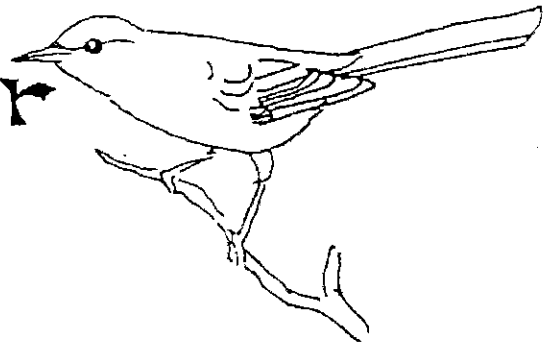


# The Gnatcatcher



## Newsletter of the Juniata Valley Audubon Society

P.O. Box 71, Tyrone, Pennsylvania 16686

Vol. 32, No. 1 — February/March 2000

### Canoe Creek Watershed Project Launched

By Dr. Stan Kotala

Canoe Lake, the centerpiece of Canoe Creek State Park, in Blair County, has seen a decline in its water quality over the past two decades due to development in its watershed. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's latest 305(b) water assessment has classified Canoe Lake as threatened. The Susquehanna River Basin Commission's Lake Water Quality Report states that Canoe Lake has undergone significant degradation since 1981. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' State Park Management Plan also lists Canoe Lake as threatened.

The degradation of Canoe Lake is due to the entry of excessive amounts of nutrients and sediment that has resulted in eutrophication manifested by extensive summertime algal blooms. These nutrients and sediment are the result of poor management practices on private lands, mostly in the Mary Ann's Creek watershed. Many residents along Mary Ann's Creek have extensive lawns to which herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers are applied liberally. In addition, most of these property owners elect to mow their grass all the way to the streambank, eliminating any protective vegetative buffer along the waterway. Thus, rainstorms are able to wash contaminants directly into the stream. This lack of a streamside buffer also contributes to erosion and sedimentation.

[ Cont'd on page 12 ]

#### — Programs —

"COFFEE CULTURE AND FOREST LANDS: IS SHADE-GROWN COFFEE FOR THE BIRDS?" Jennifer Chesworth, founder of Sombra Buena Organic Forest Products, will discuss coffee production and its relationship to the forests and people in Honduras. (See page 3.)

7 P.M., Tuesday, Feb. 15 in the Visitor Center at Canoe Creek State Park, off Rt. 22 near Hollidaysburg.



"NATURAL HISTORY OF THE GREAT HORNED OWL" Michael Patrick, assistant professor of biology at Penn State Altoona, will talk on the feeding habits and the natural history of the great horned owl. (See page 3.)

7 P.M., Tuesday, March 21 in the Visitor Center at Canoe Creek S.P.

#### — Field Trips —

EAGLES AT CONOWINGO DAM. JVAS President Terry Wentz (692-4224) will lead an overnight trip to Conowingo Dam, just south of the Mason-Dixon line, to observe bald eagles, black vultures, night herons, and shore birds. The birds gather below the hydroelectric dam to feast on fish in the Susquehanna River water kept open by turbine action. Leave Altoona from the Pleasant Valley Shopping Center at 8:15 A.M., or meet at the Ames Shopping Center in Huntingdon at 9 A.M. Saturday morning to carpool to Maryland. Stay overnight in the Lancaster/York area and return late Sunday afternoon, with birding stops along the river on the way home. Cost for motel accommodations is \$35 double (each person) or \$70 single, plus dining and a share of gas costs. Advance reservations required. Call Janet Huber at 942-5752 no later than Feb. 16 to reserve a space.

Saturday & Sunday, Feb. 19-20



PLUMMER'S HOLLOW. The Bonta family will lead a two-mile walk focusing on the biodiversity of different habitats in Plummer's Hollow and on the top of Brush Mountain near Tyrone. Meet at the top of Plummer's Hollow at 9 A.M. The walk will finish at noon. Bring a lunch. Phone 684-3113 for directions.

Saturday, March 25

## The Gnatcatcher

VOL. 32, NO. 1 — FEBRUARY/MARCH 2000

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JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Charlie Hoyer, Editor

P.O. Box 71

Tyrone, PA 16686-0071

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 Tuesday of the month in February, March, May, September, October, and November at 7:30 P.M. (A business meeting is at 7 o'clock.) The public is invited to attend.

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Programs ..... Charlie Hoyer (see above)  
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<pxf3@email.psu.edu>

## President's Message

Welcome to the spring season for the JVAS programs and field trips. I hope you'll enjoy the wide variety of topics lined up for our regular meetings and local field trips to some natural areas that you may have not visited. Field trips for the spring season will be on Saturdays instead of Sundays; the change of day has been made for those who attend Sunday morning worship services. So there are no excuses for not participating in the field trips!

I've finally succumbed to learning how to operate a computer. As some of you know, getting started is the biggest problem when learning to conquer today's overwhelming technological and informational age. Environmental policies, regulations, and investments in Pennsylvania's environment by the Ridge administration can be found on the DCNR Web page on the Internet.

The "Growing Greener" initiative was signed into law by Gov. Ridge in December 1999. The nearly \$650 million spending plan is the largest investment in Pennsylvania's environment in modern history. The spending plan invests new money and redirects existing funds to address: loss of open space and farmland, tainted waterways, abandoned mines, aging sewer systems, and repair backlogs in state parks and forests. The funds will be split among four state agencies on an annual basis.

The DCNR will receive \$154.5 million over five years. Money will be used to make major repairs and upgrades to roads, bridges, sewer and water systems, campsites and cabins, buildings, dams, marinas, trails, and other needed improvements backlogged in state parks and forests. Matching grant money will be available to acquire land to protect open space and critical natural habitat, to build community parks and playgrounds, and to create greenways and develop rail-to-trails projects. Also, funds may be used to supplement research and protection efforts for the state's native nongame wildlife and wild plants through the Wildlife Conservation Fund.

Gov. Ridge kicked off "100 days of growing greener" on opening day of the Pennsylvania Farm Show. At least one new "Growing Greener" initiative will be announced every week during the 100 days from Farm Show week to Earth Day 2000 in April. Look for announcements about projects in the JVAS area. More details about "Growing Greener" can be found on the DCNR Web page at <www.dcnr.state.pa>. Information about state parks and environmental education programs also is available at the DCNR Web site.

Checking out the Web site is an excellent way to spend a dreary Sunday afternoon and to keep informed of all the state park, forestry, and highway projects ongoing in our area. When you get overwhelmed, go for a hike to enjoy Mother Nature's signs that spring is not dependent on cyberspace.

