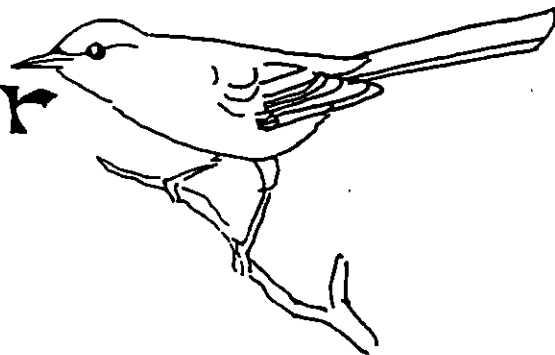


The Gnatcatcher



Newsletter of the

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

R.R. 3, Box 866, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601

October 1996

DEP's Neglect of Pennsylvania's Streams Results in Abuse

Pennsylvania's 55,000 miles of streams have not received adequate protection by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), stated the U.S. District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania this past spring. Judge Bechtel noted that DEP officials "operating under the present standard have issued permits that have directly caused harmful environmental effects." As a result of DEP's dereliction of duty, Judge Bechtel ordered the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to promulgate adequate antidegradation regulations for the surface waters of the Commonwealth.

Less than half of the Keystone State's river, creek, and stream miles have been classified according to water quality by the DEP. Presently, three levels of protection exist for Pennsylvania's streams: Existing Use Waters, High Quality Waters (20% of assessed stream miles), and Exceptional Value Waters (2% of assessed stream miles). These classifications have proven inadequate to protect our waterways from degradation. They are unnecessarily restrictive in granting protection to the Commonwealth's waters. They permit harmful discharges even into the most protected streams!

It is hoped that this deplorable situation will end with the promulgation of adequate stream water quality protection regulations by the EPA, but don't count on it! Opponents of clean streams wield con-

Cont'd on next page

October Program

"WATER QUALITY" — Mark Hersh, of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, will give a slide show detailing how streams are classified according to their water quality.

7:30 p.m., Monday, Oct. 21 at the Visitor Center, Canoe Creek State Park

Field Trips

STONE MOUNTAIN HAWK WATCH — Dave Kyler will lead trips to the top of Stone Mountain. Phone Dave at 643-6030 for additional details or clarifications. (See page 2.)

9 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 19 and 26 (Rain dates Oct. 20 and 27)

IRISH PINES TREE FARM AND NATURE TRAIL. Bill and Marie Riley will guide a tour of their award-winning conservation forestland near Spruce Creek. Phone Stan Kotala at 946-8840 regarding meeting place and head count.

2-4 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 13

PLUMMER HOLLOW-OUTING. Hike on the home ground of the Bonta Family. Bring a bag lunch. Marcia will provide beverages and dessert. (See additional information and directions to Plummer Hollow on page 2.)

11 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 20 (Rain date Sunday, Oct. 27)

WATER QUALITY MONITORING AT CANOE CREEK STATE PARK. Dr. John Lennox, of Penn State, will demonstrate techniques of assessing water quality. Meet at Pavilion #2.

2:30 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 26 [DATE CHANGE!]

ELK HOLLOW WILDLIFE RESERVE/CALIFORNIA QUARRIES. Preservationist Joe Gurekovich will lead a tour of his renowned conservation project. Phone Joe at 684-3587 for directions. Following the tour will be dinner at LaScalia's Restaurant.

1:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 2

Next Board Meeting

7 p.m., Monday, Nov. 4 at President Stan Kotala's residence. All members are welcome.

From the Gnatcatcher's Nest . . .

The JVAS is privileged indeed this month to have as its program speaker Mark Hersh, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mark has fought tirelessly to defend our streams from those who would degrade them. As a stakeholder in this past summer's regulatory negotiation process regarding Pennsylvania's stream quality protection program, he strongly advocated the highest standards for waterways protection.

Mark's topic for this month's meeting is stream water quality. He'll discuss the Commonwealth's current stream classification system, its strengths and weaknesses, and the future of the special protection waters program in light of its inadequacies.

Prior to our program meeting at Canoe Creek State Park on Monday, Oct. 21, members the JVAS Board of Directors will accompany Mark to dinner at the U.S. Hotel, in Hollidaysburg. If you'd like to honor Mark for his diligence in protecting our waters, please consider joining us for dinner. Let me know by Oct. 18 by calling me at 946-8840 or Paula Ford at 695-4799.

Stan

. . . DEP's Neglect *Cont'd from page 1*

siderable power in Harrisburg and have been very critical of even the DEP's lax protection standards. They even want to restrict Exceptional Value stream designations only to those streams on public land, thus elevating the act of polluting our waters to a property right!

