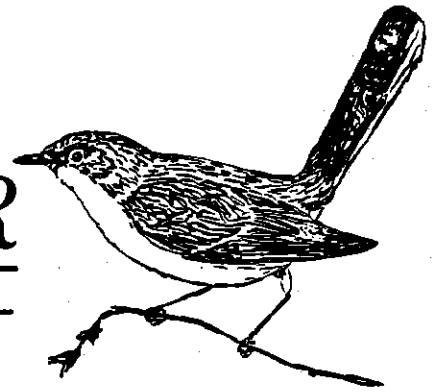


THE GNATCATCHER

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

May 1988



THE MAY MEETING

Don't miss the May 31 chapter meeting at 7:30 pm at the 28th Street Church of the Brethren. Our speaker will be Cindy Adams Dunn of the Citizens' Program for the Chesapeake Bay. Title: The Bay and You.

ANNUAL PICNIC SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 12

Just a reminder that the Chapter's annual picnic will be held at Canoe Creek State Park in Pavilion #1 on June 12, 1988. As in previous years everyone is requested to bring a covered dish to share. There will be grills for those who will be cooking but you will need to provide your own charcoal. You will also need to bring your own drink. I hope the attendance this year will be as good, or even better than previous years.

CHINCOTEAGUE PLOVER HABITAT PROTECTED

Some of our readers may recall a few months ago being asked to comment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concerning protection of Piping Plover habitat on the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. The Chapter has recently received the Environmental Assessment prepared by the U.S.F. & W.S. reporting their acceptance of **ALTERNATIVE B**, which we felt was the best choice to protect the Piping Plover, considered a threatened species according to the Federal Endangered Species Act. **ALTERNATIVE B** will restrict Tom's Cove Hook, the plover's breeding habitat, from all public use during the breeding season, approximately from March 15 through August 31.

The Assessment report contained comments made by the public during the evaluation period. Many of these comments reflected the opposition of off-road vehicle users to any type of restrictions in the habitat area. O.R.V. use in this area could be fatal to the plover population by destroying their habitat. This area is a wildlife refuge and not a recreational park, thus justifying the restriction of human activity.

CANOE CREEK UPDATE

Terry Wentz

Summer and the swimming season is foremost in park preparation for the tenth anniversary of Canoe Creek.

The cabin project has progressed nicely throughout the Spring with the final eighth cabin to get a roof this week. Much work remains however, with an anticipated completion date of all cabins early in September.

The Visitor Center will take on a pleasing exterior finish as work begins again within the next two weeks. Funding is available to finish the building, but additional funds will be needed to landscape the grounds and complete a nearby amphitheater. This facility will be a most welcome addition to the park's environmental education activities.

Please note the following dates for summer programs at Canoe Creek:

1. E.E. activities Sunday afternoons with campfire program Sunday evening at the Beach

- Area.
2. June 4th - Annual Panfish Derby. 9 am to Noon near Boat Rental.
 3. June 5th - Annual Environmental Awareness Day. 1 pm to 5 pm surrounding Pavilion #2.

Announcements on weekend programs can be found in the Federal, State and Local Parks column each week in the Altoona Mirror or by calling the park office.

Visit Pennsylvania State Parks this summer for a relaxing experience.

BLUEBIRDERS RECOGNIZED AT ANNUAL TRAIL MONITORS WORKSHOP **Terry Wentz**

Three members of the Juniata Valley Audubon Chapter were recognized for their dedication and accomplishments as Bluebird Trail Monitors at Canoe Creek State Park during the recent annual statewide bluebird meeting.

Members recognized were Beryle Sternagle, Eugene Root, and Fran Burgoon. As host bluebirders, the three directed a trail inspection under the expertise of Dr. Richard Fisher, Cornell University renowned Ornithologist.

Dr. Fisher shared his expertise with the 45 statewide volunteers stating that Pennsylvania is a leader in the bluebird trail program. Also, encouragement was given to document and experiment with bluebird life cycles and habitat because of the vast amounts of knowledge that is being established from collective observation and record keeping. Published information can greatly aid continued return of the bluebirds.

The meeting concluded by presenting Fran Burgoon and Gene Root with solid Pennsylvania cherry wooden clocks as selection of Bluebird Monitors of the Year. The awards were presented by Lou Ritrovato, Chief of State Parks Environmental Education Section, for dedication by Fran and Gene to the Bluebird Trail Program at Canoe Creek the last six years.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES **Bruce Bonta**

On May 18, the International Issues Group heard Professor Lakshman Yapa of Penn State University discuss environmental issues in developing countries. The talk was fascinating and interesting. The group reviewed progress on ongoing projects and is making plans for an increased effort in community outreach.....education about international conservation issues.

PRESQUE ISLE/PYMATUNING FIELD TRIP

Great!! Fantastic!! Beautiful!! We wish many others could have experienced this weekend!! These were a few of the comments that I overheard on our return trip home from our Presque Isle/Pymatuning Weekend. Thirteen members of our chapter met at the Pleasant Valley Shopping Center on May 13th to begin our Van trip to the Erie area for the weekend. The three hour trip began under stormy skies but the clouds parted over Clarion to reveal a beautiful sunset and a promise of good weather to come.

