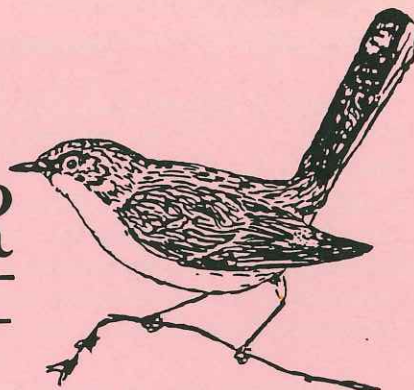


THE GNATCATCHER

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

January 1988



JANUARY'S PROGRAM

CANCELLATION: Tom McMann's slide presentation on black bears has been cancelled. In place of the planned program, the film "Return from Forever", about the reintroduction of the osprey, will be shown. Also, the education committee members Dan Sinal, Jean Sinal, and Roy Boyle will summarize recent activities of the committee and demonstrate two environmental games. The meeting will be held at the 28th Street Church of the Brethren (28th Street and Union Avenue) on Tuesday, January 26 at 7:30 p.m. A business meeting will precede the program.

BOARD MEETING

The JVAS Board Meeting was held on January 14. In addition to reports from committees, several other items of business were discussed. We will sell t-shirts with the JVAS logo at future meetings. Details will be announced at the January meeting.

A memorial fund for Al Burd has been established. See Marcia Bonta's column for more information.

Also, discussed were plans for a fundraising committee, the budget, and JVAS officers for next year.

TAX STATUS APPROVED

Bruce Bonta

The application of JVAS for federal tax exempt status (501-C-3) has just been approved by the Internal Revenue Service. Members and friends who make contributions to JVAS to support the environmental education and conservation programs of the group can now deduct them from their U.S. tax returns. Make checks out to the Juniata Valley Audubon Society and send them to the Treasurer, Janet Neely, 8 South Montgomery Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Paula Ford

The Conservation Committee meets at Paula's house on the third Tuesday of the month. If you're interested in conservation issues, please join us. Call Paula at 695-4799 for details.

Paula attended a Pennsylvanians for Acid Rain Control (PennARC) meeting in State College on Jan. 9. Penn State's analysis of thirteen acid-rain monitoring stations for 1986 shows that the situation in Pennsylvania is not improving. Our precipitation is very acidic, and we are losing buffering capacity. PennARC supports Senate Bill 1894 and House Bill 2666. You can help by writing to Senators Heinz and Specter. Ask them to cosponsor SB1894. Please also write to congressman Shuster and ask him to support HB2666. See Paula at the Jan. meeting for details about these two bills.

Steve Parks and Paula Ford met with the Freedom Township supervisors to discuss billboards on the section of new Rte. 220 in their township. Their solicitor, Clyde Black, is looking into billboard ordinances.

THE OSPREY IS BACK!

We need your Continued Support. Donate on Line 10C or 19C of the State income tax form to the Wild Resource Conservation Fund, Pa's Tax Checkoff.



Write for information:

Wild Resource Conservation Fund
P.O. Box 1467
Room A1-85, 3rd & Reilly Streets
Harrisburg, PA 17120



Endangered Species Act: House reauthorizing legislation (HR 1467) passed the House 399-16 on December 17. Three weakening amendments defeated. 1. Watkins (R-OK) amendment to delist the keioard darter (fish). 2. Ortiz (D-TX) amendment to delay for two years the required use of the Turtle Excluder Device by shrimp fishermen. 3. Packard (R-CA) amendment requiring the federal government to consider the impacts of endangered species government decisions on human safety. Several other weakening amendments were proposed and withdrawn without a vote. Amendment by Parris (R-VA), which limits penalties against those who take endangered plants on private property to those who "knowingly" take an endangered species, was accepted on a voice vote.

On the Senate side, an amendment delaying implementation of EPA's program to prevent impacts from presticide use on endangered species was added to the giant continuing appropriations bill, an unfortunate precedent. A reauthorization bill (S. 675) has been reported out of committee but continues to be held up by Senator Simpson (R-WY) over issues related to wolves and grizzly bears. Action hoped for on Senate floor in spring.

Clean Air Act: The Congress passed an eight-month extension of the deadline for cities to meet tighter standards for smog reduction. The extension expires August 31. Congress's unwillingness to pass a two-year extension of the deadlines as proposed by Congressman Murtha (D-PA) indicates a strong commitment by Congress to address significant clean air legislation in this Congress. Four areas that have already had economic sanctions imposed upon them by EPA--Tucson, Phoenix, Albuquerque, and the Kentucky suburbs of Cincinnati--will not be granted relief along with the rest. Sanctions include the loss of federal highway fund money and construction bans.

