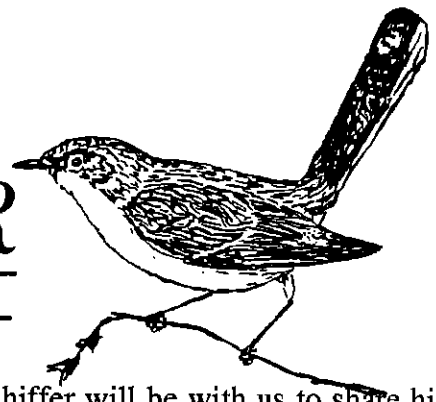


THE GNATCATCHER

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

March 1989



MARCH'S PROGRAM: Dragonflies of Pennsylvania. Clark Shiffer will be with us to share his beautiful slides on Pennsylvania's wetland insects. The meeting will be held Tuesday, February 28 at the 28th Street Church of the Brethren on Union Avenue in Altoona. The meeting will begin at 7:30 pm with the business segment, to be followed by the program.

FIELD TRIPS

Dave Kyler

Middlecreek Field Trip Report

March 11

Unbelievable! Fantastic! Beautiful! were just a few of the exclamations heard upon arriving at the Middlecreek Wildlife Management Area and finding the sky filled with thousands of low flying Canada Geese interspersed with white flights of Tundra Swans. Thirteen members of Juniata Valley Audubon and sister conservation groups arrived at this Eastern Lancaster refuge at 10:30 am on March 11th to find most of the refuge's water impoundments covered with a thin layer of ice. However, before long the warming day melted the ice cover, affording everyone with close-up looks at the migrating waterfowl.

Two slow moving circuits of the refuges 10 mile "auto loop" produced good looks at Pintail, Snow Goose, Wigeon, Ring-neck Duck, and Great Blue Herons as well as the abundant Canada Goose and Tundra Swan. Exceptionally striking were the brown and white Northern Shovelers 100 foot away on a pond in bright sunlight.

After looking for and finding Long-eared Owl and Barred Owl in the pine thickets, we headed home, stopping enroute for an ice cream supper at Friendly's in Harrisburg.

Dolly Sods and Cranberry Glades

April 29-30

Our overnight field trip to Dolly Sods and Cranberry Glades in West Virginia has been rescheduled for the 29th and 30th of April, 1989. This rescheduling will allow local Audubon participation in the Audubon Council of Pennsylvania's Regional meeting taking place at Canoe Creek State Park on the 22nd and 23rd. Also, the delay will provide more time for the flora and fauna to bloom at the high altitude natural areas we will be visiting.

Eleven Audubon members have signed on for van travel to West Virginia to date. If further interest warrants, we will add a second van for transportation. Due to the need for advanced motel reservations, we have established a cut-off date of April 10, 1989. Cost: Approx. \$80/person/double occupancy: Info: Dave Kyler 643-6030 between 6 & 9 pm 18 March-23 March and 2 April-10 April.

Del-Mar-Va Field Trip

May 5-7

Come join us for an Adults Only birding/nature adventure to the Delaware, Maryland, Virginia (Del-Mar-Va) Peninsula. In addition to the 150 species of birds we will encounter, we will see the famous ponies and sika deer found on the Chincoteague Refuge. Good seafood dinners are planned, as are stops at the following wildlife refuges, Blackwater, Little Creek and Bombay Hook and Chincoteague. Cost: Approx. \$100/person/double occupancy: Info: Dave Kyler 643-6030. Cut-off date 20 April 1989. One van is filled but we still have eight seats available on the second on a first come basis.

BOARD MEETING

Wilson Kreitz and Jim Winsor

The most recent board meeting was held March 9, 1989 at the Altoona Area Public Library. Items of interest included:

- 1) The projector fund has reached \$600, probably enough to purchase a projector. After the projector is purchased, any remaining funds will be applied to the Bluebird Trail.
- 2) Paula reported on the upcoming Audubon Council of Pennsylvania meeting to be held at Canoe Creek

April 21-23. There will be a pot luck dinner on Friday night and three field trips: one on the Canoe Creek grounds, one to Tytoona Cave and a third trip to be decided.

- 3) A motion was passed to donate \$50 to DROP (Don't Ruin Our Park) the group opposing the state National Guard's plans for a training facility near Black Moshannon Park.
- 4) Rails to Trails. We had presentations by Ken Streit, of Rails to Trails of Blair County, and Dave Guyer and Sam Dunkle, representing a sportsmen group. Each presented their side of this issue. This deals with the very preliminary plans to convert the abandoned Muleshoe, New Portage Railroad, to a hiking, biking, and skiing trail. The Chapter felt that with the amount of misinformation and rumors being circulated we should gather as much information about this concept which may be developed. It didn't appear at this time that there is any proposal or plan, and may not be for 6 to 9 months. This being the case the Chapter remains officially neutral on any "proposal" to construct a trail along this old railbed. Since the meeting added pressure has appeared in that an early decision will have to be made regarding the fate of the two railroad bridges which are part of the trail.
- 5) Suggestions for speakers for next year's program series are welcome.

