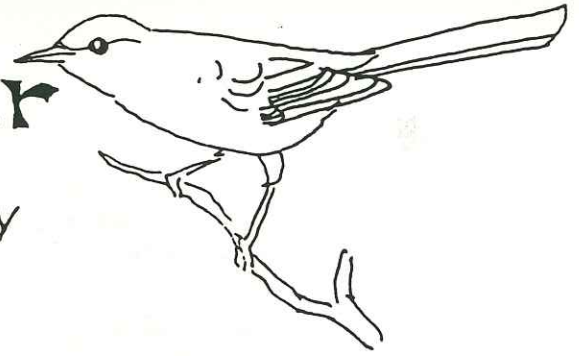


The Gnatcatcher



JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 1992

FEBRUARY PROGRAM: UNIQUE ECOSYSTEMS

Wildlife Conservation Officer Rob Criswell will present an extremely interesting and informative discussion and slide show in regard to unique ecosystems in the Keystone State. You may remember Officer Criswell's outstanding presentation on endangered flora and fauna of Pennsylvania (January 1991).

TIME: 25 February 1992 (Tuesday)

PLACE: 5th Avenue United Methodist Church
5th Avenue and 4th Street
Altoona

FIELD TRIP: MIDDLE CREEK WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

State Game Land 46 was created in 1929 on the border of Lancaster and Lebanon counties and was managed for small game for 40 years. With the approval by Pennsylvania voters of Project 70 funds in 1963, the Pennsylvania Game Commission elected to create a waterfowl management area adjacent to this game land. Wetlands which had been marginal for farming north of SGL 46 were acquired for this project. The Game Commission constructed several small impoundments, created a 400 acre lake complete with nesting islands, provided picnic areas, hiking and nature trails, and built a beautiful visitors' center with its huge window overlooking the lake. Wildlife lectures are held regularly at the visitors' center, contributing to Middle Creek's tremendous value as a conservation education site. March will find the lake covered with waterfowl, most notably large numbers of Tundra Swans. We will explore the area thoroughly, visiting various habitats. We will meet at Pleasant Valley Shopping Center and leave for Middle Creek at 7:00 A.M. on March 14. Please call Dave Kyler (814)643-6030 or Stan or Alice Kotala (814)946-8840 if you need additional information.

"One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving
the murk of a March thaw, is the spring."

Aldo Leopold
A Sand County Almanac, 1949

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The Endangered Species Act is up for reauthorization in 1992. It was originally enacted in 1973 to provide a program for the conservation of endangered and threatened species because they are of "aesthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people." Protection of a species is granted when the United States Fish and Wildlife Service scientifically reviews it and finds it to be worthy thereof. The Endangered Species Act has saved from extinction the Peregrine Falcon, California Condor, Brown Pelican, Whooping Crane,

Black-footed Ferret, and Gray Whale, among others.

During the 1980's and early 1990's, special interests which have been inconvenienced by the Act have attempted to undermine its protection. This year they are organizing in an unprecedented manner in order to weaken the Endangered Species Act by eliminating citizens' rights to petition for the listing of imperiled species and by deleting several other important provisions. Such weakening of the Act would undermine its scientific basis.

The struggle to maintain the scientific integrity of the Endangered Species Act will be the most significant environmental battle of the decade. If it is lost, it will be far easier to doom a species to extinction. We must not allow any weakening of the ESA to occur. Rather, the Act should be strengthened in order that we will not lose biodiversity due to habitat destruction.

In response to these scientific concerns, H.R. 4045 was introduced in late November of 1991. This bill would broaden the Endangered Species Act to protect all endangered species in an ecosystem and emphasizes multi-species recovery plans for both listed and candidate species and their ecosystems. It would also set deadlines for such plans. Your United States representative needs to know that you support this bill. Please write to your representative and ask him or her to cosponsor H.R. 4045 to strengthen the ESA. Let your representative know that the Endangered Species Act is a pivotal environmental law that must be broadened for the protection of species and their habitats.

