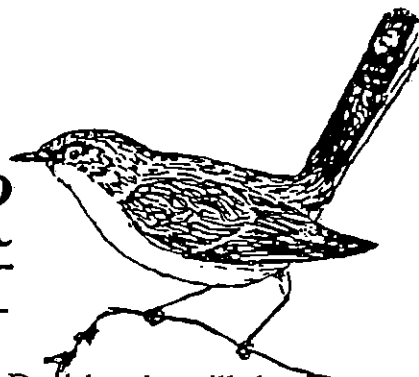


THE GNATCATCHER

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

May 1990



MAY'S PROGRAM: Our May program will feature Gaspar (Gap) Danish, who will share with us his amazing experiences (and results) in the world of "lepidoptery", the study of butterflies. The meeting begins at 7:00 pm with the business segment, followed by the program at 7:30. The meeting is Tuesday, May 29 at the 28th Street Church of the Brethren at Union Avenue and 28th Street in Altoona.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dave Kyler

It seems hard to believe that the current Audubon Year, 1989-1990, is coming to an end. Looking back over the past twelve months we have had many special events and have met many special people. Our programs have included "lie" raptors and bats and took us to such faraway places as Yellowstone, Norway, Costa Rica and Peru. Our field trips visited Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Pittsburgh Aviary and Middlecreek Wildlife Management Area, and who will forget that frozen day spent afield counting "winter birds". All of these were special memories that we have shared and hold dear. Next year we hope to add many more special memories to your list.

I believe that the next ten years will be a "watershed" in the environmental movement not only in the United States but also in the world. The next decade will hold many pitfalls as well as many promises. We have the unique opportunity to determine what our children's and grand-children's future will hold, if we make a concerted effort now!! To that end I would like to challenge each of us to do more in the upcoming years to support the environmental and Audubon cause nationally, internationally and most important locally.

A Financial Planning meeting is scheduled on 1 July 1990 at 3 PM at the home of Bill & Amy King. As usual this meeting will precede a covered dish supper. Call Bill or Amy at 942-7673 for directions or more information. A Program Planning meeting is scheduled for 14 July 1990 at 3 PM at our home in Huntingdon. As above, "food will follow", covered dish style. Additional information or directions call 643-6030. All members are invited to attend either or both meetings. Your input and participation are needed to make 1990-1991, a successful Audubon Year.

CARSON VALLEY CORMORANT

Wilson Kreitz

I'm sure there are many of you who have seen a cormorant on trips to the shore, or on one of Dave's Delmarva Field Trips, but have you ever seen one in Blair County? Well that's what Teddie, Schuyler and I saw one Sunday in April.

We were returning home on April 29, 1990 when we noticed a "strange" bird on the shore of our pond. At first we thought it was a Loon, but it didn't look quite right.

We went into the house where I learned that none of my 35 mm cameras were loaded. Not wishing to waste time in loading one I grabbed our camcorder, loaded a tape and tried creeping up on the bird taping when I was close enough.

I got about 5 minutes of tape watching it swimming, and slowly sinking as it got wet, then taking short flights to dry off, I guess since it always floated higher afterwards.

From reviewing the tapes that evening and freezing certain frames Teddie was able to identify it as Great Cormorant and from the coloring it was probably an immature. We also think that since the winds on Saturday were strong from the southeast it blew in from the Chesapeake.

It would be interesting to see if there are any other sightings recorded in Blair County in recent history.

But be it the first or the 101st sighting, it was still quite an event.

SUPPORT YOUR COUNCIL

Paula Ford

All members who participated in the Audubon Council of Pennsylvania's notecard appeal last year should have received another packet of cards in late April. In addition, new Audubon members (including "new" members who let an old membership lapse before rejoining) should have received the cards.

The notecards are yours to keep, but we do ask for a donation. Please be as generous as you can be. Our state council is working hard to get up and running. Our most important goal is to hire a staff person to coordinate our efforts at the state level.

