

SECRETARY

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
January 1973

Winter

I wish to hear the silence of the night, for the silence is something positive and to be heard. I cannot walk with my ears covered. I must stand still and listen with open ears, far from the noises of the village, that the night may make its impression on me. A fertile and eloquent silence. Some- times the silence is merely negative, an arid and barren waste in which I shudder, where no ambrosia grows. I must hear the whispering of a myriad voices. Silence alone is worthy to be heard. Silence is of various depths and fertility, like soil. Now it is mere Sahara, where men perish of hunger and thirst, far from the fertile bottom, or prairie, or the west. As I leave the village, drawing nearer to the woods, I listen from time to time to hear the hounds of Silence baying the Moon, to know if they are on the track of any game. If there's no Diana in the night, what is it worth?.. The silence rings; it is musical and thrills me. A night in which the silence was audible. I heard the unspeakable.

- Henry David Thoreau  
(In Wilderness is the Preservation of the World)

First meeting of 1973

Peace in the New Year! Our first meeting of the new year will feature a pair of short films - Rainshowers and The Cry of the Marsh. The latter should be very interesting from a conservation point of view. Audubon is currently working hard to save coastal salt marshes. There will be time to discuss the film before the magic hour of 9:00.

DATE: January 30th (last Tuesday)  
TIME: 7:30 P.M.  
PLACE: Audio-visual room of the Altoona Area Public Library (the meeting room adjacent to the Childrens' Theater.)

Winter Birds Field Trip

Sunday, January 28th at 2:00 P.M. John Orr will undertake to guide a field trip for winter birds in Sinking Valley. Meet at the Country Dairy Store (Sickles Corner) at 2:00. With snow we should see horned larks, meadow larks, mourning doves, killdeers and hopefully - snow buntings. Dress warmly. Trip will last 2 hrs.

Christmas Bird Count - Fourth Annual

Fourteen people in 6 parties spent most of the daylight hours December 30th searching under poor conditions for the Christmas birds. No snow hampered us - if you can believe that statement - for we had poor background against which to see birds. Also, manure strip activity was minimal. No horned larks! The first year that has happened. We see as many as 250 larks in a good year. There was no prediction that Sunday. Perhaps more of a debilitating factor was the heavy overcast. The sun did not shine on us this year.

Thirty different species were seen on the count day. For area that is not too bad - and not too good. We should see thirty easily and then fight for forty! We did see forty different birds if you add the ten species seen on other days in the count period (2 weeks) (Dec. 16th to Jan 1st). For the four years we have seen fifty different species in our area.

A good time was had by everyone at Paul and Irene Luckner's house where we met for our covered dish dinner in the evening. We want to thank them for the fine hospitality. Such gatherings are enjoyable. Let us have more of them.

The following 30 birds were seen on the count day:

black-capped chickadee	cardinal
tufted titmouse	evening grosbeak
white-breasted nuthatch	purple finch
red-breasted nuthatch	american goldfinch
town creeper	rufous-sided towhee
carolina wren	slate-colored junco
mockingbird	tree sparrow
golden-crowned kinglet	chipping sparrow
starling	white-throated sparrow
house sparrow	song sparrow

Birds seen in the two week count period but not on count day:

canada goose	killer
common goldeneye	belted kingfisher
mallard	red-tailed hawk
mourning dove	horned lark
ruffed grouse	robby

Next year is another chance to improve our count. Get to know our territory. Borrow our huge map of the circle (John McCall has it now). Find a favorite stretch of wood or field for your own coverage. We hope to have more people out next year. Linda Amelang and Roxanne Shank, two student members of Audubon, and two of their girlfriends covered Greenwood, Bertwood, Tipton and Tyrone. They picked up the only mockingbirds seen all day. We need more teams. More field trips and workshops in identification will be set up. The count is over but winter is not yet upon us - so there is time to see what we have here in the months of Jan. and Feb. Report anything interesting in or out of our circle to John Orr, bird count compiler at 943-5629.

Spring Field Trips

Some members would like to take an extended field trip sometime in the future - possibly to Sapshaker Woods at Cornell University or to Audubon's home in eastern Pa. Or to Brigantine and the coastal bird refuges. More will be said on this later. If interested in such trips bring it up for discussion at a meeting or call Earl Higgins 684-0350.

Subscription of Gnatcatcher

We intend to send complimentary copies of our newsletter to anyone interested in our group. Let us know of such people - your friends perhaps. Also, we will exchange free copies with other conservation groups, especially with local Audubon groups. There will be a \$1.00 per year rate charged to anyone who is not a member of Audubon but who wants to get the Gnatcatcher (9 issues). Let us know of your intent if you plan to subscribe - as some have already done. Remember, those who now belong to Audubon do not have to pay for the newsletter.

Need a Ride?

If you need a ride to any of our monthly meetings call Earl to see if it can't be arranged. Many of us live near one another but don't know it. We should be able to work out rides for those with no way to get in to the library.

The Gnatcatcher : 943-5629  
 Juniata Valley Audubon Society

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