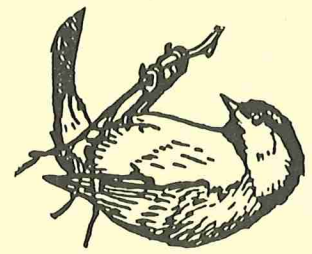


# Chickadee Chatter



Newsletter of the  
Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society

Volume 9

Number 1

January 1992



## 1991 Bird Count Report

Each year we ruminate over our accomplishments at itemizing the variety and numbers of birds. And rightfully so! This grand effort will be a source of useful information for many years to come. Ruth Sager deserves much credit for laboriously compiling the results of both our hawk watch and Christmas Count in a way that information can be compared to previous years.

Nationwide 44,000 volunteers participated in bird counts in this and a number of other countries. In our latitudes ferreting out birds is always a challenge. We are, however, always surprised at the results for they are never predictable. Don't count on fickle winter finches for in most years as they're conspicuous by their absence. This year both Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins were at my feeders for just one day and again one day just prior to count week. Data gleaned from this count will help in determining changing ranges, abundance or lack of, locating rarer species and giving direction to environmental planning and conservation efforts.

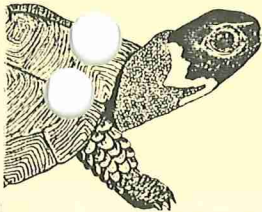
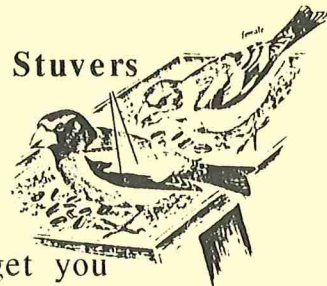
A hardy thanks to the hawk watch crew and the CBC participants (see accompanying articles). The information will be wisely used.

### Bird Seed is still available at good prices from Stivers

Black Oil Sunflower: 50 lb. for \$11.00  
Wild Bird Seed: 40 lb. for \$11.00  
Gray Strip Sunflower: 50 lb. for \$11.00  
Thistle .99 cents a pound

Call Stivers at 288-1759 or 288-3603 and order enough to get you through the winter.

Mike Lubick will speak at UPJ at 7:30 at the Engineering and Science Auditorium on February 20 on Sea Turtle Conservation. Don't miss this fascinating lecture. Also bring your mugs for coffee, we will soon discontinued providing disposal cups.





2.

## 1991 Christmas Bird Count

The 1991 Christmas Bird Count of the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society had the usual element of surprise on Saturday, December 14, 1991. After preceding days of unusually balmy weather, Count Day arrived with high morning temperatures of up to 55°. West wind velocity increased, temperatures fell throughout the morning and by early afternoon NW-wind-driven rain slashed into the count area on wind gusts of up to 50 mph. Eleven teams of CBC participants were by then shivering in temperatures as low as 30°, dodging falling tree limbs, making detours because of closed roads, and wondering what a CBC would be like in favorable weather. By the end of this, their 9th year, they knew that survival was possible in spite of all that the weatherman could thrust upon them and that some birding history would evolve from their efforts. Fifteen feeder watchers may not have been so physically stressed, but they added considerably to the day's totals.

Survival was instant when the field teams reached the shelter of Tom and Sally Dick's post-count party and partook of Mary Jo Cernetich's culinary offerings. Birding history will take longer to develop and will depend upon individual interpretation of all the facts and figures making up the following report of the past and present CBC counts.

The warm weather going into count week, undoubtedly, contributed to the unusual presence of 10 Yellow-rumped Warblers. Eleven E. Bluebirds, 11 Carolina Wrens, 16 Am. Robins, 3 N. Mockingbirds and 1 Rufous-sided Towhee were among the species that favor mild weather. The advancing storm brought a fair sampling of waterfowl into waters that had been bare of birds for several days, but except for 46 Hooded Mergansers, the waterfowl buffs had little to crow (or "honk") about. The crow watchers were even worse. With the Johnstown crow roost now a thing of the past, crow-watching was wiped out as a birding specialty and assimilated into "birding-in-general". The total of 1314 Crows was a far cry from the crow-watching heydays of the early 1980's. Winter finch species, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks, Horned Larks, and Snow Buntings were among the missing.

Pre-count questions had been raised about populations of sparrows and field birds because of the recent drought. Very few birds were seen in open fields because of the strong winds, so the weather prevented any logical answer to these questions. One participant complained of the frustration of chasing "flocks of leaves"—hardly the best conditions for field surveys! Suffice it to say that there must be some conclusion to be reached from the 9-year low of 30 Am. Tree Sparrows, 3 White-throated Sparrows, and 196 Dark-eyed Juncos. N. Cardinals and Blue Jays took nosedives, also. We would have to notice that the surprisingly good totals of 64 species and 9522 individual birds comprised a large percentage of birds found in wooded and sheltered areas and in yards where feeders were stocked.

Snow Goose was added as a new species during count week, extending to 108 the species list for the 9-year period. One hope for next year is that we increase our coverage in the other days of count week. The absence of any owl records in 1991, points out the need, also, for some concentrated owling. What new height can the Johnstown Bird Count reach in 1992, their 10th year? Remember the element of surprise!

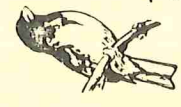




COUNTS OVER 200

1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991

0	0	0	1	4	0	1	1	3	N. Mockingbird
0	1*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Brown Thrasher
32	19	8	64	27	9	13	20	130	Cedar Waxwing
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	N. Shrike
982	1193	620	1174	978	938	1321	2396	2853	Eur. Starling
0	0	0	0	0	1*	0	0	10	Yellow-rumped Warbler
115	99	185	230	398	214	237	190	99	N. Cardinal
0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	Rufous-sided Towhee
86	41	163	115	60	92	180	61	30	Am. Tree Sparrow
4	11	10	0	3	0	7	2	1	Field Sparrow
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	Vesper Sparrow
1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	Fox Sparrow
31	17	41	43	53	45	57	22	23	Song Sparrow
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Swamp Sparrow
25	104	32	33	28	15	41	32	3	White-throated Sparrow
0	0	1*	0	0	0	0	0	0	White-crowned Sparrow
0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Sparrow, sp.
246	249	544	522	283	381	679	416	196	Dark-eyed Junco
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	Snow Bunting
3	0	1*	0	150	0	14	5	126	Red-winged Blackbird
0	0	0	21	5	0	0	0	1	E. Meadowlark
0	1*	1	1	43	3	11	8	3	Com. Grackle
0	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	0	Rusty Blackbird
0	0	12	1*	75	1*	1*	4	2	Brown-headed Cowbird
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Blackbird, sp.
97	84	42	0	25	2	21	45	30	Purple Finch
270	268	456	1666	671	603	515	472	1062	House Finch
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	77	Finch, sp.
14	0	0	0	0	1*	0	0	0	Com. Redpoll
7	0	4	8	97	3	118	0	0	Pine Siskin
103	31	95	120	169	62	88	35	62	Am. Goldfinch
68	0	1180	74	226	0	3	6	0	Evening Grosbeak
410	930	496	863	1266	521	421	961	744	House Sparrow



14913 16861 19948 24370 21124 7683 9726 10077 9522 INDIVIDUAL BIRDS

\* Seen in Count Week but not on Count Day

57	52	62	61	65	61	68	60	64	SPECIES ON COUNT DAY
69	59	68	63	66	70	76	70	66	SPECIES IN COUNT WEEK
								1	NEW SPECIES IN 1991
								108	TOTAL SPECIES 1983-91

OBSERVER INFORMATION

1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	
43	39	58	65	59	64	54	52	48	Observers
27	51	22	29	13	20	10	9	14	Party Hours on Foot
38	39	42	54	58	46	45	61	61	" " by Car
18	18	43	50	37	40	42	26	35	" " at Feeders
31	54	28	21	14	23	13	12	18	Party Miles on Foot
387	476	526	522	583	424	525	487	702	" " by Car
0	0	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	Party Hours Owling

PARTICIPANTS

Doris Brown, Grady Caples, Dwight, Tom & Sally Dick, Manetta Escherich, Tim Fox, Roger Gerney, Stanley Ginzza, Donna Gregory, Margaret Haines, Henry & Velva Idzkowsky, Barbara Jacko, John Jakesell, Shirley Jensen, Claudia Jones, Donald Kreutzberger, Joan Lohr, Alberta Long, Ed & Karlice Makuchan, Che & Marion Mincone, Mary Mock, Richard Murphy, George & Helen Nicely, Jeff & Retta Payne, Jim Rocco, Nancy Rovanssek, Robert Rudegeair, Glenn & Ruth Sager, Lynn Sanderson, Linda & Rick Sell, Paul Sheesley, Eric & Jess Stuver, Charles Voytko, Jeannie Weible, Dorothy Williamson, Neil Woffinden, George & Michael Wolfe, John Ziats

An adult Bald Eagle began the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch on August 16, 1991. An adult Golden Eagle was seen on the last day of the watch November 30, 1991. These majestic birds were among the totals of 13 Bald Eagles and 90 Golden Eagles that starred in the "Eagle Year", the third year of the watch near Central City conducted by the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society.