Saturday morning was clear and cool as we left the motel heading for Jean Stull's mist nets and banding station on Presque Isle. Jean had banded and held several species for us to see before being released. Yellow, Magnolia, Worm-eating, and Chestnut-sided Warblers were all waiting for us at the banding station. A search of the protected bay produced Bufflehead duck and Horned Grebe at close range. Inland marshes yielded Common Gallinule, Red-headed Woodpecker, Prothonotary Warbler and White-crowned Sparrow.

Saturday afternoons "mini-trips" to Asbury Woods, on Erie's West side and Siegel Swamp on Erie's East side, gave us good looks at Pink Trillium and roadside displaying Bobolinks. Saturday evening

found us watching the sunset over Lake Erie after a great supper at Hoss's in Erie. Dessert came later when we held a surprise birthday party for Dan Sinal in one of the motel rooms.

Sunday morning found us up early again (5:30 AM) and off to Presque Isle to enjoy some more "warbler watching". Some of us enjoyed a two mile walk across the Isle on the "Sidewalk Trail" observing Prothonotary Warblers, Veery, and Red-headed Woodpecker along the way. Others went to Gull Point at the tip of the Peninsula, where we observed Sora Rail, White-rumped Sandpiper and the ever present Gulls.

Sunday afternoon was spent at Lake Pymatuning, west of Meadville, where we visited the Pennsylvania Fish Commission museum and fish hatchery. Not to be forgotten was the spectacle of feeding stale bread to tons of carp at the causeway dam. After a filling lunch in Meadville our group began its return trip home with a "pit-stop" at Yellow Creek State Park where we picked up our 107th and final bird species for the weekend. A tiring but enjoyable weekend was had by all.

POWDERMILL NATURE RESERVE

Marcia Bonta

Nine members of JVAS traveled to the Powdermill Nature Reserve under the leadership of Dave Kyler on April 30. The field station of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, this 2200 acre property in the midst of the Laurel Highlands has a mixed habitat of woodlands, old fields, ponds, streams, and thickets. Such an environment is attractive to many species of birds and mammals which are necessary to fuel the two major ongoing projects at the reserve--bird-banding and mammalian ecology and physiology.

We were privileged to watch the all year bird-banding operation directed by bird-banders Bob Leberman, (author of the BIRDS OF LIGONIER VALLEY) and Bob Mulvihill. We followed staff members as they removed the birds from the mist nets, popped them into paper bags clipped shut with clothespins, and returned to their work room where they identified, weighed, measured, sexed, and checked the birds for parasites before releasing them. Ten to fourteen thousand birds are handled per year and altogether 500,000 birds have been banded at Powdermill over the years with 500 of those birds later recovered. One, a Swainson's thrush, was shot in northeastern Peru. Another, a cedar waxwing, banded in late summer, was found in Mexico City that winter, the first of the species ever recovered south of the United States border. One record they are proud of is that more ruby-crowned kinglets are banded there than at any other spot in the United States---100 between 1961 and 1965. The day we were there they caught innumerable blue jays, a few cowbirds, chipping sparrows, juncos, titmice and towhees. They also turned up a hooded warbler, a pine siskin, a red-bellied woodpecker, and best of all, an immature orchard oriole.

Later we walked along several trails connected with the preserve's newly-constructed Florence Lockhart Nimick Nature Center with its small museum and then drove to nearby Linn Run State Park to hike the lovely Adams Falls Trail. All in all we had an interesting day exploring a remote area of Pennsylvania.

PRESIDENTIAL NOTES

Wilson Kreitz

The first thing I wish to do is to thank Marcia for her work over the past 4 years in helping hold the Chapter together when we were in danger of losing our Charter, and moving us forward into the areas of international and global environmental issues.

With her election to JVAS' Board of Directors I hope she will continue in the tradition of our other fine Director, Collette Heller, and be there when help is required.

I can't promise you that my reports in this column will be as regular, or as well written, as my illustrious predecessor but I will try to keep you informed of critical issues as they arise.

And one of those critical issues is next years program of meetings and field trips.

As Vice-president Dave Kyler is the chairman of the Program Committee, but that doesn't mean he has total responsibility for preparing next years events. I'm sure that many of you have ideas for speakers, or programs, and places the Chapter would like to visit, so don't keep them to yourselves tell Dave. If you don't see him at the meeting call him with your suggestions, his number is (814) 643-6030.

You will also have the opportunity to discuss field trips for next year at an open meeting of the Program Committee which will be held during the Annual Picnic.

It's that time of year when it becomes necessary to discuss the Chapter's Budget for 1988-89, so I'm requesting volunteers to serve on this committee.

Current committee chairpersons should prepare their spending proposals for the coming year. If a committee fails to submit a spending agenda for next year, we will assume there will be no expenses for that committee.

Once the committee has been formed a meeting will be scheduled for this Summer.

Since this is the last regularly scheduled Gnatcatcher for this year I'd like to thank Jim Winsor for his job as Editor, and hope you have a good Summer and return refreshed and ready to pick up where we left off this year.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please submit items for the September issue before Monday, September 19 to Jim Winsor, 102 Halleck Place, Altoona, PA 16602 (943-8213) or Altoona Campus, Ivyside Park, Altoona, PA 16603 (949-5180).