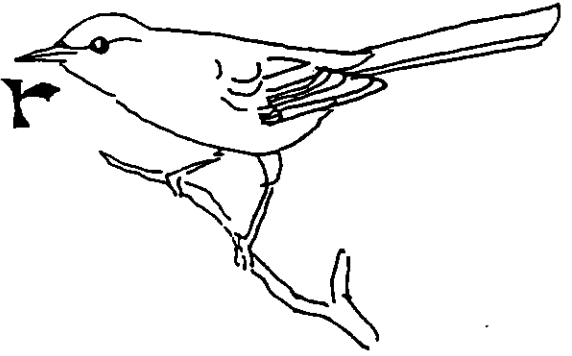


# The Gnatcatcher



Newsletter of the  
**Juniata Valley Audubon Society**

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

Vol. 29, No. 4 — May 1997

## **Governor Ridge Kicks Off Streamside Buffer Initiative**

On May 2 Governor Ridge launched a multiagency initiative to establish and preserve streamside forest buffers in Pennsylvania.

"Many citizen grassroots organizations, watershed associations, and community water monitoring groups already are voluntarily involved in planting forest buffers along streams," Ridge said at a meeting in Harrisburg of 15 state agencies that will help with the initiative. "Our state agencies will now adopt the practice of planting buffers along waterways on state lands, and educating the public about the importance of this practice."

The initiative will encourage planting trees along our waterways to "buffer" them from pollution.

"Riparian forest buffers link our landscapes to our rivers — while at the same time providing great value to aquatic life and the quality of the stream," Department of Environmental Protection Secretary James F. Seif said.

Streamside forest buffers help filter the runoff of sediments and the fertilizers applied to lawns and crops, assist with nutrient uptake, provide canopy and shade for temperature control, and provide habitat and leaf food for aquatic life. They are important in urban, agricultural, and residential settings that border waterways.

Nonpoint source pollution — pollution that comes from the general drainage of the land — is now one of the greatest threats to our water quality. While Pennsylvania has made significant improvements at controlling pollution from point sources — such as sewage treatments plants — traditional regulatory approaches don't have the same effect on non-point sources of pollution.

*Cont'd on page 6 ⇒*

### **May Program**

**"PARTNERS FOR WILDLIFE"** — Dave Putnam, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will present a slide show/talk detailing the Partners for Wildlife program in which the USF&WS can help land owners create better wildlife habitat.

7:30 P.M., Monday, May 19 at the Visitor Center, Canoe Creek State Park, off Rte 22 east of Hollidaysburg.

### **Field Trips**

**BIRDS OF THE LOWER TRAIL.** Meet at the Alfarata Trailhead. Dave Kycler, trip leader (643-6030).

8 A.M., Sunday, May 17

**FERNS OF THE LITTLE JUNIATA VALLEY.** Meet at White Oak Hall in Fort Roberdeau County Park. Investigate ferns at Fort Roberdeau Park, Tytoona Cave, and along the Little Juniata River at Schoenberger and Spruce Creek. From there join us for dinner at the Main Street Cafe, in Alexandria. Dr. John Lennox (946-1584) and Stan Kotala (946-8840), trip leaders.

1 P.M., Sunday, June 22 [Rescheduled from June 15]

### **Next Board Meeting**

7 P.M., Monday, June 2 at the Kotalas' residence. All members are welcome. Phone 946-8840 for directions.

**The Gnatcatcher**

is published eight times a year (in February, March, April, May, June, September, October, and November) by the

Juniata Valley Audubon Society  
 Charlie Hoyer, Editor  
 P.O. Box 32  
 Tyrone, PA 16686-0032

Articles may be submitted directly to the editor. The deadline for the June 1997 issue is Friday, May 30.

The Juniata Valley Audubon Society (JVAS) is a chapter of the National Audubon Society serving members in Bedford, Blair, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Mifflin Counties.

Program meetings of the JVAS are held in the Visitor Center at Canoe Creek State Park, near Hollidaysburg, on the third Monday of the month in February, March, May, June, September, October, and November at 7:30 p.m. (A business meeting is at 7:15.) The public is invited to attend.

The JVAS Board of Directors holds its meetings, which are open to any concerned JVAS member, as announced in *The Gnatcatcher*.

For membership information, please contact Charlie Hoyer at 684-7376.

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- Director of Ornithology . . . . . Bill King 942-7673
- Director . . . . . Dave Kyler 643-6030

**President's Message**

A means of generating increased funding for Pennsylvania's nongame wildlife projects is presently being considered in Harrisburg. It would consist of increasing the current \$2-per-ton recycling fee levied on municipal waste disposed in the Commonwealth, 50 percent of which comes from out of state.

It is proposed that the recycling fee be increased to \$2.50 per ton, with 25 cents of the increase going to the Wild Resource Conservation Fund to support nongame wildlife projects and the other 25 cents going to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to provide grants to nonprofit citizens' groups for nonpoint source water pollution monitoring and abatement.

Write to your state senators and representatives and let them know that you support the reauthorization of Act 101 and the expansion of tipping fees on municipal waste with a portion allocated to the Wild Resource Conservation Fund and the DEP's Watershed Conservation and Education programs.

Should this proposal become law, the Keystone State's nongame wildlife funds would be quadrupled! Your action is needed now, since this issue is being debated this month!

*Stan Kotala*

**Melvin Lane Environmental Education Fund Established**

The JVAS Board of Directors is pleased to announce the formation of the Melvin Lane Environmental Education Fund, in Melvin's Memory, to promote environmental causes that were near and dear to Melvin's heart. To date, the fund already has received many individual contributions from Melvin's friends and acquaintances. If you'd like to contribute to this worthwhile fund, mail your check (payable to JVAS) to **The Melvin Lane Environmental Education Fund**, c/o Marge Hoyer, JVAS Treasurer, P.O. Box 32, Tyrone, PA 16686. ❖

**REFRESHMENTS AT ALL JVAS PROGRAM MEETINGS  
 AND BOARD MEETINGS  
 ARE DONATED BY**

**NATURE'S PANTRY  
 1054 PENNSYLVANIA AVE.  
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 684-0393**

## CONSERVATION

TURNER

By Paula Ford

### DEP Panders to Polluters In Pathetic Proposal

This month's "Conservation Corner" is provided by Joe Turner, Editor of *Pollution Update*.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has proposed major changes in Pennsylvania's regulations that implement the federal Clean Water Act and the state's Clean Streams Law. Most of the regulations would seriously weaken the current regulations.

A prime example is found in the DEP's High Quality streams proposal:

1. The DEP wants to allow General Permits in High Quality waters, which means no meaningful review or requirement that a discharger prove that its need is greater than the degradation of the water quality. This isn't permitted in the federal program.

2. The DEP wants to limit antidegradation to covering discharges despite court and agency rulings that activities other than discharges can affect water quality, such as water withdrawal.

3. The DEP wants to narrow the protected areas from "watersheds" to "surface waters." All the wetlands, small seeps, and springs won't be included because there are no biological methods to assess them.

4. The DEP wants to allow a discharger to degrade up to 25% of the stream's assimilative capacity without justification. That's not permitted under the current regulation.

5. The DEP wants to allow some sewage plants the right to discharge into High Quality Waters without having to balance need versus pollution, as is now required.

Wow! Doesn't leave much left, does it? The DEP did not tackle the decision-making process part of High Quality, where they decide whether or not to allow water quality degradation. Polluters must have been happy with that part of the program, as the DEP has never turned anyone down.

With this proposal, the DEP had a chance to give some real muscle to the watershed groups that it is constantly promoting. Apparently, the DEP wants these groups to concern themselves with picking up litter and such other activities that won't get in the way of the DEP issuing permits to degrade *your* water quality. Write the Environmental Quality Board and tell them that this proposal is one of the biggest pieces of litter to disfigure our streams in quite some time.

Use the following sample letter to write your own letter to the EQB. The deadline for comments is May 21.

/ Date /

Mr. James Seif  
Environmental Quality Board  
P.O. Box 8477  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477

RE: Proposed Antidegradation Regulations

Dear Mr. Seif:

I am completely opposed to the proposal. This proposal will make it harder for streams to get protection as high quality and will allow the redesignation of streams to lower categories that offer less protection. There is no way for seeps, springs, and wetlands to get protection in this proposal.

If a stream is lucky enough to be High Quality according to your proposal, the protection is weak and contrary to the current state and the federal regulation. Why are you weakening protection?

For all the rhetoric about the DEP working with watershed groups, it is dismaying to see the DEP undercut their efforts with this polluter-friendly proposal.