We've established four priority issues on which to work: Solid Waste and recycling, Clean Air and acid rain, Wetlands, and Environmental education. Several volunteers have been working hard on these issues, but if we want to be an effective voice for the environment at the state level, we need to have at least one person who will be able to attend committee hearings held during the day, meet with legislators, and coordinate our efforts. Our grass roots volunteers have set the agenda and are crucial to our success, but volunteers, by definition, are people who give Audubon the "leftover hours." We desperately need the ongoing presence a staff person would provide.

So please be generous to ACP, and use your cards to spread the Audubon message. If you did not receive your cards and would like a set, please call me at 695-4799 (leave a message on the answering machine.)

CANOE CREEK HAPPENINGS

Roy Boyle

The summer season is here and Canoe Creek State Park is once again offering a variety of activities. Below is a list of programs for Memorial Day Weekend. Other programs including games, hikes and talks will be scheduled throughout the summer. One favorite, the Bat Hike, will return again this year for the first time on June 3 at 8:00 pm. A program on Pennsylvania's aquatic life will be offered earlier that same day.

Throughout the summer, day camps for children of various ages will be offered. Also, a Thursday evening hike is scheduled to give you a "nature break" to help you make it through to the weekend. Much more will be scheduled as the summer gets going and don't forget, if you or your group would like a hike or program, feel free to contact the park. We will try to accommodate you. For more information, call the park office from 8 am until 4 pm seven days a week. Have a great summer!

Canoe Creek Programs

May 27, 1990	2:30 pm	NATURE GAMES FOR KIDS Meet in the beach/patio area for the fun.
	4:00 pm	WONDERFUL WETLANDS WALK Meet at the beach/patio area.
	7:00 pm	CAMPFIRE STORYTELLING Meet at the beach/patio area.
May 28, 1990	1:00 pm	BLUEBIRD TALK AND WALK Meet in the beach/patio area.
	3:00 pm	SCAVENGER HUNT Meet at the beach/patio area for the fun.
	5:00 pm	LIMESTONE KILN HISTORICAL HIKE Meet at the beach/patio area.

ANNUAL PICNIC

Our annual Audubon picnic (a.k.a. summer feast) will be held at the Allegheny Portage National Historical site near Cresson on Sunday June 10th. The covered pavilion (which cannot be reserved) will never-the-less be held by Bill King and myself until replacements arrive. The charcoal and grills will be provided by Audubon and will be fired up for the evening meal which will begin at 4 P.M. All of those

attending will need to bring individual place settings, beverage and covered dish to be shared by all.

The rangers at Allegheny Portage have agreed to lead a Nature/History Walk at 6 P.M. to show us the natural beauty of this Allegheny Front site. A sign-up sheet will be circulated at our final meeting for the year on the 29th of May.

BLUEBIRD PROGRAM

Fran Burgoon

On May 1 I showed bluebird slides to three of Ms. Judy Wallace's conservation classes at Hollidaysburg Senior High School. The sixty or so students were very interested. A booklet furnished by Canoe Creek State Park on how to build a bluebird house along with other pertinent material was given to each student.

Ms. Wallace later told me that within a week three of the students had completed bluebird houses. They plan to erect the houses around the perimeter of the large athletic practice field near the school.

RAILS-TO-TRAILS IN BLAIR COUNTY

Jennifer Barefoot

Do you want to take a ride on a canal boat from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh or see a working railroad from Petersburg to Canoe Creek? Well you can't, those days are gone, but there is a possibility of maintaining some of the historical significance of the abandoned corridor by converting it into a Public Non-motorized trail.

The Petersburg Branch (or Juniata River Corridor) began as part of the "Public Works" or Continuous Waterway." In the early 1820's there was a great need for Pennsylvania to compete with New York in trade from the Atlantic coast westward. Pennsylvania wanted a line to connect Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. In 1824 a Board of Canal Commissioners was appointed to "view and explore" several routes from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh. On July 4, 1826 the "Public Works" was started in Harrisburg.

In 1831, Nicholas Hewit of Hollidaysburg was awarded the contract to build the canal between Hollidaysburg and Huntingdon. The original western terminus of the Juniata Canal would have been in Frankstown where the three branches of the Juniata come together. This idea never materialized for Jacob Wertz would not sell his property for \$10,000. The terminus was then chosen to be Hollidaysburg.

The idea of having a "continuous waterway" from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh would mean a four mile tunnel through the Allegheny mountains. This idea being impractical and too costly, the Portage Railroad was built with 10 inclines, and put into operation March 18, 1834.

The Pennsylvania Canal was in operation in 1832. The cost of the canal was \$8,325,000.00 and the total cost of the Public works from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh was \$16,504,655.84.

To obtain a ticket in 1835 from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh would cost a person:

Philadelphia to:

Harrisburg	111 miles	\$3.00	Alexandria	226 miles	\$5.00
New Port	138 miles	\$3.50	Williamsburg	238 miles	\$5.25
Mexico	155 miles	\$3.81	Hollidaysburg	254 miles	\$5.50
Lewistown	171 miles	\$4.06	Johnstown	290 miles	\$6.50
Huntingdon	216 miles	\$4.87	Pittsburgh	394 miles	\$7.00

A trip from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh would take four days. The Pennsylvania Canal system, between Huntingdon and Hollidaysburg, consisted of 14 dams, 43 locks, 7 guarded locks and 73 sections. This section was known as the "Frankstown Line." The development of the Public Works caused much excitement and growth to the communities, although excitement alone could not compete with the railroads.

The canal system had major pitfalls. Railroads could operate year round. While the canals operated mainly March through August. In September, October, and November there was shortage of water in the Juniata and in December, January and February the river froze. Most of the canals in Pennsylvania were abandoned in the 1850's. The canals from Hollidaysburg to Williamsburg was abandoned in 1872. Traces of this "continuous waterway," (canal system), can still be seen along the Juniata River from Hollidaysburg to Huntingdon.

Once the canals were abandoned the railroads continued to grow even faster. Hollidaysburg lost the distinction of being the center of all, and Altoona took off as the railroading center.

In 1873 the Pennsylvania Railroad completed the branch of railroad from Hollidaysburg to Williamsburg, this was known as the Williamsburg Branch. In 1905 this railroad was extended to Petersburg and renamed, "The Petersburg Branch." No longer was there the Frankstown line of the canal system but the Petersburg Branch of the railroad. This rail line stayed active until the 1970's, and was then formally abandoned by Penn Central in 1982.

Now, in 1990, Rails-to-Trails of Blair County, Inc. would like to see this abandoned canal-railroad right-of-way transformed into a Hiking/Biking/Horseback riding, (non-motorized) trail for all to use. This trail would promote outdoor recreation, healthy activities, and preserve some of our historic heritage in Blair and Huntingdon counties. As it stands now parts of this abandoned corridor are becoming an unauthorized landfill (illegal dumping area) and the remnants of the canals continue to deteriorate. Rails-to-Trails of Blair County find this an exciting proposition to provide such an asset to Blair and Huntingdon Counties while preserving our past for future generations to see and use.

Information from:

Blair Counties first 100 years 1846-1946

Blair County Historical Society

History of Blair and Huntingdon Counties

P.R.R.: Burgess and Kennedy

RAILS-TO-TRAILS HIKE PLANNED

All JVAS members are invited to come hike the Juniata River Corridor, (Petersburg Branch) on Sunday, June 3. Hikers will be meeting at Riverside Park in Williamsburg at 1:00 pm. For more information about the hike, or for a copy of the Rails-to-Trails informational brochure, please contact:

Jennifer Barefoot

P.O. Box 592

Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

814-695-8521

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY POST FILLED

Bill King

To fill a post that has been vacant for some time in JVAS, Amy King has agreed to become the chapter's corresponding secretary. Amy will be sending cards or special notes to chapter members where needed.

If you know of a chapter member or friend of JVAS in need of a get well or thank you card, or a special pat on the back for something "well done" please let Amy know at 942-7673

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please submit items for the September issue before Friday, September 14 to Jim Winsor: 102 Halleck Place, Altoona, PA 16602 (943-8213) or Altoona Campus, Ivyside Park, Altoona, PA 16601-3760 (949-5180).

KID'S NATURE PAGE

By Roy Boyle

BYE, BYE BIRDIE ?

The rainforests of Central and South America seem so far off to us here in Pennsylvania that it is hard to understand how the burning and clearing of these distant forests can affect us. Trees in the rainforest release oxygen, a gas we need to breathe. Trees also use and trap carbon dioxide, a gas that when in the air insulates our planet making it warmer. Many forms of life live in rainforests. Some scientists believe over half of all species living on our planet dwell in the rainforests. Their loss would be devastating to the peoples of the forests and possibly to all mankind. Who knows how many new types of medicines, foods, or other good things could be found in the rainforests if they were allowed to remain?

But does the destroying of rainforests hurt us in Pennsylvania? Yes, it does. One way is how it is devastating our birds that fly to the rainforests to spend the winter. Over 200 North American birds winter in the areas where the rainforests are being cut down. When our birds arrive in the south, they no longer have a safe place to stay or feed and many of them die. In the past 7 years, some of these birds have declined as much as 30%. Our wildlife is linked to the rainforests. Talk to your parents or teachers about what can be done to save them before our part of the planet becomes a little less pleasant.

BYE, BYE BIRDIE SEEK N' FIND

Below are listed some birds affected by rainforest destruction. See if you can find all these birds in the puzzle and the "hidden bird" not listed in the word list. (NOTE: There are no spaces between words or "-" in words in the puzzle!)

- Indigo Bunting
- Pine Warbler
- Broad-winged Hawk
- Cuckoo
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Yellow Warbler
- Ovenbird
- Oriole
- Purple Martin
- Eastern Kingbird
- Eastern Wood Peewee
- Wood Thrush

The Secret Bird
is the

ESTRNIWODTPWEEINDIGOBUNTINGPURPLPE
 ETRCHOICESEATATLLTHYEWORTLEDLITEAB
 WERABYCFKOOTFLOWYENGIDWTTAOFPSJC
 EFPPIPREDEYEDVIREOJKLHZJTINGBIRTWEX
 ENPZUPCZICFCJZCFLSWLCSEBCFIASENATO
 PTFBOORELBRAWENIPHAORPJTCDAFRORLRO
 DUTRHRAEFKIROBDIFIDWSAIWIJNNTKTKAK
 OAROTIFATRCOAASHSNEWJPACZHKAJVDAIC
 OJHPPOEAAHAHIDNFJIGGATROFDIAIJERETU
 WJNULLZVEIZNTNDCAENRBHSWNLEWAOEBNC
 NAZAHENEASTFHAROFDIBPFTGARHTIVRUMI
 RTEOSSMCJAHORNISNAWLCABCNZHDEERANT
 EPDCHNDZVERUNOTIWDETICOSRJSHNEJROR
 TSNIDTERREKESAPOLKARRPRAEIJHTBPLIT
 SPAHSATCUTHSHBSDEODSCNTSUAHMIAMVL
 APMCPSTAASITCLUTECRAPVACSRSESJRJENZ
 EMKNSVHUMMINGBIRDTBYTCARETCADYTET

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The secret bird is the HUMMINGBIRD

STRNHWODTPEEINDIUBOVNTJNSUPRBE
ERCHORICESEATALLTHEVORTLEEDLITR
ERKARVCFIXDOTFLGWEWISDVTIADRFJC
EPIRBEDEYEVJREDAWLNZJTINGBIBEX
BMPZPCZICFCJZCFLBULCSEBCTIASSNATD
RFBQRELBRALENIDHGRPJTCOARFORLRO
RORSHBEFKIRIBODIFRUSAIWJYVTKKAK
DRDJIATRORASHSNEPJACZVRAJYDALK
DUPPEAHANIDNFJIBBATORFVJAJEREJU
KUNULVEIZNINDCAABNSHSALEWHDBN
MAZANEPEASTFAROPIDPPFCARHTIKVUMI
RDESSJCAHNTANSMAKCRONZHDREKANT
EPOCHNSAEVEBNOTIHEBTLQSRJSHNEJRO
TENDITERREKESAPDLKESPRAEIJH3PLIT
SPAKSATICUTHEBSOMESTSCNTSUANHIANVL
RMPSTIAP3ITCLUTEOPVACSRSE93JENZ
EMKNSVUMIAGBIRDOBTICARETCAQDYTEI

ANSWER KEY

By Roy Boyle

KID'S NATURE PAGE