face

patches at the base of the bill. The one bird looked pretty much like a male scaup, but the others must have been immatures. The lighting was so poor, that I could not tell if the head was dark or chestnut. They may have been redheads. I wish that I had noted the eye color of the duller birds (scaups and goldeneyes have gold eyes, and redheads have dark eyes). They may have even been one male scaup mixed in with goldeneyes, but I could not observe typical goldeneye wing markings. Linda said she didn't know, and Jim just said, "The lightings pretty poor". I wouldn't feel so bad about this, except they were soooo close!! Jim also spotted a flock of approximately 12 gulls, that we believe to be ring-billed gulls. I heard them later in the day, but I didn't see them. It was one of those days when the water horizon and the snow combine into one. Linda and I also observed two park-bird mute swans behind Stoughton Lake's Playhouse. Laskey's, Sammi's Marsh, and Stoughton Lake were completely frozen over. We did not give tribute to Lake Somerset, as all the reports from the lake this week held no birds. We also checked the feedmill in Hollisopple, and there were no mallards there. That gave us 39 ducks (7 unidentified), 1 sharp-shinned hawk, and about a dozen gulls.

Submitted by Dick Mock

SPRING HAWK WATCH

On April 20, 1985, join Michael and Noreen Sankovich for a day at the Pulpit on Tuscarora Summit, near McConnellsburg, Fulton County.

Those wishing to participate may do so by meeting behind Dunkin Donuts in Richland, where we will be leaving at 8:00 AM. For more information contact: Michael Sankovich at 288-2304 evenings.

Last years trip was a large success. Many Raptors were seen at close distances, even a few hang-gliders.

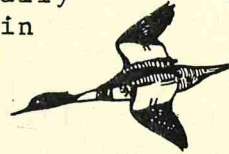
Watch your newspaper under "Club Notes" for details of other outings.

SEE WHAT YOU MISSED !

The second annual Delmarva birding weekend was a tremendous success with over 105 species tallied. Cloudy skies, wind, fog and rain characterized much of the weekend, but didn't dampen enthusiasm. Horned larks, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs and water pipits flying together were found along the snow lined roads and fields during the first two hours of birding. At Bombay Hook NWR (north of Dover, Delaware) were small openings in the largely iced-in freshwater impoundments. Here we found herons and Kingfishers patiently eyeing the water. Raptors seen were Northern Harriers, Red-tailed hawks, Coopers Hawks, Kestrels, Sharp-shinned Hawks and two Bald Eagles. Our next stop was the Indian River Inlet, where large rafts of Greater Scaup were seen hugging the lee of the storm whipped rocky jetty. Smaller rafts of Buffleheads were bobbing over the waves. Bonaparte Gulls mixed in with Herring and Ringbilled gulls could be seen floating and flying while Sanderlings and Dunlins were tucked in behind the beach berm avoiding the unrelenting wind. Further down the road at Ocean City inlet, was a flock of 70 Purple Sandpipers feeding on crustaceans among the jetty rip-rap.

The following day at Assateague Island was a combination of ponies, red foxes, waterfowl, Yellow-rumped warblers, and more wind and rain. Our list grew as we discovered Snowy Egrets, Great Egrets, Little Blue herons and a lone American Bittern. Long strings of all three scoters, several Northern Gannets, loons, and Old Squaw were seen by only the hardiest due to low temperatures and wind. Spectacular flights of Brant lifted and settled along the marsh peat where they fed on the abundant sea lettuce. Flocks of Snow Geese gave colorful contrast to the stark winter marsh. A real find

was a lone Merlin flying around the Bayberry thickets along wildlife drive (always a good location for falcons). We spent two days trying to add Red-breasted mergansers to our list (usually they're very abundant in the coastal bays) and finally on the last day one was spotted just minutes prior to departure from Assateague -- it was spotted from our motel window.



The last day involved colorful birding locations such as a cypress pond, bottom lands of the Moneystump and Blackwater Rivers and the mouth of the Choptank River. The cypress pond locality produced the following: an immature Bald Eagle being harrassed by two Red-tailed hawks, an entranced woodcock doing some sort of boogie-woogie mating dance, White-crowned sparrows, Brown Thrasher, and Carolina wrens. The Blackwater NWR is always hot birding action with its Black Vultures, Bald Eagles, Brown-headed nuthatches (with white head stripes), Pine Warblers (very bright yellows) Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets and abundant waterfowl. Finally, the trip grinded to a close with several hundred Canvasback Ducks flying against a rare sunset on the Choptank River. The final bird of the day (still being disputed) was picked up by Tom Dick (while traveling 45 mph) just off the Choptank bridge, and that was a Common Merganser.

Remember, this is a regular January or February trip each year and is open to all members. So, if you don't mind scrambling across the country building up a list and having fun, then why don't you join us?

Submitted by Tom Dick

Once again, our chapter is willing to partially underwrite the expenses of sending a member to one of the National Audubon Society's ecology camps, such as the Chesapeake Bay Ecology Camp in early July. Call or write Tom Dick.

NATURALIST'S CORNER

INSECTS IN WINTER

Unlike birds and mammals, insects are almost completely dependent on the temperature of their surroundings to maintain their body temperature. Chemical reactions involved in their cellular metabolism will occur if the insect's temperature is above a certain minimum. And, of course, if its cellular machinery is at a standstill, the insect can't function. Additionally, if ice crystals form in cells, they disrupt the cell membranes and the cells cease to function permanently. All this means some hardship for the insects of the Allegheny Plateau in January. Still, there are plenty here in July, so the question becomes "Where are they now?"

A very few, the Monarch butterfly for example, do what my neighbors do. They go south for the winter and avoid cold temperatures altogether. Once in Central or South America, they lay their eggs which hatch, go through the larval (caterpillar) and pupal (crysalis) stages, and emerge as adults to make the return trip north. Once back here the new generation lays its eggs, etc. How this migration is controlled is unclear, but certain areas get members of specific broods year after year, so the routes must somehow be genetically set. As new generations are produced at each locality, there is no opportunity for learning to take place.

Of the insects that stay here, some live in protected habitats. Aquatic nymphs of mayflies, dragonflies, stoneflies and others are protected by the water surrounding them. Water decreases in temperature very reluctantly, so temperatures will seldom reach freezing, except in the shallowest of ponds. The insects may be quite sluggish at low temperatures, but they survive. Many are preadapted

to cold temperatures, from living in cold streams for thousands of generations, and remain quite active. Another protected group is the fauna associated with litter. In the rotting leaves of the forest floor, activities of bacteria and fungi warm their surroundings, especially if there is an insulating layer of snow. Springtails, small beetles, ants, termites (not too abundant here, by the way) and larvae of several insect groups are active in this mouldy realm throughout the year, if not exposed to too much drying. There are also some flies and wasps which lay their eggs in plants and cause a proliferation of tissue that insulates them nicely throughout the winter. The galls on goldenrod stems are common examples of this ploy.

A few species are active through the winter on the surface of snow or other reflective surfaces. Some springtails, scorpionflies and stoneflies have special adaptations that allow them to be active at below normal temperatures and are actually more threatened by heat than cold. They absorb enough heat from the sunlight to keep them from freezing and seldom leave the surface, so they avoid windchill. The first two groups don't even have wings.