In the meantime, a group of moderate Democrats on the House Energy Committee is meeting regularly to work on a compromise clean air bill that will break the deadlock between Chairman John Dingell and Subcommittee Chairman Henry Waxman. Leaders of this group are Swift (WA), Synar (OK), Slattery (KS), and Sharp (IN) (the S caucus). They plan to have a draft bill in the next month or so.

In the Senate a strong comprehensive Clean Air Act reauthorization has been reported by the Environment and Public Works Committee (S. 1894), but floor action remains problematic because Senator Robert Byrd (D-WVA), the majority leader, is from a coal state. Environment and Public Works leaders are circulating a letter for Member's signatures asking Byrd to bring the bill to the floor promptly.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Senator Bennet Johnston (D-LA) tried unsuccessfully this fall to schedule committee action on legislation to open up ANWR to oil and gas development. Failure to hold a mark-up by the end of the year is considered a setback for passage of legislation in this Congress. Meanwhile, the Senate Environment and Public Works held hearings in December on S. 1804, a bill comparable to the Udall bill designating ANWR as wilderness.

In the House, both Interior and Merchant Marine Committees continue to hold hearings on various aspects of the issue, but no action is in sight. It is possible that Merchant Marine Chairman Walter Jones (D-NC) will push hard soon for action on the so-called compromise legislation (HR 3601) spearheaded by Congressman Lindsay Thomas (D-GA), but Thomas has now moved off the committee leaving his bill without a strong champion on the committee.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Bruce Bonta

Prof. Christopher Uhl of the Penn State Biology Department spoke to the International Issues Interest Group at its meeting on December 11 about his research on the deforestation on Brazil's tropical forests. Illustrating his remarks with interesting slides, he explained the biological reasons for the permanent destruction of forests once they have been even selectively cut. He also demonstrated the reasons why the economics of clearing rainforests for agricultural production are so disastrous for Brazil.

On behalf of the International Issues group, Colette Heller has been mounting library displays related to tropical deforestation and the exchange with ECODESC, our sister chapter in the central rainforests of Peru. The display was first shown in the Tyrone Snyder Township Public Library in October and it is now in the Altoona Area Public Library through January.

The International Issues Interest Group has been sending to Central America superseded issues of nature magazines which many JVAS members have kindly donated for this purpose. The pipelines are now full, however so we have to call a halt to the boxes of magazines. We want to thank everyone for their generosity over the past year and one half of this project.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Marcia Bonta

Al Burd Memorial Fund - Our beloved Al Burd died in early December and over 25 JVAS members paid our respects at his viewing. Because Al did so much for our organization and for the school children of Blair County by leading countless nature walks at the Fort Roberdeau Nature Center, we would like to establish a memorial fund in his honor. All donations will be placed in a separate account and we hope, with the possible assistance of a grant, to use the money to improve and/or help build a new nature center to replace the one that burned down. But we need your help! Please send your checks to our treasurer Janet Neely, 8 South Montgomery Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648. Make them out to the Juniata Valley Audubon Society, but specify that they are for the Al Burd Memorial Fund. Let's show that we truly cared for a member who gave unceasingly of himself and never counted the cost. Those of us who knew him well know that we will never forget him or his example of selfless work in nature education. For all of us such memories of Al Burd will remain an inspiration and a goal to continue the work he felt so strongly about.

Christmas Bird Count - Thanks once again to coordinator Angeline Stout and supper chairperson Mary Burgoon for organizing a fun-filled day and a delicious meal (it gets better every year). Despite a relatively low count (56 species), we had more members participating, including a few new people. The birds just didn't cooperate as well as they sometimes do!

JVAS in Print - Speaking of the CBC, JVAS's spectacular 1985 count was featured in an article I wrote for the December 1987 PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS called "Counting the Birds." I hope, if you read it and have not participated before, that it will inspire you to join us next year. In the latest issue of PENNSYLVANIA WILDLIFE I wrote an article on the Barrens near State College. The featured photograph was one Bruce took several years ago on a JVAS outing and includes George Mahon, his wife and daughter, John and Marian McCall, Ann Borland and Isabelle Abel. I'll try to remember to bring copies of both magazines to the January meeting.