*Terry Wentz*

## CONSERVATION

CORNER

By Sarah Miller

### Landmark Wildlife Conservation Funding Bill Needs JVAS Support

The Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999 (CARA, H.R. 701/S. 25) is expected to be voted on by the House of Representatives this spring. Called the "most far-reaching conservation legislation in this half century," CARA would reinvest a percentage of federal revenues from offshore oil and gas exploration into state wildlife conservation, education, and recreation programs. While the conservation and management of game species primarily has been financed through hunting and fishing fees and taxes, nongame species historically have fallen through the cracks. The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies estimates that more than \$1 billion in additional annual funding is needed to adequately protect the 2000-plus nongame species (including songbirds) whose populations are in decline. CARA will fill this void by doubling federal revenues for state-level wildlife conservation programs and providing a dedicated and adequate source of funding for nongame species. For Pennsylvania, this means an additional \$13 million per year.

While CARA has strong bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate, only four Pennsylvania representatives have signed on as cosponsors of the bill. To get the word out, the Pa. Fish & Boat Commission has asked the JVAS to pledge one letter or phone call to Congress for each bird species counted during the 1999 JVAS Christmas Bird Count. That means we need sixty-four members to pledge. The organization generating the most letters will be treated to a birding or fishing trip down the Susquehanna River this spring.

If you're interested in pledging, please send an e-mail message to <garynsarah@prodigy.net> or call me at 684-2226. Pledges are needed now, but letters are not needed until this spring when CARA

approaches a vote. Additional information will be provided on CARA to help in preparing letters and phone calls. I'll also give each participant adequate notification of when letters and phone calls are due.

Please pledge your support of this important legislation! ❖

### JVAS Programs for February & March

#### February 15 — *"Coffee Culture and Forest Lands: Is Shade-grown Coffee for the Birds?"*

Jennifer Chesworth, a native of Centre County, is founder of Sombra Buena Organic Forest Products, a for-profit business marketing shade-grown, organic, "bird-friendly" coffee. She also is co-founder of Sombra Buena in Honduras, a nonprofit agricultural extension group working to organize coffee farmers in forest regions of that nation. Sombra Buena seeks to establish direct financial and educational support for community-based reforestation and forest conservation programs in regions where coffee is grown. Jennifer's presentation will look at coffee production and its relationship to the forests and people of the department of Olancho, in Honduras, as she tells the story of Sombra Buena's evolution.

#### March 21 — *"The Natural History of the Great Horned Owl"*

Michael Patrick, assistant professor of biology at The Pennsylvania State University, Altoona Campus, has studied the feeding habits and natural history of the great horned owl over the past fifteen years. The great horned owl is the fiercest and most aggressive owl in North America. It is a large powerful flyer that bears great, razor-sharp talons that have one purpose — doling out death. Largest of the common owls in the United States, the great horned owl remains a silent predator striking its prey with a sudden, world-shattering grip. Mike says, "These night-watchers still amaze and intrigue me."

## Results of 100<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count

By Debbie Wentz, JVAS Director for Ornithology

Let me thank all of you who participated in the 100<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count that was held on December 18, 1999. The totals are in. We identified a total of sixty-four species of birds for a grand total of 7615 birds. Twenty-eight people participated this year, including feeder-watchers. We logged a total of 60.75 hours in the field and 18 hours at feeders. Forty hours were done on foot for a total of 29 miles. Twenty plus hours were done by car for a total of 225 miles.

Because the lakes weren't frozen there were some sightings of waterfowl not generally seen during the Culp CBC. These included common goldeneye, bufflehead, canvasback, and snow goose (seen count week). We also had a golden eagle on the count for the day.

We ended the day at Marge and Charlie's, where we gathered for a covered-dish dinner. Again I would like to thank those of you who helped make this year's count a success.

The tally follows: pied-billed grebe 1, great blue heron 5, tundra swan 19, snow goose (cw), Canada goose 154, mallard 129, canvasback 2, ring-necked duck 2, common goldeneye 1, bufflehead 32, ruddy duck 4, northern harrier 2, sharp-shinned hawk 5, Cooper's hawk 3, red-tailed hawk 34, golden eagle 1, American kestrel 21, ring-necked pheasant 6, ruffed grouse 9, wild turkey 3, American coot 90, ring-billed gull 12, rock dove 952, mourning dove 234, eastern screech-owl 7, great horned owl 1.

Belted kingfisher 1, red-bellied woodpecker 38, yellow-bellied sapsucker 1, downy woodpecker 63, hairy woodpecker 15, northern flicker 11, pileated woodpecker 14, eastern phoebe 1, blue jay 91, American crow 220, common raven 3, black-capped chickadee 180, tufted titmouse 106, red-breasted nuthatch 5, white-breasted nuthatch 73, brown creeper 5, Carolina wren 25, winter wren 5, golden-crowned kinglet 5, eastern bluebird 49, hermit thrush 5, American robin 19, northern mockingbird 5, cedar waxwing 28, European starling 3874, northern cardinal 51, American tree sparrow 75, field sparrow 1, song sparrow 7, swamp sparrow 1, white-throated sparrow 37, dark-eyed junco 238, common grackle 4, brown-headed cowbird 150, purple finch 2, house finch 203, pine siskin 3, American goldfinch 88, house sparrow 184.

Participants were Marcia Bonta, Steve Bonta, Bill Burch, Kathy Burch, Barb Corle, Janet DeMuth, Bea Dorminy, Katharine Everts-Temple, Alice Goodlin, Martha Greene, Colette Heller, Charlie Hoyer, Janet Huber, David Kyler, Joe Marinak, Gary Miller, Cindy Moore, Luis Moore, Lona Norvis, Jessé Perry, John Salvetti, Mark Shields, Steve Stroman, Gib Swayne, Judy Swayne, Shirley Wagoner, Debbie Wentz, and Terry Wentz.

You also can obtain the results from the Cornell Web site <[www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org)>, where you can look at the results for the CBC circle: Culp, Pennsylvania. ♦

**Don't forget to send your BiLo Foods and  
Riverside Markets cash register tapes to  
Anne Borland at 138A Larch St., Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.  
Anne redeems the tapes for \$\$\$ for the JVAS.**

## Stone Mountain Hawkwatch: Final 1999 Report

Here are the final totals for our ninth season at the Stone Mountain hawk watch. Coverage hours were essentially identical to those of 1997 and 1998, but the raptor numbers were way up — easily our best overall season ever, measured by a number of criteria. The 5510 birds recorded topped our previous high by almost 50 percent.