The flow of migrating raptors was impressive throughout the season. Many watchers joined the following leaders during 585.9 hours of coverage on 91 days of coverage: Sally and Tom Dick, David Escherich, Wanetta Escherich, Tim Fox, Kevin Georg, Dean and Ehyllis Jobe, William King, David Kyler, Che and Marion Mincone, Glenn and Ruth Sager, Evaleen and Michael Watko, Neil Woffinden, Michael Wolfe and Jim Zelenak.

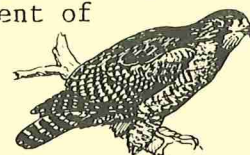
Although all other records of the previous Tussey Mt. effort at Everett in past years were surpassed, we will go into 1992 aiming to break Tussey's N. Goshawk record of 16 in 1987. The 90 Golden Eagles, 13 Bald Eagles, 168 Cooper's, 1614 Red-tails, 76 Osprey, 29 Peregrines, and 6617 total for 1991 were all record-breaking statistics for both watches.



September 14's 949 hawks provided the peak day of the year, September 12 followed with 899, and September 20 with 543, all in the "Broadwing Season". A total of 329 hawks sailed through on October 29 during the "Red-tail Season". A combination of Sharp-shins and Red-tails accounted for the next best daily total of 266 on October 14.

The hawk watchers were hard-pressed to decide what was the most exciting or favorite aspect of the watch. During the warm-to-hot days of September, large kettles and streams of Broad-wings brought shouts of joy, along with some frustration on days when the birds rose in thermals to eye-straining heights. From mid-September through early October, feisty Sharp-shins and Cooper's, and Am. Kestrels added their zip to the sport, but Peregrines and Merlins were the coveted blazing stars of those days. The call "Big O!", was always a treat for those who marveled at the steady approach and passage of the beautiful Ospreys. Those rewarded with the sight of erratic-flying, identity-defying N. Harriers, trim, bright-colored Red-shoulders, dependable, easily-identified Red-tails, and rare Goshawks and Rough-legs in the latter days of the season felt that each day was special for the special birds seen.

For 1991, those BIG BIRDS, the Golden Eagles and Bald Eagles, definitely provided the greatest entertainment. Watchers were known to grow limp from excitement on days like November 9 when 14 G. Eagles passed through, 11/1 when 11 were counted, and 10/26 and 10/31 when there were 10 each day. However, as far as we know, all left the mountain as the deer hunting season began. The lands of Col. George Gage and Mrs. Dolly Landis, our much-appreciated hosts, have now returned to the quiet of winter. As we review the results of the past season, and dream of the future of the Allegheny Front watch, a tantalizing announcement concerns a planned spring watch during April, 1992. We hope you will be there to share the enjoyment of hawk watching at the most western hawk watch in Pennsylvania.



YEARLY TOTALS

	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>		<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>
Turkey Vulture	81	77	49	Bald Eagle	7	9	13
N. Goshawk	5	9	9	N. Harrier	132	75	55
Sharp-shin	1054	1511	1439	Osprey	53	66	76
Cooper's	125	160	168	Peregrine	12	27	29
Red-tail	1385	1306	1614	Merlin	18	13	12
Red-shoulder	95	59	60	Am. Kestrel	66	89	66
Broad-wing	2967	762	2823	Swainson's	0	1	0
Rough-leg	3	11	4	Unidentified	75	137	110
Golden Eagle	37	34	90	TOTALS	6115	4346	6617

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

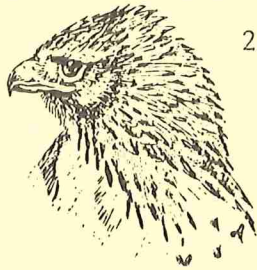
MO - Month (first two letters)  
 HRS - Hours  
 TV - Turkey Vulture  
 GO - Northern Goshawk  
 SS - Sharp-shinned Hawk  
 CH - Cooper's Hawk  
 RT - Red-tailed Hawk

RS - Red-shouldered Hawk  
 BW - Broad-winged Hawk  
 RL - Rough-legged Hawk  
 GE - Golden Eagle  
 BE - Bald Eagle  
 NH - Northern Harrier

OS - Osprey  
 P - Peregrine Falcon  
 M - Merlin  
 AK - American Kestrel  
 SW - Swainson's Hawk  
 U - Unidentified Raptor  
 TOT - Totals