CANOE CREEK STATE PARK WINTER BIRD CENSUS

Juniata Valley Audubon Society members Bill King, Dave Kyler, Stan Kotala, and Terry Wentz braved single digit temperatures on January 19, 1992 to conduct a winter bird census of Canoe Creek State Park. Each person covered a designated area of the park. Thirty seven species were seen. Of particular note was the Virginia Rail spotted by Bill King near the mouth of Mary Ann's Creek at 8:00 A.M.. Bill observed the rail for several minutes at a distance of fifteen to twenty feet and noted all the classic field marks. The Virginia Rail was seen again at 1:00 P.M. by Bill, Dave Kyler, and Stan Kotala at a range of ten to thirty feet for five minutes. In winter this bird normally is found well south of Pennsylvania and along the coast, although Peterson notes it to be "casual in mild winters to Lake Erie." Below is a complete list of numbers of individuals of each species seen.

Great Blue Heron	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	16
Mallard	2	Brown Creeper	2
Cooper's Hawk	1	Carolina Wren	6
Red-tailed Hawk	2	Winter Wren	1
American Kestrel	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1
Ruffed Grouse	2	Eastern Bluebird	24
Rock Dove	1	American Robin	6
Mourning Dove	5	Northern Mockingbird	4
Eastern Screech Owl	5	Cedar Waxwing	3
Belted Kingfisher	1	European Starling	6
Red-bellied Woodpecker	5	Northern Cardinal	20
Downy Woodpecker	17	American Tree Sparrow	12
Hairy Woodpecker	6	Song Sparrow	6
Pileated Woodpecker	3	Dark-eyed Junco	18
Blue Jay	11	House Finch	38
American Crow	19	American Goldfinch	7
Black-capped Chickadee	51	House Sparrow	5
Tufted Titmouse	24	Swamp Sparrow	4
		VIRGINIA RAIL	1

ACP ISSUES DAY by Paula Ford

The Audubon Council of Pennsylvania held its annual Issues Day on January 11th near Harrisburg. Randy Snodgrass, Wildlife Issues Specialist at NAS's Washington, D.C. office, gave a report on the status of the Endangered Species Act, which is due to be reauthorized. Audubon supports HR - 4045 in the House and a companion bill (as yet unnumbered) in the Senate. Please contact your Congressman and both Senators to ask them to co-sponsor a strong Endangered Species Act. Details can be found in the January issue of Audubon Activist.

Also at the Issues Day were presentations on "Armchair Activists," a program developed by Jeff Lippert of an Illinois chapter, and a keynote address by DER Secretary Art Davis. Dr. Maurice Goddard was presented the annual ACP Conservation Award - a copy of "Autumn Blue," the art print available through ACP. Dr. Goddard was honored for his many years of conservation work in Pennsylvania.

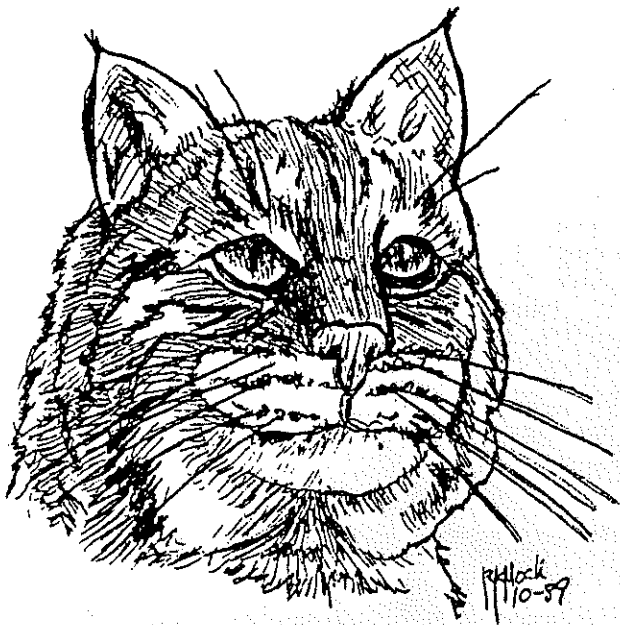
In - depth issues workshops were presented on the following state issues: Growth Management and Land Use Planning, Oil and Gas, Wetlands, Environmental Education, and Nongame Wildlife Funding.