Species records were set for all except osprey, bald eagle, golden eagle, and merlin. The red-tail flight was the outstanding feature, topping the previous record of 1351 and surpassing 1998's disappointing total (873) by a whopping 150 percent (again, same level of coverage).

We have good falcon numbers again, considering our far-inland location. Numbers of golden eagles rebounded from a low 1998 season, though were short of the previous high (120 in 1997). We saw (or identified) many more northern goshawks than previously. The only species lower in numbers than in 1998 was osprey, but by only a single bird.

A late-season highlight was a well-described, white-phase gyrfalcon on Dec. 7. ❖

— Greg Grove, Compiler  
McAlevy's Fort  
Huntingdon County

	1999 Totals	1995-98 Average
Observing hours . . . . .	381	333
Osprey . . . . .	91	103
Bald eagle . . . . .	18	15
Northern harrier . . . . .	118*	72
Sharp-shinned hawk . . . .	1008*	813
Cooper's hawk . . . . .	170*	114
Northern goshawk . . . . .	24*	5
Red-shouldered hawk . . . .	108*	58
Broad-winged hawk . . . . .	1424*	910
Red-tailed hawk . . . . .	2125*	1079
Rough-legged hawk . . . . .	5*	2
Golden eagle . . . . .	93	78
American kestrel . . . . .	213*	130
Merlin . . . . .	28	24
Peregrine falcon . . . . .	25*	15
Gyrfalcon . . . . .	1	-
Unidentified raptor . . . . .	59	50
Totals . . . . .	5510*	3467

\*new seasonal record

Observers — Don Bryant, Nick Bolgiano, Dave and Trudy Kyler, Bill King, Bill Dietz, Pat McElhenny, Deb and Greg Grove, and a host of guest spotters

## To Feed the Birds?

The issue of bird feeding is an interesting one with pros and cons.

Birders are usually a strong force for conservation. However, there are a number of ways that the activity of birding can be detrimental to the very creatures that we love. For example, we sometimes disrupt nesting activity, and our traveling contributes to global warming. Another one may be the feeding of birds during winter.

Nest predators, such as jays, crows, raccoons, and opossums, have higher survival rates because they are subsidized by bird feeding and predation upon bird nests has increased in recent years. In

more subtle ways, the increasing numbers of resident birds, in part from bird feeding, may lead to increased competition for food and territory for neotropical migrants. I think that we don't well appreciate this phenomenon.

As Terborgh discusses in *Where Have All the Birds Gone?*, we should not look at bird feeding as a one-sided activity, but try to understand the connectiveness of our activities and make personal choices. I have been ambivalent about bird feeding since I read this book. Some winters I have put out some seed, some winters I don't. This winter, I decided not to. ❖ — Nick Bolgiano, State College

## Get Involved In Community Planning

It seems like you can hardly pick up the newspaper these days without reading an article or letter concerning the loss of farmland, diminishing open space, or urban and suburban sprawl. Clearly, these are issues that deeply concern the people of the Juniata Valley. That's why I urge citizens to get involved in local land-use planning processes.

Those who are concerned with issues of growth and sprawl should do more than just complain about badly planned development after the fact. They should be involved in the planning process from the start, so that growth occurs in a way that does not eliminate the very things that make our area livable. Concerned citizens can be proactive about land use issues by attending local planning commission meetings, supporting organizations (such as 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania) that promote smart growth, and participating in projects to plan for future growth.

In addition, there are several land-use reform bills in the Pennsylvania House and Senate that would reform the municipalities' planning codes to help municipalities better plan for growth, while protecting natural, cultural, and historic resources. The people of Pennsylvania need to voice their support of these bills to their legislators. Right now, the only groups that they are hearing from are vocal minorities that support sprawl.

The time to act is now, before the bulldozers already are on site. ❖

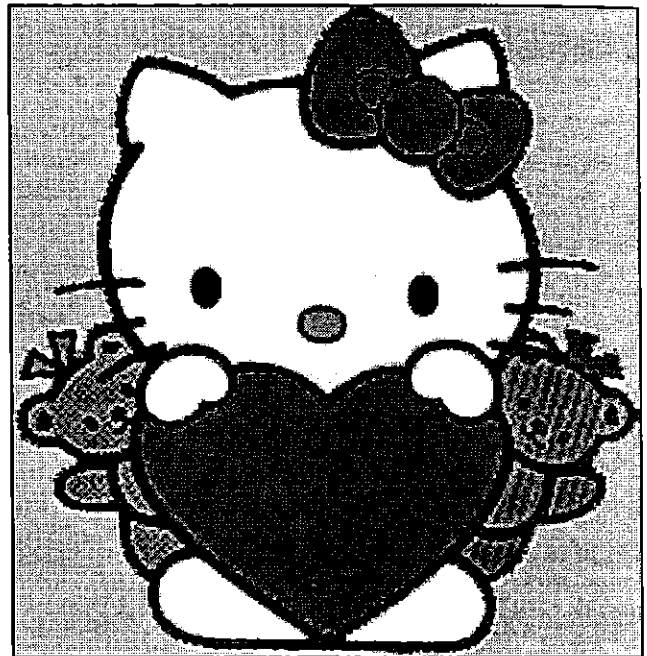
— Sarah Miller

### National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day 2000 Poster Competition — Call for Entries

The American Bird Conservancy announces a children's poster competition to promote the second "National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day." Cats Indoors Day will take place on May 13, 2000 and aims to educate cat owners that cats, birds, and other wildlife benefit when cats are kept indoors. The competition is sponsored by Wild Bird Centers of

America, Inc., which is providing prizes including a bird-friendly school yard for the winner's school.

Competition entries are due May 1 and prizes will be awarded to winners in the age categories 6-7, 8-9, and 10-12. Each poster must have the name, age, address, and phone number of the entrant on the back, as well as the name, address, and phone number of the school. Artwork should show a happy, safe, indoor cat.



Winners will be announced by May 12 on the American Bird Conservancy's Web site <[www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)>, where the winning poster will be featured. Prizes awarded by Wild Bird Centers of America include a \$250 gift certificate that will go to the overall winner and another \$250 gift certificate to the school, nature center, or other institution with which the child is associated. Wild Bird Centers also will assist the school or institution in establishing a schoolyard habitat for birds.