1991 DAILY SUMMARIES

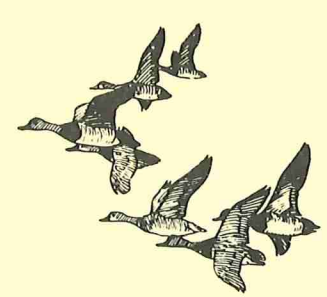
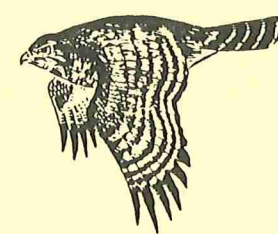
<u>MO</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>HRS</u>	<u>GO</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>CH</u>	<u>RT</u>	<u>RS</u>	<u>BW</u>	<u>RL</u>	<u>GE</u>	<u>BE</u>	<u>NH</u>	<u>OS</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>AK</u>	<u>SW</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>TOT</u>
AU	16	1									1								1
	25	6						2											2
	27	7.5		1	1	3		5				1	1		2			1	15
<u>TOT</u>		14.5		1	1	3		7			1	1	1		2			1	<u>18</u>
SE	1	4.5						10			1					1			12
	2	8.3		11		8		1			2		12			2		2	38
	3	8		3				9			1	1	4					1	19
	4	3.5																	0
	5	6		1				7					1						9
	6	7.3		3		1		36				4				3		1	48
	7	6		20	6	6							1			1			34
	8	5.5				2													2
	9	8		12		2		22					3			2			41
	10	6		1															1
	11	7		5				11				1				1			18
	12	7.5		23		5		853			2	1	9			3		3	899
	13	8.2		5				98					1	1					105
	14	8.5		13		4		919				1	5	1	1	2		3	94
	15	7		7	1	1		131			1	1		1		1			144
	16	7.5		4		2		58			1		2					2	69
	17	8		10				25								3			38
	18	7.3		20				24					2	2		1			49
	19	3.5						1								1		1	3
	20	8		18	3	2		507				1	4	1		6		1	543
	21	8		11	2	5		40										2	60
	22	7.8		25		4		31				2	4	3		2		2	73
	23	3.5																	0
	24	8		18	1	2		9					2	2				1	35
	25	RAIN																	
	26	7.5		13	4		1	1					1	1				4	25
	27	6.8		15	2	1	1	10						1		1			31
	28	4.5		4									1			1			6
	29	7		39	4		1	4					4	1	1	5		4	63
	30	7		105	18	34	1	4				1	6	3	1	7		8	188
<u>TOT</u>		195.7		386	41	79	4	2811			8	13	62	17	3	43		35	<u>3502</u>
OC	1	7.5		19	3			1				2	4	2	1	1			33
	2	8		20	1	2		1					2	1		1			28
	3	7		75	5								1			2		2	85
	4	5		19	2	2		2										1	26
	5	7.8		105	10	3	1						2	3	1			2	127
	6	6		45	2	4		1				1				2		1	56
	7	6		37	4	1						2							
	8	7.8		20	1	1						2				2		1	27



NO	DATE	HRS	TV	GO	SS	CH	RT	RS	BW	RL	GE	BE	NH	OS	P	M	AK	SW	U	TOT
OC	9	7.5			139	8	3	2					2	1	3	2	4		4	168
	10	7.2			96	3	3	1				1					5			109
	11	5.7													1					1
	12	7.5			30	3	1								1					35
	13	6.7			51	2	9						2							64
	14	7.7			129	48	64	1			1		3	1	1	1	5		12	266
	15	2			2															2
	16	7	7		20	6	38	5						1		2			8	87
	17	6.5			6		2													8
	18	8			34	2	53	2			1		3	1						96
	19	6			1		2						1							4
	20	8	17		22	2	128	1					1							171
	21	8			7	1	52				1								1	62
	22	8			7	1	12	1			1								3	25
	23	7			44	2	90	3		2	1	1	2						3	148
	24	7.2			5	2	30												1	38
	25	8.1	6		33	5	90	2			3									139
	26	8.5		2	51	2	177	5			10		1							248
	27	8			11	2	34	1			3		1						2	54
	28	7.5		2	3	3	100	7			6	1	3						10	135
	29	9	10	2	10	1	287	7		1	6	1	2						2	329
	30	7			1		44	2			1		3						6	57
	31	7.2					63	2			10		2							77
TOT		220.4	40	6	1042	121	1295	43	5	3	44	4	33	13	12	7	22		59	2749



NO	1	8	3				71	4			11								1	90
	2	7	2				8	2			1		2				1		4	20
	3	6.7	3		1		5	1					1							11
	4	7		1	1		5	1											1	9
	5	7.5			2	1	28	2					2							35
	6	5					4				1									5
	7	4.7					2													2
	8	7.2				1	6													8
	9	7.5		1	1		35	1			14		1						1	54
	10	4			1						4									5
	11	4.8																		0
	12	3.3					1													1
	13	3																		0
	14	5.2			1	1	7						1						1	11
	15	7			1		3				1									5
	16	6.5		1			7	2												10
	17	6.3	1		1	2	40			1	2		1						5	53
	18	7					2				5									7
	19	4					1													1
	20	6			1						1									2
	21	2.5																		0
	22	RAIN																		
	23	8					5				1									6
	24	6.5					2				1									3
	25	3																		1
	26	NO WATCH																		
	27	6.1					5				3									8
	28	2																		0
	29	5																		0
	30	4.5									1									1
TOT		155.3	9	3	10	5	237	13		1	46		8				1		15	348