The next ACP meeting will be on April 25, in the State College area. All JVAS members are welcome at any ACP meeting.



Timber Wolf

by Richard Mock



Lynx by Richard Mock

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT by Craig Cameron

The Conservation Committee is accepting nominations from members for the annual Conservation Award to be presented at the April banquet. Groups or individuals are eligible for the award. If you know of someone who deserves to be recognized for work to protect the environment, please contact Craig Cameron at 695-4799.

The Committee recently wrote a letter of support for the Antis Township Action Committee in its effort to obtain a grant to do education on the important issue of groundwater protection.

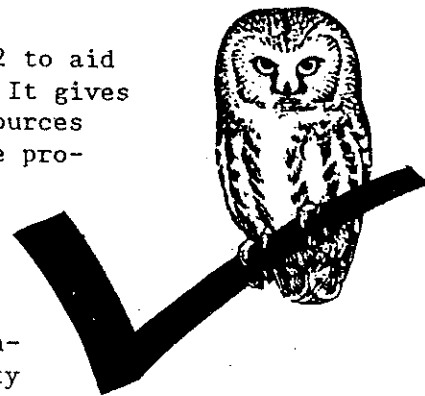
Committee member, Paula Ford, travelled to Washington in December and again in January to discuss RCRA reauthorization with Senator Wofford's staff. Senator Wofford is a member of the subcommittee that will consider reauthorization of RCRA, the federal law that regulates hazardous waste. Paula continues to represent JVAS, ACP, and NAS on the steering committee of the National Citizens' Network on Oil and Gas Wastes. She has attended meetings in Louisiana, Utah, Kansas, and New Mexico on behalf of the Network. She also wrote an article on Oil and Gas Hazardous wastes for the November - December issue of E Magazine.

1992 PGC VOLUNTARY WATERFOWL STAMP

Pennsylvania's 1992 waterfowl stamp, featuring Canada Geese in a beaver pond, is the tenth "duck stamp" offered by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. The original oil painting is the work of York, Pennsylvania artist Robert D. Sopchick and was selected as the state's tenth anniversary stamp and print design from among forty entries submitted for judging during the Pymatuning Waterfowl Expo held last September in Linesville. In "Beaver Pond Canadas" Sopchick shows the type of habitat that is critical to all waterfowl. Funds derived from the stamp and print sales are used for wetland acquisition, habitat development, and waterfowl-related education programs. The stamps are available at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area (site of our March field trip), Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area, Game Commission offices, and participating hunting license issuing agents. The fine art prints are available from Sportsman Specialties Company of Greensburg and from wildlife art galleries statewide.

WILD RESOURCE CONSERVATION FUND

The Wild Resource Conservation Fund was established in 1982 to aid in the protection of Pennsylvania's unique flora and fauna. It gives us the opportunity to support the management of our wild resources since no general tax dollars have ever been earmarked for the protection of the Commonwealth's endangered and threatened wild plants and wildlife. The fund is supported entirely through voluntary contributions. Recent conservation successes of the Wild Resource Conservation Fund include the reintroduction of the Osprey, the re-establishment of the River Otter to state waterways, the Breeding Bird Atlas Survey, the Volunteers for Wildlife program, the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory Database, and a study of wintering Bald Eagles in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.



You can donate to the fund in two ways:

1. Tax Check-off: Pennsylvania taxpayers may contribute all or part of their state income tax refund while preparing their taxes. The Department of Revenue has provided a description of the Wild Resource Conservation Fund in the instruction booklets of both the long and short state tax forms.

2. Direct Contributions: Individuals may support the fund by making a check or money order payable to the Wild Resource Conservation Fund and mailing it at any time to;

Wild Resource Conservation Fund
Room 101, 3rd & Reilly Streets
P.O. Box 1467
Harrisburg, PA 17105-1467

All contributions are tax deductible. Without your support the Wild Resource Conservation Fund may be headed for extinction.

PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS



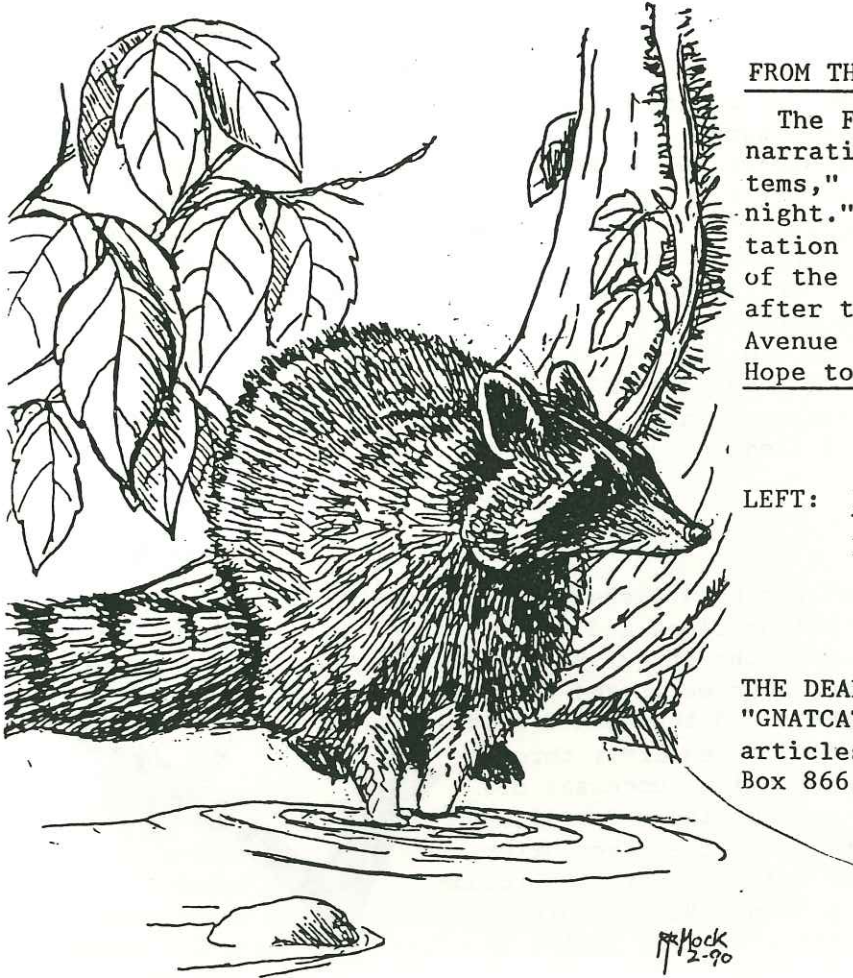
Stan Kotala will replace Marcia Bonta as the Blair County compiler for "Pennsylvania Birds." Any interesting birds seen should be reported to Stan either by writing or by calling; Stan Kotala, R.D. 3, Box 866, Altoona, PA 16601, (814) 946-8840. Dates by which reports are due are as follows:
January to March edition: April 1, April to June edition: July 1,
July to September edition: October 1, and October to December edition: January 1.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK by Dave Kyler

The February meeting, with Rob Criswell narrating his slide program, "Unique Ecosystems," has been designated "bring a friend night." We hope that you will extend an invitation to a friend to join you on the evening of the 25th. Refreshments will be served after the program, which will be at the 5th Avenue United Methodist Church, lower level. Hope to see you there!

LEFT: Raccoon by Roaring Spring artist
Richard Mock.

THE DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES FOR THE MARCH
"GNATCATCHER" IS MARCH 8th. Please submit
articles to the editor, Stan Kotala, R.D. 3
Box 866, Altoona, PA 16601.



JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON
P.O. BOX 2378
ALTOONA, PA 16603

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Altoona, Pa.
Permit No. 238