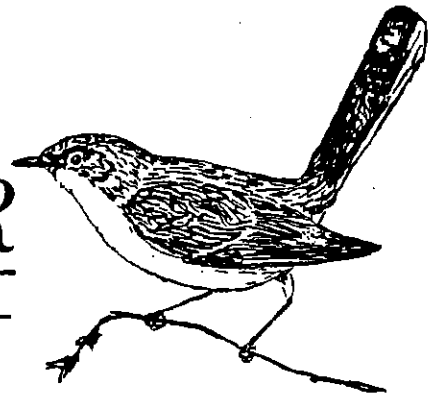


THE GNATCATCHER

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

April 1989



APRIL'S PROGRAM: ANNUAL MEETING AND BANQUET

On April 25th the chapter will hold its annual dinner at the Scotch Valley Grange. The grange is located diagonally from the entrance to Canoe Creek State Park.

I hope you have all sent your reservations to Janet Neely, because this year we will not be able to take any payment the night of the dinner.

Even if you are not coming to dinner, I suggest that you come to the presentation by Connie Mahon, from National Audubon's Washington D.C. office. It takes on even more importance in light of recent Exxon tanker incident in Alaska.--Wilson Kreitz

BIRDATHON 1989

Wilson Kreitz

For the first time our chapter is going to participate in National Audubon Birdathon on May 13, 1989.

Those who plan to join in this event will be expected to gather sponsors who will pay from a nickel up to a dollar for each species counted, (not each bird).

Of the money collected 50% will be given to the Mid-Atlantic Regional office to help Walt Pomeroy continue work both in Pennsylvania and the rest of region.

And now for the good news; the chapter gets to keep the remaining 50% of the sponsors pledges for our treasury. We can always use some extra income.

Just to keep things interesting there is going to be a friendly competition between the counties covered by Juniata Valley Audubon. After counting from sunrise to sunset the participants will meet at a local restaurant about 9:00 PM to tabulate the birds and replenish the calories expended during the day. There will be a prize for most birds in a counting.

Please consider joining this event, but if you can't you can sponsor one of the counters, we will have our sign-up sheets at the banquet.

Just remember half of all you donate will be returned to the chapter.

NEWS FROM FORT ROBERDEAU

Peggy Goodman

Picture this - a beautiful spring morning in the forest at Fort Roberdeau. A dozen nine year olds are walking the trails with an adult leader, happy to be in the sunshine and enjoying the delicate beginnings of another season of activity and growth. Their eyes miss almost nothing, and questions and exclamations abound. There is the child who just has to be up front with the leader, another who is shy, one who hesitates for fear of bugs and snakes, a quiet one whose mind is going full speed, one who is worried about getting a new pair of sneakers dirty, and one who just can't wait to find a creepy crawler or something else just as wonderful to show to the leader and the other kids.

What I have just described is a typical day in May when hundreds of 9 to 12 year old students visit the fort site, and what I have come to think of as "a little bit of heaven on earth." The schools regard the nature experience as being just as important as the history lesson.

You have probably recognized by now that this is a poorly disguised invitation to members to join us at the fort this spring. A quality program has been established by Al Burd, Gene Root, and many other volunteers. We need to continue to provide opportunities for the children to learn respect for the environment and to enjoy the sights, smells and "feel" of the forest with someone who can share and communicate with them.

At the end of the day with the kids at the fort, I always feel as though I have received more than I have given, and always learn something new. A rewarding opportunity is there for those who are willing to try, and there is plenty of help available to get you started. The bonus is a great lunch of the fort's famous stew, cornbread, greens with hot bacon dressing or whatever is on the menu for the day. We get to eat the "props" made in the fireplace that day.

To join in or just find out more about it, call me after 3:30 p.m. at 942-5763.

Other news from the fort includes several items which we want to share with you. A trails committee (T. Wentz, J. DeMuth, P. Goodman, R. Bacon, L. Parvin, M. Mazur, D. Fisher and M. Fisher) met in January and has been busy since then with help from some grant funding and county-provided labor. Dangerous trees and limbs close to the trails have been removed and trails have new chips and bridges. Also, a request for grant funding to rebuild the Activities Building is being prepared during April. Keep your fingers crossed that we will be successful in this project.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Bruce Bonta

On Friday evening, April 7, the International Issues Interest Group saw a brief presentation of slides taken at the new library, BIODOC, of the National University of Costa Rica's scientific books and journals for several years and when Bruce and Marcia Bonta visited there last month the librarian expressed their appreciation for the materials we have sent. The Philippines sub-committee reported a lot of activity, including raising money for the Asian Wetlands Bureau, writing letters about the importance of Olango Island, a threatened migratory bird sanctuary near Cebu, and a growing, conservation-oriented, classroom exchange that Mike and Laura Jackson have developed with schools in that country. The meeting concluded with a presentation by Colin Nichols-Orians, a Penn State graduate student, on the "Effects of Tropical Deforestation on Watersheds," based on his observations in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Mr. Nichols-Orians also showed wonderful slides of Costa Rican snakes, frogs, flowers, and insects taken at the La Selva Research Station in Costa Rica.

