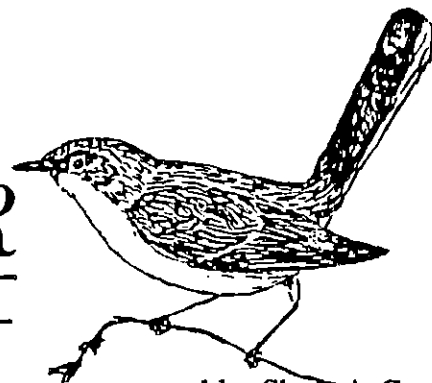


THE GNATCATCHER

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

September 1989



SEPTEMBER'S PROGRAM: Join us for "Birds of Prey" a program presented by Shaver's Creek Environmental Center. Live birds will be displayed. The meeting begins at 7:00 pm with the business portion, followed by the program at 7:30 pm. Meetings are held at 28th Street Church of the Brethren at Union Avenue and Twenty-eighth street in Altoona.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Wilson Kreitz

Congratulations to two JVAS members for being recognized for their achievements in education. Laura Jackson, high school biology teacher in Bedford, will receive the Outstanding Conservation Educator Award at the Annual Conference of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts in State College on October 3, 1989.

Also, Mowrie Ebner, retired teacher and principal of the Altoona Area School District, has been honored by having the new Eldorado-area elementary school named after her.

GOOD JOB!

COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS FOR 1989-90

This is a reminder that we are still in need of volunteers for the following committees: Conservation, Jim Winsor can't do it all by himself; Nominations, we will need a complete set of officers this year. By the February meeting we need a slate of officers for election during the March meeting with installation at the Annual meeting in April; Annual Meeting/Banquet committee, being that this is our 20th year this one should be special. These committees are very critical to our chapter, if we fail to have officers we will be subject to Charter withdrawal, and we've been close to that one before.

While these committees are important we also need help with the Education committee, Wetlands committee (critical with our area right now), and the Hospitality committee.

Please consider being on these committees or being an officer.

Let's try to remember that Audubon is an organization that functions best with a large number of volunteers from the grassroots up. The committee chairpersons can't do everything themselves they need your help, so pick a committee and sign-up.

TOUR DE TOONA

Wilson Kreitz

The weekend of August 19 to 20 saw bike racing come to Blair County in the form of the Tour De Toona and associated with these races was a Pizza Bake-off to determine the best pizza in Blair Co.

Now what does this have to do with Juniata Valley Audubon? WALY-FM 104 was the sponsor of the bake-off and they asked the Chapter about the possibility of selling the ballots for \$1.75 per ballot which bought 1 piece from each of the 4 shops present. The real plus for the Chapter is that WALY agreed to let Juniata Valley keep all the proceeds from the pizza sales, and sales were brisk that Sunday.

In case you're curious the winner was Vito's Pizza, and we picked up \$279.75 for the treasury.

I'd like to thank everyone who volunteered their Sunday afternoon to staff our booth, answer questions and sell pizza ballots. Those folks were John Lennox, Janet Neely, Janet Huber, Dick and Nona Weicht, Bill King, Janine King and Teddie Kreitz.

BIRD SEED SALE

Enclosed with this issue is the order form for JVAS's annual bird seed sale. This is our most important fundraiser and its success is essential if we are to continue all our diverse activities.

Please order some seed and tell friends about this opportunity to feed our friends inexpensively and support JVAS. The deadline for orders is October 3.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Bruce Bonta

The International Issues Interest Group has begun planning for Earth Day 1990, the 20th anniversary of the original event, which will "lead to a much higher degree of communication and cooperation among environmentalists around the world," according to the National Wildlife Federation. This international focus for Earth Day will be observed in Altoona on Tuesday, April 24th, to coincide with the annual JVAS Banquet. As special guests for the occasion, we are planning to have with us Cecilia Mendiola, one of Peru's leading conservationists, and her husband Antonio Brack, an outstanding Peruvian wildlife expert. The Group has been corresponding with Ms. Mendiola for three years about Pennsylvania's and Peru's conservation issues, and it will be a special treat to have them join us for the Earth Day celebrations. We will be hosting them for at least two weeks to orient them to conservation issues, environmental education programs, and the outstanding natural places in central Pennsylvania. Their visit will be sponsored by our grant from the New Land Foundation.

Other news from the International Issues Group: A publicity subcommittee has been working to get information out to the public. An article in the Bedford newspaper in June was followed recently by another piece in the Altoona Mirror. The Green Tambourine, a student magazine from Penn State, will probably carry a report this fall. The Philippine subcommittee continues to receive binoculars and money for the Asian Wetlands Bureau. A letter to the editor of Bird Watchers Digest prompted six excellent pairs of binoculars--one bird-watching couple wrote that they had just bought two new pairs, but when they saw the note in BWD they decided that the people in the Philippines needed the new ones more than they did. They sent their new pairs and will continue to use the old ones themselves! The subcommittee has also sold a number of copies of the Birds of the Philippines, proceeds of which go back to the Asian Wetlands Bureau.

Also from the Philippines, the subcommittee has just received a letter from AWB Coordinator Perla Magsalay that the mangrove tidal-flat area of Olango Island has just been declared a sanctuary by the Philippines national government. The wetlands, an extremely important resting site for a number of rare Asian migratory shore birds, had been threatened by a proposal for intensive fish-farming. Apparently the letters written by members of the Group, plus others across the nation who responded to articles in Audubon Activist and BWD, did have some impact on the government.