I would suggest, therefore, that you withdraw the entire package and rewrite it so that it protects the environment, and gives the public the protection as outlined in the Clean Water Act. In the alternative, keep the regulations now in place.

/ Name and signature /

cc: Michael McCabe,  
EPA Regional Administrator  
841 Chestnut Building  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

## Education News

By Alice Kotala

### AUDUBON ECOLOGY CAMPS AND WORKSHOPS — 1997

Brochures on the National Audubon Society's ecology camps and workshops are now available.

This summer's topics are "Introductory Field Ecology for Educators" in Connecticut, "Field Ecology" in Wyoming, and "Field Ornithology" or "Field Ecology" in Maine. There also are ecology youth camps (ages 10-14) in Maine.

Prices for these one-week adventures range from \$600 to \$825 and include all accommodations. With an additional fee and coursework, undergraduate and graduate college credits can be obtained.

A limited number of brochures will be available at the next JVAS meeting. You can call Education Chair Alice Kotala at 946-8840 for further specific information. Interested parties must register soon, as these popular programs fill up quickly.

### AUDUBON ADVENTURES

Teachers, parents, and youth group leaders: "Audubon Adventures" is an exciting environmental education program published by the National Audubon Society. The materials are developed and written by professional educators and targeted for the 3rd through 6th grades. Participants receive a bimonthly newspaper (six issues), a parchment certificate suitable for framing and hanging, an Audubon Month poster, and a leader's guide/teacher's manual filled with corresponding curricula and hands-on activities. This resource manual can be useful to teachers and scout leaders for years to come.

Kits are available for the individual (\$15) or classroom (\$35 — includes enough newspapers for 32 students). Topics for 1997-98 are "Bats," "Deciduous Trees," "Sea Turtles," "Owls," "Amphibians," and "Butterflies and Moths." A limited supply of back issues also are available.

The NAS will be sending out 1997-98 enrollment packets soon, so contact JVAS Education Chair

Alice Kotala at 946-8840 if you'd like to receive further information, or contact the NAS directly at 800-813-5037.

### WILD ACTION GRANT AWARDED

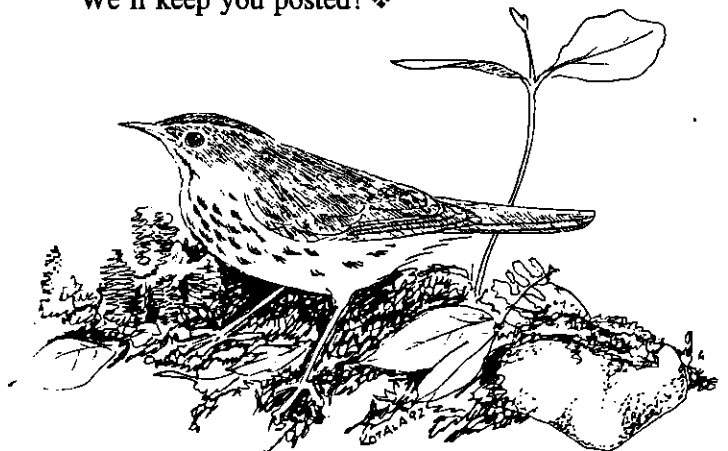
We're pleased to announce that we've received the Wild Action grant from the Pennsylvania Game Commission to establish a butterfly/hummingbird garden at Penn Mont Academy, in Duncansville.

*[ Penn Mont is enrolled in the "Audubon Adventures" program and its school principal qualified to apply for the grant, having taken the Project Wild course. ]*

With guidance of the JVAS and their teachers, the children — ages 6-12 — will be planning, constructing, and maintaining the garden every step of the way. Their work on the project begins this month.

The JVAS will produce a slide show covering the garden's production and evolution, which can be used by A.P.A.T.H. (Audubon Protecting Animals Through Habitat) volunteers in presentations to various community groups, schools, and local governing bodies. The garden not only will provide food sources for hummingbirds and butterflies, but many of the selected plants produce seeds eaten by birds such as the dark-eyed junco, common goldfinch, and white-throated sparrow. In addition, this project will benefit the community by enhancing the biological diversity of the area and exemplify an attractive alternate to the standard landscape practice of mowed monoculture grass and exotic ornamental plants.

