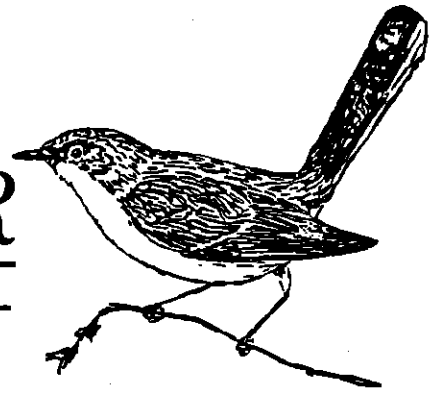


THE GNATCATCHER

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

Sept. 1987



September's Meeting

September's meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. on the 29th at the 28th Street Church of the Brethren. Speaking to us will be Dave Young of the Bureau of State Parks. Dave is from the Shawnee Office of the parks and has worked at the Jennings Environmental Center. His talk, on relict prairies in Pennsylvania, will be illustrated with slides. Please join us for a very enjoyable, informative talk.

Juniata Valley Audubon Society Annual Report 1986-1987 Marcia Bonta

Last year we managed to maintain our same high levels of diverse projects despite a dwindling budget. At least half of our 300 members participated in one activity and over 60 members played an active role by serving as officers, on committee, and on the board, contributing refreshments, helping with the Bird Seed Sale, assisting at Naturefest and Envir-Olympics, being on the banquet committee, running field trips and workshops, attending state and regional Audubon Council and/or conservation/education-oriented conferences, bringing nature-related displays to meetings, keeping Tytoona Cave cleaned up, participating in the Christmas Bird Count and the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas, maintaining Bluebird Trails, and generally being doers instead of spectators.

Regular Activities

We continued to have excellent programs that featured both local issues and places--Tytoona Cave, the rehabilitation of raptors in Johnstown, the ecology of gypsy moths--and areas farther afield such as the national parks of Alaska, the flora of the Mid-Appalachian shale barrens and Pete Myers's outstanding banquet presentation of the shorebirds of the Americas. Members' Night drew an enthusiastic crowd that stayed on and on, past 10:30, sharing slides of favorite places and wild creatures.

Our field trips also took us both near and far--from Winter Trees/Winter Tracks at Canoe Creek State Park, eagle-watching at the Pulpit and waterfowl identification at Shawnee State Park, to Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, the Pittsburgh Aviary, white water rafting on the "Yough," and hawk-watching at the Tussey Mountain Fire Tower--culminating in an unforgettable May weekend trip to Cape May and Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey.

Our monthly newsletter The Gnatcatcher continued to expand with more contributions about our activities written by members, a trend our new editor hopes will continue.

Education

Our Education Committee once again increased its workload--expanding the Speakers' Bureau, the number of classrooms reached by Audubon Adventures, and the level of participating high schools in the Envir-Olympics. They also had a JVAS booth at the annual Central Pennsylvania Outdoor Sports and Recreation Show where one member gave three seminars in black bear biology.

Other education activities by JVAS members included offering workshops to the public in waterfowl, warbler and fern identification at the Altoona Campus as well as co-sponsoring a Project Wild Workshop at Canoe Creek State Park.

Conservation

The Conservation Committee continued to fight billboards both on a local and national level, wrote innumerable issue-related letters to state and national representatives, offered input to Canoe Creek State Park regarding projected cabin sites, investigated countless requests for conservation-

oriented help, and participated in forming the new Pennsylvania Acid Rain Coalition. Every month they presented Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down awards to those who contribute to a better environment and those who do not.

International Issues

The International Issues Interest Group strengthened their exchange ties with ECODESC in Peru by sending to them education and conservation materials, a slide/tape show of JVAS's activities, and \$200 which they raised to help finance a biological research station at the Yanachaga-Chemellin National Park in the central jungle near Oxapampa. The group continued to send donated nature-related magazines to libraries in Belize and Guatemala and gave a whole donated science library to the new wildlife management program at the Universidad Nacional in Costa Rica.

Summary

We have spread our net wide, encompassing old as well as new active members with a range of interests that can best be described as Think Globally, Act Locally, Statewide, Nationally, and finally Internationally! With continued and added support from all our members, we can only do better this coming year. If you are one of our members who only subscribes to Audubon magazine and receives our newsletter, please consider joining us and helping to advance the Audubon Cause in a more active way. People can and do make a difference when they speak up and help out.

Cape May/Brigantine Field Trip Dave Kyler

At Cape May, in southern New Jersey, the Atlantic Flyway constricts to form a natural funnel through which many migrating species must pass on their northbound journey in the spring and their southbound journey in the fall.

May is the best month for observing the northbound "push" all along the Atlantic coast, and this past May was no exception. Twenty-six members of the Juniata Valley Chapter "migrated" to the New Jersey shore. On the 16th and 17th of May, to view this natural spectacle first-hand.