FIELD TRIPS

Dave Kyler

Jennings Environmental Education Center:

On July 29th two vans left Pleasant Valley Shopping Center at 8 a.m. On board were twelve intrepid Juniata Valley Auduboners heading west in search of the elusive "Blazing Star". Our destination for this beautiful summer's morning was the Jennings Environmental Education Center just north of Moraine State Park near Butler.

After several "pi stops" for coffee and burritos at "Mickey Dee's" we arrived at Jennings at 11 a.m. and promptly had our bag lunch. (Do you get the impression that this group travels on its stomach??) After lunch we met Dave Young, who previously served as co-ordinator at Jennings, and were led on a three hour walking tour of this amazing nature reserve. This relic prairie had in bloom during our visit thousands of brightly colored flowers including hundreds of "prairie pines" or Blazing Star, Monkey Flowers, Sundrops, Depford Pinks, and the elusive Purple Fringed Orchid.

Overhead were heard and seen Broad-winged Hawk, Great Blue Heron, Northern Oriole and brightly colored Goldfinch. Underfoot where we searched for (evaded??) Massasauga Rattle-snake, we found crayfish "castles" and many species of fern. Butterflies, including the Viceroy, hovered over the many blooms.

After leaving the reserve we traveled to a nearby serpentine esker to marvel at this natural formation and to pick up a few souvenirs from this ancient river of ice.

Supper was at a "home-style" restaurant near Kittaning and we arrived home, in Altoona, at 9 p.m.

Sapsucker Woods & Corning's Glass Museum:
7 & 8 October 1989

Juniata Valley Audubon will sponsor a field trip, the first full weekend in October, to the "finger lakes" region of New York State. On the agenda, for the trip, are stops at Cornell University's "Sapsucker Woods", a natural area with ponds, trails, and a nature center. Also found here is the Fuertes Art museum. Later that day we will be stopping at Watkins Glen State Park for a walk up a natural chasm full of cascading waterfalls. Supper and accommodations will be in the Elmira, NY area. Sunday morning will find us at the Corning Glass Museum where glass, from all ages, can be found. The Remington Museum, western art and artifacts, is also nearby. The afternoon will find us on our return trip to Altoona. Approximate cost for Van Transportation/Accommodations (double occupancy) will be \$60.00/person. Reservations paid in full need to be in by 22 September 1989. Checks payable to: Juniata Valley Audubon Society and mailed to RD #4 Box 159A, Huntingdon, PA 16652.

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary:
4 November 1989

Early Saturday morning we will be leaving Pleasant Valley Shopping Center for a field trip to one of the most famous hawk watching locations in North America. Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, located just east of Pottsville, PA is a natural funnel in the Appalachians that channels migrating raptors on their travels south. In addition to the passing hawks and eagles overhead, the sanctuary also has an interesting gift shop, display room and outdoor feeding stations. Bring a bag lunch, warm clothing, binoculars, field guides and a comfortable cushion. Van transportation is available. \$20.00/person. Leaving P.V.S.C. at 6 a.m. back at 9 p.m.

RAILS TO TRAILS
Jennifer A. Barefoot

Thank you for your support of the Blair County Chapter of Rails-to-Trails. Your offer of assistance in creating a Rail Trail on the abandon New Portage line as well as your signature on the petition to save the Muleshoe Bridge is greatly appreciated.

Across the United States there are now over 50,000 members of the National Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. There are 210 Rail Trails on the ground and over 300 in the planning stages. Here in Blair County we have no officially designated Rail Trail but have several prime abandonments just waiting to become one.

The Presidential Commission on Recreation states the number one need is for more trails for outdoor recreation that are close to home. Converting abandon rail lines into Rail Trails meets this need, for the long narrow corridors (not exceeding 4%), which allows for use by Cardiac Rehab, Handicapped, and Senior Citizens, they also are often prime wildlife breeding and conservation areas. They have many advantages too numerous to go into now. Rail Trails are used for hiking, biking, cross country skiing, bird watching, horseback riding, photography, etc., (any non motorized activity).

Enclosed in your newsletter is a membership form for Rails-to-Trails of Blair County. We would greatly appreciate your donation or membership to help us in our cause of creating Rail Trails here in Blair County.

If you would like further information or need a speaker for a group or organization please write or call:

Rails-to-Trails of Blair County
PO Box 592
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
Phone: 695-8521

We meet 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m., 3rd floor of Altoona City Hall.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

John Orr

Volunteers are needed to help PRIDE, an organization made up of residents of the Ruskin Drive area protect the Goodman Tract Wetlands. The proposed addition to Logan Valley Mall will have a major impact on these wetlands.

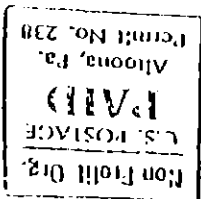
Especially important is help in identifying plants and animals on the site. The identification of birds is urgently needed.

If you can help, please call John Orr at 943-5629.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please submit items before Friday, October 20 to Jim Winsor: 102 Halleck Place, Altoona, PA 16602 (943-8213) or Altoona Campus, Altoona, PA 16601-3760 (949-5180).

STAN KOTALA
BOX 866 RD 3
ALTOONA
PA 16601



DATED MATERIAL

ALTOONA, PA 16603
P. O. Box 2378
ALTOONA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY