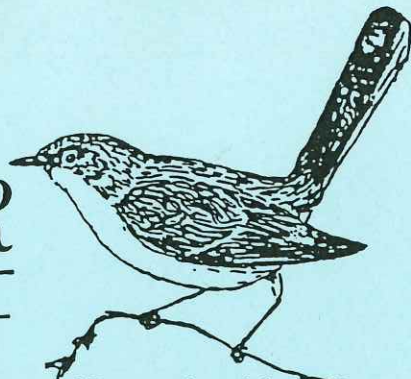


THE GNATCATCHER

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

January 1991



JANUARY'S PROGRAM: Don't miss "Endangered Flora and Fauna of Pennsylvania", the program for our January meeting, to be given by Rob Criswell, local wildlife conservation officer. The meeting is Tuesday, January 29 at 7:15 pm at the 28th Street Church of the Brethren on Union Avenue in Altoona. A business segment will precede the meeting.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dave Kyler

With the new year finally here, and with the new decade beginning, here are a few of my New Year's Resolutions that I will try to uphold:

- 1) I will try to become less pessimistic!
- 2) I will try to have a positive attitude!
- 3) I will try to become more environmentally aware!
- 4) I will try to make others more conscious of their need to protect "our one world"!!
- 5) I will make no more than five resolutions/year!!

I hope that you will join with me to be more active and energetic in all Audubon matters in this upcoming year. A few individuals can not do it all and should not be expected to do so. Long time members need to provide leadership roles and must refrain from "resting on their laurels". As with any organization, we need new and energetic members to carry on our successful programs. Only 20% of you members, who are reading this right now, ever attend a meeting or join us for a field trip; to the remaining 80% I say Altoona is not that far away!!

Our program for January 1991 promises to be an informative and interesting one. Rob Criswell will bring to us a slide program depicting his special concerns for Pennsylvania's endangered plants and wildlife. We hope to see you there!!

PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS

Marcia Bonta

What unusual birds or bird behavior did you observe in Blair County October through December? What changes in bird populations and species have you noticed recently? Please share with readers of Pennsylvania Birds by sending the information to me immediately at P. O. Box 68, Tyrone, PA 16686 or calling me at 684-3113. In the words of co-editors Barb and Frank Haas, "It's so easy to count rarities. Like, I mean, you know, how hard is it to count to one? But maybe we had all better expend some effort in trying to keep track of our more common species. When reports come in that there seem to be few ovenbirds, thrushes, warblers, etc., we should all sit up and take notice...We need to be monitoring what is happening. Without hard data it is difficult to fight for any cause...There are few hobbies that can give the scientific world as much help as birding. Professional ornithologists do rely on the non-professional observers for information. Rarities provide distributional data for them. Banders, at the minimum, provide status and distribution data as well as some relative degree of abundance."

What you have not seen recently may be as important as what you have seen. And birds, as we've been told over and over again, are a barometer for the natural world as a whole. What is happening to them is important to us. They are the true canaries in coal mines. It is not necessary to travel any further than your backyard, nearby vacant lot, or park to monitor changes. In fact, being totally familiar with a small area is probably more important than traveling distances to view unusual birds. Environmentally speaking, the more observing you can do on your home ground on your own two feet, the better.

NATURE GUIDING WORKSHOP

Peggy Goodman

The Winter/Spring Program Guide from Shaver's Creek Environmental Center offers a Nature

Guiding Workshop on Sunday, April 7 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The Fort Roberdeau Association will pay the registration fee for up to 5 persons who would like to attend the session and utilize their environmental skills at the fort. Several thousand students visit the fort every year, and we are always trying to improve our presentations to them. These young people are the key to the future.

Please contact Peggy Goodman at the fort's office 695-5541, ext 385, or at home, 942-5763 if you are interested.

The description in the Program Guide is as follows:

Nature Guiding Workshop, Sunday, April 7, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Are you a teacher, scout leader, nature counselor or youth leader interested in nature study with children? You can become a highly effective nature guide for children of all ages by learning to nurture a child's sense of wonder and make outdoor learning fun and dynamic. This workshop will focus on utilizing the natural environment as a learning laboratory, developing field trip techniques, using games, simple keys and field guides, handling live animals, developing nature trails, aquariums and small nature rooms, and using contemporary resources for developing individual programs. Dress for the weather and bring a lunch. (R)(A)

Members: \$16.00 and Non-Members: \$20.00

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

IT'S NOT TOO LATE ---- WE STILL HAVE SPACE AVAILABLE!

If anyone is interested in joining the JVAS group to the National Convention in Estes Park, Colorado in July, please call Janet Huber at CLASSIC TRAVEL, (814)696-3558 or (800)696-8400, or, contact Terry Wentz at 695-1810.

The convention is the week of July 22, with the weekend having the most activities. All details are tentative but, we can offer a choice of programs to suit your schedule.

We will be flying on US AIR from any of the commuter airports of Altoona, Johnstown or State College to Pittsburgh, then non-stop to Denver.

If you are interested; you can either do a weekend at the convention from possibly Wednesday, July 24 to Monday, July 29.

OR; The weekend at the convention and a week long side trip to Yellowstone and the Grand Teton National Parks. The trip to Yellowstone will be by van at a leisurely pace of covering 150 to 250 miles on most days, with one long day of driving on the return to Denver of about 450 miles. We will spend two nights in Yellowstone midway through the week. We are allowing ample time for birding, exploring, and enjoying the scenery and flora and fauna of this unique and interesting area. (The week to Wyoming can be the week either before or after the convention, depending on majority interest.)

We will have copies of the itinerary at the next JVAS meeting on January 29, and also a more definite cost per person. If you have any questions or are interested in this trip, please contact either Janet or Terry.

by Roy Boyle

MAKING AN "EARTH DAY" AQUARIUM

Materials: 2 large soda bottles (2 or 3 liter size), sharp knife, sand, water plants, 2 or 3 small fish.

- Directions:
- 1 Pull the black bottom off one of the soda bottles.
 - 2 Cut the lid off the other soda bottle just above the straight sides of the container.
 - 3 Wash dirt from sand by running water through it until the water coming out of the sand is clear. This could take many minutes. Place 3-5 inches of clean sand in the bottle with the black bottom.
 - 4 Fill the bottle with water.

Adding fish and plants:

Place tap water in your aquarium and leave the top off for 24 hours before adding fish to get rid of chemicals in the water. Add only distilled water after the fish have been added to your aquarium.

Add two or three small fish. The plants can not produce enough oxygen for more. When adding your fish to the aquarium, place them in a plastic bag and let the whole bag float in the aquarium for at least 12 hours. This will allow the temperature of the water in the aquarium and the bag to become the same reducing the shock. Feed your fish every couple days. If the water becomes cloudy, you are overfeeding the fish. Try to keep the water between 70° and 75° F. This will keep your fish warm enough.

Plants can be added anytime. Plants need sunlight so place aquarium near a window where it will get lots of light. If your plants die, add new ones. Without the oxygen they make, your fish will die. If algae appears on the side of your aquarium, add a snail or two.

WHAT DOES AN AQUARIUM HAVE TO DO WITH EARTH DAY?

An aquarium is a small world all by itself. The plants provide the oxygen the fish need to survive. Sunlight to power photosynthesis is provided by placing the aquarium near a window. You provide the food for the fish.

You get to take care of your own world. You see for yourself how important it is to have all the parts of your aquarium working. If food, sunlight and oxygen are not present, your aquarium will lose one or all of its life forms. It works the same on planet earth. If the different parts of our planet are not in balance and parts of our world are destroyed, our world will die, just like your aquarium. Take care of the big aquarium we live in!

FIELD NOTES

Dave Kyler

*As a fund raiser for some upcoming projects, Mike & Laura Jackson will once again sponsor a "RAIN FOREST CRUNCH" sale. As many of you already know, this delicious mixture is made from native rain forest products, and directly benefits our South American native friends. Please take advanced orders \$3.00/box and present your orders to Mike & Laura at our January meeting. The proceeds will be divided evenly between our Philippines camera fund and our "bird feeding station" at Ft. Roberdeau.

*JVAS will sponsor a booth at the Jaffa Mosque, February 22, 23, 24, 1991 and we will need some help at this 9th annual Outdoor Sport & Recreational Show. Dick & Nona Weicht (814) 695-4838 will have the sign-up sheet at the January meeting.

*Craig Cameron needs "outdoor burning ordinances" from all of the local towns & boroughs. If you have access to a copy bring it to the meeting.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please submit items for the February issue before Wednesday, February 13 to Jim Winsor: 102 Halleck Place, Altoona, PA 16602 (943-8213) or Altoona Campus, Ivyside Park, Altoona, PA 16601-3760 (949-5180).

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