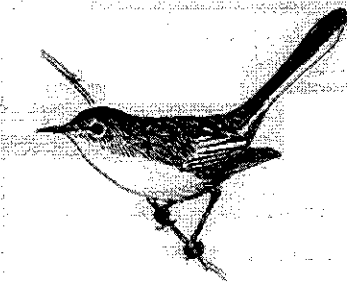


THE GNATCATCHER

Newsletter of Juniata Valley Audubon

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www.jva.org



Pennsylvania Biological Survey designates Allegheny Front Important Bird Area

Audubon Pennsylvania announces the designation of the Allegheny Front as Pennsylvania's 84th Important Bird Area (IBA). This new IBA includes part of the Allegheny Front Section of the Appalachians Plateaus Province extending from the Pennsylvania/Maryland border north to where route 322 crosses the Front in Centre County and varies in width from one to three miles. The Allegheny Front was approved as an IBA by members of the State Ornithological Technical Committee (OTC), which is comprised of professional biologists from across Pennsylvania who work as college professors, museum curators, private consultants, non-profit conservation organization biologists, and state employees, as well as skilled amateur ornithologists.

The Allegheny Front is recognized as an IBA because it is a critically important corridor for tens of thousands of raptors, songbirds, and other land birds that migrate through Pennsylvania during both spring and fall. In addition the large unbroken tracts of forest provide exceptional habitat and resources for many interior forest species of birds that call Pennsylvania home during the breeding/nesting season as well as stopover sites for those passing through in migration. Furthermore, numerous Pennsylvania Species of Conservation Concern and several state and federally listed threatened and endangered species, have been regularly observed throughout the year along areas of the Front including Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons. The following is a synopsis of the IBA criteria that qualified the Allegheny Front as an IBA:

1d. *spring and fall raptor migration, especially Golden Eagles (fall and spring) and Osprey (spring).*

1e. *exceptional concentrations and/or diversity of birds; have identified a total of 195 species along areas of the Allegheny Front. Over the years 123 of these have been documented during breeding season. Also large passage rates of fall migrating landbirds with smaller numbers*

observed in the spring (Tom Dick and Jeff Payne pers. comm.).

3. *Pennsylvania Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy bird species that either breed along and/or utilize the front in migration including: American Woodcock, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Whip-poor-will, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Acadian Flycatcher, Black-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, Winter Wren, Blue-headed Vireo, Wood Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Cerulean Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Canada Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and Pine Siskin.*

4b. *exceptional representative of interior forest habitat within the Appalachian Plateaus physiographic province.*

5. *ongoing avian monitoring, including season-long spring (since 1998) and fall (since 1987). Standardized full-season counts were initiated for both seasons in the late 1990s.*

Important Bird Areas are sites that are part of a global network of places recognized for their outstanding value to birds and bird conservation. The Important Bird Area (IBA) program is a vital global initiative designed to help combat threats to bird populations and the habitats we often share with them. The goals of the Pennsylvania IBA program are to identify a network of sites throughout the state that are essential for sustaining wild bird populations, and to protect or manage these sites for long-term conservation purposes. By focusing attention on the most essential and vulnerable areas, the IBA program helps to promote proactive habitat conservation that ultimately benefits birds, other wildlife and us.

*JVAS Annual
Spring Banquet*

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

6:30 PM

At the Scotch Valley Grange

across from Canoe Creek State Park on Turkey Valley Road

Family-style

all you can eat turkey dinner!

\$15 per person

Guest speaker: Mike Lanzone

This ornithologist from the Powdermill Nature Reserve will present a program on his research on bioacoustical birding. He will also entertain questions on the discovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

There will be door prizes and a silent auction. Auction tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5.

Scents and Sounds

By Heidi Boyle

The slow turn of winter into spring brings about strange habits. March and April are the waking months, bringing the exquisite torture of advances and setbacks that draw us outdoors in the most miserable weather that would keep us inside at any other time of year.

As the hot breath of the sun slowly seeps through winter's seemingly impenetrable hide and infuses the countryside with warmth, it is followed by a subtle wake of green and a strange mélange of scents and sounds that stir the soul to the inevitable thrills of spring.

I stepped out for a mid-March walk in the miserable, mushy melting snows of late winter. My breath formed plumes in the icy air as I breathed deeply, detecting the strange musty, muddy 'green' smell that heralds the change from winter to spring.

The smell of winter is sterile; dry grass, lichens - the absence of life. In contrast, the scents on a new spring morning evoke a stirring, a quickening of the senses. Soil is thawing and being stirred to life by a multitude of under-soil creatures that are responding to the first warmth of the season.

As the beech leaves left from last fall shivered tremulously in the chilly air, I stepped along the sodden path, each step gurgling and bubbling, smelling of fresh mud and, from somewhere, a slight odor of mint.

With the demise of the cold months, the number of springtime surprises rises, but all bear a careful search, each sign of spring earned and savored. February had delivered its reminders of the spring to come in the forms of dead skunks on the road, silent figures of vultures on the wing, and chunky groundhogs tiptoeing out to find early greens. Kneeling at the edge of a seep, I plucked a snarl of brilliant green watercress, its sharp pungent odor the very essence of the change of seasons.

Last night, spring had seeped into my dreams with the sound of the first spring rains drumming on the roof. As I stumbled down the path through rain-rotted ice, I was greeted with the shrieking of a killdeer, the rusty chattering of glistening grackles and the bold calls of cardinals.

