

Chickadee Chatter

Newsletter of the
Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society

Volume 4

Number 1

January 1987

Changing of the guard.....

No longer a fledgling organization, we've emerged as a proven, hard working Audubon Society with APAS newsletters reaching some 340 individuals. During the past 4 years we've sponsored 10 schools with the Audubon Adventure Series, conducted continuing education ecology programs for teachers, collected 3 years of data on plants and birds through hawk watches, Christmas Bird Counts, plant inventories, breeding bird surveys, and outings. We've also spoken to numerous civic organizations, participated in state park programs, hosted regional meetings, and maintained displays at malls, outdoor shows, and fairs. Surprisingly, it's not just the work of a few but of clusters of members such as: board members (18), Hawk Watch (15), Christmas Bird Count (40), Breeding Bird Survey (42) etc.. It's this combined effort of these and many smaller groups that has led to our rapid growth. Now it is time we move on ...and so we did with our first elections since the chartering of our chapter. The nominating committee did a great job of recommending top people with creative energy to the board. Our new president, Dr. Doris Brown, is Associate Professor of Natural Science at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. No neophyte to our organization, Doris has been on the executive committee since its inception. She has been an active organizer and field trip leader and brings great expertise. Let's give Doris a good start by offering to help in any way we can, such as field trips, fund raising, hospitality, etc. etc.. This type of volunteerism brings citizen groups like ours to a high degree of effectiveness. The new officers are as follows:

President: Dr. Doris Brown (255-1223)-426 Girard St., Johnstown 15905
Vice President: Mike Wolfe (255-5098)RD 5, Box 170, Johnstown, 15907
Recording Secretary: The David Escherichs (893-5092) Box 34 RD2, Stoystown 15563
Corresponding Secretary: Linda Sell (266-2734)RD 2 Box 457, Johnstown 15904
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Conservation: Richard Mock (479-4232)Box 74 Davidsville, Pa. 15928
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Hospitality: Dr. Sally Dick (266-7912) 1003 Eisenhower Blvd., Johnstown 15904
Publicity: Pam Boderocco (255-5264) RD5,Box 83, Johnstown, 15905
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Rare Bird Alert: Kevin Georg (288-1763)219 Columbia St., Johnstown 15905
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Academic Consultant: Dr. Neil Woffinden (467-5738) 1775 Regal Dr. Johnstown 15904
Photography: Dave Mikesic (266-7620) 126 Carwyn Dr. Johnstown 15904
Bird Seed Sales: Eric and Eileen Stuver (288-3603) RD7, Box 458, Johnstown
Education: Joe Emerick (472-7540) Box 235 Ebensburg 15931
Bird Counts: Ruth and Glenn Sager (798-3242)RD1,Box 176-B, Hooversville 15936
Stream Committee: Tim Fox (536-5081)145 Blough St. Johnstown 15902

December 21, begins a period of seasonal austerity. Prevailing
 ing nightly temperatures, above normal precipitation, all combined,
 lenying edge. This bleak scenario continues as trees bear naked
 > replaced by rubbing branches composing lonely winter serenades.
 ankets the last remaining remembrances of summer flowers. Depressed? Maybe not!
 explore what winter means to the naturalists. Winter is constellations on cold clear
 its, birds at the feeder working down a winter supply of seed, trees with buds waiting for
 spring, insects quietly tucked away in soft cocoons, and sunlight made brilliant through
 crystalized snow and ice. This is also the time to search for last year's flower parts, insect
 workings, bird nests, and the ongoing activities of hardy wildlife residents. Let's briefly
 examine an example of each of the following: constellations, trees, mammals, and birds in
 winter.

It's not hard to feel humbled by the panorama of a winter sky. Imagine the scientist who sees
 the history of our galaxy written in the sky and punctuated by the stars. The brightness of stars
 may dazzle your eyes but the knowledge that some of these very stars may no longer be present
 is even more intriguing; it's only their ghostly light you see traveling the endless boundaries of
 time. For you and me, it's enough to appreciate the mythology handed down through millenia; the
 never-ending conflict between Orion the hunter and Tarus the Bull. But even the spectacle of a
 winter sky is not be enough to keep away the chill of the winter night.

"Harvesting the fruits of labor" is a rather old expression seemingly reserved for mankind.
 But consider the winter Cucumber tree, a common local tree reaching heights of 90 feet. It has
 large aggregate fruits with seeds that drop slowly by short threads and fall on the snow covered
 forest floor. Producing the fruit required a lot of effort... roots to pull large amounts of water
 and minerals from the soil, a trunk for support and transport, the development of leaves for
 collecting and hammering out the building blocks of carbon dioxide and water into simple
 energy-providing sugars, large flowers complete with male and female parts to attract insects
 for pollination and lastly, the fruit. The results of this enormous effort can be seen littering the
 forest floor along with Samara aggregates from Tulip Poplars, birch strobile scales, beechnut
 husks, acorns, and pods from locust trees. All these parts, outlined by snow, fit neatly in place
 like a seasonal puzzle, each in its own way, telling a story about its life history.

Much can be said of active winter mammals, yet the most abundant animal is also the least
 recognized, the meadow vole, *Microtus Pennsylvanicus*. This little mammal feeds on grasses,
 sedges, and rushes and, in the process converts plant protein directly to animal protein. The
 vole is a preferred food for hawks, owls, and furbearers. This little mouseburger has been
 known to have 10 litters per year with litter sizes averaging from 2 to 8. Populations peak
 every 4 years and decline quickly. Last year, on an Audubon outing to a replanted stripmine
 near Elder Ridge, Auduboners saw Red-tailed hawks, Short-eared owls, Northern Harriers, a
 Northern Goshawk, a Rough-legged hawk, and a Northern Shrike all hunting this abundant little
 vole. Meadow voles are safe in their labyrinth of tunnels under the snow; occasionally they can
 be flushed from grassy tussocks. Once exposed they're vulnerable to quick predation. They may
 be the most important mammal in Pennsylvania since they divert predators from game species
 and offer substance during critical winter food shortages.

Winter for birds is a time of mutual cooperation. It's a time of massing together for food,
 warmth, and protection. Most of us, knowingly or not, have seen
 the evening flight of local crows to their communal roost
 at Stackhouse Park. Usually, they have a short stop at a
 pre-roost site where they squabble, fly around, and then
 continue on to their nightly roost. During the day the
 Stackhouse crows, numbering some 10,000, spread out over several counties.



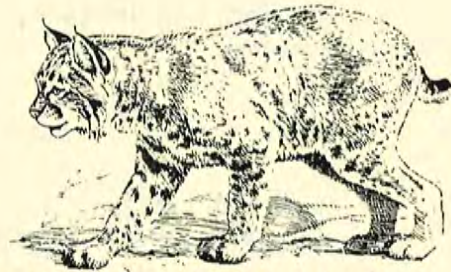
This behavior is unlike the small family groups of early summer; the mobbing of a Great Horned Owl is the only stimulus to bring them together in the summer. Starlings also get together in large numbers where they can be seen roosting in areas like the honeysuckle-locust hillsides behind Hill's Shopping Plaza in Richland Township. With starlings, it has been shown the communal roosting on cold nights can be very energy efficient; they can save up to 50% on their internal heating bill by close perching. Robins also band together in small winter flocks, but south of here, in the Dismal Swamp of Virginia they have been known to produce flock sizes which exceed a million.

Over the aeons natural selection has allowed birds to adapt to winter in a way which produces the greatest survival value. This, of course, is something to think about on a short hike into the winter woods.

Submitted by Tom Dick

Did you know that----

..... Some years ago, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, worried about the scarcity of bobcats, tried to figure a way to bring about their protection. They realized they could not introduce protectionist legislation into the general assembly since the legislators, with a responsibility to its constituents, disdain any laws that might infringe upon their rights. Realizing this, the Game Commission instead introduced legislation making the bobcat a game animal. The bill was passed and the Game Commission quickly responded by closing the season.



.....Who killed the chicken: hawk, owl, or mammal? Usually skunks or raccoons will kill several chickens and tear the flesh up. Raptors (birds of prey) will usually kill only one bird and pluck out its feathers. Owls will usually eat the head and leave small heaps of chalky whitewash directly on the ground. Hawks will usually streak out whitewash on the ground. Some hawks, especially Red-tails, will eat carrion; in that case, if the feathers have small amounts of tissue clinging to them, the bird was already dead and cold when taken!

..... **Sally Dick** counted 1600 Snow Geese, 1000 Tundra Swans, 2 mature Bald Eagles, and 3 mature Golden Eagles at the Tussey Mountain Hawk Watch on November 12. The birds were flying the leading edge of a cold front that brought the first arctic chill of the season to the Allegheny Plateau. The following day **Dave Kyler** counted 11 Golden Eagles flying past the Summit.

.....Occasionally, areas which harbor endangered species are given the status as "Specific habitat locations." Recently two New York bridges were given that designation: the Yarrazano Narrows Bridge and Throgs Neck Bridge. Why? Because these bridges have been used as nesting sites by Peregrine Falcons since 1983.

.....Among some naturalists there is considerable objection to the Cornell Peregrine Reintroduction Program. The objections are due to their relocations on barrier islands where prey species such as Piping Plovers and Least Terns are already endangered. They also object to these large Cornell strains which may dislocate native tundra Peregrines during migration by driving them away from shores where they feed on shorebirds. Another complaint is the destruction of local Great Horned Owls, a necessity to keep owls from feeding on Peregrine fledglings.

.....The industrious woodpecker, unknowingly, in its hard work carving out cavities in trees also is preparing the way for other nesters. For example over 40 other species including Wood Ducks, Owls, and some 30 different songbirds, use these cavities for nesting.

.....Quips Ralph Abele, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission, "the Fish Commission is doing such a great job raising fish that they not only supply fisherman but eagles, otters, and osprey, all part of the game commission's reintroduction programs."

Special Tribute

Mike Sankovitch (affectionately known as Mr. Hawkwatch) and **Noreen Sankovitch** have moved to York, Pennsylvania. We will miss them both; Mike was the organizer of the hawk watch and chairman of the conservation committee while Noreen was our corresponding secretary and an always ambitious fund raiser. They both helped to launch our Audubon chapter into full sail. Mike and Noreen will become our members at large and have volunteered to continue running the Susquehanna winter outings for eagles. We wish them the very best of fortune.

Keeping Records

"Why didn't I think of that?" That is exactly my response to an article in the Nov./Dec. 1986 issue of BIRD WATCHER'S DIGEST concerning "A Simple Method of Keeping Records," by Norman Lavers. He lists these advantages of his simple system: (a) it helped him learn his birds and their songs; (b) it helped him locate rarities; (c) it gave information that helped to have the area where he lived converted into a wildlife preserve; and (d) it took only a few seconds a week. That should be testimony enough for me to pass along an abbreviated description of his method. If you are interested in the reading the entire article, I or some other friend might share a copy with you.

1. Start with a 14" wide sheet of graph paper that has quarter inch squares, a yardstick, and a pen.
2. Go in 4 squares from left and with pen and yardstick draw a heavy line all the way down the graph paper, making a one-inch margin.
3. Beginning with the second line, write in the one-inch margin the names of birds you expect to see in the area of study. Others may be added as you see them.
4. There are 52 spaces across the page, representing 52 weeks of the year, but you need one 8-day week to come out to 365 days of a year. Write 1/1-1/8 in first space (which will be your 8-day week), putting first set of numbers above the other to fit the space. Then write 1/9-1/15, 1/16-1/22, etc. until you end with 12/25-12-31 in the 52nd space.

Mark a check mark by its name when you hear or see a species during each week. Mr. Lavers says that if you do this for a year you will be astonished at the interesting and usable information you have accumulated. At a glance you can see which birds are in the area the whole year, winter, summer, spring or fall migrants, common species, scarce ones seen only one or a few times a year. For those only seasonally present, you will have a good idea of what dates they are present.

Making an effort in subsequent years to find migrants in the week prior and the week following the one you have checked can help you find the earliest and the latest dates for these species. You will discover that certain species appear year after year on virtually the same day or at least within the same week. Causes such as local weather conditions and day-length are involved. If you do not see a species at all in your first year, when you see it in a later year, you will know it is probably something special in your area. Jot down the exact date in the square and report it to Tom Dick for his report to AMERICAN BIRDS.

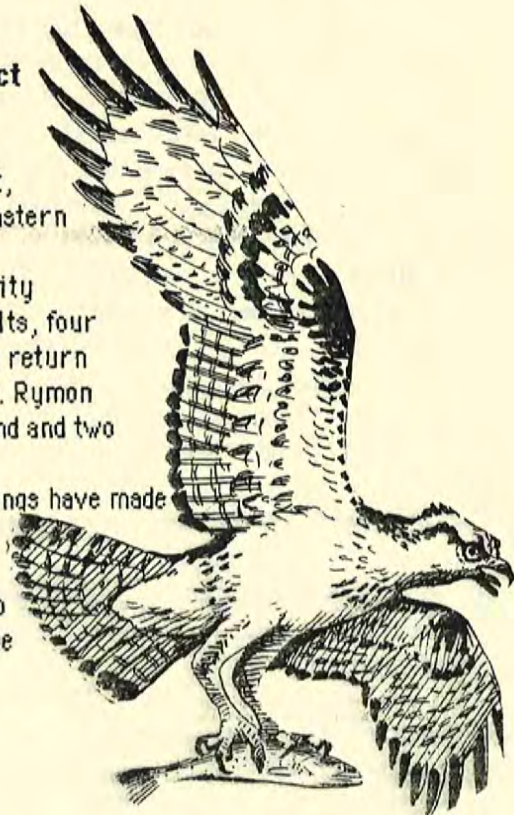
Some further suggestions are given to add to the value of your record. Depending on your own interests, you might come with further innovations. Those in the article include: (a) marking over the square with a transparent colored marking pen to show when species are particularly abundant (example: large flocks of robins), indicating migration surges; (b) marking behavior by tiny "s" in corner to indicate singing, which is often a first sign of breeding behavior, or in winter may suggest territorial singing; (c) marking "n" for nest, "c" for mating or courtship, "e" for eggs, "y" for young, "f" for fledgling, etc.

You have two options after using the chart for a full year. Keep using the same chart, adding new species at the bottom, or filling in squares that were not filled the first year. You may also keep the second year separate by using a different colored pen. If you spend only a few seconds a week on the kind of record described by Mr. Lavers, I feel sure you can glean a wealth of information from your backyard birdlife. This should give you much birding pleasure. It also may be of great value at some time when specific records are needed for the Allegheny Plateau region. Nothing ventured, nothing gained!

Submitted by Ruth Sager

Update on the Pennsylvania Osprey Project

As you remember APAS donated money to the Osprey Project and, indeed, it was money well spent. The project, located in the Pocono and Delaware River Gap region of Eastern Pennsylvania, has been very successful. During 1986 a total of twenty marked adult osprey returned to the vicinity of four previous hacking locations. Out of the twenty adults, four were 1982 releases and sixteen were 1983 releases. The return rate is nearly 45% which according to project leader Dr. Rymon is excellent. Out of this group, six active nests were found and two pairs produced four young. The four young all fledged successfully. The two productive pairs and their fledgelings have made Pennsylvania and World history as the first successful osprey reintroduction effort. It has been suggested that the Game Commission extend the reintroduction program to the Western Pennsylvania areas of Raystown Dam and the Pymatuning.



(The following report represents simple highlights; a combination of local APAS data and banding reports from Powdermill Nature Center. In the future we'll be carrying a regular briefing on Powdermill's banding reports.)

In general we had above average Sharp-shinned Hawk, Coopers Red-shouldered Hawk, and Golden coverage and more experience on the raptor report will come out in the next particular, "diving ducks" were two weeks were in good numbers: Buffleheads, Ring-Goldeneye, and scaups. "Dabblers" were in flights of Tundra Swans were seen around flocks seen over Northern Cambria County. Swan were seen flying southeast over the at Everett. 1600 Snow Geese were counted that same cold front again at Tussey

The following report on passerines is gleaned issued by Powdermill Nature Reserve. This fall, they birds, considered "just average." The total is birds for September, 2,683 for October, and Between field observations and banded birds the number of this down, 36 were above average, 33 below and 9 just Eight species (Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Blue-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher) were recorded in their best fall numbers in the last ten years, while 4 species (Blackburnian Warbler, Canada Warbler, Wood Thrush and Swainson's Thrush) were recorded in their worst numbers for the same period."

Consider some winter birds such as finches, sparrows and kinglets. Only 15 Evening Grosbeaks were banded compared to 521 last year. That should answer some questions on how common they will be this year. We do have some scattered flocks locally but nothing like the invasion of last year. Pine Siskins are up 125% with 54 banded and this correlates well with local sightings which have been fairly consistent. They seem to be hitting feeders very inconsistently. Last year, if your remember, we saw very few siskins. Common Redpoles were not mentioned but locally a few small flocks have been spotted; it's my impression they'll turn up on the Christmas Bird Counts. Purple Finches experienced a light migration with 107 banded; locally, we've seen very few but those that have been seen are mostly females mixed in with the House Finches. Dark-eyed Junco numbers were up with 247 banded. American Tree Sparrows were not mentioned but locally we seem to have normal numbers for December. White-crowned Sparrows were sporadic and few in number locally and this agreed with the below average numbers banded. White-throated Sparrows were also down this year. Fox Sparrows were up this year with 20 banded; many local feeder watchers reported Fox Sparrows for the first time. Golden-crowned Kinglets had an excellent flight with twice the average numbers banded.

For some of us the only look we had of songbirds was at the Tussey Mountain Hawk Watch. In the morning before the hawks were up, the summit was often loaded with birds. On a number of occasions we had over 70 bluebirds sitting on towers and wires. Warblers, including the Connecticut Warbler, were abundant. Flights of Cedar Waxwings were commonplace. Of particular interest was the abundance of Carolina Wrens and Winter Wrens. They could be heard or seen during most of late September and October. On one occasion, three Olive-sided Flycatchers were observed sitting on the snags lining the east slope of the summit.



flights for the following raptors:

Hawk, Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Eagle. Much of this was due to increased part of the observers. The detailed

newsletter. Waterfowl, in early this year. The following ducks necked Ducks, Ruddy Ducks, very poor numbers. Strong November 12 with large The same day 1000 Tundra summit of Tussey Mountain riding the leading edge of Mountain.

from the Banding reports banded a total of 7,216 divided as follows: 2,675 1000 for November. species is 78; breaking about average.

Our Audubon Society will run a regular feature on banding reports during the fall and spring migration. The much more detailed summary of Powdermill's bandings will be available for interested members at our regular meetings.

Powdermill Nature Center

Powdermill Nature Center, located near Ligonier in Rector, Pa., is a good friend of the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society. Their scientist-naturalists have helped us on many of our own programs, and now they also have many free educational programs. We felt sure you would like to know more about these excellent programs. The following is the January-February schedule entitled "Wandering through Winter."

Powdermill Nature Reserve's Nemick Nature Center is located about 7 miles south of Route 30 along Route 381. Sunday afternoon programs begin at 2 pm; Thursday evening programs at 7 pm. The series, which will include both indoor and outdoor activities, is scheduled from January 4 through February 22. For confirmation and details of each week's programs call 593-6105; a recorded message will be updated each Monday through the program period.

January Programs at Powdermill Nature Center

- 8-----Meeting - public invited to a meeting of the Scenic and Environmental Quality Committee of the Friends of the Ligonier Valley.
- 11-----Bird Banding- Bob Mulvihill will demonstrate the art and science of the "bird in the hand." Interesting hands-on biology of banding winter birds.
- 15-----Moonlight walk- A brisk moonlight walk along easy trails looking and listening for owls. All of this followed by hot chocolate and friendly conversation.
- 18-----Signs in the snow- Assuming good snow covering, Dr. Joseph Merritt, mammologist, will lead a walk searching for tracks and other signs. In the event of no snow, Bob Mulvihill will give a presentation on his research findings with juncos.
- 22-----Arctic adaptations- Dr. Merritt will show us how plants and animals of the far north endure conditions that make our winters look mild.
- 25-----Where have all the insects gone? - For the most part they're still here! Join us as we get to the bottom of this mystery. We'll be indoors and out.
- 29-----Birds of Belize- What better way to shake off winter's chill than by joining Bob Leberman for an evening in the jungles and savannas of Central America.

February

- 1----Watching birds (Part 1): Identification - A Powdermill team will teach winter bird identification skills. Stay warm! Watch the birds from the nature center's window.
- 5----Touring Australia and New Zealand- The second of a series of travel logs by a naturalist team: Mr. and Mrs. Norman DeWind.
- 8----Watching birds (Part II): Studying behavior- We go from "what is it," to "what is it doing?" Everyone invited including graduates of "Part I."
- 12---Moonlight walk- See Jan. 15 outing.
- 15---Junco research- Bob Mulvihill will share with us some findings about these common winter birds from his studies of nesting juncos at many sites in the valley. This is also the alternative date for Dr. Merritt's "Signs in the Snow" program.
- 19---Meeting- See Jan. 8 above.
- 22---Attracting Bluebirds- Mr. Emil Klanchar will present a slide show put together by the North American Bluebird Society. A timely program in anticipation of spring.

Bird seed update

Mixed bird seed is still available by calling Stuver's Riverside Nursery at 288-1759. Rememb-er, the mixed seed will appeal to 80% of all the winter birds. The seed we use is all top quality and at lower prices than last year. We have approximately 50 bags remaining which is 2500 pounds out of the total 24000 pounds we ordered. Needless to say the Stuver's have done a great job in selling the seed. The profits will be plowed into community (especially schools) education programs. Its a good feeling when you buy something and know the profits will be spend on conservation.

Sierra Club Meeting

Auduboners are invited to a movie on Coyotes, Tuesday, March 17, 7:30 pm at the Beth Sholom Temple. Coyotes, a lively subject of range debate, are no longer western species but are found from Pennsylvania throughout New England.

Welcome New Audubon Members

Michael A. Herman, 11 R. E. End Rd., Connellsville, Pa. 15425
Evelyn Pellow, 752 Central Ave., Johnstown, 15904
Charlotte-Phillipi, RD 6, Somerset, Pa. 15501
Felicia M. Suveges, 408 5th St., Windber, Pa. 15963
Nancy J. Clark, Box 125 R.D. 1, New Florence, Pa. 15944
Shirley Keim, 347 W. Race St., Johnstown, Pa. 15901
Keith A. Koss, 242 4th St., Johnstown, Pa. 15909
Marsha Krinsky, Box 454, Rd. 5, Johnstown, Pa. 15904
Patricia Marvin, 701 Mount Carmel Dr., Windber, Pa. 15963
Randy McKlveen, 114 Longanecker Dr., Connellsville 13423
James A. Miller, 652 Washington Box 268, Bolivar, Pa. 15923
Eleanor Romesberg, RD 2, Rockwood, 15537
Edith L. Rummel, Box 328, Rd. 1 Bolivar, Pa. 15923
Y. Skchafter, Water St., Rockwood, Pa. 15557
Louise Switzer, 103 Fury St., Connellsville, 15425
Theresa A. Yodzack, Box 378 Rd. 4, Johnstown, Pa. 15905
Harold C. Franks, 212 Demuth Rd., Connellsville, Pa. 15423
Robert Matera, 825-Main St., Windber, 15963
Wendell Haines, 1 Church St., Jennerstown a5546
Betty L. Shoup, RD 8, Johnstown, Pa. 15909
Betty L. White, 1466 Franklin St., Johnstown, Pa. 15905
Mrs. E. Clark Shaffer, 892 Susquehanna St. Ext., Johnstown, Pa. 15905
Brian R. Freiwald, 334 Arch St., Johnstown, Pa. 15905
Gloria Coleman, 88 Lindbergh Ave., Johnstown, Pa. 15905

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Newsletter of the
Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society

Volume 4

Number 2



March 1987

1986 Christmas Bird Count results by Ruth Sager

"We had a great time!" was the first greeting we heard as we piled out of our car at the home of Tom and Sally Dick following the 1986 Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 20th. That thought was echoed many times that evening as we enjoyed the post-bird count party and tallied the results of our day of birding. Our efforts came to a halt as good food filled our tummies, tired muscles relaxed, and the cozy warmth of the Dick home caused a drowsiness to fall over those who had tramped in the outdoors since early morning. A few hardy souls made a stab at owling on their way home, but their efforts were unfruitful. As visions of bird counts danced in my head as I tried to sleep that night, I wondered what we can do in 1987 to produce a better owl count.



When reports came in from 29 feeder watchers in the days following December 20th, it became apparent that the special effort to obtain more feeder counts had been very helpful. This was in spite of the fact that there was a general complaint that birds were noticeably absent from most feeder areas. The abundance of wild food, the moderate temperatures in December and the lack of snow cover were contributing to the dearth of feeder birds in all areas. As I write this report in early January, I know that more normal winter weather has since brought many more birds to our feeders. We will surely aim for more feeder counts again next year to see what happens with a different weather pattern.

The House Finch is now the predominant species at feeders, and the count of 1666 seems to indicate that they are here to stay and prolific in spite of any circumstance. The numbers of House Finches seem to have increased remarkably in the outlying areas, whereas they were chiefly a "city bird" several years ago. This year the Soap Hollow Road had particularly high counts. The House Sparrow count has remained high, so there is no evidence that they are being replaced by House Finches in this area.

A record was set again in 1986 when 24,370 individual birds topped the 1985 record of 19,948. The 61 species was just one short of the 1985 high of 62 species on count day. Eastern Meadowlark, Short-eared Owl, Killdeer, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Mockingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Shrike, and Northern Bobwhite were added for the first time. The Mourning Dove and Northern Cardinal joined the ranks of birds seen in COUNTS OVER 200. The number of waterfowl species was down somewhat. Winter finches were down again, with a surprising zero for Purple Finch and only 74 Evening Grosbeaks. Field, Fox, Swamp and White-crowned Sparrows were also entirely missed on the count. As we see the rise and fall of the appearance of possible species in our Christmas Bird Counts, after four years of participation it begins to look like we can expect a total in the 50-60 range. Considering the fact that 94 species have been recorded in the 4-year period and there are still some good possibilities, we should have more record-breaking years to come.



Although we tend to dwell on the statistics concerning birds and species seen, I believe that the real story lies in the statistics concerning OBSERVER INFORMATION. Even if the expertise of our birders cannot ever be evaluated, it is certainly a deciding factor and we expect that to improve year by year as we gain experience individually and learn to work together more effectively in teams. Competitive team spirit is surely a plus for the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society. A Christmas Bird Count sugar plum that danced in my head in the a.m. hours of December 21 concerned the dedication of those who joined us from far afield-- Ron Rovansek from Alaska, Stan Shetler from Washington D.C. and Mike Sankovich from Dover, Pa. The willingness to try something new paid off so well for Dr. Andrew Choby when he volunteered to lead Team #1. He and his team of Kevin Georg and Charles Voytko clicked off 14,091 crows from Sunnehanna Country Club as they came in to roost, another record-breaker over the previous high of 9440 in 1982.

This year there were only 36 field observers, compared to 40 last year, but they contributed more party hours on foot and by car. Considering the difference in weather statistics for the two years, this obviously had something to do with the time spent in the field. The 24-35 degree temperatures, 1-7 mph West winds, and 0-5" of snow on count day were quite a bit more pleasant than last year's 7-29 degrees temperatures, 5-30 mph West winds and 1-18" of snow.

In addition to my resolution about owling in 1987, there is the persistent New Year's wish for you that finches would be more distinguishable. One excited birder joyfully shared the information that the difference between Purple and House Finches clicked for him when he saw the comparison in "The Birds Around Us," an Ortho book. I will at least try to include sketches of these confusing species in next year's instructions for the count.



Not being overly fond of researching statistics, please take over from here for me and pursue the matter to your heart's content, whether for your own gratification or the perfection of the next Johnstown, Pa. Bird Count. When my brain returns to normal, I will be hashing over some news for you about the crucial year, 1987, of the Pa. Breeding Bird Atlas Project. Keep birding!

ONES OVER 200

OBSERVER INFORMATION

<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>		<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	
10,650	12,388	13,041	16,377	Am. Crow	43	39	53	65	Observers
982	1,193	620	1,174	Eur. Starling	27	51	22	29	Party Hours on Foot
63	0	1,180	74	Evening Grosbeak	38	39	42	54	" " by Car
533	277	950	613	Mallard	18	18	43	50	Party Hours at Feeders
410	930	496	863	House Sparrow	31	54	28	21	Party Miles on Foot
392	393	481	425	Black-capped Chickadee	387	476	526	522	" " by Car
270	268	456	1,666	House Finch	0	0	2	2	Party Hours Owling
246	249	544	522	Dark-eyed Junco					
228	246	352	435	Rock Dove					
200	1*	343	272	Horned Lark					
56	78	174	533	Mourning Dove					
115	99	185	230	N. Cardinal					

(Team leaders are underscored. Feeder watchers are asterisked.)

PARTICIPANTS IN 1986 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: *Richard A. & *Richard D. Akers, Cindy Alt, Doris Brown, Andrew Choby, Chris, Dwight, Tom and *Sally Dick, *Albert, David, *Scott, *Thelma, & Wanetta Escherich, Brian Freiwald, Kevin Georg, *Rosalind Gordon, *Mr. & Mrs. James E. Griffith, *George and Margaret Haines, Neil Harvey, *Henry and Velva Idzkowsky, *Donald Kreutzberger, *John & *Ruth Lehman, Joan Lohr, Alberta Long, Iris Marr, James Mayer, *Vernon & *Pat Mock, Dave Mikesic, *Robert Mulvihill, Richard Murphy, *George & *Helen Nicely, *Allan & *Alyce Ober, *Theresa Pekala, Jim Rocco, Wayne Rosenberger, *Dean & *James Ross, Ann, Nancy & Ron Rovansek, Glenn & Ruth Sager, Mike Sankovich, Stanwyn Shetler, Eileen & Eric Stuver, Mike & William Tarpley, *Ann & *Marty Torledsky, Bill Turner, Charles Voytko, *Jeannie & *Kenneth Weible, *Dorothy Williamson, George & Michael Wolfe.

<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>		<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	
5	1	2	2	Com. Loon	38	44	133	170	Blue Jay
5	0	0	0	Horned Grebe	10,650	12,388	13,041	16,377	Am. Crow
1*	8	9	2	Pied-billed Grebe	1*	0	0	0	Com. Raven
1*	0	1	0	Great Blue Heron	392	393	481	425	Black-capped Chickadee
1*	0	0	0	Tundra Swan	69	69	199	135	Tufted Titmouse
9	0	2	3	Mute Swan	9	3	14	5	Red-breasted Nuthatch
9	1	37	65	Canada Goose	67	80	71	137	White-breasted Nuthatch
1*	0	1	0	Wood Duck	2	1	2	11	Brown Creeper
1	0	0	0	Green-winged Teal	1*	0	1*	6	Carolina Wren
8	8	17	52	Black Duck	1	0	0	0	Winter Wren
538	277	950	613	Mallard	6	21	33	20	Golden-crowned Kinglet
3	7	0	0	N. Pintail	0	0	0	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
0	1	0	0	Am. Wigeon	8	7	0	5	E. Bluebird
5	3	15	4	Canvasback	1*	0	0	0	Thrush, sp.
0	0	4	0	Redhead	1*	18	3	1	Am. Robin
0	1	1*	0	Ring-necked Duck	0	0	0	1	N. Mockingbird
0	0	15	4	Lesser Scaup	0	1*	0	0	Brown Thrasher
6	1*	1*	0	Com. Goldeneye	32	19	8	64	Cedar Waxwing
13	9	1	0	Bufflehead	0	0	0	1	N. Shrike
1	5	7	6	Hooded Merganser	982	1193	620	1174	Eur. Starling
0	1	1	0	Com. Merganser	115	99	185	230	N. Cardinal
0	2	0	0	Red-breasted Merganser	0	1	1	0	Rufous-sided Towhee
0	13	2	2	Ruddy Duck	86	41	163	115	Am. Tree Sparrow
0	2	0	1	N. Harrier	4	11	10	0	Field Sparrow
1	1*	6	2	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	0	1	0	Fox Sparrow
4	0	2	4	Cooper's Hawk	31	17	41	43	Song Sparrow
1	2	0	0	N. Goshawk	2	0	0	0	Swamp Sparrow
4	18	18	12	Red-tailed Hawk	25	104	32	33	White-throated Sparrow
0	1	0	0	Buteo, sp.	0	0	1*	0	White-crowned Sparrow
0	1*	0	0	Rough-legged Hawk	0	6	0	0	Sparrow, sp.
7	8	7	5	Am. Kestrel	246	249	544	522	Dark-eyed Junco
0	0	2	0	Hawk, sp.	3	0	1*	0	Red-winged Blackbird
2	5	1	5	Ring-necked Pheasant	0	0	0	21	E. Meadowlark
2	13	5	2	Ruffed Grouse	0	1*	1	1	Com. Grackle
0	0	5	1	Wild Turkey	0	0	12	1*	Brown-headed Cowbird
0	0	0	5	N. Bobwhite	0	0	0	1	Blackbird, sp.
0	0	0	2	Killdeer	97	84	42	0	Purple Finch
1*	0	6	0	Am. Coot	270	268	456	1666	House Finch
0	0	10	0	Ring-billed Gull	14	0	0	0	Com. Redpoll
0	0	0	1	Gull, sp.	7	0	4	8	Pine Siskin
228	246	352	435	Rock Dove	103	31	95	120	Am. Goldfinch
56	78	174	533	Mourning Dove	68	0	1180	74	Evening Grosbeak
1*	0	2	1*	Screech Owl	410	930	496	863	House Sparrow
1*	1	1*	5	Great-Horned Owl					
2	1*	1	0	Barred Owl	14,913	16,861	19,948	24,370	Individual Birds
0	0	0	1	Short-eared Owl					
0	0	1	0	Owl, sp.	57	52	62	61	Species on Count Day
0	0	0	1	Belted Kingfisher	69	59	68	63	Species in Count Week
0	1	3	0	Red-headed Woodpecker					
1*	0	3	4	Red-bellied Woodpecker					
1	0	1	1	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker					
51	58	56	74	Downy Woodpecker					
8	10	17	12	Hairy Woodpecker					
2	2	0	6	N (yellow sh.) Flicker					
2	1	1	3	Pileated Woodpecker					
1	1	0	0	E. Wood Pewee					
1	0	0	0	E. Phoebe					
200	1*	343	272	Horned Lark					

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

1986: Tussey Mountain Autumn Hawk Watch Results

By Michael A. Sankovich

Autumn 1986 was a banner year for you chapter sponsored hawk watch. Let me begin by stating that this will be my last report to you on Tussey, due to my relocation to the York area.

This project, during the last three years has been like a baby to me. One which I have had the pleasure of nurturing from infancy to maturity. One which has gone from obscurity to one of the most important in the Northeastern United States. Until 1984, no seasonal records were kept on Tussey, or on any other of the continuous Appalachian ridges west of the Tuscarora. The Western Appalachians were a "Black Hole" of hawk migration data. Is there a major movement of raptors migrating through the Western ridges, similar to the well documented ones in the East? One thing that has been shown during the past three years is that, yes, there are significant numbers of migrating raptors in the West. These are the birds which do not filter through the ridges to be counted at other ridges in the East. Unlike other hawk watches, these birds are probably counted for the first time on Tussey.



Winds from the West were predominant during the month of September. Consequently, a major flight of Broadwings never materialized. Our only major flight occurred on September 11th, with only sixty-one birds. Better numbers were recorded from sites to the East, probably due to the Western winds, moving them toward that direction. However, while Broad-winged Hawks may make up the largest numbers at other sites, in other years, Broad-wing numbers are insignificant to the total count due to their unpredictability. They never seem to show up when they are expected, or where they are expected. Taking this into consideration, we had a great year!

Sharp-shinned hawks seemed to make up for the lack of Broad-wings. The flight began on September 22nd, with thirty, and continued through the 15th of October, with the best flights on the 5th and 11th with 75 and 60 birds. Coopers Hawks were in good numbers with a total of 91, the fifth of October was spectacular with a flight of 25 birds. Northern Goshawks were showing an increase from last year by 33 percent. Both Peregrine Falcon and Merlin numbers were up by five each. American Kestrels were about in line with 1985, down by only one. The number of Red-shouldered hawks increased by 57%, with some spectacular close up views. Red-tailed hawks more than made up for the Broadwing shortage, with their numbers increasing by 348. Northern Harriers were down by six, while the number of Ospreys increased by almost fifty percent.

Golden Eagles again highlighted this season, with thirty-one birds. The largest push was on the thirteenth of November, with the arrival of the first bitter cold front of the entire season. The preceding day brought two adult Bald Eagles and three Golden Eagles, along with spectacular flights of Snow Geese (1,600), and Tundra Swans (1,000). That next day with strong Northwest winds, came ten Golden Eagles, 250 Canada Geese, and 32 Tundra Swans. Golden Eagles were up by almost 50%, with another two birds counted over Everett on days when the watch was not occupied. Had we had full coverage during November, it is not inconceivable that we might have had close to fifty Golden Eagles. Rough-legged Hawks were again absent this year from the site, however, two birds were seen further up the ridge to the North. This may have been because of their preference for the Valley areas.

Where do we go from here? In 1987 the watch will be in the hands of Tom Dick. This does not mean that Tom will be doing it all by himself, but that the success or failure of the hawkwatch will depend on you the membership, and your cooperation. This project is an opportunity to participate in the gathering of scientific data, and to learn and sharpen your identification skills. You the volunteers of yesterday, today, and tomorrow have the power to make or break the project. Your participation is always appreciated and needed.

Let me take time here to Thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to serve you during the past three years. Since then, Audubon has opened many new doors to me. It has allowed me to meet many new people and make many new friendships. I have been able to initiate new projects and see them through. Allegheny Plateau Audubon helped me to get involved. That is what I am asking of you, GET INVOLVED!!!

Many thanks to the volunteers of 1986, without whom we could not have been as successful as we were. Tom and Sally Dick, Tim Fox, Kevin Georg, Dave Kyler, Dave Mikesic, Doug Radziewicz, Ruth Sager and Lynn Sanderson, you have my utmost appreciation for a job well done. Thank you is also in order to the Pennsylvania Game Commission and its District Game Protectors and the Land Manager of Bedford County.

Species	1984	1985	1986
Black Vulture	5	8	5
Turkey Vulture	60	200	172
Northern Goshawk	1	6	9
Sharp-shinned Hawk	208	433	579
Coopers Hawk	25	84	91
Red-tailed Hawk	332	546	894
Red-shouldered Hawk	23	28	65
Broad-winged Hawk	201	443	262
Golden Eagle	9	16	31
Bald Eagle	4	3	2
Osprey	22	38	64
Northern Harrier	39	50	44
Peregrine Falcon	4	7	12
Merlin	0	3	8
American Kestrel	11	28	27
Unidentified	21	35	57
<hr/>			
Totals	965	1928	2322
Days	40	45	66
Hours	175.62	231.61	365.27

Ed. note: Watch out for Tom Dick this fall, he doesn't care if you know a duck from an eagle, he wants you! Don't look around, and headaches won't work either, if you're not careful, you, the members might find yourself sitting on a mountain contemplating hawks.

**Comments on a conference entitled "Raptors and Public Education," by
Mike Jackson**

(Ed. note: Mike's comments, near the end, only point out the dominant human attitude toward birds of prey.)

I recently attended a Pennsylvania Raptor Conference entitled, "Raptors and Public Education." It was held in Bethlehem, Pa. on the campus of Moravian College. There were sixteen different speakers who expounded on their knowledge of raptors and education. The keynote speaker was Roger Tory Peterson. His speech was unique in the sense that he had never before spoken about raptors by showing the artists' involvement. He mentioned that no birds are drawn more than the birds of prey.

Each speaker explained the need for education of the public in learning about the important role of birds of prey in the environment; the need to protect them and their habitat. Most speakers noted the frustration of speaking to the particular group of 250 people who were present; those who are already educated and concerned about birds of prey. Many free materials were available to share with others who were willing to spread the word. The people who need to be educated are often difficult to "convert" to our way of thinking.

The topics and speaker's field of specialization were varied- ranging from a high school student to many speakers with Ph.D.'s in their fields. Numerous speakers without Ph.D.'s were authorities in their own right of the many years on concentrated research on a particular bird of prey.

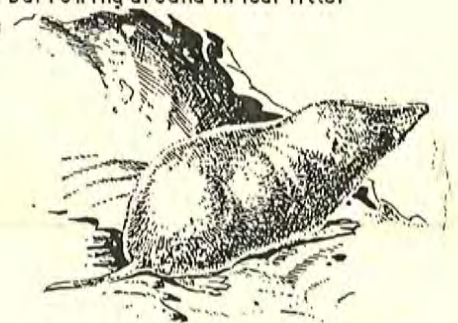
Perhaps the part of the conference which aroused the most excitement was an announcement that followed a presentation by Gerard W. Wendt, from the Pa. Game Commission. Donald Heintzelman, author of several fieldguides on birds of prey, announced that the state game farm (which raises pheasants) has been setting pole traps at that facility! Photographic evidence was obtained and the state and federal authorities were notified.

Naturalist Corner

Shrews in Winter by Dennis McNair

If you think its hard for you to stay warm during a walk in the woods on a winter day, imagine how it must be for Pennsylvania's most common mammal, the short-tailed shrew, Blarina brevicauda. This creature weighs in at about 1/2 oz. soaking wet, which means that its body mass, where heat can be generated, is quite small relative to its surface area, where heat can be given off. (Biologists call this the square/cube relationship: as animals increase in length their surface area increases by the square of that increment and their body mass by the cube.) So while the woodchuck is hibernating and the black bear is sleeping in its semi-hibernating winter torpor, the short-tailed shrew is busy foraging for enough fuel to make it through another 24 hours.

Shrews are secretive animals and, even though they are ubiquitous in our woods, you may never have seen a live one. They live in a special microhabitat, burrowing around in leaf litter or loose soil feeding on worms, insects, salamanders, beechnuts or just about anything else they run across. Sometimes they manage to subdue larger prey, such as mice, by virtue of a fairly unique attribute. They are one of three known species of mammals with a poisonous bite. Poison glands associated with their lower incisors produce a neurotoxin which will lower the metabolic rate and neural activity of their prey to the point that they effectively are in a coma.



This allows the shrew to stash the victim somewhere and come back later to feed on it when pickings are slim elsewhere. Don't look for shrew-bite kits in the drug stores before your next hike; their teeth and jaw muscles are unlikely to allow them to break human skin. You'd probably drop the animal before it could bite you anyway. When disturbed they emit a very loud, high pitched screech reminiscent of fingernails being drawn across a blackboard. If that didn't get you the smell would. They produce a musky secretion from skin glands on the flanks and belly that smells like something that's been in the back of your refrigerator for a long time.

Dr. Joe Merritt, the director of the Carnegie Museum's biological field station at Powdermill Nature Reserve, has been working on short-tailed shrews, and other small mammals, for several years. He's found that many small mammals huddle together in the winter to conserve heat but that the shrew has such a vile temper that two of them can't even cooperate temporarily to beat the cold. They live solitarily in softball sized nests beneath the leaf litter. When the temperature above them is well below zero, the temperature in their nests may be as much as 20 degrees F due to the insulation of snow and litter and the bacterial and fungal activity occurring in the soil.

He has also found that shrews are very capable of using a special tissue called brown fat to produce heat on demand. He suspects that the shrews are actually torpid much of the time (torpor being a period during which the body temperature and metabolic rate are allowed to drop below normal) but can become active quickly by utilizing their brown fat mechanism. According to Dr. Merritt's data, these shrews actually gain weight over the winter, unlike most small mammals. They are such voracious eaters that one has been recorded to eat three times its weight in beetle grubs in a single 24 hour period. This fuels a tiny furnace racing along with a heartbeat of 760 beats per minute and 164 breaths per minute recorded while the shrew was anaesthetized, i.e. inactive.

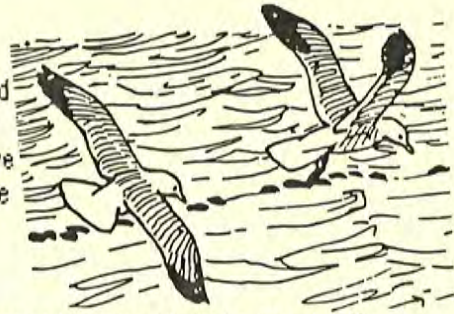
All this fascinating information is easy to relate but very hard to come by. Elaborate techniques for measuring oxygen use, telemetry using tiny radio transmitters sewn in the shrews abdominal cavities, and simply finding these secretive but feisty little guys present considerable challenges to research. Dr. Merritt's most recent publications expanding on the information given here can be found in the latest issue (Jan/Feb) of Carnegie Magazine and in the Journal of Mammalogy, Vol. 67, No. 3. This summer his guide to the mammals of Pennsylvania will be published by the Univ. of Pittsburgh Press.

Corkscrew Swamp

Sally and Tom Dick recently toured Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Florida. Cypress swamp and prairie characterize this ten thousand acre sanctuary. They discovered that Corkscrew rangers spotted a pair of Florida Panthers (Felis concolor coryi) within the sanctuary and observations suggested a possible breeding. Sound unusual? Perhaps not, or at least till you realize the entire state may only have as few as 30 to 40 panthers. Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission began studies in 1981. They formulated a field team consisting of a veterinarian, biologists and an expert tracker with "cat dogs." The tracker and cat dogs were brought in from Texas. On a perfect day the hounds were released in the Fakahatchee Strand and Big Cypress National Preserve. Once the dogs find a panther scent the chase is short, in this case a cat was treed within 15 minutes. The tracker then called in other team members by radio. Once an imperial observation was made that the cat was not a pregnant female the cat was immobilized with a tranquilizer dart. A crash bag was placed under the tree to prevent injury. The animal was than carefully examined by the veterinarian and a radio collar applied. This procedure was repeated on 13 other animals and the information gained from their movements within the state led to changes in interstate highway design and the lowering of speed limits on highways that cross the panther's habitat (U.S. 41 and Fla. 29 and 84). Engineers have redesigned Interstate 75 to include several underpasses in areas frequented by panthers in an effort to keep the animals off the super-highway. The demise of the Florida Panther is the result of a heavy migration of snow-birds (Homo sapiens) that replace wildlife habitat for retirement communities.

See What You Missed!

Our annual excursion to coastal Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia was another outing success story. Our group consisted of Pam and John Boderocco, Bruce Courter, Kevin Georg, and Tom Dick. It worked out that everything we expected to see, we didn't, and everything we didn't expect to see, we did. Here are some of the salient points. Our trip started in Delaware at Bombay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR); there, quartering the fields were numerous harriers and Red-tailed Hawks.



Waterfowl was scarce since the impoundments were frozen. Bruce Courter kicked a brush pile and out came a Red Fox. Another treat was a Snowy Owl sitting in the middle of a corn field, quietly and comfortably, preening and sleeping. Continuing south along coastal route 1 we made many brief stops picking up assorted shorebirds such as Oystercatchers, Ruddy turnstones and Purple Sandpipers. South of Ocean City Inlet a Merlin was sighted perched on a telephone wire and a Barred Owl perched on a corn stalk. What was the owl doing? Just looking around!

On to Chincoteague where we discovered two Great Horned Owls perched in Loblolly Pines being mobbed by crows. At Chincoteague NWR the water was open and covered with waterfowl. Our species list was climbing. A flat sea from a west wind enabled us to pick out many common and Red-throated Loons fishing and loafing offshore. We picked up a fellow Allegheny Plateau Auduboner at Chincoteague: Jill VanScoyc. Jill is working with the refuge and she accompanied us to our next destination, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. With permits we visited the bridge tunnel artificial islands hoping for ocean species (pelagics). Enroute we saw a mature Bald Eagle and at the islands a Northern Gannet plunge diving for fish.

The following day, after a quick last minute tour of Chincoteague we headed off to Blackwater. At the town of Venice, near the mighty Nanitoke River we saw an immature Bald Eagle collide with a mosaic of high tension powerlines, fortunately, the bird survived, privately I wondered how many eagles might be killed this way. At Blackwater NWR and vicinity we saw 7 more Bald Eagles and an Immature Golden Eagle. We ended our adventure on the Choptank River looking over a raft of several hundred Canvasback Ducks. Our total count was a respectable 115.

Local Birding Information:

Locally, some feeders are productive and others are not. Ruth Sager had 20 Robins in her yard on February 12, she also reports occasional Pine Siskins, Evening Grosbeaks and a regular group of 5 Purple Finches. Dr. Sanderson has a pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches regularly visiting his feeder; his home is surrounded by a hemlock forest. The Idzkowski's have a Ring-necked Pheasant feeding daily at their ground feeder, they live in a suburban area well away from pheasant habitat. At the feeder of Sally and Tom Dick are 10 Common Redpolls feeding with a group of 80 house finches. Dave Kyler reports flocks of up to 100 redpolls in the Tyrone area, he also states that many feeders in the Huntingdon area are being visited by redpolls. Elder Ridge, a large reclaimed stripmine, continues to be a good source of wintering Short-eared Owls, Rough-legged Hawks, and occasional Northern Shrikes. Directions to Elder Ridge can be obtained from Kevin Georg or Tom Dick. One unusual sighting worth commenting on was a confirmed sighting of two Bald Eagles at North Fork Dam on January seventh and eighth.

(If you have any information regarding wildlife please notify Tom Dick)

Upcoming Events

Please note that trip leaders should be notified if you plan to attend an outing. If possible alert trip leaders early. Many trips are cancelled (Crash Chesapeake Bay Trip) due to lack of early notification.

March 17 Sierra Club Meeting: Auduboners are invited to a movie on coyotes at 7:30 pm at the Beth Shalom Temple. Coyotes now occur in Pennsylvania and are well established in New England.

March 19 meeting: Slide/lecture presentation by Mike Ondik. Mike is a well known rehabilitator, lecturer, and naturalist. For years, Mike worked with the Penn State Deer Herd. Mike is also an excellent photographer and he makes for an exciting evening.

April 4: See Spring waterfowl with Tom Dick. Meet at Abex driveway near the Quemahoning Dam at 8:00 am. This will be a morning tour of the following areas: Quemahoning Dam, Lasky's Pond, Samii's Swamp, and Somerset Lake. Spotting scopes will be available for distant viewing. This is a peak time for waterfowl in breeding plumage.

April 16 Meeting: 7:30 Dan Brauning will present an exciting slide /lecture presentation on the plant provinces of the state and their influence on bird distributions. Dan is in charge of the breeding bird survey for the state. We encourage all members to attend, this important meeting will be attended by other Audubon groups and breeding bird survey participants from other counties. This will also be an organizational meeting for the breeding bird survey. The meeting will be in the Engineering and Science Auditorium.

April 19: Spring Hawk Watch at Tussey Mountain with Kevin Georg. This is a warm time to be enjoying migrating hawks. The deflected wind from ridges supports the return of Ospreys, Eagles, and other raptors. An always successful outing (weather dependent, of course). Contact Kevin at 288-1763.

May 8 and 9 Continuing Education Program: This is another program sponsored and run by both our Audubon Society and the Conservation District. This program emphasizes natural history through hiking, wild plant identification, bird identification and introductory astronomy. Lectures will be given on the evening of May 8 with all outdoor activities on May 9. Rain or shine this program goes. For more information contact Joe Emerick or Tom Dick.

May 10: Century Bird Count: The "Christmas Bird Count" of Spring, when all the birds are back and some are migrating through. The weather is generally pleasant and the staging area is Shawnee Park. Over a hundred species should be counted. This is an all-day invigorating Spring experience that no one should miss. Phone Tom Dick(266-7912) or Charles Voytko(623-2747) for details.

May 15, 16, and 17 Whale Watch Weekend: Each year at this time the American Littoral Society runs a natural history excursion to Cape Cod with the emphasis on migrating whales. Since Tom Dick is president of the littoral society and trip leader for this event he extends an invitation to members of the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society to join. This is an action packed weekend with lectures and studies of rocky shore inhabitants, dune botany, birding, and 8 hours of boat time looking for Humpback, Finback, Northern Right Whales, Dolphins, and pelagic birds. Contact Tom Dick for details. This trip fills fast so early notification is important.

The folks running the show

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Recording Secretary: The David Escherichs (893-5092) Box 34 RD2, Stoystown 15563
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Rare Bird Alert: Kevin Georg (288-1763) 219 Columbia St. Johnstown, 15905
Newsletter/Outings: Dr. Tom Dick (266-7912) 1003 Eisenhower Blvd., Johnstown, 15904
Membership: Rick Sell (266-2734) RD 2, Box 475, Johnstown, 15904
Academic Consultant: Dr. Neil Woffinden (467-5738) 1775 Regal Dr. Johnstown 15904
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Education: Joe Emerick (472-7540) Box 235 Ebensburg, 15931
Bird Counts: Ruth and Glenn Sager (798-3242) RD1, Box 176-B, Hooversville 15936
Stream Committee: Tim Fox (536-5081) 145 Blough St. Johnstown, 15902

Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society
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Thomas & Sally Dick
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Chickadee Chatter

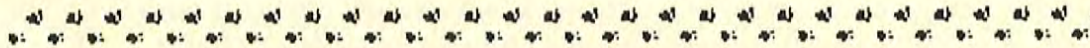
Newsletter of the
Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society



Volume 4

Number 3

May 1987



Special Breeding Bird Survey Issue

Ed. Note: Read on about this very, very important effort. But first a few thoughts on who is qualified to work on this project. After much celebration I've decided that the only requirement is to be a member of the human race. Good News! I reviewed our membership list and found you all qualify. Congratulations! The question is: why a major effort to determine the breeding ranges of our native birds? Explanations are sometimes best done by example. Recently your editor received a flier from the Purple Martin Conservation Association (PMCA) and guess what? The Purple Martin is in trouble throughout most of its range. We know this because of breeding bird surveys. This once extremely abundant bird is declining due to nest-site competitors and pesticides. Well, now that we know we can try to correct the situation. Coming to the rescue in this instance is the PMCA and they want your help. Look for these birds: report colonies. You may want to build boxes.



write to : **Purple Martin Conservation Association**
Institute for Research and Community Services,
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania,
Edinboro, Pa. 16444

Species Maps and Henslows Sparrows

By Ruth Sager

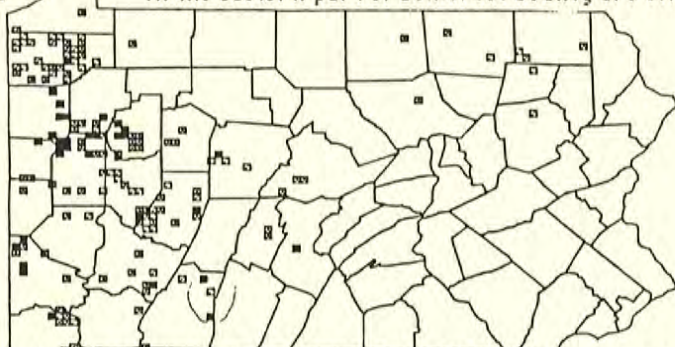
Species maps are an eye-catching summaries of results involving many people spending many hours in many places doing Breeding Bird Survey work. These maps are now being produced for and by the survey. When finished the maps and other information will be published in a book form called an atlas. Dan Brauning, the Project Coordinator, reported in March, 1987 that working drafts of over 100 species had been produced.

They are very interesting to peruse for information as to distribution of individual species. They are also of help to coordinators in checking whether species are being missed by atlasers (volunteers doing the survey) in their region. Obviously, if species appear on maps of surrounding regions, there is a great possibility that they will be found in our regions.

The first of these species maps were scrutinized one map after another by a core group of coordinators at a meeting of coordinators in Lock Haven on November 8, 1986. When the Atlas work is all done and all maps are completed, their real value will be realized. They will be reviewed for countless years to come by experts and scholars in all natural science fields, by engineers of projects responsible for complying with environmental regulations, by Game Commission personnel, by land management officers, by legislators from local to national levels, etc. It is impossible to estimate the value of this first effort to collect information on breeding birds for a statewide data bank. It will probably be used in the future in ways that are incomprehensible at this time. Until now, Pennsylvania has had very sketchy scientific records of our breeding bird population, but the picture has already changed drastically because of Atlas efforts. As environmental concerns mount, the records will become increasingly important.

In time, you'll appreciate this work when we include a map copy of our chapter mascot, the Black-capped Chickadee.

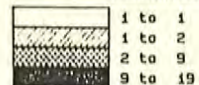
We do have a local but secretive bird that is listed as a threatened species and its this bird, the Henslow Sparrow, we want to discuss. We have included a map of the Henslow Sparrow distribution for your information. You will note that it has been found almost exclusively in Western Pennsylvania. Most sightings are in **stripmined land**. The two "confirmed nesting" records in Windber and New Baltimore Quads and an "unconfirmed" sighting in the Central City Quad in the eastern part of Somerset County are circled on the map.



Henslow's Sparrow

1986 Atlas results

Breeding codes



We should all be watching for these birds of special concern. In the mid-1970's the Sagers had them nesting on their farm at Hooversville. Richard Mock found them nesting on the hillside near his home in Davidsville. The atlas is an excellent opportunity to join the quest and determine the present status in the Allegheny Plateau area for this species whose nesting is so dependent upon a special habitat of neglected weedy fields, wet meadows and grasslands. Cambria County is a wide-open field for possible sightings within the range of previous records. Are they still nesting in that county? Let's make a special effort to find out. Are they beyond the Allegheny Plateau in Bedford County? Let's make a special effort to find out about that too.

If you think sparrows are a little tricky for identification, remember that although they are a secretive field bird, Henslow's have a very odd song. The song is weak, but it repeated regularly, often late in the evening and on into the night. Once the dull "sslick" is identified, you should listen for more of the same, since they nest in colonies. At least ten birds were located at one time last summer in the New Baltimore Quad.

Stop!! Look!! Listen!! -----especially in stripmined areas.

The Breeding Bird Survey in Pennsylvania: a retrospective look.

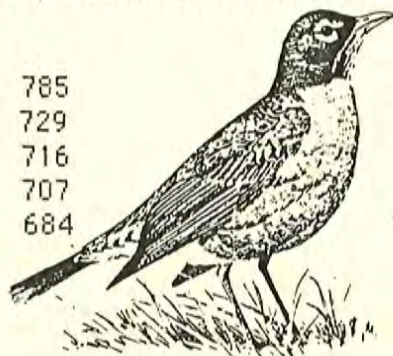
Realize we have this year and the next before finishing the survey, let's look at some of the salient features of the past 3 years.

1984

300 atlasers were in the field spending 8230 hours racking up over 40,000 breeding records involving 190 species. Listen below, out of 909 blocks, are the top ten species:

-- (I'm the winner)

1. American Robin 785
2. Song Sparrow 729
3. Gray Catbird 716
4. American Crow 707
5. Blue Jay 684



6. Common Yellowthroat 679
7. Chipping Sparrow 677
8. Indigo Bunting 674
9. Northern Cardinal 669
10. American Goldfinch 669

Reported highlights of 1984 were as follows: Singing male Clay-colored Sparrows in Butler County - Upland Plovers and Grasshopper, Vesper and Henslow's Sparrows nesting in reclaimed stripmines of Western Pennsylvania - Hooded Mergansers, previously reported nesting only in Crawford County, discovered nesting in Warren and Washington Counties- Common Mergansers documented in all of the state's major northern watersheds as nesting birds.

1985

Over 800 atlasers in the field collected over 50,000 reports, with 198 species. Obviously, this is result of climbing enthusiasm. Saw-whet Owls, tiny little owls, which were reported nesting in Pa. only a few times previously, appeared throughout the northern counties, with one confirmed nesting. By the end of the next year they were found in 24 counties and confirmed nesting in five counties. Western Somerset County and Fayette County each had two sightings, one of which was a "probable" nesting category.



Jackdaws hit the North American Rare Bird Alert and birders came from miles around during the summer of 1985 for their first look at a pair of Jackdaws. They were apparently unsuccessful in their nesting effort at Lewisburg Penitentiary in Union County. The Pa. Breeding Bird Atlas recorded the first known nesting of these European vagrants in North America. Over 30 of these birds had been seen the previous year along the St. Lawrence River in Quebec, Canada.

This year Chuck-will's-widow turned up in Indiana and Franklin County. Chuck-will's-widow is a southern species that might be extending its range. The first suspected nesting of Black Rail in Lancaster County, attempted breeding of Clay-colored Sparrow and Western Meadowlark, and Sedge Wren were identified in three Western Pa. counties. A confirmed nesting of a King Rail and three Black terns added to the exciting Atlas discoveries.

New breeding locations were found for the "threatened" Least Bittern in Bucks, Huntingdon and Indiana Counties, including Raystown Reservoir, Yellow Creek State Park and game lands in Buck's County.

Dickcissel, a mid-western bird, was confirmed in one block for the third year, this year in Adams County. New Breeding sites were also added for Henslow's Sparrows. The very rare Long-eared Owl was reported from only 8 blocks.

The **top 5 Warblers** included: 1. Common Yellowthroat, 2. Yellow Warbler 3. Ovenbird, 4. Am. Redstart, 5. Black and white Warbler.

One oddity was a Wood Duck and Eastern Kingbird were found nesting in the same box.

1986

800 atlasers spent 15,000 hours collecting over 60,000 records, 20% more than in 1985.

For the first time in 70 years, Ospreys were confirmed nesting in Pa. Two pairs of reintroduced birds nested in the Poconos and another pair in the lower Susquehanna River in Lancaster County.

Upland Sandpipers, nesters in pasture land and vulnerable to agricultural practices are listed as "confirmed" nesters in western Somerset County and a "probable" in Bedford County in 1986. These birds are listed as "threatened". To date no Bewick's Wrens have turned up anywhere in Pa.

We've been asked to cooperate in reporting Barn Owl information to the Pa. Barn Owl Project. This organization aims to increase the population and reestablish this diminishing species in suitable habitat in their former range. The Barn Owl is in trouble over much of its former range, being listed as a "species of special concern" in Pennsylvania. Missouri, Iowa, and Ohio have listed them as being in danger of extinction. They were reported by Atlasers on the western border of Somerset County and in the Schellsburg area of Bedford County in 1986.

It was reported that Atlas data is now being used in other important studies. The Nature Conservancy is using data to protect habitat used by rare species, such as the Northern Goshawk. The Pa. Game Commission is now using it in designating its new list of endangered and threatened species.

Birds seen in Cambria, Somerset and Bedford Counties from 1968 to 1987

Common loon	Wild Turkey	Oliv.-sided Flycat.	Yell.-throated Warbler
Red-throated Loon	Virginia Rail	Horned lark	Yell.-rumped Warbler
Horned Grebe	Sora Rail	Tree Swallow	Black-throated Green
Red-necked Grebe	Florida Moorhen	Bank Swallow	Cerulean Warbler
Double-cr. Cormorant	Am. Coot	Rough-winged Sw.	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Semipalmated Plover	Barn Swallow	Bay-breasted Warbler
Cattle Egret	Killdeer	Cliff Swallow	Blackpole Warbler
Great Egret	Black-bellied Plover	Purple Martin	Pine Warbler
Snowy Egret	Upland Sandpiper	Bluejay	Kirtland's Warbler
Black-cr. Night Heron	Greater Yellowlegs	Northern Raven	Prairie Warbler
Glossy Ibis	Lesser yellowlegs	American Crow	Palm Warbler
Tundra Swan	Solitary Sandpiper	Black-capped Chick.	Ovenbird
Canada Goose	Spotted Sandpiper	Carolina Chickadee	Northern Waterthrush
Brant	American Woodcock	Tufted Titmouse	Louisiana Waterthrush
White-fronted Goose	Common Snipe	White-br. Nuthatch	Kentucky Warbler
Snow Goose	Short-billed Dowitcher	Red-br. Nuthatch	Connecticut Warbler
"Blue" Goose	Sanderling	Brown Creeper	Mourning Warbler
Mallard	Least Sandpiper	House Wren	Common yellowthroat
Am. Black Duck	Baird's Sandpiper	Winter Wren	Yellow-breasted Chat
Gadwall	Pectoral Sandpiper	Bewick's Wren	Hooded Warbler
Common Pintail	Whimbrel	Carolina Wren	Wilson's Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Herring Gull	Nor. Mockingbird	Canada Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Ring-billed Gull	Gray Catbird	American Redstart
Am. Wigeon	Bonapartes Gull	Brown Thrasher	House Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Forster's Tern	Am. Robin	Bobolink
Wood Duck	Common Tern	Wood Thrush	Eastern Meadowlark
Redhead	Caspian Tern	Hermit Thrush	Red-winged Blackbird
Ring-necked Duck	Black Tern	Swainson's Thrush	Orchard Oriole
Canvasback	Northern Phalarope	Gray-cheeked Thr.	Northern Oriole
Greater Scaup	Mourning Dove	Veery	Rusty Blackbird
Lesser Scaup	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Eastern Bluebird	Common Grackle
Common Goldeneye	Black-billed Cuckoo	Blue-gray Gnatcat.	Brown-headed Cowbird
Bufflehead	Barn Owl	Golden-cr. Kinglet	Scarlet Tanager
Old Squaw	Great Horned Owl	Ruby-cr. Kinglet	Northern Cardinal
White-winged Scoter	Common Screech Owl	Water Pipit	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Ruddy Duck	Barred Owl	Cedar Waxwing	Blue Grosbeak
Hooded Merganser	Short-eared Owl	Northern Shrike	Pine Grosbeak
Common Merganser	Saw-whet Owl	European Starling	Indigo Bunting
Red-breasted Merg.	Whip-poor-will	White-eyed Vireo	Evening Grosbeak
Turkey Vulture	Chimney Swift	Yellow-thr. Vireo	Purple Finch
Black Vulture	Ruby-thr. Hum.-bird	Solitary Vireo	House Finch
Northern Goshawk	Belted Kingfisher	Red-eyed Vireo	Common Redpole
Sharpshinned Hawk	Common Flicker	Philadelphia Vireo	Pine Siskin
Coopers' Hawk	Pileated Woodpecker	Warbling Vireo	American Goldfinch
Red-tailed Hawk	Northern Three-toed	Black & White Warb.	Red Crossbill
Red-shouldered Hawk	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Worm-eating Warb.	White-winged Crossbill
Broad-winged Hawk	Red-headed Woodpecker	Golden-winged Warb.	Rufous-sided Towhee
Rough-legged Hawk	Yellow-bellied	Blue-winged Warb.	Savannah Sparrow
Golden Eagle	Hairy Woodpecker	Brewster's Warb.	Grasshopper Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Downy Woodpecker	Tennessee Warb.	Henslow's Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Eastern Kingbird	Orange-cr. Warb.	Vesper Sparrow
Osprey	Great-cr. Flycatcher	Nashville Warb.	Junco (northern & Oregon)
Peregrine Falcon	Eastern Phoebe	Nor. Parula Warb.	Amer. Tree Sparrow
Merlin	Yellow-bellied Flycat.	Yellow Warbler	Chipping Sparrow
American Kestrel	Acadian Flycatcher	Magnolia Warbler	Field Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Willow Flycatcher	Cape May Warb.	White-crowned Sparrow
Common Bobwhite	Alder Flycatcher	Blk.-thr. Blue Warb.	White-throated Sparrow
Chukar	Least Flycatcher	Cerulean Warb.	Fox Sparrow
Ring-necked Pheasant	Eastern Pewee	Blackburnian W.	Lincoln's Sparrow

(Continued)

Continuing Birds seen in Cambria, Somerset, and Bedford Counties: To be added to the list are Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Snow Bunting. The following supplied the records: Bob Mulvehill, Tom Dick, Lynn Sanderson, David Milliron, Charles Voytko, Richard Mock, Ron Schad, Suzanne Cogliati, Ruth Sager (original list), and David Learnan.

Local Bird Information: April 1987

Ed. Note: Those of you that go cruising, i.e. bird cruising, keep notes of your observations and sent them to Tom Dick. In return he will immortalize you in the newsletter. Read Charles Voytko's article on Shawnee for continued local birding information.

Ruth Sager reported a Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, and Red-tailed Hawk kettling together on April 10. She also reports the following April highs for the Quemahoning Dam: 3 Horned Grebes on April 17th; 8 Common Mergansers on the 11th; 3 Buffleheads on the 17th; 4 Common Loons on the 21; 56 Ring-necked Ducks on the 11; 2 Pied-billed Grebes on the 17; 32 Lesser Scaups on the 17; 2 Coots on the 17th and on other birds she reports 25 Evening Grosbeaks on the 23th. Mike Wolfe reported 15 Pine Grosbeaks at his feeder on April 24, Mike is located along the Millcreek Hollow Watershed. April 26 marked the first noticeable return of Black-throated Green Warblers, Solitary Vireos, and waves of Brown Creepers. Osprey migrations are the big news locally with Clyde and Ethel McGinnet of Everett reporting a Osprey at their pond on April 23, 24, and 25th. Tim Fox reported an Osprey fishing successfully a small creek not more than 3 feet wide outside New Paris in Bedford Co. The game commission reported the return of the Upland Sandpipers to farm lands near Jerome. Richard Weaver (DGP, Cambria County) reported a least Bittern on State Game Lands 26 around April 20th. Finally Kevin Georg has the following exciting summary about the **Spring Hawk Watch** at Tussey Mountain:

Species	April 18	April 22	April 27
Broad-winged Hawk	69	398	84
Red-tailed Hawk	17	12	6
Red-shouldered Hawk	4	2	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	28	14	2
Coopers Hawk	6	6	1
Kestrel	1	--	--
Osprey	3	17	19
Golden Eagle	1	--	--
Totals	129	449	114



Rehabilitation Clinic

The Richard Veterinary Hospital Wildlife clinic released 3 Red-tailed Hawks, 1 Coopers Hawk, 1 Kestrel, and 1 Common Loon during the month of April. Thanks to the benevolence of Ruth and Glenn Sager the clinic is transferring injured birds to their farm for the final convalescence prior to release. The isolation and solitude of Sager's provides the healthy environment for speedy healing. Presently, a large hawk exercise pen is being contemplated for their farm, volunteers willing to help are welcome. The Sagers are now boarding a fledgling Horned Owl. They report hearing the little fledgling begging at night whenever it hears hooting adults. The loon release needs a tad of elaborating. Two fisherman surprised a loon on a pond, the loon in hasty departure, smacked into a tree. The fisherman, obviously endowed with deep streaks of humanity, submitted what they thought was a very strange duck to the clinic. Other than a headache the loon was fine. Dr. Sanderson released the bird to the Quemahoning Dam whereby it was soon joined by another loon. A happy ending ensued as they went diving together into the distance. Don't you just love happy endings?

(The Richard Veterinary Hospital is a fully accredited rehabilitation facility. It is licensed by both the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the Federal Fish and Wildlife. Animals are accepted free of charge.)

Allegheny Plateau News

D. Scott Wood, Asst. Curator of Birds at Carnegie Museum of Natural History has requested the following: **NEEDED:** Cooperators for the Breeding Bird Survey Program (this is the Federal Fish and Wildlife program-- not the state program). This long-term federal research effort samples breeding bird populations by means of a standardized survey along specified 25 mile routes. Cooperators need only spend one or two mornings per year per route but must be able to identify birds by voice. In addition, cooperators are desired that can run routes several years in succession. At present quite a number of routes in Pennsylvania need volunteers; among those in western Pennsylvania are one (or 2) each in Cambria County. Persons interested can contact D. Scott Wood, Section of Birds, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 4400 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh, Pa, 15213, for more information.

Greg Schrumm, DER Bureau of State Parks has asked... help in developing Natural Resource Management Plans for our State Parks. This help is primarily for inventorying the natural resources present at each of the State Parks as the initial phase of each Management Plan. In other words if you want to be part of a team determining plants and animals of our state parks, within our Audubon territory, notify Dr. Doris Brown (255-1223).

Finally, we will soon have a voice in Harrisburg with the formation of a Political Action Committee and lobbyist. This means we can join the Sierra Club in fighting issues on a state level. More about this at our next meeting.

We need volunteers to inventory the spring flowers in Stackhouse Park. If your interested in walking the trails with your field guides and figuring out the flowers than please call Tom Dick. He will be most appreciative.

The next issue of "Chickadee Chatter" will be devoted entirely to local wetlands. In this regard, **Dr. Doris Brown** has a state "Mini-grant" to inventory the wetland plants of Sammi's Swamp. We will update you on local wetlands including the mountain glades so characteristic of our area.

Dr. Andrew Choby, Chairman of the Bird Box Committee, will be purchasing 5 Wood Duck Boxes from the Rockwood Chapter of Ducks Unlimited. You may have noticed the abundant, almost ubiquitous Wood Duck boxes along our area impoundments. **Dave Escherich** will also be purchasing boxes. He will use these boxes, not for Wood Ducks, but for Kestrels (Sparrow Hawks). The Kestrels apparently will take readily to these boxes.

Would you like to advertise the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society by wearing colorful t-shirts, sweat shirts, or hats? If your answer is "yes" than contact **Eric and Eileen Stuver** by calling 268-3603.

Bruce Courter is the new coordinator for Cambria County. Cambria may be the worst covered county in the state. Bruce will need all the support possible for the survey. This survey gives everyone a chance to participate in science, to learn, and to appreciate nature on a level they may have never experienced before. Call and offer your help by calling Bruce during the week at 266-7912.

A new Periodical entitled, "Pennsylvania Birds," is now being published and two local members are serving as county editors. Ruth Sager will handle Somerset County while Thomas Dick will handle both Bedford and Cambria Counties. For those desiring subscriptions they should send \$10.00 payable to Pennsylvania Birds, to 769 East Forge Road, Media, Pa. 19063-4332.

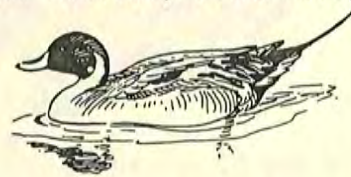
Welcome new members: **Nancy Jane Campdon, Karen Miller, J. Wyman**

Breeding Bird Surveys and Tropical Rainforests by Thomas Dick

As many of you know, the survey has many purposes but ultimately the information gleaned from such an effort is to learn about expanding and contracting ranges of birds. In essence, this effort is to establish "normals", to learn who is doing well and who is not. Many conservation journals rate the deforestation of tropical rainforest as the most destructive environmental degradation of the 20th century. Yet we know that many of our colorful song birds spend the winter in these very forests. Obviously, in the future we can only expect more birds to fare poorly on surveys. Who is destroying the forests?? Is it the native peoples, the same people who lived compatibly with the forest for centuries? Let's look at Belize, a poor country eager for foreign investors. Belize has rainforests, but nearly 80% of this country is owned by foreign interests. The multi-national corporations, so revered by this countries capitalistic system, are the important villains in Central and South America. In Belize, Coca-Cola, with its subsidiary Minute-Maid, is interested in converting over a 196,000 acre parcel from sub-tropical moist forest to orange groves. The worst part is that no environmental impact is necessary. Obviously, rainforests are just one of those things that don't "go better with coke". Does this bother you, if so, than write Michele Beale, Coca-Cola Foods, P.O. Box 2079, Houston, Texas 77252. Tell him Coke isn't "the real thing."

Shawnee Notes

by Charles Voytko



Ed. Note: Charles Voytko is a Shawnee Lake watcher and chief in charge of the Century Bird Count. This event is to be held May 10, there, members will have an opportunity to explore the varied beauty of Bedford County between Shawnee and the Allegheny Front.

One of the most dramatic sightings in many years of observing spring migrations at Shawnee lake happened on March 6. Tundra Swans which normally come in average size flocks were gathered in a long line across the Schellsburg side of the lake. This made them easy to count by scanning with my spotting scope. There were 575 birds and it was a stunning sight. Their feathers reflected the orange tint of twilight against the darkening water. Even the local residents were out to see the "geese".

A few Pintails and the first Red-wing Blackbird on territory were also seen. The water level of the lake at this time was still not back to normal due to the drawdown experiment last fall by the Park to improve fishing habitat. I think this may have caused a number of ducks to bypass the lake. If they would allowed the drawdown to continue into May we may have had a significant shorebird presence. Twelve Ring-neck Ducks, 1 Killdeer, 2 Bluebirds and 2 Tundra Swans were seen on March 12. One week later the lake hosted 23 Red-breasted Mergansers.

On April 5, while visiting Johnstown, I went to North Fork Dam on the hunch that the stormy weather would bring down some birds. I saw 10 Common Loons, 7 Horned Grebes, and 9 Red-breasted Mergansers.

I returned to Shawnee on April 7 on the same weather hunch. I entered the park from the back and parked near the cove, but all I saw was some very high, muddy water and a speck on the lake that turned out to be a Horned Grebe. As I started to walk around the trail towards the grebe I heard the cry of an Osprey and then saw a crow chase it away. There were no other birds around so I drove to the beach parking lot where, on high ground, I could get a good view of the lake. It didn't take long to see bobbing waterfowl. The count was: 20 widgeons, 31 Old Squaws, 11 Common Loons, 8 scaups, 30 coots, a large flock of Ring-billed Gulls, and one Great Egret.

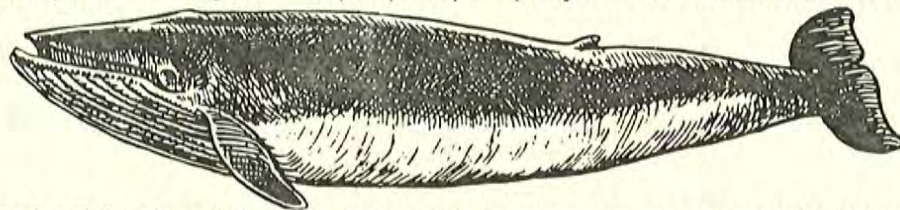
I then left the park and stopped at the boat dock for one last look. I added 52 more Old Squaw, 38 scaups, 31 Red-breasted Mergansers, 9 Horned Grebes, and a pair of Double-crested Cormorants. A Flock of swallows were skimming for out but could not be identified; a symbolic beginning for the next wave of smaller migrants, which will be there for the May 10 Century Count. Hope to see you then to help in seeing at least 100 species in one day.

Upcoming Event.

May 9 Birding with Ruth Sager: Bring a box lunch and meet at the Sager farm. Meeting time is 9 am. This is a combined outing with the Westmoreland Co. Bird Club. A good opportunity to see arriving warblers. Sorry this is a late notice, but if your interested hurry and call Ruth Sager at 798-3242.

May 10 Century Bird Count: Join up with Charles Voytko and Tom Dick for a crazy whirlwind tour of mountains, valleys, and lakes searching out all the newly arrived migrants. Our goal is anything over 100 birds. Call 266-7912 or just meet at the Richland Veterinary Parking lot at 7 am.

May 15, 16 and 17 Whale Watch Weekend: This trip is rapidly filling with over 70 signups already. This is an action packed weekend with lectures and studies of rocky shore inhabitants, dune botany, birding, and 8 hours of boat time searching the Stellwagon Bank for Humpback, Finback, Northern Right Whales, dolphins, and pelagic birds. Contact Tom Dick for details.



May 15, 16 and 17 Spring Nature Retreat: This is a program sponsored by the Church of the Brethren at Camp Harmony. It is a weekend of fellowship, hikes, Bluebirds, and wildflowers. We have two outstanding members of our society running this weekend: Dr. Stan Shetler, Acting Associate Director at the Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institute and Ruth Sager who needs no introduction. The cost for the entire weekend is only \$35.00.

May 16 Spring Wildflowers with Bruce Courter: Join Bruce, an acknowledged naturalist, on a mountain wildflower trip. Meet at the Richland Veterinary Parking lot at 2 pm. Notify Bruce ahead by calling 266-7912. The trip will be approximately 3 hours.

May 21 General Meeting: Our speaker will be Dr. Dennis McNair. Dennis is an excellent lecturer and biologist, his topic will be on insects. A good way to beef up on entomology before summer.

May 23 Mayflies and stream ecology with Tim Fox: Join Tim on a hike into the mountains near Windber to see hatching mayflies, wildflowers, warblers, and bats. This is Tim's, always successful, tribute to spring. Meet at the Richland Veterinary Parking lot at 5:30. Notify Tim by calling 266-7912 after 4 pm.

June 12 - 14 Pennsylvania Wild Resources Conference: Attend this once of a kind conference to be held at the J.O. Keller Conference Center, University Park, Pennsylvania. This conference is an outgrowth of the Wild Resource Conservation Fund. There is something for everyone from planting for wildlife, endangered species, conservation, films, reptiles, Bluebird trails, insects etc. etc. A highly recommended inexpensive program. For details call Tom Dick at 266-7912.

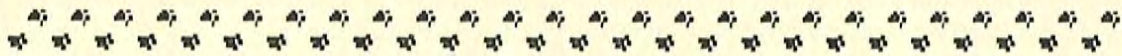
The Breeding Bird Survey Crash block parties

Ed. note: The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society is in the uneasy position of having their home county as one of the most under reported in Pennsylvania. The block party consists of members getting together and going into these gray areas and finding out where and what the birds are doing. This is science but better yet its fun!

June 6 Block Busting with Ruth Sager: Meet at the Richland Veterinary Hospital Parking lot at 7 am for a foray into the backcountry of Bedford County. Their purpose is to determine the bird species and complete the blocks. Please notify, if possible, Ruth on your attendance. Call 798-3242

June 13 Block Busting with Bruce Courter: Meet Bruce at the Jamesway Shopping Center parking lot. Bruce will explore the hills and valleys of Northern Cambria County in an attempt to bring us up to date on blocks. This is a fun and education experience. Bring lunches and be prepared to see some real back country. Call Bruce at 266-7912 to make arrangements. Participants will meet at 7:30 am.

June 20 and June 27 Block Busting with Bruce Courter: Same itinerary, different country. Meet at the James way Parking lot at 7:30 but notify Bruce again at 266-7912.



The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society is working hard to identify and retain areas of special beauty and significance, preserve declining species, and introduce ecology into schools. If you subscribe to these goals why not buy a friend's membership. Membership in the Audubon Society opens many doors to natural history from Christmas Bird Counts, Hawk Watches, wildflower trips to Whale Watches. In addition Society members receive the award winning Audubon magazine and six issues of the local "Chickadee Chatter." Fill out the membership form below and become an Allegheny Plateau Auduboner.

 Introductory Membership \$20.00 Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society (U20)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone Number (Area Code) _____

Make Checks payable to National Audubon Society
Mail to: Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society
1003 Eisenhower Blvd.
Johnstown, Pa. 15904

My Check for \$ _____ is enclosed.



The folks running the show

President: Dr. Doris Brown (255-1223) Girard St., Johnstown, 15905
Vice President: Mike Wolfe (255-5098) RD5, Box 170, Johnstown 15907
Recording Secretary: The David Escherichs (893-5092) Box 34 RD 2, Stoystown 15563
Corresponding Secretary: Linda Sell (266-2734) RD2 Box 457, Johnstown 15904
Treasurer: Joan Lohr (266-5104) 255 Collegiate Dr. Johnstown 15904
Conservation: Richard Mock (479-4232) Box 74, Davidsville 15928
Programs: Dr. Dennis McNair (539-8293) 517 Cypress Ave., Johnstown 15902
Hospitality: Dr. Sally Dick (266-7912) 1003 Eisenhower Blvd., Johnstown 15904
Publicity: Pam Boderocco (255-5264) RD 5, Box 83, Johnstown, 15905
Bird Box Committee: Dr. Andrew Choby (255-3866) 1905 Bates Dr., Johnstown 15905
Rare Bird Alert: Kevin Georg (288-1763) 219 Columbia St., Johnstown 15905
Newsletter/Outings: Dr. Thomas Dick (266-7912) 1003 Eisenhower Blvd., Johnstown 15904
Membership: Rick Sell (266-2734) RD2 Box 457, Johnstown 15904
Academic Consultant: Dr. Neil Woffinden (467-5738) 1775 Regal Dr., Johnstown 15904
Bird Seed Sales and Fund Raising: Eric and Eileen Stuver (288-3603) RD7, Box 458, Johnstown
Education: Joe Emerick (472-7540) Box 235 Ebensburg, 15931
Bird Counts: Ruth and Glenn Sager (798-3242) RD1, Box 176-B, Hooversville 15936
Stream Committee: Tim Fox (536-5081) 145 Blough St. Johnstown, 15902

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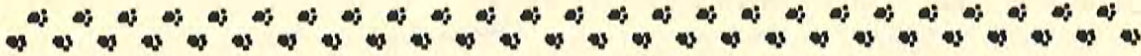
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Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society



Volume 4

Number 4

August 1987



Special Wetland Issue

Our concern in this newsletter is wetlands; those wetlands near where our members work and live. You need to know they exist, what they're about, and you also need to know they're vulnerable. In the following articles the authors talk about Samii's Swamp, (its local name), and mountain bogs. Samii's Swamp can be reached by driving south on old 219 (985) from Johnstown toward Jennerstown. The swamp, actually a marsh, is on the right just prior to reaching the playhouse. Samii's Swamp is vulnerable to stripmining, not within the marsh, but adjacent to it; destroying water quality would destroy the marsh. The mountain bogs are located along Rt. 56 between Windber and Pleasantville, within and around Babcock Park. The bogs are vulnerable to drainage, ATV (all terrain vehicles), and development. A good example of illegal development is the new Better Tire Shop recently erected on wetlands along Rt. 56. In this issue the three lead articles are: Bob Mulvehill pondering marshes especially Samii's, Doris Brown unravels the difference between grasses, sedges and rushes, (the latter two associated with wetlands), and finally, Tom Dick muses over our mountain bogs.

Wetland Reflections

By Bob Mulvehill

Wetland, those places where water give precious little ground to land, take many forms, including bogs, swamps and marshes. Of these, bogs are comparatively depauperate, being deficient in nutrients and oxygen, while marshes are perhaps the most productive environments in the world. Swamps, characterized by trees and shrubs that are more or less adapted to a flooded existence, like Red Maple and alder, constitute the most forbidding, if not boreboding wetland type.

Henry David Thoreau wrote, "In wildness is the preservation of the world." Wildness, it seems to me is nowhere better preserved, both literally and in our imaginations, than in the bogs, swamps and marshes where man enjoys no firm footing. I share Thoreau's view that "We need the tonic of wildness, to wade sometimes in the marshes where the bittern and meadow-hen lurk, and hearing the booming of the snipe...We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander."

My shoes had barely dried after a recent bog outing when I decided to visit a favorite marsh, known variously as Jennerstown, Samii and Griffith Swamp, in the hope of hearing the whinnies or clucks of breeding rails. Rails, Thoreau's "meadow-hens," are most vocal near the begining and end of night.

It was just after sunset when I settled amid some tussocks of sedge well out in the middle of the marsh. Blackbirds fussed for a time at my presence but eventually settled in to roost for the night. Swamp Sparrows and Willow Flycatchers sang surprisingly long after sunet. The flycatchers, at least six of them, sang one after another until just minutes before dark, as if in a contest to get in the lat word. As darkness gathered around me, the marsh grew quieter, as the day active birds fell to sleep, then louder with the building chorus of insects and frogs.



I waited and listened. A snipe zig-zagged the last light of the sky, nearby I heard the cattails. Lightning bugs, or fireflies, beetles, flashed their myriad codes of the other. An hour passed, or was it two?



across my view, silhouetted against the splashes of muskrats busy in the neither bugs nor flies at all, but light from one end of the marsh to

The "tonic of wildness" was potent even whinnies of "meadow-hens," distant calls of night amid the penetrating whistles and twangs of innumerable spring peepers and green frogs. I made my way out of the marsh nonetheless refreshed.

without the hoped for clucks and which might well have been lost this

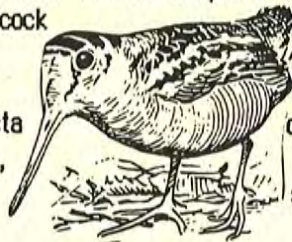
Another time it was a daytime sojourn to a small wetland of a different kind near my home. Appropriately enough, I discovered an Alder flycatcher proclaiming ownership of this alder-dominated swamp. So like the Willow Flycatcher in appearance that the two kinds cannot be separated, even in the hand, only this bird's slightly different song convinced me of its identity. The Alder's "Fee-bee'0 can be told apart from the similar "Fitz'bew" of the Willow Flycatcher only with some practice, and then only with care. The Alder is far less common in our area than the Willow, being a bird of more northern affinities. The fact that my flycatcher was singing from an alder swamp was but a happy coincidence, for it might just as easily have been a willow thicket!

As I attempted to sneak a look at the bird, it literally sang circles around me. So deliberate was it in its movements from perch to perch, that I could easily have drawn the outline of its territory on a map. While I waited and watched, a Swamp Sparrow popped up into view, startling a hummingbird from its sunny spot on the bare branch of an alder. The sparrow sang a quick song, "chippit-chippit-chippit-chippit-chippit," and dropped back down into a tangle of wet grasses and sedges.

Farther away, A Green-backed Heron landed in the top of a tree, complained about something with a series of characteristic "Skeows!", then settled into a statuesque pose. I suspected that I was the something it was complaining about and that once again the herons were nesting in this wet thicket. A few years earlier I had found four of their gawkish, downy young balanced precariousl in the alders on legs too long for their bodies and feet to large for their perches.

Like one of these herons, or an alder, or a cattail, I must require or at least enjoy the sensation of wet feet, for I am unfailingly drawn in my wanderings to soggy spots, be they bogs, marshes, or swamps. Perhaps it is because I know that in these places I will find not stagnation, but rather life abundant. It is here where swallows, waxwings and dragonflies hunt the mosquitos that keep so many people away. it is here, in the marshes and other wetlands, where deer and muskrats find luxuriant graze, where painted, spotted and bog turtles reside and where waterfowl congregate by the hundreds to rest and feed before continuing their lengthy migrations. It is here, too, where Least Bitterns lurk deep in the cattails and skinny rails glide easily on long legs and toes through the bullrushes. From such places Leopard frogs offer their staccato snores in Spring, and snipe and woodcock mount the sky on winnowing wings.

In our wetlands, summer wildflowers are best. Here can be seen a purple and white vista teasel and meadowsweet. Here the wild phlox, purple fringless orchid vie for the brightest



often at their colorful of vervain and boneset, of swamp milkweed and shade of magenta.

In one boggy marsh I have thrilled to the sight of an exceptional specimen of this orchid, one that had grown to a height of more than three feet and had nearly a hundred brilliant flowers crowded on a twelve inch spike. A rare orchid, the purple fringless gains some measure of protection from the unpopularity and inaccessibility of its habitat, but, ironically, the same unpopularity and inaccessibility forever threatens its habitat with unnecessary and short-sighted draining and filling. And what threatens the orchid threatens much else.

An intricate web of life exists in any wetland that can perhaps only be appreciated by those whose feet and curiosity have been wetted and whetted, respectively. With our vision sharpened by curiosity, by the desire to know what it is that we are seeing, or rather to know what it is that we haven't been seeing, we become sensitive to how many parts make up the whole, to how many lives lie in the balance of decisions made by man, to how many men are possessed of vision blurred by disinterest. In short, we grow concerned.

And well we should, because wetlands, increasingly uncommon themselves in southwestern Pennsylvania, are the primary refuges of a number of breeding birds that are rare or uncommon in our area. Local wetlands have provided nesting records for Northern Harrier, Blue-winged teal, Common Moorhen, Sora, Virginia Rail, Common Snipe, Red-headed Woodpecker, Alder Flycatcher and Northern Waterthrush. And still rarer species, like least and American Bitterns, Black and King Rails, Hooded Merganser and Marsh Wren, may one day be found nesting in some wetland in our region.

Only careful monitoring and protection of our remaining wetlands will insure that the diversity of birds and other wildlife characteristic of these habitats continues to provide a much-needed "tonic of wildness" for the health of our world.

(Ed. Bob Mulvehill is a bird bander at Powdermill Nature Reserve, an excellent naturalist and good writer on natural history subjects)



Well, if it isn't a grass, what is it?

by Doris Brown

It's green with non-showy flowers, it often grows in clumps like grass--than why isn't it a grass? Look again, carefully; does it really look like grass? "Well no, maybe not," one says hesitantly. "Something isn't quite right for a grass but I'm not sure what."

It's true, it doesn't quite look like a grass, in fact it's quite different. That's because it's a sedge, a member of the Cyperaceae family while grass belongs to the Gramineae. There are no woody sedges, there is one woody grass, bamboo.

If we want to see the difference we should first look at the grass. Who hasn't grabbed a piece of grass at one time or another and stuck it in his mouth, but have you really looked at it. The leaf ends in a sheath that is open with the edges overlapping around the stem. At the top of the sheath there are two little ear-like lobes called ligules. Now look at the culm, or stem; it is round and when you cut it across it is apparent that it is hollow. The grass family is a huge one of about 6,000 species of cosmopolitan distribution. Economically, it is one of the most important of the plant families including such cereal grains as wheat, oats, rye, barley, rice, corn, and other food plants such as sorghum and sugar cane. In the east bamboo is important for building purposes. Then there are all the different grasses that are important as forage plants such as Timothy.

Now, what about the sedges. They too belong to a large family, but it can't compare to the grasses. They are cosmopolitan with about 75 genera and 4,000 species. There is a saying, "sedges have edges," and indeed many of them do. Feel the stems, they may be triangular or even square. However, the rushes which belong to the sedge family have round stems. One of the most obvious differences is the sheath, it is closed, not open as in the grasses. There are no little ears, or ligules. Cut across the stem, it is solid, not hollow as in the grasses. Identification of the sedges is based mainly on the shape of the achene or seed. Grasses are identified mainly by the flowers which is unique to that family.

Both the grasses and the sedges are wind pollinated. That is why people with allergies often have a bad case of hay fever when they are blooming in June and July..

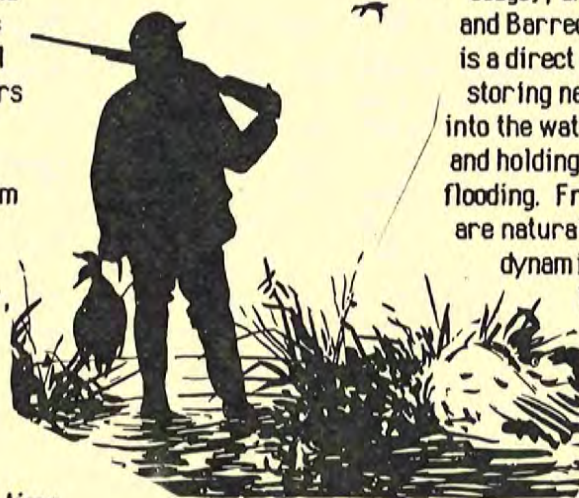
The grasses and many of the sedges are unique as to where the meristematic tissue, or constantly growing embryonic tissue is located. The majority of other plants have growing tips. If you constantly chopped away at your flowers or vegetables as you do your lawn they would soon be completely gone. What does your grass do--grow and then grow some more. You mow it one week and a week later the dratted stuff needs to be mowed again. That is because grasses and many of the sedges have what is known as intercalary meristem. That means they are inside the leaf sheath instead of at the tip. The growing area does not get mowed off.

In contrast with grasses, few sedges, among them the rushes and carexs, have little, if any economic importance. A few are cultivated as ornamentals. Very few sedges are weeds because they grow on sterile or barren soil or in swamps or bogs. After all, what is a weed except a plant that is growing where you don't want it to grow.

Check it out! Go to a wet area and see if you can tell the difference between a grass and a sedge.

(Ed. Dr. Brown is our intrepid leader [Audubon President] and mentor for students studying botany at the Johnstown College of the University of Pittsburgh. She is also separating, under a mini-grant, the various sedges at Bob Mulvehill's favorite marsh: Samii's Swamp)

(Ed. Wetlands are not only esthetically important ,educational and recreational value. refuge to a potpourri of plants and animals environments ,some have economic muskrat, and others are simply rails, wrens(marsh and Red-shouldered Hawks and water table control Wetlands are reservoirs drought, discharging would simply run off, would cause downstream perspective wetlands learning about energy even recycling. Lastly, recreation, a gray both naturalists and naturalist reward is , Consumers like hunters go a step harvesting at the same time.



but they have real economic Esthetically ,wetlands offer not normally found in other importance such as mink and prizes to behold like herons, sedge), and raptors like and Barred Owls. Water quality is a direct economic benefit. storing needed water for times of into the water table when water and holding water that otherwise flooding. From an educational are natural laboratories for dynamics, carry capacity, and lets consider term applying to consumers. To the simply seeing. fisherman and further by

Mountain Glades

by Thomas Dick

Wetlands are hot subjects these days. Developers and farmers prefer wetland drainage while conservations bend toward preservation. Wetlands, no longer considered undesirable, are now relished and protected as unique little assemblages of plants and animals. With Wetlands water is the evolutionary force resulting in a parade of water loving plants. Locally, we are blessed with a fascinating wetland called a mountain glade or bog. Bogs have thick mats of sphagnum moss growing over troughs and hillocks. Peat moss, the name given dried sphagnum, is the same spongy stuff used around shrubbery.. Bogs can develop in any shallow depression holding water. Route 56 as it crosses over the Allegheny front between Windber and Pleasantville has many glades, some can be seen from the road. Let's examine the history and biology of these mountain top glades.

Locally, bogs range in size from a fraction of an acre to over 30 acres. Their origin dates back to 1889 when the Babcock Lumber Co. clearcut the entire mountain top. Following the lumbering extensive forest fires raged during the years between 1920 and '30's. The fires burned deep allowing for soil erosion by rain down to bedrock. This produce shallow pannes for water. Removal of the giant hem locks and a complex series of tram roads prevented runoff. The preserved hemlock stumps can still be seen in the bogs and traces of tram roads linger. Killing the trees stopped transpiration and cool mountain temperatures retarded evaporation allowing pools of standing water. Moss (sphagnum) soon spread by way of spores or fragmented parts; the latter being achieved by wind or animals. Once the moss becomes established the environment is under its control. Sphagnum bullies other wetland plants by making the environment hostile and impoverished. This is done in several ways: first, by secreting hydrogen ions ,therefore, acidifying the water, and second by absorbing the mineral bases necessary for plant growth, and lastly by secreting tannins(pigments) to discolor the water. Dark acidic water not only discourages other plants but it stops decomposition as well. You can retrieve branches with leaves of preserved trees that were felled 80 years ago. Bogs have a certain sinister appearance amplified by scattered scrubby hemlock, and ponds laced with dead trees extending arm-like branching limbs. Consider the latter especially with a good ground fog and suddenly your mind ponders the macabre.

Typically, trees on the mountain are the northern hardwood types and near the bog the most common trees are Yellow Birch, Red Maple, Quaking Aspen, Service Berry, and Eastern Hem lock. Small trees and shrubs are Flowering Dogwood ; hollies like Winterberry and large leaved Holly; viburnums like Northern Arrowwood and Northern Wild Raisin. Within the bog are few trees except stunted hemlock and serviceberry. The dominant plant is sphagnum of several species, dewberry, lowbush blueberry and scattered carnivorous plants like sundews and the pitcher plant. The carnivorous plants survive by supplementing their diets with insects to make up for nutrient poor conditions. Other plants of interest are the ferns, clubmosses and occassional stands of cattails. Cattails survive in areas where oxidation occurs making decomposition possible, it is here where you can really sink down into the muck.

Some birds of the bog and adjacent areas I've logged include Hermit Thrush, Veery, Wood Thrush, and Blue Bird the (latter attracted many dead trees with cavities). Cedar Waxwings are abundant the many berries and insects. Warblers include Canada, Blackburnian, Common Yellowthroat, and Northern Waterthrush. Solitary Vireos, and Dark-eyed Juncos are common. All the common forest birds can be found in and around the bog. Raptors include Kestrels, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Broad-winged Hawks.

The new Wild Plant Sanctuary in Babcock Forest off route 56 provides easy access throught a well developed trail system to a typical mountain bog. In fact, an excellent interpretive guide to the is available from your county forester. Join us on our local Audubon bog outings.



to the
due to

bog trail

Bird Sightings for Bedford and Cambria County (April to June)

Bedford County:

On 5/9 and 5/10 were 2 separate reports of Black Terns fishing small farm ponds. Although this tern can be common in Spring at Shawnee State Park (SSP) these are the first local reports on farm impoundments. On 5/11 a survey of SSP turned up the following commentable species: 1 **Albino Common Loon**, 3 Red-throated Loons, 1 Ruddy Duck, 8 Lesser Yellowlegs, 30 Spotted Sandpipers, 1 Short-billed Dowitcher, 1 **Ruddy Turnstone** (TD, CV, MJ, LJ) The turnstone may be a record for Bedford County. Other birds of interest were 6 Forsters Terns, 1 Green-backed Heron, and 1 American Bittern. Golden-winged Warblers continue to be abundant in the shrubby fields surrounding the lake. A Red-headed Woodpecker Colony near the lake consists of 5 breeding pairs. On 5-26 another active colony was found approximately 6 miles away with 3 breeding pairs. Numerous reports of Osprey fishing small farm ponds and trout streams no wider than 3 feet were received (TF).

Atlas information received from Ruth Sager reports the following briefs: A banter year for Eastern Bluebirds in Bedford, Yellow-breasted Chats were found in every block, Great Crested Flycatchers were found commonly associated with 17 Year Cicada, Kestrel numbers were down, Cliff Swallows were found co-inhabiting barns throughout the County with Barn Swallows (we found this true for barns in Cambria and Somerset Co.), it was a good year for Prairie Warblers and Louisiana Waterthrush and, finally, in Southern Bedford Whip-poor-will and Common Bobwhite numbers were good.

Observers: **Tom Dick (Compiler)**, Kevin Georg, Laura Jackson, Michael Jackson, Charles Voytko, Ruth Sager.