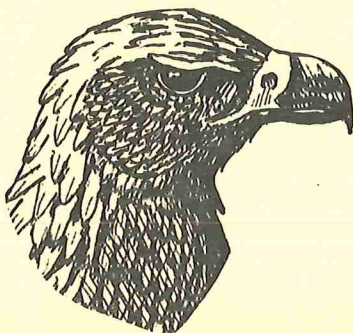


## The Folks running the show

President: Joe Emerick (472-7504) Box 235, Ebensburg, 15931  
Vice President: Tim Fox (495-9011) 503 Main St., Box 352, Summerhill, 15958  
Recording Secretary: Joan Lohr (266-5104) 255 Collegiate Dr., Johnstown, 15904  
Corres. Secretary: Velva Idzkowsky (255-1910) 1324 Christoper St. Johnstown, 15905  
Treasurer: Shirley Jensen (629-6338) Box 282 Jennerstown, 15547  
Conservation: Jeff Payne (443-1323) Box 76 Shanksville, 15560  
Programs: Dr. Dennis McNair (539-8293) 517 Cypress Ave., Johnstown 15902  
Outings: Dr. Sally Dick (266-7912) 1003 Eisenhower Blvd., Johnstown, 15904  
Publicity: Becky DeAngelo (629-6546) RD#1 Box 48 Boswell, 15531  
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  
Editors: Dr. Thomas Dick (266-7912) 1003 Eisenhower Blvd., Johnstown 15904  
Hewlett Prucher: (539-2485) 109 Bucknell Ave. Johnstown, 15905  
Membership: Rick Sell (266-2734) RD2, Box 457, Johnstown, 15904  
Hospitality: Juanita Foor (266-2199) RD1, Box 290, Saxton 16678  
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Bird Counts: Ruth and Glenn Sager (798-3242) RD1 Box 176-B, Hooversville, 15936  
Stream Committee: Tim Fox (495-9011) 503 Maine St., Box 352, Summerhill, 15958  
Photography Committee: Dr. Doris Brown (255-1223) 426 Girard St., Johnstown, 15905  
Special Projects: Linda Sell (266-2734) RD2 Box 457, Johnstown, 15904

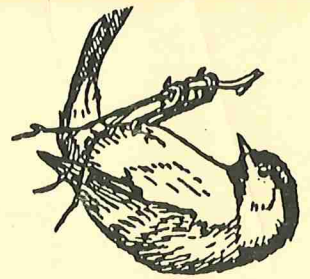
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Johnstown, Pa. 15904

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# Chickadee Chatter



Newsletter of the  
Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society

Volume 9

Number 2

Spring 1992



Audubon Picnic August 30  
Wetlands and Endangered Species  
Conservation Corner  
Adventure Tales  
Previous Outings

## Audubon Picnic August 30

Join up with Auduboners for a Picnic at Hidden Acres Farm (home of Tom and Sally Dick). Food and field trips abound. Field trips include old field ecology, mountain bog tours, kick seine in a mountain trout stream, farm pond ecology (includes seine for channel catfish), butterfly and field flower tour and just down the road is the hawk watch where the first Bald Eagles may be coming through--Join us---- Notify Sally or Tom at 754-5727 or 266-7912.

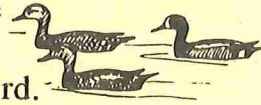
**Who needs wetlands? Read on about our special Audubon project that has turned exhausted farmland into a wetland gem. The coming of age of a wetland creation project and the luring of species of special concern.**

(See the September 91 newsletter for details on how the wetland project was funded.)

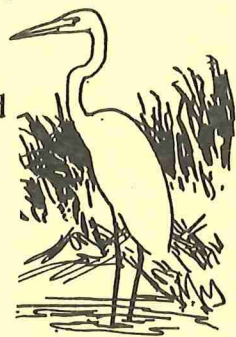
In October of 1991 two dikes were completed on approximately 40 acres of a 170 acre parcel near Dunnings Creek in Bedford County by Audubon members. The dikes maintain moist and inundated soil for wetland plant management. By mid-December, both impoundments were full. January of '92 was quiet, the wetlands were frozen, but the accompanying fields were excellent for winter raptors. Raptors to be seen were Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers, Rough-legged Hawks, Kestrels, and Short-eared Owls. By late February, the wetland was coming to life as a loafing area for waterfowl. The wetlands offered only water since aquatic plants (food) had not been introduced yet. Among the first visitors were Tundra Swan with high counts in the 80's. This was soon followed by dabblers like Mallards, American Black Ducks, Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, Green and Blue-winged Teal, and American