Edwin Way Teale wrote that birds mark the epochs of the year, "*the soft melodious warble of bluebirds in the melting days of early spring. When we first hear that gentle sound some of the hardness of winter softens within us. We are always surprised at how far it carries...we often catch this strain, so simple, so rich...*"

The woods and fields rang in a glorious cacophony of birdsong as territory and mates were argued over in audacious arias. Email reports had been flying across my computer screen - first sightings of blackbirds, swans, ducks, warblers and thrushes escorting north the leading edge of spring. All were arriving loudly, greeting the cold gray weather with the knowledge that sun and warmth were following.

It is a slow agony, the wait for greenery and warmth. Setbacks of snowflakes and squalls softly cover the newly soggy fields after a few days of tantalizing 50 degree weather. Typical of March, this morning's leaden skies were quickly breaking up, and golden beams were racing with cloud shadows across the valley.

Stopping at an enormous tulip poplar, I watched as insects and spiders hidden in the bark began moving about in the weak warmth of the sun. The sharp scent of wintergreen interrupted my examination. Something had shredded twigs from a nearby yellow birch, releasing the spicy scent.

Sniffing in delight, I froze as a familiar call struck my ear. A nasal, buzzing "peent!" emanated somewhere in the marsh - another spring delight; surely another of Teale's signs of spring - the woodcock (*Scolopax minor*). This funny and rather ungainly little bird shaped like a small football sports a long, narrow bill designed for probing the soil for earthworms. Each spring its calls can be detected at dawn and dusk, it proclaims its presence with a "peent" and lifts into the air in sweeping circles, its song paralleled by the musical vibrations of stiff wing feathers.

Later, as I captured the images of early spring in my journal, I wound the calls and flight of the woodcock in spirals along the margins. Where else to illustrate a bird who seeks the 'tween times of dawn and dusk to sound the arrival of spring?

It had been the kind of spring morning that many would not recognize because of its icy chill and bleak aspect. The true spring, the one many do not see and therefore miss, is not the showy gold and green of May, but the subtle stirring of fiddleheads, peepers and blackbirds. The true spring is one of sound and scent - of birdsong and mud and quickening of life.

***O, how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day!***

--William Shakespeare

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY TO INTRODUCE SEASONAL POOLS REGISTRY AT CANOE CREEK STATE PARK

Seasonal pools, often called vernal pools, are a unique type of wetland habitat. They are typically small, shallow, ephemeral waterbodies, and unlike a pond or a lake, they have no permanent inlet or outlet. They are filled each spring by rain and snow melt, then dry up for a period of time during the summer. These qualities of seasonal pools distinguish them from other wetlands, and they support several species of animals that require these temporary wetland habitats for survival.

The Pennsylvania Seasonal Pools Registry is a citizen-based program to document locations of seasonal pools. We are relying on volunteer participants to submit information about where seasonal pools are located and what animals are using the pools. The registry is an important step toward understanding Pennsylvania's ephemeral wetland habitats. The information will be available to researchers who study seasonal pools in the state, and to landowners and agencies who manage these often-overlooked wetlands. Anyone who is interested in seasonal pools is welcome to get involved.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy will present an exciting program and walk to see seasonal pools in Canoe Creek State Park on Saturday, March 24, from 2-4pm! The program will begin in the Canoe Creek State Park Education Center basement. For more information about the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Seasonal Pools Registry, check <http://www.paconserve.org/rc/sp/>

Stern Introduces Bill to Help Farmers REAP the Rewards of Participating in Proven Conservation Practices

State Rep. Jerry Stern (R-Blair) has reintroduced legislation designed to help Pennsylvania farmers meet environmental regulations through an innovative financial assistance plan called the Pennsylvania Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Tax Credit Program.

"I first introduced this legislation last year and still think this is a vital program that can help Pennsylvania farmers meet the sometimes financially challenging endeavors of implementing proven environmental conservation practices," said Stern. "As a lawmaker from an agriculturally-rich region of the state and someone whose family has been in the farming business, I understand the many financial concerns farmers have in adopting some of the conservation practices available to them."

Stern explained that the REAP program will provide tax credits for private investment in the implementations of a variety of proven and cost-effective best management practices, including improvements to barnyards, pastures and riparian corridors, development and implementation of nutrient management plans, remediation of legacy sediments and other approved practices. REAP will ultimately help farmers use best management practices to manage nutrients appropriately and reduce nutrient and sediment loads in streams.

"Our farmers are more than willing to implement environmental conservation practices, and often do, they just need some financial assistance to help them afford the equipment and tools needed to make these improvements possible," said Stern, who noted that more farms are being subject to more environmental regulations as a result of recent changes to the law and other regulatory revisions.

The credits will be available for personal and corporate income tax, the Capital Stock and Franchise Tax, and the Sales and Use Tax. Qualified applicants will receive a tax credit of 25 percent to 75 percent of the project cost, depending on the practice implemented. Other elements of the program specify that tax credits may be sold to other entities and for business or individual sponsorship of a project installed by a landowner. Tax credits may be carried over for maximum of 15 years.

"Agriculture is Pennsylvania's number one industry and a significant job provider," said Stern. "My legislation will help our farmers better protect the land they so obviously need to keep the industry thriving."

Stern said the legislation is expected to be assigned to the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, where it should come up for review in the coming months. ***Please call your state legislators and ask them to support REAP.***

JVAS Kestrel Trail established in Sinking Valley



Thanks to a generous donation of kestrel boxes from JVAS member Tom Harvey of Huntingdon, we've been able to establish a kestrel trail, similar to the well-know bluebird trail (Tom also donated the nest boxes for that), in Sinking Valley, Blair County.

The kestrel is a small cavity-nesting falcon that responds well to the presence of nesting boxes. They live in open habitat, such as meadow and farmlands, where they feed upon insects, lizards, mice and small birds. They frequently hunt from roadside utility lines, as well as by hovering in stationary flight while flapping into the wind.

The JVAS would like to see at least five additional kestrel boxes in place, so, if you're a landowner in Sinking Valley who'd like to invite this small falcon onto your fields, then please contact JVAS President Dr. Stan Kotala at 946-8840, ccwiba@keyconn.net.

JVAS members ought to stop by Tom Harvey's woodworking stand at the Water Street Flea Market to thank him for his generous donation. Better yet, buy some of his custom-made bird houses and feeders. Tom can build nest boxes, bat boxes, feeders, and nesting shelves for all your wildlife-attracting needs. Tom's at his stand from 10am till 2pm on weekends. You can also call him with your requests at 814-643-7118 or email trv1@verizon.net

JVAS President Dr. Stan Kotala installs a kestrel box along a row of trees separating fields at Fort Roberdeau County Park in Sinking Valley.

JVAS to present Frogwatch USA Training Session at Canoe Creek State Park

Scientists are concerned about the recent decline in many of the world's amphibian species. Amphibians, such as frogs, toads, and salamanders, have porous skin and porous eggs that make them very vulnerable to toxins. Because their life cycles require both aquatic and terrestrial environments, amphibians are among the first species to suffer the consequences of environmental threats such as air and water pollution, destruction of habitat, and increased ultraviolet radiation. Since amphibians are indicators of ecosystem health, declines in their populations raise concerns about the health of our environment.

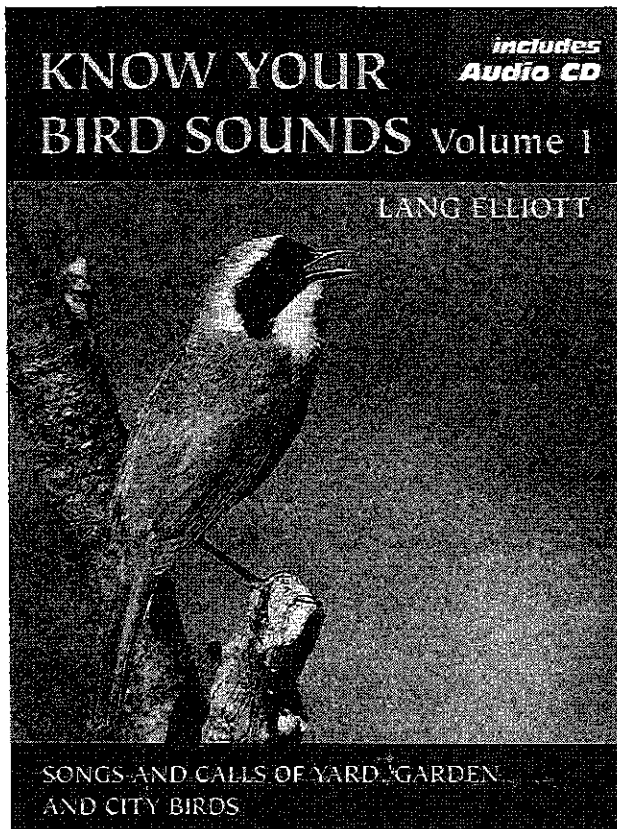
Tim Maret of Shippensburg University's Department of Biology and chair of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey's Herpetological Technical Committee states that "for many amphibian species in Pennsylvania, we just don't have the data to adequately determine their present status. We are lucky to have such a diverse assortment of amphibians in Pennsylvania. The first steps toward preserving these species should be to conduct inventory and monitoring programs to determine their present status and track future trends."

You can help scientists learn more about amphibian populations in the United States by becoming a volunteer for Frogwatch USA, a long-term frog and toad monitoring program managed by the US Geological Survey (USGS) and the National Wildlife Federation. You do not have to be a frog and toad expert to make an important contribution.

On Sunday, April 29 from 2-4 pm, join Juniata Valley Audubon for a fun and informative program that will introduce you to Frogwatch, feature a slide show of the frogs and toads of our area, let you know how you can be involved, and take you into Mary Ann's Marsh to find frogs and toads. Be dressed to get your feet wet! The program begins in the Canoe Creek State Park Education Center basement.