Cambria County:

First a story that needs to be told; Kevin Georg, a zealous birder found himself in a malestrom of controversy. It all started on May 2 when he reported a Bohemian Waxwing and Black-shouldered Kite on the same day. Despite incredible written detail on the kite and excellent descriptions of flight characteristics it was down to the old axiom: no picture, no bird. Now Kevin isn't to be taken lightly, he is an excellent birder and extremely likely to find the unusual but on June 24th when he called to report a Pomarine Jaeger on a local reservoir (Hinckston Run) his reputation was, well to be kind, bent. But, the story ends here for the bird was not only there but it lingered from June 24th to July 3, the last reported sighting, and was seen and photographed by many. The Jaeger, a young bird, can be difficult to identify due to the barely noticeable terminal paddle-shaped tail feathers. However within several days Bob Mulvehill et. al captured a positive glimpse confirming it as a Pomarine. This, undoubtedly, will be the bird of the year in Pennsylvania and certainly Cambria County.

Most of the information is presented chronologically for the purpose of simplicity. On April 20, a Least Bittern was reported in a small marsh on State Game Lands 26 (RW). On April 24, 15 Pine Grosbeaks were reported at a local feeder, they lingered for several days (MW). April 26 marked the first noticeable return of Black-throated Green Warblers, Solitary Vireos, and waves of Brown Creepers.

Atlas Data for June suggests that Kentucky Warblers are becoming more common. The North Fork Dam (NFD) and Beaverdale Dam area have increased Kentucky Warbler breeding activity. Northern Parula Warblers are on the upswing as a breeding bird in this County. On 6/24 three pairs were located within a few hundred yards along the NFD (TD). The Magnolia Warbler appears to be the most common warbler bordering the Hemlock-lined lake and streams of Cambria County. Two pairs of Red-breasted Nuthatches, again, in the North Fork Dam area were seen on June 27th (TD) Bobolinks are increasingly slightly as new habitat in the form of replanted surface mines becomes available. They are breeding for the first time in many years in the borough of Richland, again in a reclaimed Surface mine.

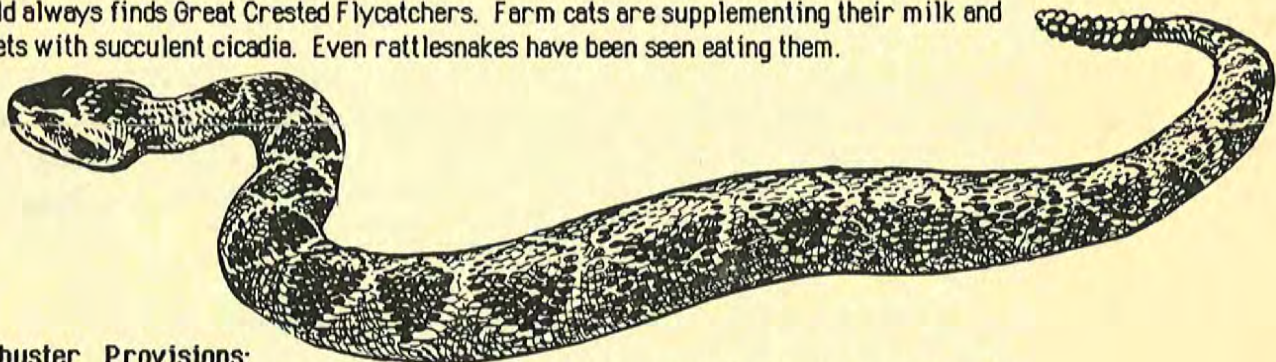
Observers: **Tom Dick (compiler)**, Richard Weaver, Mike Wolfe

(Ed. this information can be found in a more complete form in the new publication entitled "Pennsylvania Birds". Subscription can be obtained by sending \$10.00 payable to "Pennsylvania Birds" 769 East Forge Road, Media Pa. 19063-4332.

Bits and pieces

Good News: In Pennsylvania and other states there exists an item entitled a "depredation permit" which allows game farms to trap-mutilate birds of prey like Red-tailed Hawks and owls. These traps, steel jaws set on poles, not only trap the intended birds but a variety of other species which are not doing well these days. Your editor has submitted testimony to Frank Dunkle, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service citing a variety of reasons why such permits are totally barbaric and out of sink with modern ecologic thinking. My commentary was stimulated by the Wildlife Information Center Inc. which formally petitioned the director, Fran Dunkle, to prohibit all uses of pole traps for birds of prey. The petition was accepted, and later in the year, the pole traps will be included in a proposed rule change dealing with various uses of migratory birds to be published in the **Federal Register**. If adopted, all pole trap uses in the United States will be prohibited. Pennsylvania may be the most abusive state for such permits. The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society will follow up with further testimony based on rehabilitation data once published in the Federal register.

17 Year Locust: Okay, how many of you have heard the low drumming of this species of cicada. Admittantly, it is spotty in Cambria while quite noticeable in sections of Somerset and Bedford Counties. The nymphal stage, secure within its mud cocoon, sleeps soundly for 17 years. Finally, it emerges as an adult and lies its eggs on terminal twigs. The sound you hear is from abdominal drums on the male. The cicada abundance has caused behavioral changes in other species, in particular: carp. Carp, a fish that is normally a bottom feeder, are now being caught on surface plugs. Why? Those big delicious cicadas, almost two inches in length, die shortly after eggs are laid. Their bodies sometimes litter the water surface providing an easy meal. for carp. In Bedford County, Ruth Sager noticed where there were large concentrations of cicadia she could always find Great Crested Flycatchers. Farm cats are supplementing their milk and mice diets with succulent cicadia. Even rattlesnakes have been seen eating them.



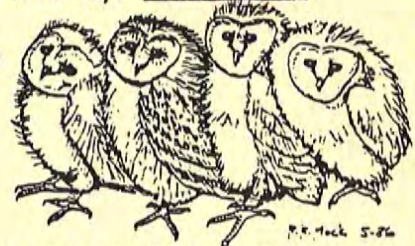
Swampbuster Provisions:

The following information is gleaned from the Wildlife Management Insititue's newsletter, the "Outdoor News Bulletin." Briefly, the 1985 Farm Act has a swampbuster provision stating that any farmer caught draining wetlands will be ineligible for subsidies offered by the Dept. of Agriculture. This makes sense! This legislation protects wildlife, it prevents soil erosion, and eases commodity surpluses and federal subsidy costs. The agency's officials are now gutting this legislation to allow farmers to have their "cake and eat it too." In case you didn't know humans are inherently insecure about wetlands and feel if you can't walk on it than drain it. Why am I telling you this, well just remember when it comes to the federal government just don't turn your back--nothing is written in stone.

Environmental Olympics (Bedford County): The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society will teach some 100 Bedford Co. students about raptors. They'll be hosted on the Tussey Mountain Summit where auduboners will teach hawk identification and counting. The students are participating in the Bedford Conservation District's annual environmental Olympics. This is very fitting to teach students living along the very ridges where our hawk watch is located. They may grow up appreciating what an important niche raptors fill. Keep in mind that Tussey hosts other groups through the Allegheny Plateau Audubon such as other Audubon chapters, Sierra club, Powdermill etc.

The Rehabilitation Clinic

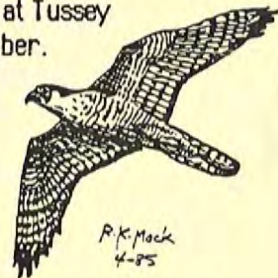
The clinic has been busy with both small stuff (baby birds, chipmunks, mice, rabbits etc.) and large stuff, especially Red-tails, Screech Owls, and Great Horned Owls. One unusual presentation was a Saw-whet Owl, a juvenile, with fractures of both the left femur and left radius and ulna. Its a first-time bird for this clinic and since it was presented July 3rd as a Juvenile that means this little owl is a confirmed breeder for Cambria County. More on owls! On July 15th the clinic found it was to be the recipient of barn owl eggs. Although the eggs never made it we learned a great deal in the process. With the help of Dr. Woffingden an incubator was being prepared with just the right temperature and humidity. Tim Fox was in close touch with the Tyson Research Center in Eureka, Missouri. This center has successfully raised and released some 600 Barn Owls. We learned much, the eggs are very hardy, they may still hatch several days after being removed from the nest. After hatching, the fledgling's eyes stay closed for 8 days so imprinting is not a problem, they imprint on each other. We also learned that barn owls have laid eggs during every month of the year in Pennsylvania. If we get eggs in the future we now have extensive information on raising this species so for something which never happened -- Tim and I learned a great deal.



Fall Calendar

(more details on outings and meetings are forthcoming in the next newsletter)

September 1 to November 27 -- Hawk Identification and Counting Station at Tussey Mountain: this is a 3 month outing starting in September and ending in November. If you want to go along to stare at sky, get sun, or help with the count please notify the lead people listed on the back page: Ruth Sager, Kevin Georg, and Tom Dick. Remember, you do not need to know your hawks, the extra set of eyes are most important in picking dots out of the sky.



Remember these dates: **Sept. 17, Oct. 15, Nov. 19**, they represent the 3rd Thursday of each month when we have our meetings. The meetings are at 8 pm in room 240 Krebs at the Johnstown College of the University of Pittsburgh. In almost all cases we have speakers on a range of interesting subjects. Many of these speakers are co-shared with UPJ's Biology Seminars. We also serve goodies, bring you up to date on what's happening within the chapter, show some member slides, and a little hands-on biology session. Its fun--join us. We list meetings in the Tribune and town crier of the Shopper. December is our **Christmas Bird Count**, exact date will be determined in November.

About Powdermill

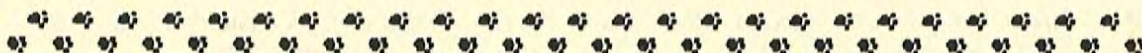
This fall Powdermill Nature Reserve has 18 programs ranging from photography, rock gardening, hawk watches, to insects and flowers. These programs are free to the public. For more details, or to confirm programs, call (412)593-6105.

Powdermill's authors have published the following books: "The Birds of the Ligonier Valley," by Robert C. Leberman, "Winter Ecology of Small Mammals" and "Guide to the Mammals of Pennsylvania," both by Joseph F. Merritt. Write to Carnegie Museum of Natural History if your interested in these publications.

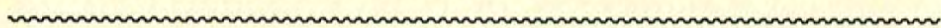
Notice many of the illustrations for this newsletter were sketches produced by Richard Mock, our conservation chairperson. Richard is an excellent Illustrator /naturalist and good worker for environmental causes.

Bird Seed Sale

Once again the Eric and Eileen Stuver are taking charge of the bird seed sales. This event is our most important fund raiser, buying seed from us plows the profit back into our chapter and therefore conservation activities. We buy only the best seed and sell at good prices. Order seed now by calling 288-3603 (Stuver's Riverside Nursery) and ask for Eric or Eileen. We sell sunflower, mixed and Thistle.



The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society is very active and dedicated to serving the natural history needs of our area. we have focused on endangered wetlands, initiated species inventories of birds and plants, conducted breeding bird census, helped in the planning of parks, hawk counting stations, maintained a rehabilitation clinic, supported school ecology programs, conducted seminars, continuing education programs for teachers, outings, programs and ,frankly, I'm getting tired of listing. If you subscribe to these goals why not buy a friend a membership. Membership in the Audubon Society opens many doors to natural history, for instance, if your interested in birds or plants we have lots of experts to help you progress along. Membership also allows you to receive the award winning Audubon Magazine and the local "Chickadee Chatter." Fill out the membership form below and become an Allegheny Plateau Auduboner.



Introductory Membership \$20.00 Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society (U20)

Name: _____

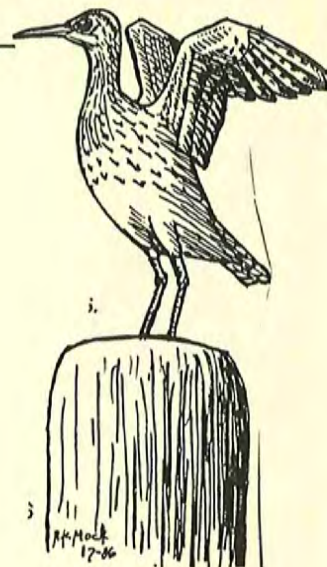
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Make Checks payable to "National Audubon Society"
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1003 Eisenhower Blvd.
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My Check for \$ _____ is enclosed.



The Folks running the show

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Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society
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Chickadee Chatter

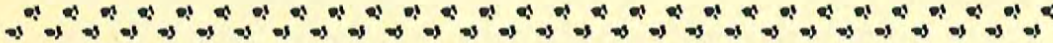
Newsletter of the
Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society



Volume 4

Number 5

October 1987



Contents : Insect migration
Bird migration theory
Hawk migration
Bird seed sale
Programs & Outings
Christmas Bird Count
Rehab. Clinic
Officers

Don't miss the Nov. 19
Meeting about the Amazon.
This is also a planning meeting
for the Christmas Bird count.

Special Fall Migration Issue

Kicking around for a fall theme the newsletter committee decided on the subject of migration. This seemed logical, the timing was right, and a number of members are studying migration indirectly by counting at our hawk watch on Tussey Mountain. We decided to expand the theme with other aspects of migration to include insects, migration theories, and hawk migration. Fall, to many of us is the sometimes enormous flocks of migrating songbirds crowding the skies, raptors hugging the ridges and monarch butterflies balancing in the wind. I think we all marvel at this spectacle especially the monarchs flying like delicate little jewels wobbling to and fro in the breeze. You see them everywhere in September even parking lots and industrial plants like Bethlehem Steel. So, with this in mind, Dennis McNair writes knowledgeably on insect migration especially monarch butterflies, Neil Woffingden on the complexity of migration theories, and Tom Dick on what we've learned about hawks as they move past Tussey Mountain.

Insect Migration by Dr. Dennis McNair

Many birds and mammals make seasonal migrations to avoid harsh conditions. In the Rockies elk, mountain sheep and their kind spend their summers in the lovely mountain meadows and come down farther as the snowline drops. The arctic tundra is the breeding ground for many birds who do well safe from predators while they are young or encumbered with eggs to incubate or babies to tend but leave before the freezing weather comes. This is obviously a good strategy evolutionarily or it wouldn't be so common.

If it's a good evolutionary strategy, you can bet the insects have tried it. They're the most diverse, ubiquitous and numerous group of macroscopic animals in the world. But they do have some limitations. Being fairly short-lived, usually less than a year, it becomes pretty difficult for them to make lengthy journeys. The mechanisms postulated for migration by birds and mammals are pretty sketchy right now and, when you throw in the fact that insects don't have time to go over their routes with mom and dad a time or two before they're on their own, the speculations on how they might make a trip of even a few hundred miles gets really vague. For instance, some moths are said to use landmarks in flying along the Florida coast but how do you use a landmark you have never seen before? It sort of changes the concept of landmark as most of us understand it. And yet there are migratory insects.

The migrator with which we're most familiar is the Monarch butterfly, Danaus plexippus. It breeds here and south to the southern U.S. and north into Canada in the summer. At this time of year you can find its beautiful chrysalids attached to twigs near or in stands of milkweed, upon which the larvae feed. The chrysalis is a lovely green color with little golden dots. In its final form, shortly before the butterfly emerges, you can see the orange-brown, black and white markings through the case which becomes quite transparent. It emerges, pumps up and dries its wings and then sets off on a journey, which has been recorded by marking individuals, of up to 3000 miles (Ontario to Central Mexico). The migrations attract attention because the butterflies follow prevailing winds, stay fairly close to the ground (in what's called the "boundary layer" where winds aren't too strong), and become gregarious. As a result of these factors they are often found in great masses along the route south and after they get to their overwintering grounds.



It's not totally clear what happens during the return trip. Breeding appears not to occur on the wintering grounds so overwintering adults begin the trip north and most stop to breed along the way. This means that at least the vast majority if not all the Monarch adults that come here in the spring and early summer have never seen Pennsylvania before. Instead of coming back north in massive groups, like the ones seen going south, they sort of dribble back. They lay eggs on milkweed as it flowers and their offspring will travel to the south the next fall without ever having been there. It all has to be prewired in their nervous systems and they have to have cues to get them to the right area at the right time of year.

Several other moths and butterflies show "purposeful" seasonal migrations. That is to say they set off in a given direction and stick to their plan. A European relative of our Painted Lady butterfly does this. An Australian moth moves to high ground in the dry season and back to lower altitudes in the wet season. Most insects that are said to "migrate" actually just move from place to place with prevailing winds to find new sources of food. The most famous example is the African migratory locust, a large grasshopper which produces a long-winged, gregarious generation under certain conditions and which is responsible for tremendous crop damage from time to time. But the Monarch is the most spectacular and the best studied migrator.

All is not well with the Monarch, however. It has taken evolution countless thousands of years to produce this remarkable migratory pattern but we could destroy it in this generation if we're not careful. The West Coast populations migrate to extreme southern California where about 80 different wintering grounds have been found, accounting for about 20% of the Monarchs in the U.S. The rest, from east of the Rockies, filter down through Texas and go to high altitude fir forests in the Sierra Madres in Mexico. About 11 sites have been found in Mexico. On the wintering grounds they can be found in densities approaching 10,000,000 butterflies per acre. Of the California sites, many are being protected by landowners who are cooperating with the Xerces Society but at least 7 have been destroyed in the last three years due to clearing and urban development. Ironically, thousands of butterflies are destroyed each year by tourists

wanting souvenirs. In Pacific Grove, California, which has a butterfly parade each year in October, an ordinance had to be passed making it a \$500 offense to "abuse" a Monarch butterfly. Logging interests in Mexico threaten to do much harm as well, while the relatively affluent citizens of Pacific Grove may be able to afford to protect Monarchs, in a poor country like Mexico it is the solid economic values that often win the day rather than the softer esthetic values we conservationists and environmentalists try to push.