Widgeon; each dropping in at specific times. Both Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers could be seen diving and probably wondering, "where's the fish?" Ring-necked Ducks came and went in large numbers, Buffleheads were spotty and scaup occasionally dropped by. Pied-billed Grebes and American Coots enjoyed our "goldenrod marshes." By spring, raucous Canada Geese were content in the newly created marsh, but declined to nest. Mallards, however, found the marsh to their liking and produced around 50 ducklings. By late spring Wood Ducks, up to 35 at a time, were the most abundant bird. By June, their ducklings could be found easily within the impoundments. The Wood Ducks nested along the adjoining creek and used the many Wood Duck boxes auduboners had posted. They marched their young across fields to the impoundments. This was particularly interesting to me since the marsh made a much safer nursery than life along the creek.



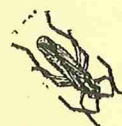
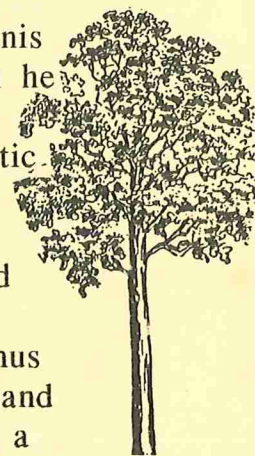
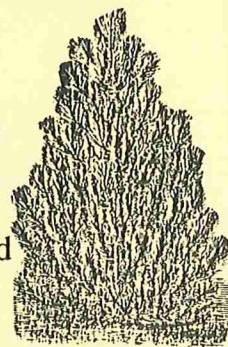
April was an exciting month. The bare ground left by the bulldozer was now partially inundated and became a magnet for shorebirds. These artificial mudflats lured Sandpipers by the hundreds. Most numerous were the Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. The following are the shorebirds we were able to see: Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper (rare), Pectoral Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Black-bellied Plover, Dunlin, Sanderling, Semipalmated Plover (abundant), Common Snipe (abundant), Short-billed Dowitcher, and Ruddy Turnstone. Garnish all this with hundreds of Ring-billed Gulls clustered together on the artificial islands. After awhile the unexpected became the expected. One day we surprised an Osprey sitting on a snag, another day a Red-shouldered Hawk, and on a 3rd visit a Green-backed Heron on the same snag. Although Great Blue herons were common, we were surprised at the appearance of 2 Great Egrets. The egrets lent a picturesque backdrop and a living symbol of a great Audubon effort.



April 16 was our big Audubon planting day. This was our opportunity to fine tune our artificial marsh into something productive by getting those primary producers planted. By the time all was accomplished, auduboners planted over 7000 plants covering an area of 70 acres. The wetland plants were cattail, sago pond weed, burreed, hardstem bulrush, duck potato, alder, willow, buttonbush, water iris, pickerelweed, and 3 square sedges. The plants were slow in coming up, but by the middle of June the marsh became a profusion of introduced plants. Not only plants but insects as well. Many jobs were difficult, but by the end of the day we accomplished a great deal for the environment. Volunteers from

Audubon, Fish and Wildlife, friends and local landowners arrived on scene with shovels, boots, and enthusiasm. Over 30 people did the following: planted 5000 trees (2000 a few weeks later), shrubs and aquatics, dike erosion problems were mitigated, ditches were opened for outflow, amphibian ponds were planted, nesting boxes were installed for Wood Ducks, Kestrels and Bluebirds, (Bill Miller made the Kestrel boxes, Dr. Choby the Bluebird boxes and Tony Marich the Wood Duck boxes) and a butterfly garden was mapped out and later planted. To add to this accomplishment, many unexpected plants were donated and for this we can thank Ruth and Glenn Sager for false patriidgeberry and various aquatic plants, Tony Marich for aquatics plus 100's of dogwoods, Tim Fox for marsh marigold, Dennis Brown of Fish and Wildlife for thousands of plants (many of which he and his family planted), DGP Timothy Flanagan of the Pa. Game Commission for crabapples, hawthorns, and evergreens. The aquatic plants came from farm ponds, stripmine sedimentation ponds, aquaculture projects in both Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Dennis and Becky Reynolds (our more distant chapter members) traveled from New Jersey to help with the plantings. Mary Jo Cernetich provided an excellent meal for a hard working crew. Another bonus was the planting of over 1000 submergent plants by Sue Furlong and Jeff Hoffman, local landowners. This effort is being followed up by a long term study of insects and plants by UPJ students and by careful documenting of birds and other sightings by Auduboners.