Nominating Committee - A reminder that nominations for JVAS president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and directors should be given to committee members before the February meeting. At that time they will present all the names which will be voted on at the March meeting. Members of the committee are Bob Keppler, Jean and Dan Sinal and Colette Heller.

Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas - Once again our coordinator, Dave Kyler, was acknowledged as an outstanding atlaser because he worked in more than 10 blocks last summer and spent more than 50 hours in the field. And if you doubt the value of such work according to the informative and entertaining PENNSYLVANIA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS NEWSLETTER (sent free of charge to all participants) several significant bird sightings were made statewide. These included: the first black terns nesting at Presque Isle State Park in 29 years, the first American coot nest ever in Erie county, mourning warblers in Sullivan and Wayne counties, the discovery of Henslow's sparrows in Tioga county and throughout western Pennsylvania, and the probable nesting of a bald eagle on Pine Creek in Tioga county -- the first such nesting outside Crawford county in 30 years. The atlas also points out the rarest as well as the commonest bird species in our state. For instance, of all the birds reported for 1987, the following were confirmed just one time -- pied-billed grebe, least bittern, American coot, common snipe, black tern, long-eared owl, saw-whet owl, sedge wren, and summer tanager. Furthermore, the commonest raptor was the red-tailed hawk, the rarest was the goshawk, the rarest woodpecker was the yellow-bellied sapsucker, the commonest the northern flicker, the commonest flycatcher was the eastern phoebe, the rarest the yellow-bellied flycatcher; and the two rarest warblers were the prothonotary and Nashville while the commonest were the common yellowthroat and yellow

warbler. There is still time to participate next spring in the fifth and final year of atlasing. Just speak to Dave at a JVAS meeting. He can use more help in this most important year.

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge is "undoubtedly the most threatened refuge in the U.S.," according to NAS. Because nearby commercial interests are threatening the integrity of the area, the Committee to Preserve Assateague Island, Inc. is trying to force the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to draw up a comprehensive Master Plan for the refuge which would then be subject to a public hearing and open to public comments. If you care about the refuge's future, please write a letter to Frank Dunkle, Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 18th & C Streets, N.W., Washington, DC 20240 and say that the Master Planning Process, together with hearings and an opportunity for public comment, is necessary, because taxes are collected from everyone to acquire federally-owned land. Such land is purchased with the understanding that it be used to protect, not exploit, natural resources for all U.S. citizens. Furthermore, National Wildlife Refuges were specifically created to protect endangered species and so the USFWS is obliged under the Endangered Species Act to protect the endangered piping plovers and peregrine falcons and the threatened least terns and black ducks of the Chincoteague NWR above all other commercial considerations. For further information on this, see me at the January meeting for a copy of the Committee to Preserve Assateague Island, Inc. newsletter.

Osprey Reintroduction Program 1987 - 26 marked adult ospreys returned to the vicinity of their release sites during the 1987 field season. Eight nests were built and four were productive with seven fledglings known to have dispersed and migrated. So the project continues to be successful. Be sure to come to our January meeting and see "Return from Forever," about this very subject. It is an inspiring and educational film. In fact, JVAS's Speakers Bureau purchased a VHS cassette of this same film for loaning to interested organizations and school groups. See education chairpersons Jean and Dan Sinal if you are interested in borrowing it for educational purposes.

Harold Yoder - Another longtime member of JVAS, Harold Yoder, passed away in early January. We extend our sympathy to his family and friends and remind all of you that each year a nature book in the name of deceased members and friends is presented to one of the four public libraries in Blair County. This year's gift will go to the Altoona Public Library and will hopefully reflect Harold Yoder's own interest in the natural world.

MISCELLANY

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT STILL WANTED. Have any binoculars or spotting scopes which you no longer use. INTERWADER, a conservation group in the Phillipines, would love to have second-hand equipment.. Contact the Bontas if you have equipment to donate.

PICTURES OF JVAS ACTIVITIES. Pictures of JVAS members and activities are constantly being sought for the scrapbook. See Truth Close if you have photos.

PROGRAM CHANGE. Dave Pearson, who spoke to JVAS at the 1986 banquet, will visit us for the March meeting. Dr. Pearson will discuss issues in international conservation. Also, Dave Kyler will present his program on

Editor's Note

Please submit items for the February issue before February 15 to Jim Winsor, 3940 Maple Avenue, Altoona, PA 16601.