It would be a great shame if the handiwork of evolution which has developed such a mysterious and complex relationship between these beautiful animals and their environment were to be undone so quickly just to satisfy some short term human urges. But as Walt Kelly's little cartoon opossum philosopher from the Okefenokee Swamp, Pogo, told us a long time ago when assessing the problems of the environment, "We has met the enemy and he is us."

Bird Migration--some thoughts
by Dr. Neil Woffingden



Migration is a well known phenomenon among many animal groups but it is best exhibited by the birds. Each year impressive numbers of birds leave the more northern reaches of our continent on their southerly course to wintering grounds. Migration also occurs in the southern continent but since the southern portion of that land mass is less extensive than its arctic counterpart, bird densities are lower and the migration is not as spectacular.

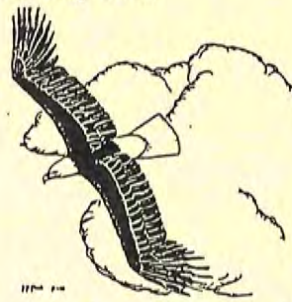
The ancients were aware of avian migration. Aristotle claimed that the European Robin was transformed every fall into the Redstart then back again in the spring. In addition, he taught that swallows retreated to mountain peaks in the fall to shed their feathers and hibernate through the winter. No one doubted that swallows hibernated but many disagreed with Aristotle, suggesting that swallows spent the winters in the mud at the bottom of lakes rather than on mountain tops. One anonymous author asserted that they flew to the moon, taking sixty days to make the trip, and hibernated there until spring. Reports from sixteenth century explorers of large numbers of common European birds being present in Africa while they were absent in Europe, lead to the more reasonable theory of intercontinental migration.

Origin of Migratory Patterns

One theory suggest that migration was made necessary by the first of the several periods of Pleistocene glaciation. Prior to this period North America had a mild climate, thus there was no need for birds to move from place to place for food and protection. Each ice age forced birds to move south; as the ice sheets gradually retreated, the birds moved north again from the crowded tropics. Over the years regular north-south movements became fixed annual avian behavioral patterns. There are many problems with this theory, one of the most obvious being that strong-flying migratory families of today existed in their present state millions of years before the first glaciation. The entire period of glaciation occupied less than one hundredth part of the avian existence. It is an unreasonable assumption then, to think that the extensive avian migratory behavior known today could have been molded solely by the brief Pleistocene Glacial periods.

Another theory suggests that at some time in the past the tropics became crowded forcing some species to move north or south to nest in areas where competition was less severe. At the conclusion of the nesting season they returned to their ancestral home. This theory works well for some species but not others. The belief is based largely on the concept of two great original land masses which split into the present continents and gradually drifted apart. The time of splitting is considered to be much before the Jurassic -- the earliest period in which primitive bird fossils have been found. Recently, however bones considered to be "modern bird bones" have been found in Jurassic deposits, indicating that birds may have evolved much earlier than presently accepted. If an earlier origin can be established, the theory of continental drift may answer many of the unsolved questions regarding the origin of avian migration.

Raptor Migration at Tussey Mountain By Tom Dick



Fifteen of us came to know Tussey Mountain as a training ground for identifying raptors. We learned a lot from this mountain following is a summary of our observations.

Raptors (birds of prey) have two major migrations: Spring and Fall. The fall migration at Tussey is the one we've come to know the best. Cold weather heralding in food scarcity seems to be the stimulus for raptor migration. Its a domino effect in that insects are the first to disappear followed by reptiles, amphibians, and finally song birds. Therefore, its logical that Broadwing Hawks which feed largely on reptiles are among the first to migrate soon followed by American Kestrels (Sparrow Hawks) of which a large part of their diet is insects. The accipters (Sharpshin, Cooper's, and Northern Goshawk) follow their main prey, the song birds, south.

The flight south is made easier by a number of energy saving steps: deflected wind, weather fronts, and thermals. Typically, raptors follow mountains and ridges where deflected wind, (wind striking the mountain and being forced upward), produces updrafts. Others will fly on the leading edge of fronts, in so doing they're guaranteed to have wind and by leaving they may avoid unpleasant weather. Lastly, thermals, rising bubbles of warmed air are especially welcome during the sunny days of fall. Air warmed near the ground becomes less dense and rises providing an elevator to the skies. At times tell-tale clouds leave footprints in the sky telling of an underlying thermal. We've learned to look for specific locations to reliably produce thermals such as the town of Everett and the Turnpike Authority parking lot, there concrete and asphalt absorb heat and in turn warm up air till it rises. In the morning before thermals have formed birds are generally flying low, toward noon the birds have achieved enough lift to be almost out of sight, we call this the "midday lows".

Bird counts at Tussey seem to do better on northwest, east and southeast winds than northeast or southwest winds. This is understandable when one considers the range runs northeast-southwest and winds from these directions do not require a bird to fly along our ridge. Each hawk counting site is slightly different since a northeast wind is good for Hawk Mountain and a northwest wind good for coastal locations like Cape May. Now lets look at Tussey on a monthly basis for the 3 Fall months of September, October, and November.



Early September is mostly a time of southwinds. Usually it is warm and dry. Open skies and hard sun make thermals common at this time. Once a Broadwing finds a thermal others are quick to join: soon the thermal begins to fill with birds. They rise with the thermal till no more lift is left and than glide, dropping as they go, to the next thermal or ridge. The ridge is only used if deflected wind (updraft) is present otherwise they may continue using valleys. This sort of hitchhiking saves energy and, therefore, the need to feed regularly, This is particularly important when one considers South America as the final destination for Broadwings. American Kestrels, however, can feast as they go since their migration overlaps the dragonfly migration.

Wind direction becomes more northerly by Late September. This is the time for Merlins and Peregrines to make their appearance at Tussey. Usually they pass close to the summit, almost overhead, flying direct and hard. The Merlin, an aggressive and fast bird, can be seen making swipes at resident Red-tails. The Peregrines, sophisticated and aloof, pass by quickly paying little attention to anything. The Ospreys, now on the scene, are indifferent to weather and are often seen migrating in the rain; they also may migrate late in the day. This is contrary to most raptors when highest numbers are usually between 1 a.m. and 2 p.m.. Ospreys follow water courses and this is Tussey's forte since the Juniata River and Cove Creek are at the base of the summit.

October, the month of variety brings much of the same but also the beginning of the Red-tail flight. Regular fronts are passing through bringing high pressure with sometimes storms and cold weather. Sharpshin Hawks and Coopers Hawks, in a ratio of 10:1, flap and soar along the summit hunting small passerines (songbirds) as they go. By mid-day many of these birds will have full crops, bulging throats from having recently eaten. The Goshawk, the largest accipiter, is also our rarest with seasonal counts barely exceeding 10. The Redtail Hawk, our main October buteo, is like the Kestrel and Northern Harrier in that it can often be seen "kiting" or flying in place. While kiting it scans the tree tops for squirrel, if prey is spotted they drop out of the sky feet first, talons extended. Many times they miss! Usual seasonal counts for this species is around 1000.

November, cold and unpredictable, is the last good month for migration. Counters, huddle and shiver, but the rewards are great since this is the month of the Golden Eagle. Tussey is distinguished in having a first rate Golden Eagle flight with as many as seven seen in one day. Some of us feel given the same coverage time as Hawk Mountain we would have a higher Golden Eagle count. Watching these magnificent birds we can only speculate from whence they came. Good information has the Gaspe' Peninsula as the origination point. As fast as the month starts it seems over and now we face the reality of the past three months and all the undone jobs at home. No problem, for during those months we were a part of the mountain imparted a feeling of place and belonging. We are all anxious for the following fall.



(Ed. Many thanks to Richard Mock for both illustrations and proof reading.)

Flock To Allegheny Plateau Audubon's Annual Bird Seed Sale

Top Quality Seed at Truckload Prices

50 lb. Graystripe Sunflower Seed	\$10.50
50 lb. Sunflower Blend	\$10.50
(75% Graystripe with 25% Black Oil Sunflower Seed)	
50 lb. Premium Sunflower Seed	\$9.50
50 lb. Songfest (mixed and improved)	\$10.50
Thistle for Goldfinches et. al	\$.90



Proceeds Support:

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Programs and Outings
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Supporting 10 schools with "Audubon Adventure Series"
Christmas Bird Counts
Breeding Bird Surveys
Newsletters
Environmental Action

Order now by calling **Stuver's Riverside Nursery at 288-1759** or stop in Monday to Saturday between 9 and 4. You may also place your order at Audubon Meetings. The next meeting is **November 19, at UPJ Room 240 Krebs**. After November the next meeting dates are **January 19, February 18, March 17, April 21, and May 19**. The third Thursday of each month with the exception of December and June, July, and August.

Our Birdseed sale represents an important part of our income and your support is not only appreciated but vital to our maintaining the many programs of environmental action.

Programs and outings from November 1987 to May 1988

Notice: unless otherwise stated all meetings are at the Johnstown College of the University of Pittsburgh, room 240 Krebs. In addition to the regular program we have goodies, hands-on-biology (a sort of nature show- and -tell) and some member slides depicting interesting situations or trips. On outings we request participants to notify outing leaders of their intent to participate, without notification its considered no-show and the outing is canceled.

November 19--"Conservation in the Amazon-- by Dr. David Pearson, a Penn State Professor and expert on Tropical Rain Forests--This is a good time to find out what really is happening in the tropics. Krebs Hall, rm. 240 Special Christmas Bird Count meeting: signups for this premier event of the season.

December 19--Christmas Bird Count --we would like our entire membership to participate in this fun day. If you don't know your birds--good! Than join up with us and learn. If you have a feeder and wish to do a feeder count notify Ruth Sager and she will instruct and give you the forms. This is an all day count with tally and food to be held at the home of Sally and Tom Dick--gather around a woodstove and enjoy the enthusiasm of running up the tally.

January 16--Photography Outing --Join our Photography chairperson, Dave Mikesic on a photographic outing to regional feeding stations of special interest. Call Dave at 266-7620

January 21,-Natural History of Africa-- An exciting slide filled evening with By Dr. Jan Humphreys, an I.U.P. professor. To be held at U.P.J., 240 Krebs.

February 6--Chesapeake Bay Crash One day waterfowl tour --join Tom Dick on this wild adventure which includes Sandy Point State Park, Kent Narrows, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and the Choptank River. Call Tom Dick at 266-7912-- final sign up date is February 1.

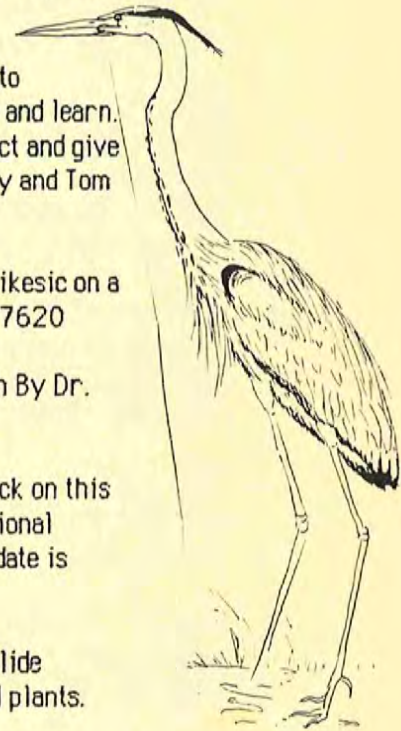
February 18--Churchill: The Natural History of an Arctic Seaport --a slide presentation by Sally and Tom Dick. An evening musing over ice foes, arctic birds and plants.

March 5--Return of the Swans and Eagles to the Susquehanna --a one day trip to see migrating swans by the thousands. Leader: Mike Sankovitch, Coordinator: Tom Dick call 266-7912 for details, we must have all signups by March 1st.

March 26 --Spring Waterfowl --join Tim Fox et. al for a tour of local water impoundments to see waterfowl in their exquisite spring plumage. Call Tim at 266-7912 for details.

April 2--Spring Waterfowl --join Tom Dick et. all for a revisit of local water impoundments--call Tom at 266-6412 for details..

April 21--Wetlands-- a slide lecture presentation by David Putnam, Biologist with Fish and Wildlife service. Find out all you can about this special topic and especially how it relates to us locally.



Continuing Outings and Programs

April 1 to 30--Spring Hawk Watch at Tussey Mountain --join up with Kevin Georg, Ruth and Glenn Sager, Dave Kyler, The Escherichs, Tim Fox, Dave Mikesic, Sally and Tom Dick, for the fair weather return of hawks and eagles on their way to northern breeding grounds. You can call either Kevin Georg 288-1763 or Tom Dick 266-7912 or Ruth Sager 798-3242 for a lift up the mountain on the day of your choosing.

May7--Powdermill Banding Station Trip: Join up with Kevin Georg to visit the banding station and museum at Powdermill Nature Center, this will be combined with birding on Powdermill's acreage. Call Kevin at 288-1763

May 8--Birding for Beginners -- trip Tom Dick will lead a group of interested folks on simple bird identifications. If you don't know the difference between a goldfinch and a Turkey vulture, then this is the trip for you. Call Tom Dick for details at 266-6412

May 14 --Century Bird Count- - this is the spring equivalent of the Christmas Bird Count. one hundred species is the goal and we travel by group within a specific area which includes Shawnee Park and the Allegheny Front. Last year we encountered such notables as Ruddy Turnstones and an albino Common Loon. For details call Tom Dick 266-7912 or Charles Voytko at 623-2262 Charles is the official leader for this outing.

May 15--Spring Bicycle trip-- along a scenic route in the Confluence- Ohiopyle area. See nature in season: birds, wildflowers, deer, snakes (omit the snakes) and small animals which may be easily observed along the route. Call Joan Lohr or David Lohr by May13th--266-5104

May 19--Member's Slide Night -this evening of conviviality will revolve around the many excellent slides our members take--all are invited to bring slides. The coordinator for slides is Dave Mikesic.

May 21--Mayflies and Warblers- -join up with Tim Fox for a lesson in stream ecology. Kick around for benthic insects on a pristine stream. See the Mayflies leave their shuck to fly free after overwintering on the stream bottom. For details call Tim Fox at 266-7912

May -Date to be Announced --once again the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society in conjunction with the conservation district will host a continuing education program for teachers, members are invited to this 1 1/2 day event. For details call Joe Emerick at 472-7540.

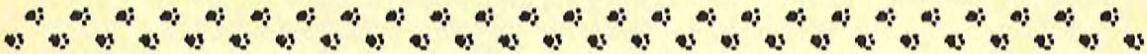
June 10th--Childrens Nature Hike --for youngsters 13 and younger. A Walking, talking and minimal collecting experience over the University of Pittsburgh nature trail. A 2 1/2 hour hike. For further details call David Lohr at 266-5104

June and July --the final stages of the breeding bird survey--join in this momentous effort and learn so much in the process. If you want to participate in this effort call Bruce Courter at 266-7912 for Cambria County and/or Ruth Sager at 798-3242 for Somerset and Bedford Counties.

Rehabilitation Clinic

This time our star boarder is an Osprey. The bird, intent on migrating, smacked into a high power utility line and plummeted back to terra firma. The impact was significant in that a number of bones were badly fractured around the birds neck (clavicle, coracoid). Fortunately, the bird is rehabilitating nicely at the Sagers, but keep your finger's crossed, we still don't understand the significance of this particular fracture and its effect on flying. While we're on the subject of Ospreys several pieces of mail have crossed my desk regarding this bird. One in particular is worth noting and it refers to an article which appeared in the september issue of Nature. Apparently, Ospreys returning to their nest with fish can tell a little story to other hunting Ospreys in the vicinity with a sort of "waggle dance." The significance of this maneuver is telling a story about the type of fish and the direction in which to find it. You see if the fish was just a loner than there would be little to tell but if its a schooling fish than lots more should be out there for the Ospreys to find. Neat!

(The Richland Veterinary Hospital is a full accredited rehabilitation facility. It is licensed by both the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service. Animals are accepted free of charge.)



The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society is very active and dedicated to serving the natural history needs of our area. We have focused on endangered wetlands, initiated species inventories of birds and plants, conducted breeding bird census, helped in the planning of parks, hawk counting stations, maintained a rehabilitation clinic, supported school ecology programs, conducted seminars, continuing education programs for teachers, outings, programs and, frankly, I'm getting tired of listing. If you subscribe to these goals why not buy a friend a membership. Membership in the audubon society opens many doors to natural history, for instance, if your interested in birds or plants we have lots of experts to help you progress along. Membership also allows you to receive the award winning Audubon Magazine and the local "Chickadee Chatter." Fill out the membership form below and become an Allegheny Plateau Auduboner.

Introductory Membership

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My Check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

I'm a bird watcher too!



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Photography Committee: Dave Mikesic (266-7620) 126 Carwyn Dr., Johnstown, 15904

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