The majority of our insects, though, winterize themselves and remain in semiprotected areas in an inactive state. Cued by decreasing daylength and temperature, they concentrate their body fluids by withdrawing water and producing large amounts of glycerol. This greatly lowers the freezing point of their fluids (to -30 degrees C for some). All this occurs before the freezing weather gets here, so they are protected ahead of time. This process is called diapause and occurs at different stages for different species. Gypsy moths overwinter as embryos in eggs; many beetles overwinter as diapausing larvae and the cocoons of moths and wasps found on trees and in rubble contain diapausing pupae. In any case, they

are capable of surviving all but the most severe winters in this condition, while we poor humans must stuff the coffers of People's or Penelec or the oil company.

Submitted by Dennis McNair

REDUCED BY ONE

January 8, 1985

My plans for the day had included an afternoon hike, but because of the rampaging winds, I decided to postpone the hike in favor of feeder-watching and magazines. Thanks to the snow squalls that had been ripping the area, feeder activity was finally picking up.

My attention had just shifted from some juncos (which were cleaning up some leftovers around a squirrel feeder located some 30 feet beyond our sliding-glass door at the rear of the house) back to my magazine, when I was startled by the familiar, sickening thud of a bird ricocheting off glass.

As I glanced up, my attention was redrawn to the squirrel feeder just in time to witness the resident junco population being reduced by one - not via the sliding-glass door, but via the talon of a COOPER'S HAWK, instead!

The panic stricken junco that collided with the glass door was, in this instance, the lucky one. It survived.

Submitted by Dave Escherich



wish to contribute to the Wild Resource Conservation Fund.

It's that time of year again - PA State income tax time, and a chance for you to do something wild. Just follow the instructions in your tax booklet if you

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT

Mr. Daniel Brauning, Project Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project, will be in Western Pennsylvania during the first two weeks of March giving presentations on the Atlas project.

The project will map in detail the distribution of all birds known to breed in Pennsylvania anytime from 1983-1988. It was initiated in 1983, and may run for as long as six or seven years to complete the field work. The atlas itself will be published after conclusion of field work. Presently, 14 states and a few Canadian provinces are conducting or planning atlas projects. The Pennsylvania atlas will accomplish a variety of goals ranging from inventory of every species of bird known to nest in this state to data for use in making wise decisions regarding our environmental resources.

The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society will participate in this project by surveying Cambria, Bedford and eastern Somerset County. Our area contains very varied habitat, in which we should be able to turn up some interesting birds. If you would like to attend the meeting when Mr. Brauning helps plan out the work in this area, please contact Ruth Sager, 748-3242 (Hooversville), and she will get in touch with you when a definite date is set for the meeting.

Submitted by Ruth Sager

A special thanks to Eric and Eileen Stuver for all their time and effort in handling our first Bird Seed Sale.

At the February 21st meeting, we will have the remaining 50 pound bags of sunflower seed on sale for the bargain price of _____. We only have 15 bags left, so be on time!

CHAPTER NEWS

The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society will begin donating money to the Osprey Reintroduction Project in Pennsylvania. The Osprey project will receive statewide television coverage on the State College station on February 23rd and 24th. WQED will have the same program on March 14th. We would also like to donate to the Puffin Reintroduction Project off the coast of Maine. The purpose of the Puffin project is to reintroduce Atlantic Puffins into historical nesting areas where they were eliminated by hunters for their eggs and plumage. According to the project, we can "adopt" a puffin in return for a \$100 donation. The project entails transplanting 200 puffin chicks from Newfoundland to the islands in Maine. Our adopted Puffin would be banded for spotting scope identification and regular progress reports would be sent to us. The progress report pertains to when it fledges from its nest, when it hopefully returns a few years later to its nesting island and if it successfully raises its own puffin chicks. Anyone interested in donating to these worthy projects should see Tom Dick.

THE REHABILITATION CLINIC

As many of you know, our star boarder is an adult Red-shouldered hawk. This bird was shuttled in from the Pittsburgh area in early January, and is now recovering nicely from a wing injury. Members are welcome to visit the clinic to see the Red-shouldered hawk, but are cautioned to not stand any closer to the cage than 20 feet. A severe winter storm in January moved down from Canada and across the Great Lakes and brought not only arctic weather to our area, but gulls as well. I can only assume that they were moving ahead of the storm and were finally engulfed by it. Two herring Gulls and one Ring-billed Gull were presented within a 3 day period, suffering from ice encumbered wings and breasts. Unable to fly and find food, they became weak and susceptible to predation. On presentation, technician Bruce Courter established the protocol by placing them in lukewarm water and feeding them a special diet. In most cases, within a few days, they were able to be released. We also received calls during this period from concerned individuals about iced waterfowl (barnyard Mallards in particular). Farm ponds froze, eliminating food and safety. Some Mallards were actually picked up on roads with iced wings.

Submitted by Tom Dick

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

Volume 2 Number 2

May 1985

CHAPTER OUTINGS

Saturday May 18th 1:00 pm

Planting for Wildlife. Learn how you can create a home for our feathered friends. Glenn and Ruth Sager's home. (814-798-3242)

Sunday May 19th 9:00 am

Spring Warblers. Meet at the parking lot of the Westmont Middle School for a walk through Stackhouse Park. Leaders: Mike Wolfe and Kevin Georg.

Sunday May 19th 7:00 pm

Stream Ecology. An evening outing along Clear Shade to study a living stream and the associated flora and fauna. Maybe even some Mayflies! Meet at the parking lot on the left side of Rt. 56 across from Babcock State Park. Leader: Tim Fox.

Friday June 7th 1:00 pm

Children's Hike. Meet at 255 Collegiate Dr., Johnstown for children 13 years and under to enjoy a walk on the UPJ nature trails. Learn about wildlife and wild flowers. Leader: Joan Lohr (814-266-5104)

Thursday July 18th 6:00 pm

General Meeting and Get Together. Bring a covered dish for an informal picnic style meeting at the Shelter at UPJ. We will have refreshments, tell tall tales, and share our pictures and slides with the group. Bring the family for the evening.

Weekends Last 2 in July, First 2 in Aug.

Help restore Stackhouse Park!
Volunteer efforts are needed to establish and maintain the trails in this local park. Details later.

NATIONAL AUDUBON NAMES NEW PRESIDENT

Peter A.A. Berle has been named president of the National Audubon Society, to be effective August 1st. He replaces Russell W. Peterson, who is retiring after 6 years as president.

OUR CHAPTER TO HOST MEETING

Our chapter will host the next Audubon Council meeting at UPJ on Saturday, September 21st. The council consists of Audubon chapter representatives. This is an outgrowth of Kevin Georg, Mike Sankovich and Tom Dick's attendance at the last council meeting held in Pittsburgh.

JOINT OUTING WITH WAPITI

The Wapiti Audubon Chapter will join us this fall on an outing to our Tussey Mountain Hawk site. They are a hard-working 75 member chapter. The Pennsylvania elk herd is within their territory.

BLUEBIRD BOXES

Bluebird box orders are now being taken at \$5.00 and \$5.50 each. These boxes can house other cavity nesters. Boxes may be bought and donated to be placed in bluebird nesting areas.

NATURALIST'S CORNER

FLOWERS THAT BLOOM IN THE SPRING

The sun is getting warmer, the spring bird migration is in full swing and the Colt's foot is covering the bare banks and waste places with its golden flowers. This first cousin of the dandelion and the daisy sends up its flower heads a couple weeks in advance of its hoof shaped leaves from whence it gets its name. If you're a glutton for punishment, you can even go to the health food stores and buy coltsfoot tea -- pretty awful from this person's point of view.

If you are lucky enough to know where it grows, this is the time of year to go looking for arbutus, or May flower as it is called by some people. Hiding under the leathery green leaves, the buds are just beginning to show pink. Soon they will open into beautiful flowers with a fragrance one never forgets.

Both the Colt's foot and arbutus are upstaged in their spring appearance by the skunk cabbage. This is a unique plant in both its flower and physiology. The flowers can be easily spotted in the swampy areas in late February or early March. The green hood, or spathe, is heavily striped with red and it covers the actual flower, or spadix, much as its close relative, the jack-in-the-pulpit.

Physiologically, it is unique in that it has its own thermostat. Even when the weather is still quite wintery, the temperature of the developing flower can be measured to be as much as 20 degrees above air temperature. This allows the metabolism of the flower to rise and produce energy for growth. The scientific name of skunk cabbage, Simplocarpus fetidus tells us something about its means of pollination. The fetid odor attracts flies and they pollinate the flower as they are crawling over it.

Another early bloomer to be watching for is the bloodroot. This beautiful pure-white flower blooms early and the petals fall rapidly, so be on the alert for it in the next few weeks. This plant gets its name from the fact that when the root is broken, it oozes a blood red juice. When you are walking in the forest, look for the little shining-leaf yellow violet. It is our earliest blooming violet. Along the streams you will find another early bloomer, this time a shrub, the spice bush. The breaking of a small twig and the subsequent sweet, spicy aroma will assure you that you have found it. If you are lucky, you may also find golden club growing in the shallow areas of the streams or rivers. This is a first cousin of the skunk cabbage, but without a spathe, only a golden spadix.

Our spring flowers are called short-day plants because of their habit of flowering only under short-day conditions. In other words, they will flower only when the day-length is less than a certain critical period. This is because of a certain pigment called phytochrome, which is necessary for flowering. This pigment needs a critical period of darkness for a number of days (dependent on the particular species) to be converted into the form necessary to activate the plant's time-measuring mechanism. Scientists have found that relatively high levels of phytochrome, which responds to far-red light, are required, particularly during the first part of the dark period, for a short-day plant to flower. At the last part of the dark period, this pigment must be low or absent. This conversion takes place during the dark and even a short period of light can cause it to regress to the inactive form. This is why house plants such as the poinsettia must be given a



particular number of long nights in order to bloom.

After the very early bloomers, it is only the amount of time one spends scanning the road-sides and walking through the forests that will turn up such delights as wake-robin trillium, trout lillies, hepaticas, anemones, and six or more different violets. A bit more persistence may find the pink lady slipper orchid. The fringed polygala and the painted trillium, two plants that grow only in the mountains, may be the treasure of your day.

Spring is a delight; only your time and effort are the limits to what you will find when you go exploring.

Submitted by Doris Brown

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS OBSERVERS

CAN YOU TOP THIS FOR A FAST BEGINNING?

Unless you found an owl on the nest, the night of Tuesday, March 19th, Jim Hemphill probably has the record for the first CONFIRMED species made by observers in Region 35 of the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project.

Dan Brauning, Pennsylvania Coordinator of the Project, presented a slide show and conducted a workshop at UPJ, Tuesday, March 19th, at 7:00 p.m. for most of the approximately 50 volunteers who will work in Region 35 and Region 37. Assignment of quadrangles in which participants will conduct field work concluded the meeting.

The next morning, Mr. Hemphill set out early to get acquainted with the Ogletown quadrangle, which he had chosen for surveying. On his way there he saw a male red-tailed hawk in a tree beside the road in the Schellsburg quadrangle. On his return trip, he discovered a female red-tailed hawk sitting on the nest in the tree. By noon he had called

to tell Ruth Sager that she could relay the message to Charles Voytko, the observer responsible for the Schellsburg quad.

Enthusiasm ran high as the volunteers left the kick-off meeting. There will be many more exciting finds during the summer as the field work is completed by these energetic birders. Their aim is to gather data on every species of bird suspected to breed in these regions. One of the key features of the Atlas is the use of three

POSSIBLE,
and CONFIRMED.
CONFIRMED
for the first
field work
quite an
achievement
for
Jim

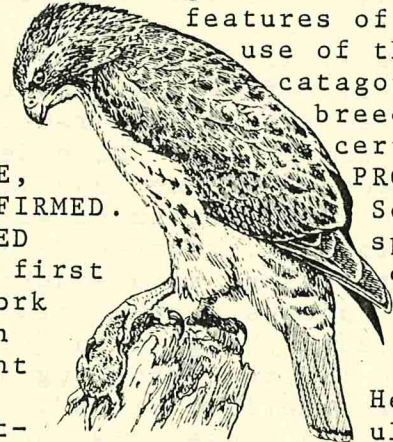
"Congrat-
to him and "Good Luck" to All".

If you haven't already signed up for a part in the Atlas work, there's still time and a place for you. As soon as possible, please contact the coordinator of the region in which you would like to help. (Ruth Sager, Coordinator of Region 35, comprising eastern Somerset and Bedford County, RD 1 Box 176-B, Hooversville, PA 15936, 814-798-3242 --- or --- Dr. Neil Woffinden, Coordinator of Region 37, comprising Cambria County, 1775 Regal Dr., Johnstown, PA 15904, 814-467-5738).

Submitted by Ruth Sager

PFA WOODLAND OWNERS HANDBOOK

At last, a complete reference book on the subject of woodland management in Pennsylvania is available. It covers forest ecology, wildlife management, timber sales, tree planting, and more. The price is \$13.25, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling. Send to: Pennsylvania Forestry Association, 410 E. Main St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055



SPRING WATERFOWL MIGRATION

This spring we've had a particularly strong spring migration, with honors for the most abundant and unusual going to Shawnee State Park. On March 16, Shawnee was replete with divers and surface feeders; large rafts of Ring-necked ducks, Greater scaup, Hooded Mergansers, Red-breasted Mergansers, Mallards and smaller numbers of Green-winged and Blue-winged teals, American Widgeons, Gadwalls, Canvasbacks, Redheads, Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Pintails, Pied-billed and Horned Grebes, American Coots, Great Blue Herons, Canada Geese, and one lone Tundra Swan. The real excitement was finding 15 White-fronted Geese with an Atlantic Brant as a sidekick. The latter 2 species were carefully observed and photographed for inclusion in the Spring migration report of "American Birds". The White-fronted Goose is a western species that is rare locally and makes for exciting "birding hotline" information anywhere in the east. The White-fronted Geese stayed locally for 5 to 7 days before they finally departed to their circumartic breeding grounds. The Brant, however, is rapidly becoming a Bedfordite, since it continues to be reported. Finally, Easter week capped off

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

Shawnee's performance with approximately 12 Great Egrets.