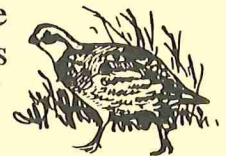
By June everything was lush: plants were growing, insects were abundant--and this was soon discovered by a number of reptiles and amphibians. Bullfrogs, who are locally migratory, now have a well established population in both the north and south dike. Green frogs have also moved in--these two frogs we expected. On the south dike I had the pleasure of watching a huge snapping turtle sitting on the rim. After it slid back into the water, I walked over and found the vegetation carefully scrapped away. I thought it was digging a hole for eggs, but there was no hole. Carefully I touched the soil and worked it slightly with my finger and realized it had been backfilled. Carefully I dug deeper till my fingers made contact with a clutch of eggs. Snapper eggs will hatch into males or females depending on ground temperatures (common with turtles). The incubation period is three to four months. When these young snappers hatch and dig their way out they'll find the ground sloping right into the water--a perfect slide to safety. Snappers are a definite risk to ducklings and waterfowl production is one of our goals, but turtle egg predation is high. Skunks and raccoons have ways of finding those eggs especially during the first two weeks of incubation.



June was also a month of discovery for some very exciting bird findings. Bob Schusky started the ball rolling by finding two **Sedge Wrens**. He lured them out with tapes of their songs. Although threatened in Pa., they may soon be assigned to a federal status of special concern. The last Sedge Wrens seen in Pa. were in Cumberland Co. several years ago. These feisty little birds make ball like nests of grass located in wet meadows. They have little site fidelity and may not use the same site each year. Decline has been attributed to the loss of wetlands. The next bird of significance is the **Common Snipe**. A common migrant but very uncommon breeder. The discovery of a snipe feigning an inability to fly by hopping from bush to bush suggested nesting. We hope to prove this. The third bird was discovered by Tim Fox and Diane Nicodemus, and this was a pair of **Loggerhead Shrikes**. Although not wetland birds, they were in typical shrike habitat. When perched they are not easily confused with anything but the Northern Shrike. We plan to check the area out closely, especially the barbed wire fences and hawthorn trees for impaled prey--it's something they do to make eating easier.



I am learning a fast lesson on the value of wetlands. This system, although in its infancy, is attracting a wide variety of species, all dependent on a moist niche where they can loaf, feed, and/or reproduce. Wetlands are disappearing fast and so are the dependent species. Future plans include bringing down heavy earth moving equipment from the Erie National Wildlife Refuge and creating 3 to 4 more impoundments. We hope to regulate one impoundment for shorebirds only. This would be done by drawing the water down during migration to simulate mudflats. The total acreage under the influence of water would probably be around 80. On other projects Tim Fox is hatching, brooding, and releasing Quail. We hope to introduce quail to an area where they were historically abundant. We also have brought the U.S. Forestry Service on the scene to help increase the riparian forest (most trees were removed for fields), develop connecting peninsulas of trees between isolated stands (allow birds and squirrels to move more freely), canopy trees for amphibian ponds (prevent evaporation and UV light protection), shrub plantings for woodcock and winter cover for other forms of wildlife. Of course, auduboners will have the most to gain for they will monitor, plant, patrol, plan, survey, learn and enjoy this unique opportunity at creating a wetland.



### Conservation Corner

When it comes to reducing consumption and waste, we are told to think globally and act locally. What better place to begin than in our own homes and yards. This column is a place to pool our knowledge on alternatives for toxic products, ways to cut down energy use and recycle. Every family has thought of ways to conserve, but no one thinks of everything. By sharing our ideas, we can become better stewards of the earth. Send in any ideas you have on chemical-free gardening, conservation in the home, energy efficient products and where you can buy them, composting, ideas for recycling products other than the recycling bin, etc. If you have questions, send in your questions and surely some member will be able to answer them. We would like to make this a regular feature, so send in those suggestions. To get started, here are some thoughts:



*Use cloth napkins instead of paper: not hard if you buy napkins that don't need ironing and buy napkin rings for each member of the family so you can use the napkins several days.*

*Ask the baggers at the grocery store to fill your bags full. It seems to go against their grain, but we'd save a lot of bags if each person used one less bag each week.*

*Better yet, take your own bags to the grocery store.*

*Does anyone know an easy, surefire way to compost? My pile is sitting there like a pile of leaves!*

*What do people do with their old magazines besides throw them away?*

*Does anyplace nearby recycle newspaper?*

*Use the water from your dehumidifier to water your garden.*

Send in your ideas and questions> Don't worry that it's too simple or elementary-those are the ones people are most likely to use frequently. If you encounter a magazine article with interesting information, but don't have time to condense it, send the article to me, and I will summarize it for the column. When sending information, please include a telephone number so I can reach you for clarification if necessary. Names will be used only with permission of the individual.