MAY BOARD MEETING

Wilson Kreitz

It has come to the attention of several of our board members noted we did not schedule a May meeting. For some reason we haven't had a May meeting in the past either.

But this year, due to a lot of issues, a meeting is needed. The meeting will be held in the Altoona Library Board Room on May 11, 1989 at 7:00 pm. Please try to attend, and remember these meetings are open to all members.

ARCTIC REFUGE NEEDS YOUR URGENT SUPPORT

National Audubon Society

Incredibly stunning in its beauty, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is still largely untouched by development. It is, in fact, the largest undisturbed wilderness in the United States. *Now we urgently need your help in the fight to protect the Arctic refuge from oil and gas development.*

As this article goes to press, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee is due to vote on bills both for and against development. Regardless of the outcome, there will undoubtedly be much to be done in the coming months to convince your senators and representative of the need to save the refuge.

Audubon's science, government relations, and public affairs divisions have been active in keeping the public and press informed of the spill's effects on wildlife and Audubon's stance on oil development in Alaska's fragile ecosystems.

On April 5, Audubon announced a six point plan of action in response to the Valdez incident. The plan was developed by Dave Cline in Alaska, Ann Strickland, Brooks Yeager and Brock Evans in Audubon's Washington D.C. Office.

The Audubon action plan calls for the following recommendations, intended to help protect the Alaska environment from further risk taking and unnecessary ecological damage from oil and gas exploration, development and transportation:

- 1) Require a thorough examination of the entire Alaska oil delivery system
- 2) Develop a comprehensive protections plan for Alaska's marine environment
- 3) Establish a Joint Federal-State Oil and Gas Monitoring Team
- 4) Classify all toxic and hazardous wastes in Alaska oil fields under the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act
- 5) Require construction of state of the art recycling and incineration facilities on Alaska's North Slope, and;
- 6) Require updated oil spill contingency plans with penalties for noncompliance.

Audubon President Peter A. A. Berle says, "The lack of responsible foresight for this incident extends beyond Alaska to the oil industry's stubborn refusal to look beyond the Earth's rapidly diminishing oil supplies for answers to humanity's long range energy needs. Without a systematic change in attitude, we can look forward to more shoddy clean-ups and meaningless apologies."

"The damage done to Prince William Sound cannot be measured in the number of animals lost, but only in the tremendous damage done to an entire environmental system," says Mr. Berle. "The Valdez incident has exposed not only the oil industry's inability to protect all the interrelated elements of the Alaskan environment, but also the extent of the systematic statewide problems in their Alaskan operations."

At this critical time, every Audubon member is a voice that needs to be heard in Washington. A letter to our representatives is the most effective tool we have to prevent the Valdez disaster from repeating itself in history.

Dave Cline advises that the most useful thing Audubon members can do is write to their representatives and President Bush, protesting the administration's continued support of oil exploration on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Audubon continues to be adamantly opposed to development of the world class refuge in the absence of a national energy plan and when reasonable energy alternatives exist.

What You Can Do

Write to your senators and representative today. Give them the facts about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

We have a worldwide oil glut. Now is the time to implement conservation measures that will make our nation secure for decades without sacrificing this priceless treasure

Address your letter(s) to:

- The Honorable _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
- The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

For more information, contact Brock Evans, National Audubon Society, 801 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

MARTINS GAP FIELD TRIP

Marcia Bonta

Since Bruce and I will be unable to lead the Bear Meadows Field trip (previously scheduled for May 20) due to a prior commitment, we would like to offer an alternative. We will be joining author Jean Aron (The Short Hiker) and members of the Clearwater Conservancy on an afternoon field trip April 7 at 1:30 pm to view the many rare wildflowers, the unusual rock formations, and a host of migrating birds. Jean has worked hard to have this beautiful area in Huntingdon County declared a state forest natural area and she has succeeded. She has also put in two trails, one of which is brand new, which we will be following. The walk will be relatively short with one small climb but those who wish to stay along the streambed and look for wildflowers rather than climbing to the top of the gap are also welcome to come.

If you are interested in attending, please contact me at home (684-3113) or at the banquet. We will be meeting everyone at the Water Street Flea Market area at 12:45 and carpooling it to the shale pit in the gap. I need to know who is coming so we don't leave without you.

LITTER PICKERS NEEDED

John Orr

Penn-DOT and JVAS will again co-sponsor the Sinking Valley Cave Tytoona clean-up. We will meet at the cave at 9:00 am Saturday, April 22nd. Penn-DOT furnishes us bags, orange vests, Keep America Beautiful Volunteer patches, and free coupons for Sheetz foods. Bring gloves, and maybe a rake. We'll only need 1-2 hours to clean up.

JVAS is the Western PA Conservancy's caretaker of the Cave Tytoona Natural Area. We get a good jump on the litter by getting out each April for this clean-up. More info: (943-5629).

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please submit items for the May issue before Wednesday, May 17 to Jim Winsor: 102 Halleck Place, Altoona, PA 16602 (943-8213) or Altoona Campus, Altoona, PA 16601-3760 (949-5180).