The gift certificates can be redeemed either at <[www.wildbirdcenter.com](http://www.wildbirdcenter.com)> or at any local Wild Bird Centers of America franchise store. Winners in the other age categories will each receive R.T. Chickadee bird feeder and nest box kits, a bird guide, and an R.T. Chickadee plush toy. The

winner also will be publicized through a national press announcement.

Artwork must be done on heavy, white paper no larger than 18" × 24" and must be flexible. Posters should be mailed in a mailing tube and arrive no later than May 1. Mail to American Bird Conservancy, 1250 24th Street N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20037. Entries cannot be returned.

Each year, free-roaming domestic cats kill hundreds of millions of birds and small mammals. In addition, millions of cats are killed or injured by cars or in fights with other cats, dogs, or wild animals. Free-roaming cats can contract debilitating and life-threatening diseases, or get lost, stolen, or poisoned. This poster competition will help draw attention to this problem and help to promote National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day, which aims to encourage cat owners to keep their cats safe indoors and to benefit both cats and wildlife.

The American Bird Conservancy's Cats Indoors! campaign is supported by thousands of individuals and conservation, animal welfare, wildlife rehabilitation, and veterinary organizations, including The Humane Society of the United States, the American Humane Association, and the National Audubon Society. Campaign education materials include fact sheets on cat predation on birds and other wildlife, hazards to free-roaming cats, cat ordinances, how to make an outdoor cat a happy indoor cat, and a teacher's guide. These materials are available through the American Bird Conservancy Web site at <[www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)>.

For more information call Linda Winter, American Bird Conservancy at (202) 778-9666 or e-mail her at <[lwinter@abcbirds.org](mailto:lwinter@abcbirds.org)>. ❖

1. A least bittern.  
2. Ivory-billed woodpecker, California condor, Carolina parakeet, passenger pigeon, health hen, Bachman's warbler, great auk, Labrador duck, dusky seaside sparrow, and Eskimo curlew.  
3. The three-volume set *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*, published between 1845 and 1854. The work was a cooperative effort with The Reverend John Bachman.  
4. Hail! on April 26, 1785.  
5. Audubon's warbler (now known as yellow-rumped warbler) and Audubon's shearwater.  
6. Four folio-size volumes.  
7. In 1840 Audubon banded an eastern phoebe by tying a silver wire around its leg.

## You're invited to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count 2000! February 18–21, 2000

The Great Backyard Bird Count 2000 marks the third year of the count. This concentrated bird-censusing effort creates immense snapshots of winter bird distribution and population status. From Alaska to Florida, Newfoundland to Hawaii, backyards "appear" on state-of-the-art BirdSource maps displaying the whereabouts of our winter birds.

This represents tremendous conservation potential as we soar into the new millennium. This year's reports will be combined with previous findings, allowing us to determine how different species have moved across the landscape over the past few years. The reports also will add to a tremendous long-term database that will allow us to detect broad-scale changes in bird populations. Please join us and citizen scientists across the continent as we count bird for the Great Backyard Bird Count 2000!

To participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count 2000 or to get more detailed information point your web browser to <<http://birds.cornell.edu>>. Use the drop-down menu under BirdSource Projects to direct yourself to the Great Backyard Bird Count. ❖

### Mini Quiz

1. What unusual bird did Audubon keep as a pet?
2. Which extinct birds, or those on the verge of extinction did Audubon probably see?
3. What mammal book did Audubon illustrate?
4. When and where was Audubon born?
5. Which birds were named after Audubon?
6. Audubon's *The Birds of America* consisted of how many volumes?
7. Which was the first American bird to be banded, who banded it, and when did this take place?

← ANSWERS

## Long-awaited Book On Pennsylvania Birds Now Available

The brand-new book, *The Birds of Pennsylvania*, by Gerald M. McWilliams and Daniel W. Brauning, is fresh off the press. The 688-page book treats all 428 species seen in Pennsylvania, including breeding and wintering birds, migrants, and vagrants.

Each accessibly written entry gives the general status of a species; the locations where it is most commonly found; its natural habitat, migratory patterns, breeding habits, and seasonal distribution; and a summary of the bird's history in Pennsylvania.

The authors provide both the professional ornithologist and the amateur birder with an abundance of information about each species and offer a broad overview of their subject — from the history of Pennsylvania's birds to changes in the state's

ecosystems and regulations protecting bird habitats.

With clear descriptions of physiographic regions as well as forty-four breeding distribution maps for the most commonly seen birds and sixty-seven photographs of many rare and hard-to-find species, the volume is an indispensable resource for all who wish to deepen their appreciation of Pennsylvania's marvelous birdlife.

Gerry McWilliams is a naturalist, coauthor of *Birds of Erie County*, and a member of the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee. Dan Brauning is an ornithologist with the Pennsylvania Game Commission and editor of *Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania*.

\$39.95, hard cover. ♦

## Stream Class Volunteers Needed

Stream Class is a stream ecology course that the JVAS has been presented to more than 1000 students in the past two years. It teaches students to judge water quality based on the presence of pollution-sensitive macroinvertebrates living in the stream.

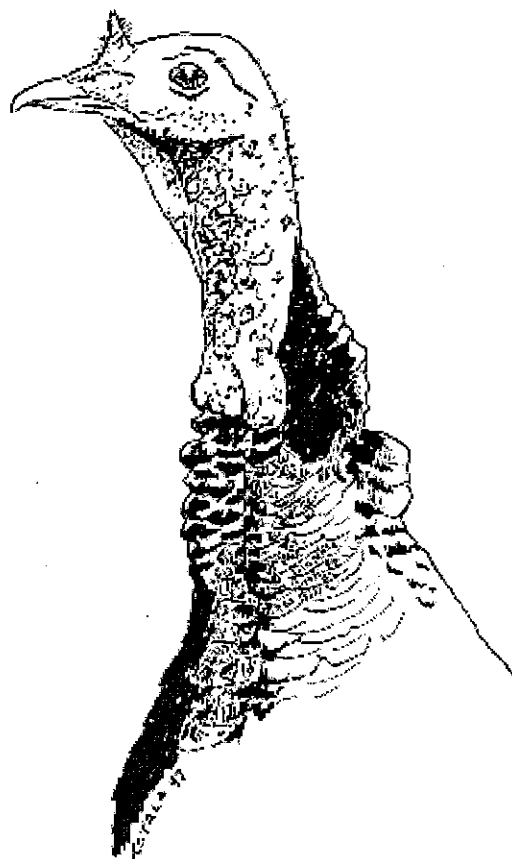
During Stream Class students are taught to identify stream-dwelling organisms and to categorize them according to sensitivity to pollution. Several macroinvertebrate samples are then obtained from a stream for some hands-on experience.