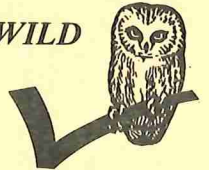
Send information to: Hewlett Prucher, 109 Bucknell Ave., Johnstown, Pa. 15905, (814) 539-2485

### Adventure Tales

With all the outdoor activities our members take part in, there must be a wealth of good stories waiting to be told. Here is your chance to tell them! We're waiting to hear from you! Tell us of your encounter with the bear or skunk, or about the one that got away or didn't get away and you wish it had. Funny, exhilarating, sad, poignant, amazing....share your story. Close to home, on vacation, along the way, in the backyard, on the farm, at sea, at work....the location doesn't matter, Big animal, little animal, no animal, breathtaking scenery, weird happenings...tell us. The only requirement is that the story has to be mostly true!

DO SOMETHING

WILD



Send stories to Hewlett Prucher, 109 Bucknell Ave., Johnstown, pa. 15905 (814) 539-2485. When sending stories, please include name and phone number so I can reach you for clarification. Again, names will only be used with the individual's permission.

The Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society is very active and dedicated to serving the natural history needs of our area. We focus on endangered wetlands, initiate species inventories of birds and plants, conduct breeding bird census, help in the planning of parks, attend many hearings and lobby in Washington, maintain raptor counting stations, support school ecology programs, conduct seminars, continuing education programs for teachers, outings, programs, host environmental TV programs, and many other services. 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 you're interested in birds or plants, we have many 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 Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society (U20)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (Area Code) \_\_\_\_\_

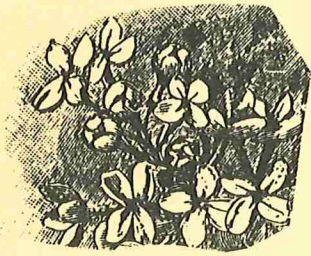
Make Check for \$20.00 payable to "National Audubon Society"

Mail to: Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society"

1003 Eisenhower Blvd.

Johnstown, Pa. 15904

Audubon outings...See what you missed!



April 13-14,1992. Audubon members visited Washington D.C. for a combined cherryblossom tour and biking the C&O towpath. It was a great time to catch a first glimpse of spring flowers and returning warblers.

April 16,1992. Approximately 30 members met at the Dunnings Creek Wetlands project in Bedford County to plant emergents, shrubs, and trees, in conjunction with Fish and Wildlife, in our effort to recreate wetlands in a previously agricultural area. It was a tiring,exciting,enthusiastic effort. We are keeping close tabs on the growth of plants and the attraction of wildlife,especially ducks,geese, and shorebirds.



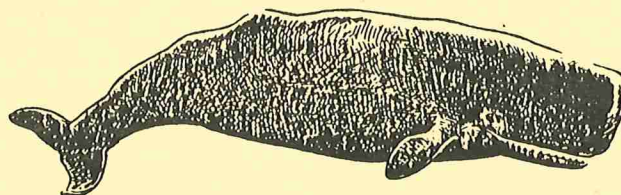
April 26,1992. Our local chapter celebrated Earth Day at Prince Gallitzin State Park. Joe Emerick presented a slide show, participants enjoyed spring flowers, then we traveled to Wilmore Dam for a hike along a fresh water stream, more wildflowers, and a picnic.

May 7-9,1992. Nine local Audubon members joined the W. Va. Wildflower Pilgrimage at Blackwater Falls State Park, Davis, W.Va. for a series of hikes and lectures and slide shows, visiting Cranesville Swamp, Seneca Rocks and Dolly Sods for more wildflowers and returning warblers.

May 14,1992. Four members traveled to Confluence for our third annual Ohio-pyle Bike Ride, biking 20 miles along the Yough, taking in spring wildflowers, birds, lunch by the rapids, and enjoying a beautiful spring day abounding with new life.

May 29-30,1992. Ten members traveled by van to Barnegat Light, N.J., boarded a 100 ft. catamaran,slept on board, and awakened at dawn, 80 miles at sea, to a spectacular array of pelagic birds, pilot whales, and puffins. Luckily we had near perfect weather and no one got seasick!

June 3,1992. Three members hiked a fourteen mile stretch of the Laurel Highlands Trail. Within the next few weeks, we hope to complete the 72 mile hike by walking the final 18 miles and staying overnight at the Youth Hostel at Ohio-pyle. Any member can join us at the Hostel for the celebration of our first of a series of extended hiking and biking trips. Our next big effort will be to bike the entire C&O towpath. From there, who knows?



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