We'll keep you posted! ❖



## Early Spring Butterflies

Soon after the first phoebe returns, I welcome the appearance of mourning cloaks and Compton tortoise shells. Both butterfly species have spent the winter on our mountain as adults, hiding behind loose bark or in other protected areas.

This spring I saw my first mourning cloaks and Compton tortoise shells on March 27 along Sapsucker Ridge Trail.

The following day I watched a Compton tortoise shell sucking sap from the side of a black birch tree along Laurel Ridge Trail, flicking away with its wings the flies that also had gathered to feed.

Mourning cloaks and Compton tortoise shells belong to the Brushfoot family of butterflies, so named because their front pair of legs is reduced to brushes, which makes them useless for walking. As adults, brushfoots frequently feed on sap flows, rotting fruit, bird droppings, or dung — but as caterpillars, mourning cloaks like willow, birch, cottonwood, elm, and hackberry while Compton tortoise shell caterpillars prefer aspen, birches, or willows.

Both species vie for the title of longest-lived butterfly. Each has only one brood a year in June or July. Then the adults estivate through the hot summer, fly in autumn, hibernate until March, mate in spring, and fly again until May or June, living between ten or eleven months.

While Compton tortoise shells are strictly northern North American species, preferring to live in boreal deciduous forests, mourning cloaks are Holarctic, meaning that they live in the northern parts of both North America and Eurasia. In England these purple-black butterflies with creamy wing borders are called Camberwell beauties and are extremely rare. Compton tortoise shells are primarily orange, brown, and black with single white spots

on their forewings and hindwings.

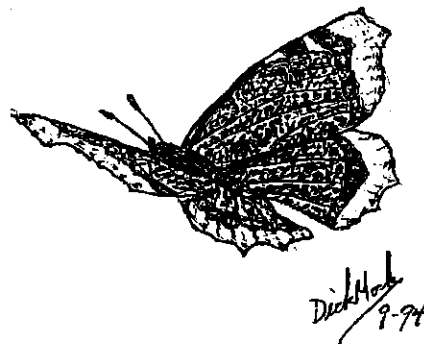
Two other early spring butterflies that appear on the mountain are spring azures and cabbages. This year I saw my first spring azure on April 4. A member of the family *Lycaenidae*, spring azure caterpillars dine on the flowering parts of dogwood, wild cherry, New Jersey tea, viburnums, and other woody shrubs.

They spend their winters in their chrysalides, so technically they are the first species to emerge as newly hatched adult butterflies. Denizens of deciduous woods and openings, these small, fluttery, sky-blue butterflies are the essence of warm spring days.

The cabbage butterflies, which first fluttered into the yard on April 16, are the European starlings of the butterfly world. Introduced in Quebec in 1860, they quickly spread throughout North America wherever members of the Mustard family — both wild and domestic — thrive. That means their pale green caterpillars marked with yellow, like the weed winter cress as well as cabbage, broccoli, and collards and so are heartily disliked by farmers and home gardeners. They are placed in the family *Pieridae* along with other white and sulphur butterflies. Known as small whites in England, cabbages have one or two black spots and a black tip on their forewings and live happily in any weedy habitat, city, suburb, or country, producing at least three broods in the north and overwintering in their chrysalides.

Butterflies, even those bold enough to emerge early in the spring, fly only when it is warm and the sun is shining. So when I see them, I know that the day will be beautiful, filled with bird song and blossoming wildflowers and trees, as well as with the flapping, soaring, fluttery flights of these most stunning insects. ❖

By Marcia Bonta



**... Streamside Forest Buffers** *Cont'd from first page*

This past fall, as a member of the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council, Ridge set a goal of creating 2,010 new stream miles of riparian forest buffers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed by the year 2010. The buffer initiative will be applied statewide.

The Forest Buffer Initiative Steering Committee includes representatives of the Governor's Office, the Departments of Environmental Protection, Conservation and Natural Resources, Agriculture, Com-

munity and Economic Development, Education, General Services, Corrections, and Transportation along with the Fish and Boat Commission, the Game Commission, the Historical and Museum Commission, the Turnpike Commission, the State Conservation Commission, the Chesapeake Bay Commission, and the Penn State School of Forest Resources. ❖

— *From the May 2 issue of Update,  
Newsletter of the Department  
of Environmental Protection*

**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!**

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