Several Stream Classes are scheduled:

- April 1 (Sat.) Juniata Gap Elementary (50 students)
- April 18 (Tues.) Grier School — Junior and Senior High (100 students)
- May 5 (Fri.) Outdoor Heritage 2000 — at Huntingdon County Fairgrounds (1000 students)
- June 3 (Sat.) Boy Scouts — Canoe Creek State Park (100 students)

The Stream Classes are taught by JVAS member Dr. Stan Kotala, but volunteers are needed to assist with the larger classes. If you could help, please phone Stan at 946-8840. Thanks! ♦

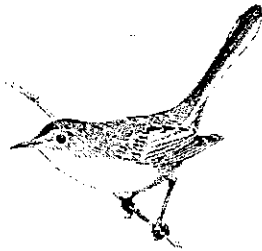
— Dr. Stan Kotala





## Annual JVAS Spring Banquet: Tuesday, April 25

Trinity United Methodist Church  
533 Main St., Bellwood  
(Near Bellwood Exit of I-99)  
Social Hour 6 P.M. • Dinner 6:30 P.M.



Dr. Timothy J. O'Connell is a research associate with the Penn State Cooperative Wetlands Center, in State College. Tim attended Cornell University where he received a bachelor's degree in natural resources. As an undergraduate, he conducted a study on cleptoparasitism in ring-billed gulls. He went on to pursue a master's degree in biology from the College of William and Mary. In addition to his research, his summers were spent conducting extensive surveys of loggerhead shrikes, Bachman's sparrows, plovers, and oystercatchers on Virginia's barrier islands. In 1999, he completed his doctorate degree in ecology at Penn State.

### PROGRAM BY TIMOTHY J. O'CONNELL

#### "Bird Communities and Ecological Condition In the Central Appalachians"

As a portion of his Ph.D. research at Pennsylvania State University, Tim has developed an index that examines bird communities to assess overall ecosystem condition. His Bird Community Index or, "BCI," sorts sites into one of several categories based on the songbird species occurring at the site.

Sites are ranked according to the relative proportions of species that share particular life history traits (e.g., insectivores, exotics). The BCI is intended to provide a "quick-and-dirty" assessment of ecological condition at large scales. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is interested in using BCIs across the country to produce a national "report card" on ecological condition. Tim says, "Although it may sound clinical at first, the story of the BCI is a fascinating tale of wandering on forgotten back roads, crashing through briars, and running from unfriendly cattle on our way to showing that we birders had everything figured a long time ago."

## Bird Surveys at Irish Pines Tree Farm, Eden Hill Conservancy

For the past three years, I've been working with Wallace (Bill) and Marie Riley to document breeding birds at the Eden Hill Conservancy's Irish Pines Tree Farm, near Spruce Creek. The 113-acre site has been in the family for a long time and is a working tree farm surrounded by farmland. The Rileys also have established a nonprofit environmental education center at the site.

As one component of their work to catalog the site's natural history, I've begun a songbird monitoring program at Irish Pines. There now is a network of six plots along the nature trails from which I conduct point counts for birds each June. The results of this current monitoring program are being compared with an earlier baseline of bird data collected by J. Stafford Prendergast in the 1950s and 60s. Mr. Prendergast's work in all seasons documented 180 species using Irish Pines; my work so far has documented fifty-eight species using the site during the breeding season.

Although I thoroughly enjoy birding Irish Pines, new directions in my research may preclude my involvement in the project into the future. I'm interested in finding a birder to assume my role in the project and continue monitoring songbirds at Irish Pines. It is important that the individual who performs the bird surveys be proficient at identifying birds by song. Some computer expertise also would be helpful, but is not essential. If you're interested and able, please phone me at 863-3194 or e-mail me at <tjo111@psu.edu>.

The site is lovely, the birds are fun, and the Rileys are great people! ❖

— Tim O'Connell

## Woodland Owners of the Southern Alleghenies' Third Annual Forestry and Wildlife Conference

Large mammalian predators have been part of the Appalachian forest ecosystem for thousands of years. Their activities have helped to shape the animal and plant composition of the forest.

At the Woodland Owners of the Southern Alleghenies's third annual Forestry and Wildlife Conference, you will learn more about the lives and impacts of some of the predators that are present or were present in the region. We'll explore some of the misconceptions that have arisen regarding these predators and find out more about how we can affect the future of our forests.

Who should attend? Forest landowners, hunters, members of wildlife organizations, loggers, environmentalists, professional foresters, wildlife professionals, and everyone interested in the present and future condition of our forests.

### — Program —

**Science, Skepticism, and Scat** — The eastern cougar, myth and reality. Prize-winning forestry and wildlife writer, Chris Bolgiano, will bring the shadowy and controversial big cat to life. Is the beast already in Appalachians? Let Chris present the evidence. She has pursued the mountain lion all over the United States and has followed hounds, waded swamps, and crossed deserts. Hold on to your hats!

**Tough Tabbies and Singing Dogs** — Coyotes and bobcats in the Commonwealth. We'll hear from the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Dr. Matt Lovallo, the biologist whose definitive research on the bobcat has led to new understanding of this rarely seen forest denizen. Matt will give us the latest on the eastern coyote as well.

**The Evolving Appalachian Forest** — Penn State professor, Jim Finley, will help us understand better how human and wildlife activities affect the ever-changing forest. Jim always puts on a good show, and everyone from bird-watchers to professional foresters have something valuable to learn from this veteran woodsman.

**Large Primates in Blaze Orange** — The past and future role of the Appalachians' premier predator will be discussed.

**Panel Discussion** — A special feature of this year's program will be a panel discussion in which all of our expert speakers will field questions from the audience and from one another in a no-holds-barred, interactive session. The livelier the better!

The conference will be held Saturday, March 11 at the American Legion hall in Bedford. The cost \$15. This includes a hot dinner and morning and afternoon refreshments. Please register early as the seating is limited and registrations already are coming in. Send check to:

Woodland Owners of the Southern Alleghenies  
798 Town Creek Rd.  
Clearville, PA 15535

Check should be payable to same. Registration deadline is March 4.

For more information, brochure, and directions, phone Donald Morris at 458-2010 or e-mail him at <dmorris1@mindspring.com>. ♦

### January Thaw *by David Bonta*

Confucius said: "Wherever a bird comes to rest,  
it's right at home. Is it fitting that a man  
should have less sense than a bird?"  
— Da Xue (*The Great Learning*),  
circa 4th century B.C.E.