A sample letter commenting on this situation is included with this issue of *The Gnatcatcher*. We ask that you sign it (or write your own) and mail it to the address indicated by Oct. 16. Brook trout, red salamanders, mayflies, caddisflies, and Louisiana waterthrushes need you to speak out on their behalf to protect stream water quality!

(K)

Stone Mountain Hawkwatch Field Trips Set

The view from the top of Stone Mountain has never been better! Toward the end of September the hawks were moving in good numbers. As of Sept. 29, the total number of migrating raptors counted was 1090, with the "big day" occurring on Sept. 18, when 589 hawks passed by the platform. On that date all-time, single-day record totals for the following species were recorded: American kestrel 35, osprey 48, and bald eagle 6.

October, November, and December will prove to be exciting months for hawkwatching at the Stone Mountain site as well. The JVAS will be conducting field trips on Oct. 19 and Oct. 26. Rain dates will be Oct. 20 and Oct. 27. (I'll be unavailable to lead a trip to the site on Oct. 12 due to a scheduling conflict.)

Plan to bring a bag lunch, drink, sturdy shoes, appropriately layered clothing, and binoculars. Meet at the Huntingdon McDonald's parking lot (on Rt. 22) at 9 a.m. Phone me at 643-6030 for additional details or clarifications. Hope to see you there!

— Dave Kyler

Plummer Hollow Outing

On Sunday, Oct. 20, at 11 a.m. our family will be leading a 4½-mile hike over our property. (Rain date is Sunday, Oct. 27.) First, we shall walk up our mile-and-a-half road to our home, where we shall eat a bag lunch. Then those who wish to walk with us a mile and a half farther over the trails on top of our mountain can do so. Finally, we shall walk the mile-and-a-half Black Gum and Rhododendron Trails down the mountain. An alternative will be offered for those who wish only to walk an easy 3 miles up and down our road. Since I am providing beverages and dessert, please give me a call at 684-3113 if you plan to attend.

To reach our place, take the Tyrone exit off Rt. I-99. Turn left away from Tyrone. Drive 0.4 mile south on Rt. 453 and turn right onto a one-lane, steel bridge across the Little Juniata River. (From

Cont'd on page 4

CONSERVATION

ORNER

By Paula Ford

Food for Thought — On the 1996 Candidates for the House of Representatives from the Ninth Congressional District

Although the JVAS cannot endorse candidates for political office, we are permitted to educate our members about candidates' records or platforms. Last month I provided facts for you to use in evaluating the two major parties' candidates for president. This month I provide information to help you evaluate the candidates for the House of Representatives from the Ninth Congressional District. They are incumbent Rep. Bud Shuster and challenger B. Monte Kemmler.

Rep. Shuster's record is well known to environmentalists. He gained national attention in 1995 as the author of revisions to the Clean Water Act. According to *The New York Times*, "The bill's sponsors worked side by side on the bill, inserting one provision after another to satisfy industry groups like the Chemical Manufacturers Association, companies like International Paper, and organizations like the cities and states covered by the law. That approach has outraged environmental groups, the committee's senior Democratic members and their staffs, and senior officials of the Environmental Protection Agency. They call it an example of special-interest influence that is remarkable even in Washington, where power always flows to the connected."

On the 1996 League of Conservation Voters Scorecard for the 104th Congress Mr. Shuster received a rating of zero. His rating for the 103rd Congress was 20%, and his rating for the 102nd Congress was zero. The LCV scorecard for the 104th Congress covered safeguard rollbacks, takings, combining takings and safeguard rollbacks, logging without laws, protection of the Mojave Desert, closing national parks, Alaska forest/mining giveaways, funding renewable energy, the Clean Water Act revisions (counted twice in the rating because LCV felt the revisions were so damaging),

funding for the EPA, and international family planning. All JVAS members received a copy of the LCV scorecard in the May 1995 issue of *The Gnatcatcher*. I will have a copy of the scorecard at the October meeting.

Mr. Kemmler, of course, has no LCV rating because he did not vote on the bills covered by the scorecard. He has provided the following statement to groups who have asked about his environmental platform:

"The environment is part of my three-point platform known as the three E's: (1) Economic development, (2) Education, and (3) Environment. My position on the environment is this: We are not creators of the environment, but rather, we are caretakers of our natural God-given surroundings. When we abandon respect for nature, we then become destroyers of the environment; and for that, there is no excuse.

I simply want to be able to get a clean glass of water from the spigot. I want to be sure our rivers, lakes, and streams are preserved not only for recreation but also for the betterment of our basic ecology. Wetlands should be protected for flood control and for habitat for wildlife. I want to stop the influx of garbage from other states and see improved waste management. I want to avoid hazardous and toxic waste dump sites from appearing in our back yards. We also need a strong Endangered Species Act.