Although waterfowl can be observed everywhere, the most productive area are: Quemahoning dam, Lake Glendale, Lasky's pond, Yellow Creek lake, Samii's swamp (noted this year for its flocks of Common Snipes), and Shawnee lake.

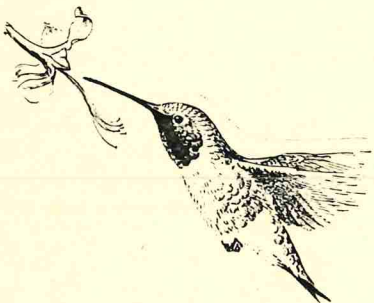
OUTDOOR PENNSYLVANIA TV PROGRAM

This PBS program will include:
Black Bears, Wild Horses, John James Audubon, and Decoy Carving.

WPSX-3 May 21st, 9:00 pm
 May 23rd, 10:00 pm
 May 25th, 1:00 pm
WQED-13 June 2nd, 4:00 pm

PA OSPREY REINTRODUCTION PROGRAM

If you have seen an osprey with colored plastic leg bands, please send a postcard with detailed information on the sighting with your name, address and telephone number to: Osprey Research Program, Dr. Larry Rymon, Dept. of Biology, East Stroudsburg University, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301. There have been no documented osprey nests in Pennsylvania since before 1960, due to the effects of DDT poisoning on osprey.



Volume 2 Number 3

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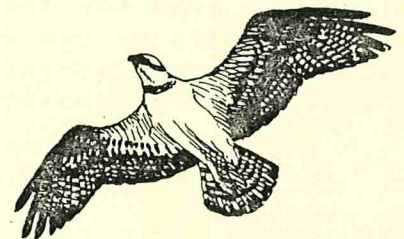
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From June 1984 to June 1985, we had 7 programs, including 4 movies. We enjoyed 30 outings, including the Christmas Bird Count and our nationally certified Fall Hawk Count. A bird seed and a Bluebird box sale were conducted. A three county breeding bird survey was held. Locally, lectures were given to community organizations. We supported Richland Elementary School with the Audubon Youth Adventures. Also, a commitment to Stackhouse Park, including clean-up work, was made. We contributed to American Bird Magazine, the Osprey Reintroduction Program and the Puffin Project. Over 30 articles on trip notifications and programs appeared in our local paper.

Our chapter was recognized in the Pennsylvania Game News for its contribution to hawk studies. We held a public lecture on hawk identification and maintain an active rehabilitation center for endangered species, which is licensed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

We've published six newsletters and our bank account continues to operate in the black. We also sent delegates to regional Audubon meetings, and will host the fall

meeting. Remember, we've only been a chapter since January of last year.

What do we plan for this coming fall? We're going to give you what you deserve: interesting programs and outings, activism, and informative newsletters. Much of the aforementioned will continue, but here is a preview of the new: chapter members will give a lecture on rehabilitation at Ohiopyle in September. We'll try for a logo and chapter creature. We will publish a tri-county check-list of birds based on what we've learned on our winter waterfowl trips, Hawk Watch, Christmas Bird Counts, Century Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys. This check-list can be used in the field and could serve as a record for members. We plan to have a continuing education program for teachers to lure them into using the Audubon Youth Adventures. We also plan to set up a regional naturalist buddy system whose members may act as mentors for the beginner naturalist.

Submitted by Tom Dick

CHILDREN'S HIKE

Nine young people were able to participate in the children's hike on a beautiful June afternoon. The 2½ hour walk began at 12:30 with Billy and Michael carrying the back packs and field guides.

Casey was recorder and took notes along the way. Early on, 2 chipmunks scurried across our path. This encouraged the children to walk quietly, lest creatures might be lurking in the bushes. The song of birds, and deer and dog prints confirmed this. There was the smell of moss, mushrooms and growing things. Daisies, may apples, ferns, buttercups and violets lined the way. Later a small waterfall delighted everyone. Laurel and Brett supplied the plant book where we identified red trillium and celandine poppies. Upon returning, David and Jim cooked hot dogs. Neil remarked " We noticed even more this year than last year".

Submitted by Joan Lohr

REHABILITATION CLINIC

The "confirmed" category in the Breeding Bird Survey form is easily checked as injured and orphaned fledgelings parade through the clinic door. Most common of the orphaned birds are always what you suspect; enter the Robins, Starlings, and Bluejays. One very young and unnamable bird was identified by association. It was brought in with its nest and technician Bruce Courter, noticing moss in the nest, correctly identified the bird as an Eastern Phoebe. Incidentally, Bruce is raising an albino Grackle. Early in the season, an orphaned Barred Owl was successfully hacked by Ruth Sager, an American Kestrel by Lynn Sanderson, and a red phase Screech Owl with an eye injury was released by Technician Tim Fox during an Audubon outing at Shawnee. Great Blue Herons, with severe wing injuries, are not usual to the clinic, but they are a local nonbreeding population. Nighthawk injuries may be due to their aerobatic flight, which predisposes them to fractures of the wing tip (possibly from the myriad of wires surrounding cities).

What of the mammals? Since spring, a fox (auto accident), baby groundhogs, young raccoons, rabbits (by the zillions), a bear cub with a snout full of porcupine quills, squirrels (Red, Flying and Gray), and orphan skunks found their way to the clinic (secretly, I've always wondered why young skunks are always the first to be released to the wild??).

So, if you're walking along and a robin lands on your head or a groundhog tugs at your shoe -- just be patient; in a few weeks they'll be wiser, then the robin will land on your shoulder and the groundhog will tug at your pant leg. Orphan animals become quite tame, but in time they also revert to the wild. This critical reversion period is

probably their greatest period of vulnerability. It is this "hacking period" when we try to keep a distant but protective eye on them.

submitted by Tom Dick

AUDUBON TV PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

The National Audubon Society and the Young Naturalist Foundation are launching an innovative new television series for children, premiering on Sunday, November 3rd, on public television. OWL/TV will blend entertainment with humor to engender a reverence for nature and an interest in science among children. OWL/TV employs a segmented magazine format linked by the wise and witty narration of an animated owl. In the various feature segments, young viewers will share the experiences and learning of real children their own age.

You can help by urging public television station managers to incorporate the series into their weekly programming schedule.

Director of Programming
WQED & WQEX
4802 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
(412-622-1300)

Programming Manager
WPSX
The Pennsylvania State University
Wagner Annex
University Park, PA 16802
(814-865-9531)

Special thanks to Ruth Sager and Velva Idzkowski for bringing in the most contributions for the Birdathon.

This fall we will have another bird seed sale. The prices and quality of our food are excellent. Information will be published as soon as it becomes available.



Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society

President - Dr. Thomas Dick
266-6412

Vice-President - Dr. Doris Brown
255-1223

Corres. Sec. - Noreen Sankovich
288-2304

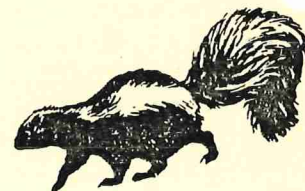
Record. Sec. - Linda Sell
266-2734

Treasurer - Rosalind Gordon
288-1248

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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Johnstown, PA
Permit # 37

Cindy Moll
318 White Oak Lane
Johnstown, PA 15904



WILDLIFE ART EXHIBITION

The Johnstown Woodcarvers is conducting a bus trip to Salisbury, Maryland on Saturday, October 5th. This is a Wildlife Art Exhibition sponsored by the Ward Foundation. There will be mountain folkart, decoy carving, water colors, oil paintings, and photography exhibits. You will have a chance to meet and talk to award winning authors of carving books. Some of the exhibits will have wares for sale. The cost is \$25.00 per person and there is a \$4.00 admission charge at the door. Reservations should be

made as soon as possible by phoning Robert Johnston (266-1852).

The Loyalhanna Watershed Association is sponsoring the 1985 Loyalhanna Art Festival on September 7th and 8th. It is open from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM at Marker Junior High and Mellon Elementary School in Ligonier. The cost is \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children from 13-18 years old. The proceeds benefit land, water, and wildlife conservation. There will be 50+ exhibitors. This is Western Pennsylvania's most comprehensive exhibit of wildlife art.

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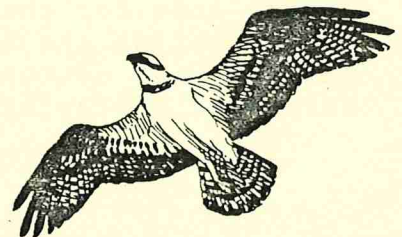
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SPECIAL THANKS TIME

Recently, I filled out an inquisitive form for recertification of our chapter -- a routine questionnaire by National Audubon, attempting to find out if we were good little Auduboners. In the process, National asked about our programs, outings, special projects, budget, and a variety of other questions. I sat down with my Papermate ultrafine, thinking that I would zip it off in five minutes. Three hours later, I realized that we have an excellent chapter, filled with exceptionally active members. Now the members I won't mention, for the sake of brevity, but the projects I will and so here goes.

From June 1984 to June 1985, we had 7 programs, including 4 movies. We enjoyed 30 outings, including the Christmas Bird Count and our nationally certified Fall Hawk Count. A bird seed and a Bluebird box sale were conducted. A three county breeding bird survey was held. Locally, lectures were given to community organizations. We supported Richland Elementary School with the Audubon Youth Adventures. Also, a commitment to Stackhouse Park, including clean-up work, was made. We contributed to American Bird Magazine, the Osprey Reintroduction Program and the Puffin Project. Over 30 articles on trip notifications and programs appeared in our local paper.

Our chapter was recognized in the Pennsylvania Game News for its contribution to hawk studies. We held a public lecture on hawk identification and maintain an active rehabilitation center for endangered species, which is licensed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

We've published six newsletters and our bank account continues to operate in the black. We also sent delegates to regional Audubon meetings, and will host the fall

meeting. Remember, we've only been a chapter since January of last year.

What do we plan for this coming fall? We're going to give you what you deserve: interesting programs and outings, activism, and informative newsletters. Much of the aforementioned will continue, but here is a preview of the new: chapter members will give a lecture on rehabilitation at Ohiopele in September. We'll try for a logo and chapter creature. We will publish a tri-county check-list of birds based on what we've learned on our winter waterfowl trips, Hawk Watch, Christmas Bird Counts, Century Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys. This check-list can be used in the field and could serve as a record for members. We plan to have a continuing education program for teachers to lure them into using the Audubon Youth Adventures. We also plan to set up a regional naturalist buddy system whose members may act as mentors for the beginner naturalist.

Submitted by Tom Dick

CHILDREN'S HIKE

Nine young people were able to participate in the children's hike on a beautiful June afternoon. The 2½ hour walk began at 12:30 with Billy and Michael carrying the back packs and field guides.

Casey was recorder and took notes along the way. Early on, 2 chipmunks scurried across our path. This encouraged the children to walk quietly, lest creatures might be lurking in the bushes. The song of birds, and deer and dog prints confirmed this. There was the smell of moss, mushrooms and growing things. Daisies, may apples, ferns, buttercups and violets lined the way. Later a small waterfall delighted everyone. Laurel and Brett supplied the plant book where we identified red trillium and celandine poppies. Upon returning, David and Jim cooked hot dogs. Neil remarked " We noticed even more this year than last year".

Submitted by Joan Lohr

REHABILITATION CLINIC

The "confirmed" category in the Breeding Bird Survey form is easily checked as injured and orphaned fledgelings parade through the clinic door. Most common of the orphaned birds are always what you suspect; enter the Robins, Starlings, and Bluejays. One very young and unnamable bird was identified by association. It was brought in with its nest and technician Bruce Courter, noticing moss in the nest, correctly identified the bird as an Eastern Phoebe. Incidentally, Bruce is raising an albino Grackle. Early in the season, an orphaned Barred Owl was successfully hacked by Ruth Sager, an American Kestrel by Lynn Sanderson, and a red phase Screech Owl with an eye injury was released by Technician Tim Fox during an Audubon outing at Shawnee. Great Blue Herons, with severe wing injuries, are not usual to the clinic, but they are a local nonbreeding population. Nighthawk injuries may be due to their aerobatic flight, which predisposes them to fractures of the wing tip (possibly from the myriad of wires surrounding cities).

What of the mammals? Since spring, a fox (auto accident), baby groundhogs, young raccoons, rabbits (by the zillions), a bear cub with a snout full of porcupine quills, squirrels (Red, Flying and Gray), and orphan skunks found their way to the clinic (secretly, I've always wondered why young skunks are always the first to be released to the wild??).

So, if you're walking along and a robin lands on your head or a groundhog tugs at your shoe -- just be patient; in a few weeks they'll be wiser, then the robin will land on your shoulder and the groundhog will tug at your pant leg. Orphan animals become quite tame, but in time they also revert to the wild. This critical reversion period is

probably their greatest period of vulnerability. It is this "hacking period" when we try to keep a distant but protective eye on them.

submitted by Tom Dick

AUDUBON TV PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

The National Audubon Society and the Young Naturalist Foundation are launching an innovative new television series for children, premiering on Sunday, November 3rd, on public television. OWL/TV will blend entertainment with humor to engender a reverence for nature and an interest in science among children. OWL/TV employs a segmented magazine format linked by the wise and witty narration of an animated owl. In the various feature segments, young viewers will share the experiences and learning of real children their own age.

You can help by urging public television station managers to incorporate the series into their weekly programming schedule.

Director of Programming
WQED & WQEX
4802 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
(412-622-1300)

Programming Manager
WPSX
The Pennsylvania State University
Wagner Annex
University Park, PA 16802
(814-865-9531)

Special thanks to Ruth Sager and Velva Idzkowski for bringing in the most contributions for the Birdathon.

This fall we will have another bird seed sale. The prices and quality of our food are excellent. Information will be published as soon as it becomes available.



Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society

President - Dr. Thomas Dick
266-6412

Vice-President - Dr. Doris Brown
255-1223

Corres. Sec. - Noreen Sankovich
288-2304

Record. Sec. - Linda Sell
266-2734

Treasurer - Rosalind Gordon
288-1248

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

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Joan & Harold Lohr
255 Collegiate Dr.
Johnstown, PA 15904



WILDLIFE ART EXHIBITION

The Johnstown Woodcarvers is conducting a bus trip to Salisbury, Maryland on Saturday, October 5th. This is a Wildlife Art Exhibition sponsored by the Ward Foundation. There will be mountain folkart, decoy carving, water colors, oil paintings, and photography exhibits. You will have a chance to meet and talk to award winning authors of carving books. Some of the exhibits will have wares for sale. The cost is \$25.00 per person and there is a \$4.00 admission charge at the door. Reservations should be

made as soon as possible by phoning Robert Johnston (266-1852).

The Loyalhanna Watershed Association is sponsoring the 1985 Loyalhanna Art Festival on September 7th and 8th. It is open from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM at Marker Junior High and Mellon Elementary School in Ligonier. The cost is \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children from 13-18 years old. The proceeds benefit land, water, and wildlife conservation. There will be 50+ exhibitors. This is Western Pennsylvania's most comprehensive exhibit of wildlife art.

Volume 2 Number 4

December 1985

DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING

8:00 PM Thursday December 19, 1985
Engineering and Science Building
University of Pittsburgh Johnstown

Dr. Joseph Merritt, from Powdermill Nature Reserve, Rector, PA, will talk to the Chapter on mammals. Dr. Merritt has conducted many projects for Carnegie Museum, ranging from Baffin Island to Australia. He will highlight his travels and research.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, December 28, 1985!

That is the date to reserve for your participation in the third Christmas Bird Count to be held by the Allegheny Plateau Society. Come out and help us topple our records of 1983 and 1984. There were 57 species and 14,913 individual birds counted in 1983, and 52 species and 16,861 individuals seen in 1984.

There is a section within the 15-mile diameter circle, with its center in Hollsopple, that should be to every birder's liking. If city sidewalks and yardbird watching pleases you, try a downtown Johnstown area. If you like to count large numbers, sign up for the Westmont section and count crows coming in to roost (there were 12,388 last year). A tour of Richland-Windber area should turn up a good selection of field birds and woodland species. Dams at North Fork, Quemahoning and Stoughton Lake are always popular with the waterfowl addicts. There are actually ten very interesting portions of our count area from which you can choose; so whatever your particular interest in winter birding happens to be, there's a place for you on December 28th.

You might like to spend the hours from midnight to dawn and from dusk to midnight counting owls. Even if you would rather do your birding in the comfort of your home, your feeder-watcher hours will be a welcome addition to our count.

At the close of the day, lots of food, beverage, a time to chat and to add up the day's count will await you in the warmth of Tom and Sally Dick's home at 1003 Eisenhower Blvd. We hope you spend the whole day with us.

If you haven't signed up yet for the count, please contact Ruth Sager as soon as possible. A briefing meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 12, 7:00 PM at Richland Veterinary Clinic, so that everyone will be instructed and ready to go on December 28th. A number of early reports indicate that this will be a good year for winter finches, so this should be a banner year. Don't miss it!

MORE BIRDERS ----- MORE BIRDS COUNTED
submitted by Ruth Sager
RD 1 Box 176-B Hooversville, PA 15936
phone number 798-3242

CHAPTER OUTINGS

Regular outings (remembering the Hawk Watch was a continuous 3 month outing) will resume in January. Outings will be posted in the club notice section of the Tribune. Outing notification will also be listed in future newsletters and postcards. Outings in the works for the first 4 months of '86" are as follows: Local waterfowl, Waterfowl of the Susquehanna River, Winter Wildlife Tour of the Delmarva Peninsula, Winter Botany, Wildlife initials in the snow, one day Chesapeake Waterfowl outing, Beaver dams of Prince Gallitzin, cross country ski tour of the Clearshade Wild Area and tours of local bird feeders. Others will be added as the outings committee hammers the schedule together.

NATURALIST'S CORNER

The Little Red Hudson

Pennsylvania's diurnal (daytime) tree squirrels, known as "bushy-tails" in local hunting parlance, consists of three species: the red squirrel (Tamiasciurus hudsonicus), the eastern gray squirrel (Sciurus carolinensis), and the northern fox squirrel (Sciurus niger).

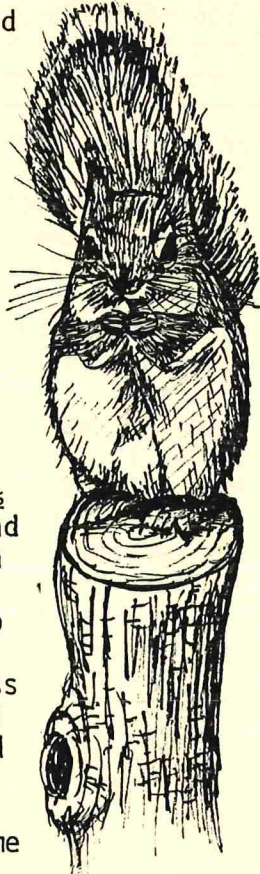
The red squirrel, the smallest of the three species and the subject of this article, is found throughout Pennsylvania. He is dubbed with several names, including:

chickaree, piney, and spruce squirrel (names also shared with the western Douglas squirrel, Tamiasciurus douglassi).

The red measures 12 to 12½ inches in total length, and weighs 5½ to 6½ ounces. In the summer the "red" is rusty above, with white to cream colored underparts, separated by a more or less well defined black lateral line between the front and hind legs. In the winter, the red chickaree's more or less rounded ears become tufted, the back becomes washed with gray, and the black lateral line fades into reddish-gray oblivion.

Although we refer to the red squirrel as a "diurnal" squirrel, it has the peculiar habit of occasionally foraging on moonlit nights-- as do some "diurnal" people. My own "Hudson" had the habit of pitter-pattering across the cabin roof (I always hoped he would find the starling eggs!) right at the onslaught of semi-conscious sleep.

Speaking of food habits, this same red squirrel would chase the local yellow-bellied sapsucker from the woodpecker's freshly drilled red pine holes and then lick and chew the sappy bark. He had the aggravating habit of leaving his leftover pine cone cores all over the step railing and landing. This squirrel also shows a



peculiar fondness for carrion flesh and bones, and it is not unusual to find them feeding on country roadkills. Tamiasciurus also eat insects, young birds, and as most champions of bird feeders can testify -- suet -- and suet with peanuts and sunflowers is even more better! This is also the only eastern bushytail that is a mycological connoisseur. Comparatively speaking, the gray squirrel only nibbles on mushrooms a little bit. The buds and fruit of hickory, serviceberry, beech, oak, maple, spruce, wild cherry, fir, tuliptree, and black walnut are also observed to be favorite foods of the red squirrel. All said, we could call him an opportunist.

Unlike the red squirrel's Sciurus cousins, he chooses to store a food cache, rather than hiding individual nuts. I have seen this little fellow use hollow logs, trees, and bluebird boxes for a food cache warehouse. The average bluebird box should have a 1½ inch opening. The red squirrel requires a 2 inch opening, which he creates by gnawing away with his ever growing teeth. This can be prevented by using a 4 inch square piece of sheet metal, or tin, cutting a 1½ inch hole in the center, and fastening the hole in place over the bluebird box opening.