*a tumble of hurdy-gurdy notes  
from the forsythia hedge*

*what memories of summer muskeg  
this we warm spell must trigger  
in a tree sparrow's breast*

*his gypsy song says courtship  
however fleeting is always definitive  
and no spring can ever be false*

## Nocturnal Visitors

**A**s a veteran of Cornell University's Project FeederWatch, I faithfully count species and numbers of birds that visit our feeder area for two days every two weeks from November until April. But I have even more fun watching the feeder area at night. Since our two feeders hang from our back porch, I can easily switch the porch light on and off several times every evening to check the action.

Our most imposing visitors have been black bears, especially when we were still storing our birdseed in trash cans on the back porch. After a few incidents of overturned cans and black bears lolling among the spilled seeds, we moved the cans into the basement. Since then, black bears have swiped at our feeders only occasionally before settling into their winter sleep.

Other quieter, less destructive visitors have been white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbits, eastern meadow voles, flying squirrels, short-tailed shrews, and both red- and gray-phase screech owls. The latter was perched on the roof of our wooden feeder January 10, 1999. Although one panicked junco flew back and forth under the porch roof, the screech owl seemed supremely disinterested in the bird. But our almost three-year-old granddaughter, Eva, was thrilled. She stood with her nose pressed against the storm door watching the little owl. Finally, after giving us a wonderful view, it flew off. Eva spent the rest of her visit talking about the owl and pretending to fly as the "buho" (Spanish for owl) had.

How we wish she had come to visit us this winter. Beginning on November 18, three young raccoons appeared on the back steps many nights to

eat birdseed. Turning on the porch light didn't deter them. Neither did opening the squeaky back door, sitting on a chair, and watching them through the screen door. During their first visit, when the phone rang, they looked up briefly. When I talked to them

they also looked up and sometimes retreated back down a step or two, but they were soon back and looking in at

me as I clicked my tongue at them. They stayed for an hour and twenty minutes before wandering off.

The triplets paid us many more visits throughout the month of December and into January. Then I didn't see them again.

A young opossum first appeared the 25th of November. A couple times it showed up when the triplets were feeding and quickly retreated. But mostly it came on evenings before the triplets or when they were absent. As of mid-January, I still see it frequently, although it is visibly disturbed when I turn on the light. If I move or talk to it, it

slowly retreats with many backward glances. Still, we were able to show it off to our Christmas visitor from the city.

Indeed, most of our visitors over the last several winters have been entertained by at least one of our nighttime visitors. A good thing too, since we don't have television. Instead, we offer live nature coverage, like the evening we sat eating dinner with our visiting son Steve and heard a thump against the back door. We rushed to turn on the porch light. Instead of the bear we had imagined, a large raccoon sat against the door beheading and eating a junco! It tore into the junco as if it were starved. In a couple minutes only a few feathers were left.

"Ah, well," Steve said philosophically. "Nature red in tooth and claw." ♦

By Marcia Bonta



**... Canoe Creek Watershed** [ *Cont'd from page 1* ]

To study the impact of these undesirable watershed activities further, the DCNR has begun the Canoe Creek Watershed Assessment Project, which involves the collection and analysis of stream and lake data and the evaluation of lake and watershed characteristics. Its final product will be a report addressing the ecological health of the lake and its tributaries, identifying the sources of pollution, and providing a management plan to reduce or eliminate water pollution in the Canoe Creek watershed.

If you're interested in participating in public meetings associated with the project, please call Blair County Trout Unlimited Director Dr. Stan Kotala at 946-8840. ❖

**Heron Fly-fisher?**

For all the members of the Audubon Society and all the local bird-watchers — a heron fly-fisher.

A long-legged green heron has put locals to the test. According to a local member of the Society, there is photographic proof of the incident. The heron twice plucked a feather from its plumage, dropped it deliberately on the water, and stabbed two inquisitive fish with its long bill when they came to investigate.

— *Beaufort (S.C.) Gazette*

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**Juniata Valley Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 71**  
**Tyrone, PA 16686**



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# The JVAS Flock

## 2000 Membership Directory

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 71, TYRONE, PENNSYLVANIA 16686-0071

— A Chapter of the National Audubon Society —

### Alexandria

Kathy Bush '99  
Robert John Dawes '99  
J. Thomas Dubbs Jr. '95  
Merry G. Metz '98  
Larry Muti '77

### Altoona

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Barbara Baird '89  
Bonna G. Batcheler '98  
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William Gruber '66  
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John Giles '99  
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Karen Pellmann '97  
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### Everett

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Erika D. Bowman '98  
M. Fox '99  
C. Benjamin Foy '99  
Richard J. Hershberger '80  
Helen Hinrichsen '99  
Mike & Laura Jackson '81  
Sean Northrop '98  
Cynthia Pittman '99  
John O. Sparks '98  
Pam Sponsler '99  
Lorelle Steach '95  
G.D. Steele '89  
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**Gallitzin**

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**Glasgow**

Phillip Cmor '97

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William Churchill '86  
Dr. Betty Lowell Cottle '63  
Paula Ford '95  
Agnes Eva Fuoss '76  
Maureen Gromiller '99  
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Elmer Gunsallus '96  
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Cesar Montero '99  
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Mildred Pincher '98  
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David Schatanoff '93  
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C. Whuman '97  
John W. Zook '98**Houtzdale**S.M. Belin '79  
May J. Love '98**Huntingdon**Ernest Baker '98  
Mildred V. Couch '99  
Robert W. Criswell '97  
Pat Croissant '94  
Hazel B. Crouch '99  
Arlene B. Cunningham '94  
Margaret A. Dean '79  
Donald P. Elliott Jr. '85  
Richard Ewell '99  
Robert L. Fisher '88  
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S.D. Gill '99  
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David W. Kyler '85  
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Mary A. Santora '98H.R. Seguin '99  
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John L. Snyder '99  
Steven C. Stroman '88  
Sharon S. Stromer '99  
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Ken & Karen Walters '99  
Robert Washburn '85  
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Nancy S. Yocum '92  
Robert P. Zimmerer '84**Imler**

Barbara S. Corle '95

**Lilly**

Monica A. Barlick '93

**Loretto**

Nona Davis '99

**Madera**

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Charles Mowry '99

**Martinsburg**Beth Dellinger '99  
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David Halbritter '98  
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Floyd H. Mitchell '96  
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Jesse Perry '81  
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James Russell '98  
Daniel J. Sinal '91  
James Stewart '97**Mifflintown**