Traveling via comfortable vans, we left the Pleasant Valley Shopping Center at 6 a.m. arriving at our first stop, Reed's Beach, just past noon on Saturday the 16th. Reed's Beach, a public access on the Delaware Bay, provided us with good, close up looks at Red Knot, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, and 'Peep' Sandpipers, all feeding ravenously on Horseshoe Crab eggs. The nearby Inter-tidal Basin yielded good numbers of Night Herons and Gulls.

At Cape May Meadows, six miles to the south, we found remnant ponds with Piping Plover, an endangered species throughout much of its range, and Wilson's Phalarope, an unusual and uncommon shorebird. The late afternoon walk, at Higbee's Beach, yielded many migrating Warblers, all in their full breeding colors. The late evening meal at Russo's Italian/American Restaurant in Wildwood was preceded by stops at Stone Harbor Heron Rookery, to view the returning Night Herons and at the Wetlands Institute where Clapper Rail and Nesting Osprey were seen.

Sunday's early morning walk, at Higbee's Beach, turned up additional Warbler species as well as Rose-breasted and Blue Grosbeaks. After a good breakfast and plenty of hot coffee we headed north on the Garden State Parkway arriving at Brigantine Wildlife Refuge before noon. Along the ten mile long "auto loop" we observed many waterfowl on the inner freshwater impoundment, and many shorebirds on the outer tidal flats. Ranking high on our species list must have been the wayward Water Pipit, Ruddy Turnstones and Full-billed Terns, but alas, no Peregrine Falcon could be found in the hacking tower. A six hour drive, including a "friendly" supper in Harrisburg, brought us back to Altoona at 11 p.m. tired but elated at having been witness to one of nature's miracles.

International Issues

*The JVAS International Issues Interest Group received a grant of \$300 from the Moshannon Chapter of the Sierra Club for its educational outreach program. The funds will be spent on materials for exhibits relating to international conservation to be placed in public libraries and as seed money for securing a major grant.

*Second-hand nature books and magazines are still welcome. Contact Bruce or Marcia Bonta (684-3113). Printed materials are being sent to interested groups and institutions in Central and South America.

*Mark and Steve Bonta are collecting used optical equipment (binoculars, spotting scopes, tripods) for the Interwader Group in the Phillipines. Please contact the Bontas if you have any equipment to donate.

From the President's Desk
Marcia Bonta

FINANCE COMMITTEE--The annual finance committee meeting was held on July 12 and a budget was projected for 1987-88 based on anticipated income from our Annual Bird Seed Sale and from the National Audubon Society. Since NAS is having financial difficulties we foresee a possible cut in our payments from them. Member support of the bird seed sale has also declined. For these reasons, we voted to discontinue our annual scholarship to the Audubon Ecology Workshop which costs us four hundred dollars. In addition, we began discussing ways JVAS can raise more money to enable us to continue our other vital programs.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION--After months of protest from chapter leaders throughout the United States, the National Audubon Society re-established nine regional offices including our own Middle Atlantic Region under Walt Pomeroy. Each region will also elect a member to the NAS board to ensure proper representation of chapter concerns. Chapters will have to help support the regional offices since, at this time, NAS cannot afford to fully finance each office. Walt has already received some substantial financial pledges but all of us will also be asked to donate in order to keep this vital office active on our behalf at a statewide level. This is still another reason for making fund-raising a major priority for JVAS this year. And we should be receiving our tax-free status papers soon from the IRS which will make individual and corporate giving more attractive.

A BOY--Wilson and Teddy Kreitz are the proud parents of a 9lb., 1 oz. son, Schuyler Wilson, born on July 12. Congratulations and we forgive you, Wilson for missing the Finance Committee meeting!

AL BURD--One of our most active members, Al Burd, suffered a severe heart attack in early June and is now recovering at the Bellemead Home, 1929 East Pleasant Valley Blvd., Altoona. Cards, letters and visitors would all be appreciated. Hurry up and get well, Al! We miss you.

Miscellany

*The Education Committee has acquired two new video tapes for use in the Speakers' Bureau Program. "What Is the Limit?" describes the global population issue. "Return From Forever" is about the program to save the osprey.

*Paula Ford was elected to the governing board of Pennsylvania for Acid Rain Control.

*The 1987-1988 JVAS program is included with this issue. PLEASE CONSULT IT for details about the geology field trip (October 24) and the bird seed sale (November 14).

*The Fort Roberdeau Naturefest will be held Sunday, October 4, from 12-5 p.m. An announcement card is included with this issue of the Gnatcatcher.

*The Pennsylvania Audubon Council meeting will be held November 6-8 at Hartman Center on Route 22 in Milroy. Details will be given at the chapter meeting September 29 or call Jim Winsor (943-8213).

Articles for the Gnatcatcher

I am pleased to be your new editor. Articles and announcements for the Gnatcatcher are welcome and will be included if at all possible. Send material to me at 3940 Maple Avenue, Altoona, PA 16601. The deadline for submissions for the October issue is October 14.

Jim Winsor

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