The red squirrel is territorial, whereas the gray and fox squirrels tolerate others in their feeding area most of the year. For the red squirrel, this eliminates the necessity for all the "social vocabulary" of his Sciurus counterparts. However, it is a shame that no one told him so! Red squirrels are very linguistically inclined. His "rapid chucking burr" is second only to the chipmunk in alerting other creatures to man's presence in the woodlands.

The red squirrel's habitat is usually populated with coniferous trees, or at least a coniferous-deciduous mix forest. But the red squirrel can also tolerate brushy deciduous stands. Gray and fox squirrels prefer open deciduous forest stands and edges. Whenever an open coniferous-deciduous mix occurs, however, both the red and gray will be there. The gray will tolerate a red squirrel in close proximity, but not vice versa. Therefore, the little red often chases the larger gray. This type of habitat is usually found in parkland day use areas, where many people observe this antic. Therefore, in many men's eyes, the gray squirrel has become the "good squirrel" and the red squirrel has become the "bad squirrel". This has led to

such myths as: "Red squirrels castrate gray squirrels!" and "The red squirrels are driving all of the gray squirrels out of my woodlot!". In truth, such territorial encounters seldom give way to any physical contact, and if you had not cut out all the gray squirrel oaks for lumber, and den trees for firewood, you would still have grays instead of reds.

I mean like after all, with all this little guy's misgivings, we should at least cut him an honest break!!!

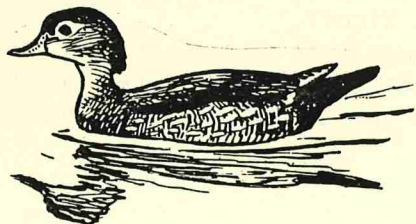
submitted by Dick Mock

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Bird seed is still available through Stuver's Riverside Nursery. The Stovers have worked hard making detailed arrangements for purchase and sales of these premium mixtures; they deserve a great deal of credit. It's worth pointing out that all the bird seed profits benefit our chapter directly; the Stovers receive nothing but the satisfaction of a job well done.

The winter finches have arrived! Buy your sunflower seeds now and attract those large flocks of Evening Grosbeaks. Other birds now in our area, according to Bob Leberman of Powdermill Nature Reserve, are Common Redpoles and Pine Siskins. Many feeders are now hosting Goldfinches, White-throated sparrows, Juncos and Purple Finches. All of this is in addition to our resident birds.

Route 219 will be lined with Blue Bird boxes if Kevin Georg has his way. Kevin plans to start early marking and placement of the boxes for both easy viewing and checking. The trail will consist of approximately 80 boxes running through Cambria and Somerset counties. Anyone interested in helping should contact Kevin. Our chapter also plans to make and place Wood Duck and Kestrel boxes this coming year. Anyone interested should contact Tim Fox or Tom Dick about details.



Notices of meetings are now in the form of postcards which will be sent out prior to each meeting. This project has been simplified by computer labels. Much of the thanks goes to Roz Gordon; she entered our membership into MacIntosh software. This system will guarantee that all members will be notified of our meetings. We may also use the postcard system for outing notices. Speaking of outings, the outings committee will meet soon. Anyone having ideas on interesting outings should contact Dave Lester, or better yet, join us at the meeting. Another meeting coming up soon will be the development of a Tri-County Bird Check List. The list will represent the combined knowledge of Auduboners developed from a variety of outings. These activities include the Christmas Bird Count, Century Count, Hawk Watch, Winter Waterfowl Outings and Spring breeding bird surveys. All those interested in becoming involved should notify Ruth Sager, Mike Wolfe, or Tom Dick by phone or through the regular meetings.

Plans to go ahead with an interpretative nature trail in Lorain Boro park have now been approved. Dr. Dennis McNair is chairman of the committee. The first limb of the trail may be completed by the summer of "86".

Our Chapter hosted the Regional Audubon Meeting at UPJ in September. Present was National Audubon Society Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice President, Walt Pomeroy. Chapters that attended in addition to ours were Juniata, Seneca Rocks, Western Pennsylvania, Waipiti, Bartramian and Presque Isle Audubon Societies. All in all, it was a very successful meeting with much good interchange of information between chapters. Linda and Rick Sell, Joan Lohr, Doris Brown, Joe Emerick, and Tom Dick represented our chapter.

Meetings: We welcome members to our meetings. We want to hear from you, meet you and discuss any ideas or thoughts that you may have. The informal coffee/tea/pastry time prior to the regular meeting is ample time to mingle and talk. We will also sell Audubon Books and Calendars at significant discounts at that time. The proceeds from these books, raffels, etc. will go to a proposed Audubon Sanctuary in the future. More details at our January 16th meeting.

PENNSYLVANIA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT

With many thanks to the volunteers who made it possible, Region 35 contributed significant data to the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project in 1985. Thirty-four binocular-toting persons made quite a dent in what looked like a formidable new undertaking, trying to cover eastern Somerset County and Bedford County. Their aim was to record the birds present during the nesting season in the region, which comprises 33 quadrangles divided into 6 blocks each. Reports were received for 23 of these quadrangles; and 40 separate blocks were accounted for within these quads.

At a meeting of Western Pennsylvania regional coordinators near Clarion on Saturday, October 26th, Ruth and Glenn Sager heard some very encouraging reports about progress of the Atlas project. Dr. Frank B. Gill, Director, and Daniel Brauning, Coordinator, of the state-wide project, commended the Western Pennsylvania atlasers for their excellent field work. They were part of the corps of approximately 1000 volunteers throughout the state who participated this year in the five-year project that will end in 1988. Although the full story will not be known until data are analyzed later this year, Black Rail, Chuck-Will's Widow, Clay-colored Sparrow, European Jackdaw, King Rail, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and Saw-whet Owl have been reported during 1985.

Some good finds in Region 35 include the Yellow-rumped warbler in Buffalo Mills, Yellow-throated Vireo in Everett-West, and Alder Flycatcher in Wittenburg Quads. Grasshopper Sparrows were reported in several quads, but it was disappointing that no reports were received for the Henslow's Sparrow. There are a number of other species unreported that are very good possibilities for Region 35. As we gain ground in subsequent years covering greater territory, seeking out unusual habitat, and having the advantage of more experience in this type of survey, we will surely be able to add a number of new species. Working in a region for which we have no previously published checklists is a challenge and we have found that there are people in the region able and willing to accept the challenge.

In addition to the valuable contribution of information which will be compiled in the atlas, many of the volunteers expressed their appreciation for the fun they had out in the field. Some letters included these remarks: "We have enjoyed this year with the birds" (Dave & Jean Sinal); "Hope everyone had as enjoyable time as we did" (Laura & Mike Jackson); "This is all new to me, but it is a lot of fun" (Dick Weaver) and "I've enjoyed the project, since it's different than 'life-listing'" (Jim Hemphill).

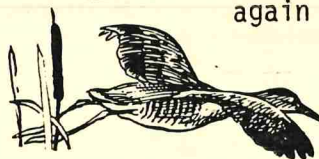
Another encouraging note in letters received with reports was that the folks are looking forward to next year's atlas work. They hope to add more species and confirm the nesting of birds that they saw in their blocks but were unable to pin down with conclusive nesting evidence.

Some of those who started out with great expectation were sidetracked but will try again next year. Lin Hunt's rafting accident was one of the most painful reasons for her low count. Several heard about the project too late, but have received the necessary instructions and are all set for an early start next spring.

A network of new birding friends has sprung up in Region 35 and the value of that spin-off is unestimable. Tim Flannigan was great help in suggesting a number of his birding friends who helped in Bedford County. One of them was Terry Carnila, whose welcome postcards usually began, "Here is another person interested in the Breeding Bird Program". Bill Rosevear also was a great help in enlisting recruits before he moved out of Region 35 when he was promoted to Park Superintendent at Pine Grove Furnace State Park.

Fine fieldwork was reported by the following: Elizabeth L. Blackburn, Doris Brown, Mary M. Caldwell, Jack and Terry Carnila, Chris Dick, Tom Dick, Dave Escherich, Michael and Claire Fomenko, Tim Fox, Rosalind Gordon, James Hemphill, Lin Hunt, Laura and Mike Jackson, Alberta Long, Juli Mann, James Mayer, Clyde and Ethel McGinnet, Robert H. Miller, Ralph Mostoller, Cornelia S. Perrin, Wm. Rosevear, Ruth Sager, Steve Schweitzer, Janet Shaffer, Daniel and Jean Sinal, Bob Thompson, Charles Voytko, Richard Weaver, and Jean Wicoff.

Although Ruth Sager, the Regional Coordinator, will enlist new volunteers again in the spring of 1985, you might like



to receive information on the project now so that you can review it during the winter months and be ready for an early start next year. Whether you volunteer to survey one of the uncovered quads or whether you will assist in the completion of a quad, there is a place for you. Atlasing your home territory is very helpful since you already are familiar with its breeding bird prospects. Taking a tip from this year's birders, it is also very exciting to move into a new area and find the surprises that turn up in unfamiliar habitat. A letter or phone call will be all it takes to get you started. (Ruth Sager, RD 1 Box 176-B, Hooversville, PA 15936 - 814-798-3242)

THE REHABILITATION CLINIC

Recent record studies of 76 hawks and 55 owls uncovered some interesting "little known facts". In brief, the reasons for admittance to the clinic appear to be related to things like lifestyles, hunting behavior, flight characteristics, time of migration and nesting. This is best explained by citing a few examples followed by an update on our Bald Eagle.

American Kestrels (Sparrow Hawks) are fast little falcons, opportunistic at times, often found around buildings where they may pursue small birds. Since buildings have windows, often not noticed, it's not surprising that a fair percentage trickle in with head injuries. Many wander away with just a headache, while others require medical attention (not covered by Blue Cross). Thirty-three percent of our Kestrel admittances are the result of flying into windows.

With the exception of February, Red-tailed hawks have found their way to our clinic every month of the year. January through April are months of fractures resulting from flight injuries. May and June produce the orphans from lumbering operations. A few orphans have been confiscated from "would be hawk owners". The real problem month for this species



is October. October is small game season, and it is also the beginning of the Red-tailed hawk migration. Sixteen percent in our clinic population have been shot at this time and most of these are immatures. On a better note, by the time they're adults, they usually have enough hunter savvy to stay out of shotgun range.

The Barred Owl, a denizen of river valleys and wetlands, often feeds on crayfish and frogs, so it is no surprise when they get caught in traps. The traps are baited for mink and are attractive to owls. Thirty-three percent of our hospital population were admitted with leg injuries attributed to trapping. Despite all that, the Barred Owl continues to be a common owl in our area.

Screech owls, indeed our cutest owl, sets records of injuries rather different than most. Twenty-six percent have been admitted after collisions with cars. Some are stunned and found sitting by the road; give them a warm place, some food, a hot water bottle and they do well. One adventurous owl flew into a chimney and had his tail feathers burned off. This latter case was particularly ironic, since it occurred in a home where the owners loved owls. They had little replicas of owls in the form of mugs, statues and paintings throughout the house. They felt honored when they awoke in the morning to a sooty Screech Owl sitting on the fireplace mantle.

Accipters (Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks) are another story. I've always marveled how nature could design birds with such speed, agility and ferocity. I always thought they could outmaneuver any obstacle course, which may be true, but it is not without mishap. These bio-projectiles impact on solid objects with such speed that fractures involving legs, wings and vertebra are common. No records can be found in our clinic of one being shot -- probably their rapid maneuvers make them impossible to hit.

What about the raucous Great Horned Owl? The Great Horned constitutes 57% of our hospital owl population. They have been presented every month except February and March. The Great Horned Owl is undoubtedly our most visible owl: visible by both its large size and close association with civilization. They've been attacked by dogs while sitting on the ground (the owl usually wins), shot, hit by cars, trapped, electrocuted while sitting on transformers and orphaned from lumbering operations.

They are our earliest nester starting the latter part of January. Possibly this early nesting keeps them out of trouble, since we rarely see them early in the year. At any rate, this owl is tough, a real survivor, and our most common owl.

Finally, an update on our Bald Eagle release. As many of you know, our bird was released at Halderman Island. Halderman is located north of Harrisburg in the Susquehanna River. Our eagle (a she) was fitted with a transmitter, which was attached to a tail feather. The antenna was attached to the main shaft of the feather with Super-Glu (our contribution to high-tech). The release was successful; she flew high and strong, staying local to the island for several weeks prior to departing for parts unknown (The Chesapeake Bay is a suspected destination). Her transmitter will transmit for the next six weeks and we're hoping that she'll be received at several key locations in the south. We (Staff of Richland Veterinary Hospital) will miss her, but we're happy she had a second chance at becoming an adult. If we receive any information on her whereabouts in the south, you will be the first to know in the next newsletter.

submitted by Tom Dick

OF INTEREST - The January 1986 issue of Outside magazine has a very interesting article- "The Grizzly and the Juggernaut".

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



Merry Christmas!

YEAR OF THE FOREST

Plans for a statewide YEAR OF THE FOREST celebration for 1986 are underway, including a proclamation for the Governor's signature and a whole year of special activities that will bring the importance of forestlands and forest products to public attention. A legislative resolution designating 1986 as THE YEAR OF THE FOREST is also in the works, and Activity Packets which make unique and thoughtful Christmas gifts are also available. Giving a YEAR OF THE FOREST Christmas gift is a great way to help celebrate this occasion and to support this important effort. For more information about the Activity Packets and what they contain, contact: THE YEAR OF THE FOREST COMMITTEE, c/o The Pennsylvania Forestry Association, 410 East Main Street, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055, phone (717) 766-5371.

Don't wait! Call or write today because supplies are limited.

"BOTTLE BILL" UPDATE

Over 100 activists, including 25 Audubon leaders from around the state, converged on the Capitol, October 16th for a "Bottle Bill" Lobby Day. On Tuesday, October 29th, all the hard work paid off. The House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee approved H.B. 479 by a 20 - 2 margin! This is the first time the bill has ever gotten out of committee in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

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resulting from light injuries. May and
the produce the organs from lumbering
operations. A few organs have been
collected from "wild" hawk owners.
the first step in search for this species