Linda K. Whitesel '73

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Marlon Myers Sr. '99

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**Petersburg**

Gregory W. Grove '89

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Mrs. Theodore E. Fuller '71

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Terry Wentz '85**Roaring Spring**Richard B. Butler '99  
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Edward Carper '99  
Kathleen J. Hoover '99  
Ken Kensinger '00  
Richard K. Mock '96  
Katie Musselman '98  
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Kenneth M. Burkett '97

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George Bonsell Sr. '95  
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Rhoda Miller '99  
Sarah & Gary Miller '99  
Verla M. Oakley '92  
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Rebecca R. Strouse '98  
Jody Wallace '97  
Jerry Watson '89  
Chester L. Wertz III '99**Warriors Mark**

Nancy &amp; Neil Smith '96

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FORBES ROAD HIGH SCHOOL '99  
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Marie C. Smith '99  
Cheryl Thompson '99**Woodbury**

Nancy L. Reighard '99

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Andy Moore

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Director of Operations

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Director of Exhibits

Steve Miller

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<smiller@nb.net>



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## What is the JVAS?

The Juniata Valley Audubon Society, chartered in 1969, is a chapter of the National Audubon Society covering the Southern Alleghenies region. With more than 350 members, the JVAS is one of 24 Audubon chapters in Pennsylvania.

The mission of the National Audubon Society is "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems — focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats — for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity."

If you'd like to find out more about the JVAS, you're invited to visit with us at one of our regular meetings or to come along with us on a field trip.

To join, ✂ the coupon, fill out, and mail to:

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

P.O. Box 32

Tyrone, PA 16686-0032

You'll receive the bimonthly *Audubon* magazine, each one filled with superb nature photography and in-depth reporting on environmental issues. You'll also receive the JVAS's newsletter, *The Gnatcatcher*, containing reports of local conservation topics and nature themes.

### NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY Membership Application

☐ YES, I want to join the Juniata Valley Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society. I enclose the special Introductory Rate of \$20.

☐ As a senior citizen or student, I'm eligible for a special rate of only \$15.

My \$\_\_\_\_\_ check, payable to the National Audubon Society, is enclosed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ PA \_\_\_\_\_

UPS

## Fall 2000 Schedule

**AMS** are presented on the third Tuesday of each month, October, and November. Program begins at 7 P.M. in the Visitor Center at Rock State Park. Our programs, designed for a general audience, are free and open to the public.

### Hawk-watching and Identification

#### At Stone Mountain

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Grove, president of the State College Bird Club, will tell why the ridges of Pennsylvania are so good for seeing migrating hawks. Greg will discuss the conditions that produce good days for seeing. He also will briefly classify the types of hawks (buteos, etc.) and will mention simple things to help identify the more common species. Yes, Greg presented a similar program for the JVAS three years ago, but we all could use a refresher. And those who missed Greg the first time will not forego this opportunity to hear him again.

### "Arctu Birding Travelogue"

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17

Dave Kyler and Gene Zielinski will discuss their adventures during a birding trip in the Arctic. The remote island of Arctu, in the western part of Alaska, is the most westerly of the islands.

### "Rare Birds of Pennsylvania"

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21

M. McWilliams, senior author of the book *Rare Birds of Pennsylvania*, recently published by the University Press, and co-author of the book *Rare Birds of Erie County, Pennsylvania*, will give a talk on the rare birds of Pennsylvania.

They also will explain why birds that may appear common will seem common when an observer becomes skilled in finding them.

**FIELD TRIPS** planned for this spring are listed below. Further information on JVAS field trips will be published in *The Gnatcatcher*.

### Stone Mountain Hawkwatch

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

At the Stone Mountain hawkwatch platform on the ridge, date in late September you may observe the following species of migrating raptors: Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, kestrel, broad-winged hawk, osprey, red-shouldered hawk, northern harrier, merlin, and bald eagle. Meet trip leader Dave Kyler (phone 670-3910) outside McDonald's Restaurant on Rt. 100, Huntingdon at 9 A.M. Bring binoculars, lunch, and sturdy shoes. Rain date — Sunday, October 1.

### Fall Foliage Hike on the Lower Trail

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14

A service forester from Pennsylvania State Forest District 5 will lead a walk along the Lower Trail to identify hardwood trees and discuss the changing colors of tree leaves during the fall season. This will be a joint hike with members of Rails to Trails of Central Pa. Meet at the Alfarata Trailhead near Alexandria, at 10 A.M. For additional information, phone Terry Wentz at 692-4224.

### Birding Along the Beaver Pond Trail

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5

Stan Kotala will lead JVAS members on a one-mile stroll along Canoe Creek State Park's Beaver Pond Trail. Overlooking beaver lodges and trails is an excellent place to see a great variety of birds. Meet at the Park Office at 10 A.M. We'll carpool to the trailhead. Call Stan at 640 or 949-3663 for more information.



## Newsletter

Newsletter, is published six times a year for JVAS members. If you're interested in receiving the newsletter, send me a check, payable to JVAS,

JVAS Treasurer  
Box 71  
16896-0071

## Membership Bureau

For more information for schools, clubs, or groups, contact me for a program, or contact me at 643-4011. I will be happy to help on a topic that's not covered here and someone to satisfy

## Topics Available

Amphibians of Pa.  
Biodiversity  
Birds In the Balance  
Black Bears  
Coyotes  
Forest Stewardship  
Partners in Flight  
Reptiles of Pa.  
Soils  
Stream Restoration  
Waterfowl  
Wildflowers  
Wolves

## Topics Available

Fields, Trees, and Wildflowers  
Fossil Identification  
Fossil Walks  
Nature Hikes, K-12  
Water Quality Monitoring

## Bluebird Monitoring

Members monitor Eastern Bluebird nesting in Canoe Creek State Park during the breeding season. We collect data and to provide for the Bluebirds'

## Officers

President . . . . . Terry Wentz 692-4224  
<Blue5bird@aol.com>  
Vice-President . . . . . Charlie Hoyer 684-7376  
<charma@nb.net>  
Secretary . . . . . Eugene Zielinski 353-8212  
<eez55@juno.com>  
Treasurer . . . . . Marge Hoyer 684-7376  
<charma@nb.net>

## Committee Chairs

Membership . . . . . Charlie Hoyer (see above)  
Programs . . . . . Charlie Hoyer (see above)  
Conservation . . . . . Sarah Miller 684-2226  
<garynsarah@prodigy.net>  
Field Trips . . . . . Janet Huber 942-5752  
<avianao@aol.com>  
Publications and Publicity . . . . . Charlie Hoyer (see above)  
Education . . . . . Shirley Wagoner 643-4011  
<swagoner@vicon.net>