Book and CD sets help you to recognize wildlife sounds

by JVAS Gnatcatcher editor Helena Kotala

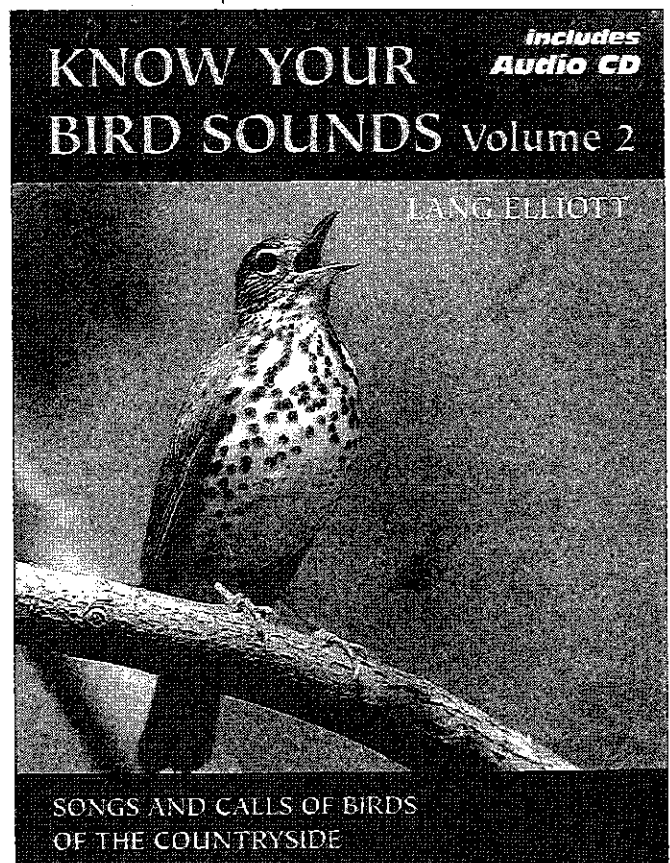


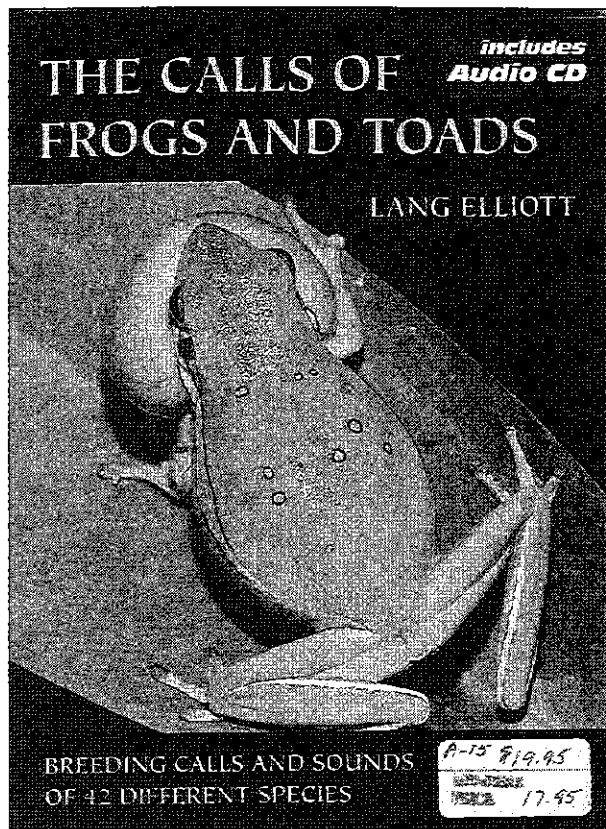
There also are a few brief paragraphs about "The Sound Repertoire" where Elliott explains how birds use their various songs. Some birds combine several songs into one, while others have a specific song that they don't deviate from. In some species, the songs vary from place to place as well as individual bird to bird. In the "More About Bird Song" section, Elliott wraps up loose ends and incorporates any random information about bird songs that were not mentioned in the previous sections. He talks about special types of songs, songbird duets, and vocal imitation. The last section of the introduction is a page of helpful hints from remembering bird sounds. This section should be incredibly valuable to those of us who have trouble learning the different bird sounds. Then Elliott goes into describing each individual species of bird featured on the CD.

Each bird is honored with its own page. There is a photograph of the bird, with its common and scientific name. There is a small paragraph explaining some of the bird's characteristics, habitat, and nesting habits. Then Elliott jumps into the calls. Every song or call that is played on the CD is described in the book. Generally, he describes the sound of the vocalization in words, and also mentions variations or the reason for the song or call. The birds and vocalizations in the book are in the same order as on the CD, so it is very easy to follow along in the book as the CD is playing.

Lang Elliott has been recording wildlife sounds for 10 years under his own label, NatureSound Studio. Now he has come out with several books on bird and amphibian sounds, each also including an audio CD. They are published by Stackpole Books.

Know Your Bird Sounds is a two-volume set. Volume 1 is comprised of yard, garden, and city birds. Several of the birds mentioned are the Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Song Sparrow. Volume 2 presents birds of the countryside, such as the Wood Thrush, Common Raven, Barred Owl, and Killdeer. The only difference between the two volumes is the species of birds mentioned. Both have the same design and features. In the beginning of the book, Elliott gives some "Bird Sound Basics", answering questions such as why and how birds make sounds. He also explains how there are different categories of sounds that a bird makes. Certain sounds have no meaning whatsoever, while others are complex symphonies made while searching for a mate. Next, Elliott goes on to explain more in depth the functions of these sounds in his "Classification and Functions of Bird Sounds" section. This section gives much insight into the vocalizations of birds. Elliott states, "...calls actually reveal more about the intimate lives of birds. ...Without doubt, recognizing calls and their meaning is a crucial step toward gaining a useful appreciation of the languages of the birds."





The third book by Lang Elliott about animal calls is *The Calls of Frogs and Toads*. This book is very similar to the bird sound books, with an introduction in the beginning providing some background information about frogs and toads and their calls. It starts out talking about the life history and breeding of frogs and toads. There also are some great illustrations of the life cycle to supplement the written explanation. Like the bird books, Elliott goes on to explain the call types and functions. Again, there are illustrations, this time of the different types of vocal sacs. Elliott expounds on the functions of types of calls such as the advertisement call, single-species chorus, alarm call, and their calls to attract a mate. He also explains how various species have slightly different ways of calling because of their unique vocal sacs, but a general pattern and process of calling is followed. Elliott also talks about learning to identify frogs and toads.