AUDUBON COUNCIL OF PENNSYLVANIA FUNDRAISER

Paula Ford

In early April every Audubon member in Pennsylvania will receive a packet of notecards illustrated with wildlife art. The cards are a gift from the Audubon Council of Pennsylvania, but you will be asked to give a free-will donation to help ACP. Please give as much as you can to this worthy cause. We are aiming to hire a Pennsylvania staff person as soon as possible.

This is especially important for two reasons. First, since the Mid-Atlantic regional office has fewer staff members than it did in the past, less legislative activity is occurring on behalf of Audubon at the state level. Second, to have an undersized staff wastes a valuable opportunity, because the Casey administration has introduced some excellent environmental legislation and probably will continue to do so.

Please help ACP get on its feet.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Jim Winsor

The international Issues Interest Group invites the participation of all interested individuals, Audubon members and others. The next meeting will be held Friday, April 7 at 7:00 pm on the first floor of the Altoona Campus Library. The speaker will be Collin Nicholas-Orians, of Penn State, who will present a slide show entitled "Effects of Tropical Deforestation on Watersheds." Please join us

ANNUAL DINNER

The Annual Meeting/Dinner of the Juniata Valley Audubon Society will be held on April 25, 1989 at the Scotch Valley Grange. The grange is adjacent to a familiar location for many of us, Canoe Creek State Park. The grange has an excellent reputation for good food and large amounts of it, so don't expect to go away hungry!

This year's dinner will be roast turkey with all the trimmings, vegetable and cake for dessert, all for only \$7.00 for adults and \$3.50 for children 3 to 12.

The dinner will begin at 6:30 pm, with a social "hour" in the upstairs meeting room beginning at 6:00 pm, after which we will adjourn to the dining area in the lower level. Punch will be served during the social "hour".

Our speaker this year will be Connie Mahon, Grassroots Coordinator in the Washington, D.C. office. Her topic will be National's High priority issues. We saw this presentation at the Mid-Atlantic Conference, and if not entertaining it is certainly informative. This presentation will be in the upstairs meeting room following dinner.

The Scotch Valley Grange is located across the road from the main entrance of Canoe Creek State Park. Turn at intersection indicating Canoe Creek, and it's about 1 mile from Route 22.

If the weather is pleasant you may want to spend the late afternoon walking the Canoe Creek trails, blue bird and other bird watching.

So that the Grange staff is able to receive an accurate count, we must receive the reservation form in this issue no later than April 17, 1989. If you have any questions, please call Teddie Kreitz at 695-0126.

JAFFA OUTDOORS SHOW

Wilson Kreitz

It's always difficult to judge the success of our participation in this annual event. We handed out a lot of educational material, answered numerous questions, and sold quite a bit of merchandise.

As usual this wouldn't work at all if not for those members that volunteer their time to see that the booth was always occupied. I would like to thank those who gave their time: Melvin Lane, Dave Kyler, Dan & Jean Sinal, Fran Burgoon, Dick & Nona Weicht, Clarence Becker, Bill King, Anne Borland, Roy Boyle, Jean Holland, and Jana Atwell.

Audubon has always been more of a "grass roots" organization than other environmental groups and these people show why it works.

CANOE CREEK UPDATE

Terry Wentz

The Spring Migration season is best for observing a wide variety of bird life passing through the Canoe Creek area. Wide varieties of birds are attracted to the lake and adjacent fields as a short rest stop along their journey North. Already the following water fowl have been seen on Canoe Lake--Common Goldeneye, Canada Goose, Whistling Swan, and Mallard. Only one night stands will be made by Mergansers, Loons, Ospreys, Ruddy Ducks, Canvasbacks, Coots, and Bald Eagles. Stay tuned and visit the park often this Spring for a nearby migration treat.

A Purple Martin house is being erected this month in hopes of attracting this colonial bird. Purple Martin populations have never fully recovered from the disaster of the Agnes flood in 1972. The park habitat seems ideal for attracting a colony of Martins who return to Pennsylvania during the last week in March.

Bluebirds are now checking in at their favorite nesting boxes for the summer. The male bird attracts attention with his brilliant blue plumage as the sun's rays reflect off his back. With 75 bluebird boxes in the park, bluebirds can readily be seen.

The Indiana Bat colony hibernating in the Canoe Creek mine was surveyed in February and results are encouraging. The location where about 40 Indiana Bats had been hibernating during previous surveys now contains 124. Game Commission biologists suggest the new reinforced gates have attributed to this increase.

Additional Park Volunteers are needed this season to monitor bluebird houses. As the new Visitor Center becomes operational in June, a volunteer staff will be needed to supplement park staff for longer hours of operation. Volunteer who have applications on file will be contacted to determine their interests.

A 10-Year Anniversary Celebration of the opening of Canoe Creek State Park is being planned for June 10th. Details will be announced nearer to the date. Visit State Parks this Spring and enjoy some solitude in harmony with nature's frenzied pace as the environment bursts forth with life during its annual Spring ritual. Parks are for people year 'round!

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please submit items for the April issue before Wednesday, April 12 to Jim Winsor: 102 Halleck Place, Altoona, PA 16602 (943-8213) or Altoona Campus, Ivyside Park, Altoona, PA 16601-3760 (949-5180).