I feel that it is necessary that the general public be aware of environmental issues. Therefore, I would support public awareness and other educational programs that would keep people well-informed."

Vote!

Handy Four-Letter Codes for Bird Names

Many field observers have been using a four-letter code for bird names that was invented by bird banders (called *alpha codes* on banding forms). It's an easy system to use and makes field note-taking simple. And since it's standardized, anyone can read your notes if they know the system (including yourself many months later). I use the system for taking notes on bird walks, and many field observers use it for point counts and other survey methods.

Many people use their own abbreviations for bird names. However, most systems lack consistency and uniformity, which do not make the notes clear. For instance, if someone writes "CH 5" for a field trip, did that birder see five chats or five chickadees? What kind of chickadee? So, try this system out. It works for many field ornithologists.

The system is simple. If the bird name is composed of one word, use the first four letters of the word (ovenbird = OVEN). If the bird name is composed of two words, use the first two letters of each word (eastern meadowlark = EAME). If the name is composed of three words, including hyphenated words, use the first letter of the first two words and the first two letters of the third word (white-eyed vireo = WEVI). If the name comprises four words, use the first letter of each word (black-throated green warbler = BTGW). After a while the codes become second nature. I've heard a few people say they saw a TuVu as their first sign of spring!

The following regular Pennsylvania birds include the few exceptions to these easy rules: bank swallow (BANS), barn swallow (BARS); cedar waxwing (CEDW), cerulean warbler (CERW); Blackburnian warbler (BLBW), blackpoll warbler (BLPW).

— *Doug Gross, Board Member
Pennsylvania Society
for Ornithology*

... Plummer Hollow Outing *Cont'd from page 2*

Huntingdon, follow 22 west 10 miles and then take Rt. 453 north toward Tyrone. After approximately 9 miles, pass the intersection with Rt. 550. Drive 0.3 mile farther and turn left onto the bridge.)

After crossing the bridge, continue on a gravel road for about 300 feet. Watch for trains! Our entrance gate is across the tracks and will be open. Pull in and park.

— *Marcia Bonta*

BOOK REVIEW



Eastern Old-Growth Forests: Prospects for Rediscovery and Recovery

Edited by Mary Byrd Davis

1996, Island Press

A single column is woefully inadequate to convey the broad range of issues, perspectives, and analyses presented in the course of this volume's 23 chapters, preface, foreword, and afterword. Even a lengthy book review couldn't capture the diversity of arguments the book's 34 contributors advance about just one of its central questions: What is old growth? (The editor sums it up thus: "I roughly equate old growth with forests that are original or primary or primeval or ancient or virgin or all of these.")

Such diversity, it seems to me, is always a bit risky. Many readers, I'm sure, are liable to be put off by the lack of a neat and orderly unifying argument — frustrated by linguistic pitfalls, thickets of inconclusive data, the useless deadwood of romantic idealism, the hoary mythic superstructures of deep empathy, and soaring optimism. And of course anti-environmental propagandists will likely seize upon some of the more obvious contradictions as emblematic of the overall decadence and danger of the biocentric position.

But never mind all that. Whether your interest lies in lichens, salamanders, or warblers, whether you'd rather hug a hemlock, harvest shelf fungus from a yellow birch, or canoe through bald cypress swamps, you're likely to find many points of unexpected interest here. I was caught, for instance, by a reference to yet-unpublished research into the rate of dispersal of black cohosh: "effectively zero meters per year." (We've seen a dramatic increase over the last 10 years in the Plummer Hollow black cohosh population, and I believe Canoe Creek State Park boasts a healthy understory of this herb as well.)

And after a Labor Day weekend backpacking trip into a corner of the Adirondacks' Five Ponds Wilderness Area — at 50,000 acres the largest patch of old-growth east of the Rockies — I was struck by the suggestion in one essay that 50,000 acres might be the smallest size at which a forest could absorb the effects of a catastrophic disturbance without losing its ancient aspect. This was of interest because, in fact, a year ago last July, this very area suffered patchy but wide-spread blowdowns, trees leveled for more than a square mile in some spots. Such an event would spell the end of the big trees in, say, Alan Seeger or Detweiler Run, but as I walked past (and over and around) the very thin, wide root balls that laid bare the underlying granite I couldn't help thinking that such disturbances must be a lot more frequent in the infertile Canadian Shield region than in our own folded Appalachians. (It's differences like these that make nice, neat models of ecosystem change a near impossibility.)

I was also struck by the incredible profusion of at least six species of frogs and toads in the never-lumbered portions of the woods, regardless of blowdown — as impressive a testament to the long-term vitality of an old-growth ecosystem as any towering grove.