Forty-two frogs and toads are featured in the book. They are divided into sections based on genus. For instance, all the *Ranidae*, or true frogs, are together. At the beginning of each section there is a short paragraph about the genus in general. There is information about the general characteristics of the frogs, from looks to habitat and living habits. Each individual amphibian has its own page with a picture, common name, and scientific name. There is a short paragraph explaining some of the frog or toad's characteristics, and then there is another short paragraph explaining the voice. The frogs and toads are in the same order in the book as on the CD, just like in the bird books. At the end of the CD, there is a 32-minute narrated introduction to the calls of frogs and toads, which includes examples of many different types of calls.

This series is wonderful for anyone who wants to learn bird sounds or the calls of amphibians. Many of us struggle with learning songs and calls, but the nature of these books makes it easier to remember the vocalizations. It helps to have the picture and information about the bird, frog, or toad handy while playing the CD. Whether you're an experienced nature-watcher or just getting started, Lang Elliott's book and CD set is an excellent resource.

Wood frog

by
Helena Kotala,
Nature's Images



Western Pennsylvania Conservancy announces

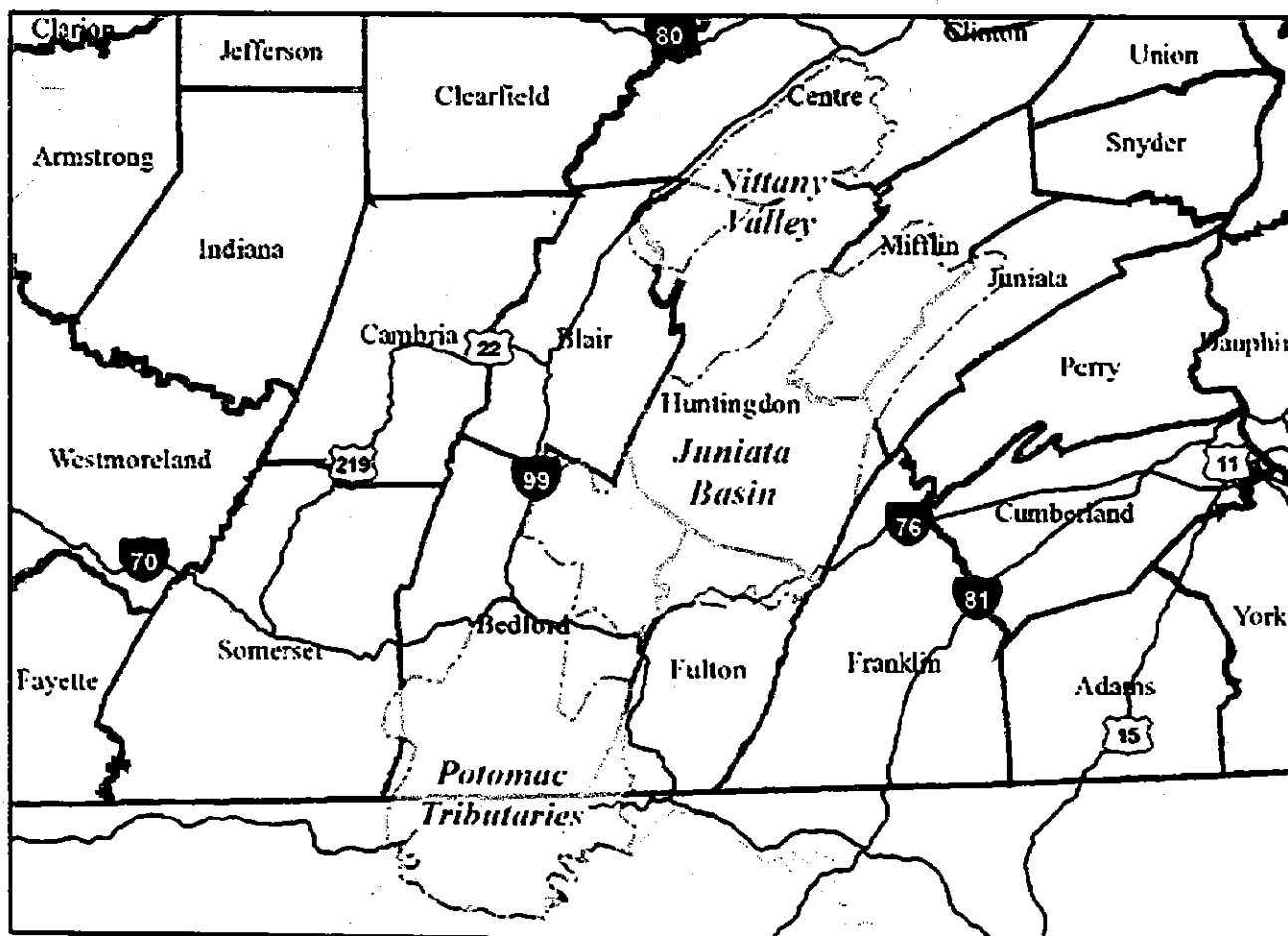
Central Appalachian Office

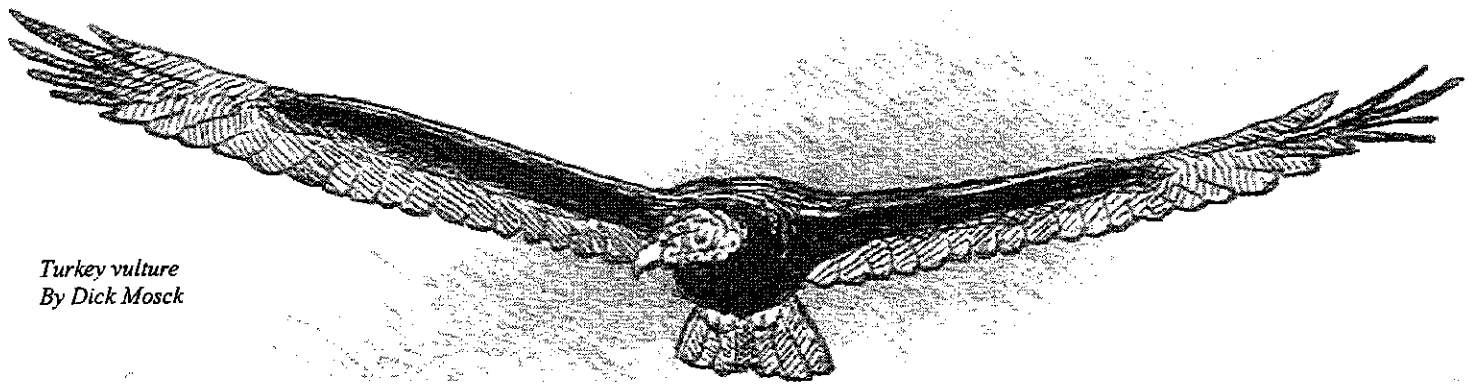
The landscapes of the central Appalachian region are unique in the state with unusual ecosystems harboring species known in few other places on earth. WPC's new Central Appalachian Office will serve three priority conservation areas as WPC determined by the development of last year's conservation blueprint: the Potomac Tributaries; the Juniata River and the Nittany Valley. Each region is identified by its own setting and contributions to the sum total biodiversity of the Commonwealth, including forests, streams, significant habitats and species. Each also brings legacies that are as challenging as they are awe-inspiring.

The Juniata River

This river is a major tributary of the Susquehanna River and its eastward course drains portions of the Ridge and Valley Province of south central Pennsylvania. Water gaps are typical features of this region, whereby seemingly against reason, large streams like the Juniata endeavor to slice through mountain ridges rather than flow submissively along their bases. Also characteristic of this landscape are the abruptly folded mountains with hard Silurian sandstone tops and lower ridges of fractured Devonian shales. The interesting and localized shale barren habitats are found here supporting lifeforms odd to most Pennsylvanians, such as prickly-pear cactus and fence lizards. Significant forest blocks are at higher elevations and the valleys support rich farmlands. In many intermountain bottomlands exists an underworld of limestone rock layers that have been partially dissolved over time resulting in plentiful aquifers of water supply and cave habitats supporting populations of animals obligated to live all or part of their lives underground, such as hibernating bats and cave shrimp. In other corners the limestone outcrops as cliffs and rocky slopes, supporting still other rare plants and animals so adapted to seek out calcium-rich habitat.