## Finance (Open)

Hospitality . . . . . Barb Corle 276-3428  
Historian . . . . . Barb Baird 946-0256

## Directors

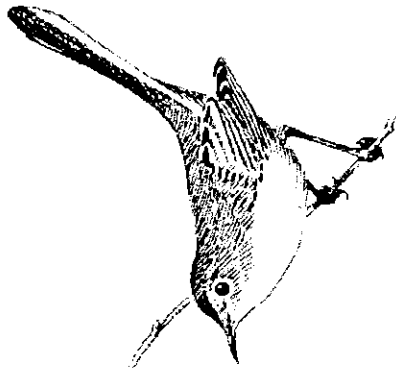
Fund-raising Director . . . . . Anne Borland 695-9718  
Director of Ornithology . . . . . Debora Wentz 692-4224  
<dkw1952@aol.com>  
Director-at-Large . . . . . Dave Kyler 643-6030  
<kylerdw@vicon.net>

Chapter Delegate to the  
Pennsylvania Audubon Society . . . Paula Ford 695-4799  
<pxf3@email.psu.edu>

## Board Meetings

This spring's Board meetings will be held 7 P.M.  
in the Visitor Center at Canoe Creek State Park  
on the following Tuesdays:  
February 1 and April 4  
All members are welcome!

# Juniata Valley Audubon Society



## Spring 2000 Programs and Field Trips

The Juniata Valley Audubon Society meets in September, October, November, February, March, and May on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 P.M. (business meeting at 7 P.M.) in the Visitor Center at Canoe Creek State Park.

*Visitors are always welcome!*

P.O. Box 71  
Tyrone, Pennsylvania 16686

## What is the JVAS?

The Juniata Valley Audubon Society, chartered in 1969, is a chapter of the National Audubon Society covering the Southern Alleghenies region. With more than 300 members, the JVAS is one of 24 Audubon chapters in Pennsylvania.

The mission of the National Audubon Society is "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems — focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats — for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity."

If you'd like to find out more about the JVAS, you're invited to visit with us at one of our regular meetings or to come along with us on a field trip.

To join, ✂ the coupon, fill out, and mail to:

Juniata Valley Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 71  
Tyrone, PA 16686-0071

You'll receive the bimonthly *Audubon* magazine, each one filled with superb nature photography and in-depth reporting on environmental issues. You'll also receive the JVAS' newsletter, *The Gnatcatcher*, containing reports of local conservation topics and nature themes.

### NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY Membership Application

☐ YES, I want to join the Juniata Valley Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society at the special Introductory Rate of \$20.

☐ As a senior citizen or student, I'm eligible to join for only \$15.

My \$\_\_\_\_\_ check, payable to the National Audubon Society, is enclosed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ PA \_\_\_\_\_

## Spring 2000 Schedule

**PROGRAMS** are presented on the third Tuesday in February, March, and May. Program meetings begin at 7 P.M. in the Visitor Center at Canoe Creek State Park. Our programs, designed for a general audience, are free and open to the public.

### "Coffee Culture and Forest Lands: Is Shade-grown Coffee for the Birds?"

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Jennifer Chesworth, of Boalsburg, is founder of Sombra Buena Organic Forest Products, which markets shade-grown, "bird-friendly" coffee. Jennifer will discuss coffee production and its relationship to the forests and people of the department of Olanchito, in Honduras.

### "Natural History of the Great Horned Owl"

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

Michael Patrick, assistant professor of biology professor at Penn State Altoona, will talk on the feeding habits and the natural history of the great horned owl.

### ANNUAL SPRING BANQUET AT TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, BELLWOOD "Bird Communities and Ecological Condition In the Central Appalachians"

6:30 P.M., TUESDAY, APRIL 25

(Social hour at 6 o'clock)

Timothy O'Connell, a research associate with the Penn State Cooperative Wetlands Center, in State College, will talk on the index he has developed that examines bird communities to assess overall ecosystem condition. See the February/March issue of *The Gnatcatcher* for details and ticket info.

### "Spin Fishing for Trout"

TUESDAY, MAY 16

Frank Nale, of Tipton, will give a slide show/talk on "fishing with a lure called a spinner." His program will cover equipment and tactics, stream selection, and why he enjoys fishing for reasons other than just to catch trout. For those not interested in spin fishing per se, the program will offer a chance to learn about the fantastic wild trout resource and the unequaled wild trout streams in central Pennsylvania. Interspersed in the program are photos of beautiful scenery, wildflowers, and wildlife.

## PICNIC AT CANOE CREEK STATE PARK

TUESDAY, JUNE 20

A season-ending picnic will be held at Canoe Creek State Park. Fellowship and a wildflower walk guided by Eugene Zielinski will highlight the evening.

## FIELD TRIPS planned for this spring are listed here.

Further information on all JVAS field trips will be published in *The Gnatcatcher*.

### Birding the Conowingo Dam

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19-20

JVAS President Terry Wentz will lead a lead an overnight trip to Conowingo Dam, in Maryland to observe bald eagles, black vultures, night herons, and shore birds. The birds gather below the hydroelectric dam to feast on fish in the Susquehanna River water kept open by turbine action. Motel room in Lancaster/York area: \$70. Advance registrations required. Phone Janet Huber at 942-5752 no later than Feb. 16 to reserve a space. Phone Terry at 692-4224 for carpooling info.

### Hiking Plummer's Hollow

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

The Bonta family will lead a two-mile walk focusing on the biodiversity of different habitats in Plummer's Hollow and on the top of Brush Mountain near Tyrone. Meet at the top of Plummer's Hollow at 9 A.M. The walk will finish at noon. Bring a lunch. Phone 684-3113 for directions.

### Birding the Lower Trail

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

Observe wood warblers and other spring migrants with Dave Kyler (phone 643-6030) on the Lower Trail, along the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River. Meet at the Allartata trail head at 8 A.M. We shall return at noon.

### Rambling Through the Detweiler Run Natural Area

SATURDAY, MAY 20

Come join Shirley Wagoner (phone 643-4011) as she leads us on a walk in the Detweiler Run Natural Area, a 463-acre patch of Pennsylvania forest primeval in a deep ravine between Thickhead and Grass Mountains in Huntingdon County. The area is dominated by old-growth hemlock, white pine and white oak. Meet in the parking lot of Kish Bank on Rt. 26 in McAlevy's Fort at 8:30 A.M. The walk will end around noon. Bring sturdy footwear.