— *Dave Bonta*

Return of the Pinesaps

Botanizing has its thrills, puzzles, and disappointments. Take pinesap, for instance. Back in 1984, as I reported in my book *Appalachian Autumn* (pp. 26-28), 63 plants of this lovely epiparasite suddenly appeared on the Guesthouse Trail. The following year 20 bloomed in the same place. And then, for 10 years, not one pinesap appeared anywhere on the mountain.

This should not have been surprising since pinesap prefers to grow in coniferous forests, especially the pine and spruce forests of northern



PINE-SAP

Europe. In fact, its species' name *hypopithys* means "under a pine or fir."

Closely related to the white Indian pipe of midsummer's woods, pinesap's "pipes" are red and gold, and instead of one pipe to a stem, like Indian

pipe, there are several. Once they are pollinated, the pipes of pinesap, like Indian pipe, also turn skyward and blacken.

But as a plant that preferred a coniferous forest, why had it seen fit to appear 2 years in a row in our deciduous woods, and why had it then disappeared again? To me the plant's appearance was a puzzle and its subsequent disappearance a disappointment.

Then came a thrill. On August 25, 1995 I was walking our Black Gum Trail through our mature deciduous forest. Suddenly I was stopped by the sight of three small clumps of pinesap in the middle of the trail at least a mile from where the plants had bloomed 10 years ago. At last the hope I had expressed in *Appalachian Autumn* that "what was once resurrected for a couple autumns may be resurrected again" had been fulfilled. However, although I searched hard, I found no other pinesaps on the mountain last summer.

But this year was unbelievable. From August 27 until September 16, I found 34 plants in four widely separated areas — two on Laurel Ridge Trail, eight on the road bank, and a bonanza of 13 on the Short Circuit Trail. I even found one growing in the moss of the Guesthouse Trail very near to where the pinesaps of 1984 and 1985 had appeared.

What mysterious plants pinesaps are, re-appearing like red and gold ghosts a decade after the first ones bloomed and then disappeared. We tend to think of wildflowers as immovable, but pinesap and pink lady's slippers, to give only a couple examples, are almost as active as some mammals. More must go on beneath the forest soil than we can ever imagine. ❖



**Send your BiLo Foods and Riverside Markets cash register tapes to
Anne Borland at 138A Larch St., Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.
Anne redeems tapes for \$ for the JVAS. Thank you!**

Report: September Program Meeting

Jeff Auker, a falconer from the DuBois area, talked about his hobby to a crowd of about 30 people. Jeff also brought along a Harris' hawk, a beautiful rufous, gray, and white buteo native to the American Southwest (and down into Central and South America). While Jeff discussed the history of falconry, the personalities of different hawk species, and other topics, the hawk spent its time eyeing Jeff hungrily or looking at the audience with mild disgust. The presentation was quite informal; over half of it was taken up by a question-and-answer session, where Jeff fielded questions ranging from

whether he had ever been injured by a hawk to what it takes to train a hawk for falconry.

— Eugene Zielinski

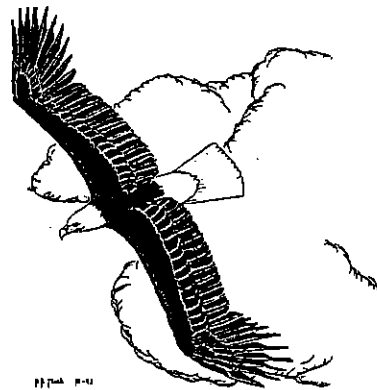
Debbie Haine Appointed Education Cochair

Debora Haine, of East Freedom, has agreed to serve as Education Cochair with Colette Heller. Debbie will handle requests for speakers of the JVAS Speakers Bureau, who offer adult seminars, lecture and slide presentations, and field trips featuring the natural environment. Colette will continue to coordinate the Audubon Adventures educational program for school children.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The deadline for November's issue of *The Gnatcatcher* is November 4. Please submit articles to editor Charlie Hoyer, P.O. Box 32, Tyrone, PA 16686.

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Ms. Evelyn S. MacKnight, 3WP11
Chief, Pa/De Branch
Office of Watersheds
Water Protection Division
Environmental Protection Agency, Region III
841 Chestnut Building
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

Dear Ms. MacKnight:

I support the proposed Federal antidegradation policy for Pennsylvania (August 29, 1996 Federal Register, Volume 61, Number 169, pages 45379-45385). I especially support the provision that the anti-degradation policy applies to wetlands. The "open season" on wetlands declared by the Ridge administration must end.

If the state proposes its own rules to take the place of the Federal regulation, then the EPA must ensure that Pennsylvania's regulation is at least as stringent as the Federal one. In any event, the EPA must now ensure that the state implements this new policy so that our waters, wetlands, and aquatic life are given the proper protection.

Yours truly,