Some of the rarest habitat types are forests, not the high elevation ones, but those that once occurred in the sweet soils of the riparian zones and bottomlands now supporting cropland and pastures.





Turkey vulture
By Dick Mosck

The Nittany Valley

The valley is found precisely at the geographic center of Pennsylvania in Centre and Huntingdon counties between two long mountain ridges: Bald Eagle Mountain and Tussey Mountain. Biodiversity significance is not as much on these mountains, as within the intermountain lowlands. Here the bedrock geology is composed of multiple limestones and the rare gravelly Gatesburg Formation. This is one of the most unique landscapes in the state and includes a mixture of pitch pine-scrub oak sand barrens habitat, dotted with vernal pools, the Spring Creek valley with its alkaline soils, limestone cliffs and rich vegetation; karst (cave permeated) valleys underlain with limestone aquifers, sinkholes and solutional caves. The outflows from groundwater reserves form some of the largest natural springs in the region and are the source for high-quality streams such as the cold and clear Spruce Creek. These unusual ecosystems harbor rare species, such as Stellmack's cave amphipod and Franz's cave isopod, crustaceans known from few other places on Earth. As in other sectors of the Central Appalachian Mountains, low elevation forests have been reduced to small patches in a fragmented landscape. In addition to protecting water quality and quantity, the restoration of lowland forests will be another conservation challenge.

The Potomac Tributaries

The southernmost region of central Pennsylvania is composed of mountains of the Ridge and Valley Province (named for the parallel ridges and valleys of the Appalachian Mountains, which create an alternating pattern) and intermountain tributary watersheds of the Potomac River. This rugged and rural landscape includes the signature "shale country" and is based on unique geology and soils. Forests are mostly composed of species of oaks and hickories, being largely confined to slopes and ridgelines. The hot and dry shale barrens habitat exists as occasional openings along streams at lower elevations. Characteristic species include bird's-foot violet, redbud, hognose snake and the Potomac sculpin, a small fish. The valleys are narrow but locally productive for crops and livestock. Attention to agricultural techniques is needed to protect the aquatic life in this landscape. The major streams here all flow to the Mason-Dixon Line and cross into Maryland to add their waters to the Potomac, the second largest source for the great Chesapeake Bay.

The Central Appalachian Office is slated to open in Spring 2007 and will be staffed by Erica Hollis, watershed manager.

Pennsylvania: a National Leader in Land Conservation

The rate at which land conservation groups set aside property more than doubled between 2000 and 2005, and Pennsylvania was one of the biggest beneficiaries.

According to the Land Conservation Trust, the total acres of private land conserved by local, state and national organizations went from 24 million in 2000 to 37 million in 2005. That's a jump of 54 percent.

Pennsylvania has 95 land trusts, fewer only than California, Massachusetts and Connecticut. Yet Pennsylvania ranks second in the country in preserving land and converting it to parks and public uses. The state is ninth overall in terms of protecting land and conserving its natural resources.

To date, 440,659 acres of land have been protected by trusts in Pennsylvania. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, a Pittsburgh-based land trust, has conserved 213,774 of those acres, or about half of the total.

**THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL BY THE STAFF
OF THE HARRISBURG PATRIOT-NEWS WAS
PUBLISHED ON JANUARY 18**

Pennsylvania's famed ridgetops aren't the only place to put them

Another announcement of plans to build a large wind farm along a Pennsylvania ridgetop brings additional emphasis to the urgent need for the state to enact a windmill-siting protocol.

Failure to do so threatens to dramatically alter Pennsylvania's ridge and valley landscape to a degree not seen since the 19th-century lumber barons denuded Penn's Woods.

The latest count shows Pennsylvania with 153 mega-watts of wind generation, which on a typical day produces enough power to serve 70,000 homes. But under the state's Alter native Energy Portfolio Standard, at least 3,000 megawatts of wind-generated electricity is projected to be in place by 2020. That would be a 20- fold increase from today and would require something on the order of 2,000 windmills.

While windmills, which can be 400 feet tall, are generally viewed as compatible with agriculture, leaving 95 percent of the land to farming, most of the early developers of wind power in the East appear to find the Appalachian ridgetops offering the most desirable locations. This is reflected once again in a just-announced proposal by Gamesa Energy of Spain to erect windmills along six miles of the crest of Mahantango Mountain in far northern Dauphin County, a project designed to produce 50 megawatts of power.

Gamesa, the second-largest wind-turbine manufacturer in the world, was personally courted by Gov. Ed Rendell to set up its U.S. headquarters in Philadelphia and establish production plants in Bucks and Cambria counties.

Wind is the fastest-growing energy sector in the country, with Pennsylvania the largest wind generator east of the Mississippi River. But it has strong competition from West Virginia, where wind farms of 166 turbines in one case, 200 in another, have been approved, and others proposed.

While officials in Somerset County say the windmills visible there from the Pennsylvania Turnpike have become a tourist draw, officials in neighboring Bedford County and other areas in the state are not so sure. To paraphrase Ronald Reagan's unfortunate comment about majestic redwood trees, it may apply to windmills that "once you've seen one, you've seen them all." People are likely to soon get sick of them if they become visible everywhere one turns. As regulations — or the absence of them — now stand in Pennsylvania, that's a distinct possibility.

A stakeholder-devised model wind-energy siting ordinance was rolled out last year, but as we pointed out then, it made limited distinctions about where wind turbines could and could not be built. The industry and wind-power advocates largely have dismissed bird and bat kills at turbine sites as either aberrations or inconsequential in the overall scheme of things. In fact, there is too little independent scientific research to know for sure. What is known is that vast numbers of birds, including large and often threatened raptors, follow the ridges of the Appalachians on their annual migration routes.

The Rendell administration is considering options for broader wind energy regulation, but it needs to pick up the pace. *Science-based windmill-siting rules should have been in place before the state began promoting this form of energy, not after.*

"I speak for the trees; for the trees have no tongues."

from The Lorax by Dr. Seuss

Below is a letter by Dr. Michael Gannon, a bat expert who is a professor at PennState Altoona, to the Harrisburg Patriot-News

I read a recent letter touting the wind energy industry's concern over the large numbers of bats being killed by wind turbines with great skepticism.

US Fish and Wildlife has developed guidelines for development of wind sites with regard to protecting bats and birds. Not one wind energy developer has ever come close to meeting those guidelines at any site they have developed in the US. As a result, bat mortality has been recorded at every wind facility in the US where it has been investigated. Several years ago, work done in Pennsylvania and West Virginia demonstrated that bat deaths from wind turbines in the Allegheny and Appalachia region of the US are the greatest of anywhere thus far examined, with estimates from this research in excess of 5,000 bats killed per site per year. Currently there are dozens of industrial wind turbine sites operating or planned for this region alone. The wind industry's response to this report was to terminate further research at those sites and prohibit impartial independent researchers from gaining access to most wind sites for further work. Science and impartiality with regards to wildlife seem not part of the equation wind developers consider when proposing and constructing wind turbine sites.

At present, continued wind development without impartial scientific evaluation may be the greatest risk to bat populations, our primary natural insect control agent, in the US. It is easy for the industry to pretend concern, but their actions to this point indicate otherwise. A good beginning would be for the industry to start following the federal guidelines developed for this purpose.

Michael Gannon, PhD

Professor of Biology

PennState Altoona



Industrial-scale wind turbines in forested settings kill 50-100 bats per turbine per year.

REGISTER FOR JVAS e-NEWS!

JVAS members interested in receiving timely notice of events such as meetings, field trips, JVAS Juniata Club river trips, and local conservation issues should send their name and email address to JVAS E-NEWS editor Helena Kotala at ccwiba@keyconn.net to subscribe to our free news service.

Sign up for JVAS Juniata Club River trips!

JVAS' canoe and kayak group enjoyed many great river trips on the Little Juniata and Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River last year. These trips are done at a leisurely pace with wildlife and observation in mind. Trips last 1-4 hours and are on Class 1-3 water depending on river conditions. Notice of upcoming trips is done by phone or email to take advantage of optimal weather and river flow. If you'd like to be added to the JVAS Juniata Club roster, call or send an email to JVAS Juniata Club Leader Helena Kotala at 814- 946-8840 or ccwiba@keyconn.net

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Nature's Images

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Altoona, PA

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The Creature Teacher



Jody Wallace
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join JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON!

Juniata Valley Audubon membership provides you with the following benefits:

- Notification of Juniata Valley Audubon's exciting activities including nature programs, field trips and other events
- Subscription to the bimonthly chapter newsletter, *The Gnatcatcher*
- Opportunities to participate in conservation projects and environmental advocacy, and *have fun!*

Become a chapter-only member: _____ Individual: \$15 _____ Family: \$20 _____ Supporting: \$35

_____ Friend of JVAS: \$50 _____ Corporate: \$100

_____ Life Membership: \$500— JVAS Life Membership provides you with all the benefits listed above for a once-in-a-lifetime fee of \$500.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Mail this form to
Juniata Valley Audubon
c/o Dr. Alice Kotala
Membership Chair
RR 3 Box 866
McMullen Road
Altoona, PA 16601-9206

JVAS BOARD MEMBERS

OFFICERS

President.....Dr. Stan Kotala 946-8840

<ccwiba@keyconn.net>

Vice-President.....Dave Bonta 684-3113

<bontasaurus@yahoo.com>

Secretary.....Shirley Wagoner 643-4011

<swagoner3@yahoo.com>

Treasurer.....Warren Baker 684-4549

Field Trips.....Terry Wentz 693-6563

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Publications.....Helena Kotala 946-8840

<ccwiba@keyconn.net>

Sarah Miller (website)

<garynsarah@verizon.net>

Hospitality.....Maxine Leckvarcik 689-1329

<dglmkf@comcast.net>

Historian.....Terry Wentz 693-6563

<twentz2@verizon.net>

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership.....Dr. Alice Kotala 946-8840

<ccwiba@keyconn.net>

Programs.....Dave Bonta (see above)

Conservation Dr. Stan Kotala (see above)

Education..... Dr. Stan Kotala (see above)

DIRECTORS

IBA Coordinator.....Dr. Stan Kotala (see above)

CBC Coordinator.....Heidi Boyle 949-9302

<hboyle@state.pa.us>

NAMC Coordinator.....Dr. Stan Kotala (see above)

PROGRAMS

"Susquehanna Birding Trail"

Tuesday evening, March 20, 2007 Doug Wentzel, program director and naturalist at Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, will provide an overview and progress report on PA Audubon's Susquehanna River Birding and Wildlife Trail. Shaver's Creek, which lies at the center of the trail, is hard at work building infrastructure to enhance the birding experience. Doug will talk about their boardwalk project and wildflower trail, as well as highlight volunteer opportunities at the Center.

ABOUT JVAS PROGRAMS: Programs are presented on the *third Tuesday of each month*. They begin at **7 PM in the chapel at Alto-Reste Park on Plank Road, Altoona**. Our programs are designed for a general audience, and are free and open to the public.

FIELD TRIPS

Shawnee State Park & Cumberland, MD

Saturday, March 24, 2007 Join us for a day of scouting for spring migrating waterfowl. Meet at Uncle Joe's Woodshed Parking Lot, Altoona at 9 a.m. We'll have lunch in Bedford Trip Leader: Terry Wentz 693-6563; twentz2@verizon.net

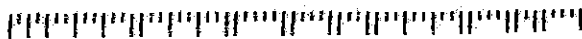
DelMarVa - Ocean City, Bombay Hook, Cape Henlopen, Indian River, Chincoteague, Piney Tract and Presque Isle State Park

Saturday, April 20, 21 and 22, 2007 We'll welcome in spring with this birding bonanza of a trip! We'll look for spring ocean birds, shorebirds, and woodland migrants. Van service from Altoona and 2 overnights included. Leave Friday p.m. and return Sunday evening. Details to be announced. Trip Leader: Dave Kyler, 643-6030 davidkyler@pennswoods.net

Detweiler Run & Bear Meadows

Saturday, April 28, 2007 Join us as we hunt for spring wildflowers and early migrants. Meet at McAlvey's Fort, Huntingdon County at bank on Route 26 near Greenwood Furnace State Park (8 a.m.). Bring a bag lunch and drinks. Trip Leader: Shirley Wagoner, 643-4011 swagoner3@yahoo.com

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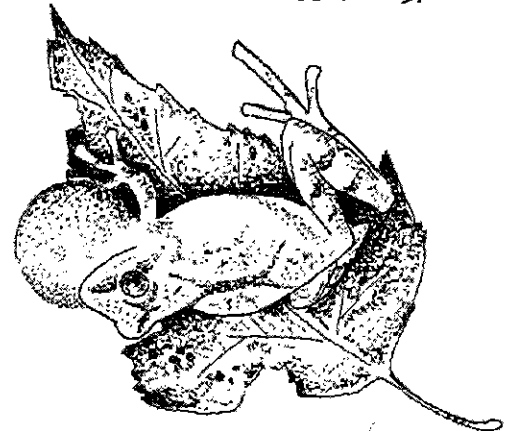


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Hal Borland, *Twelve Moons of the Year*

April is still in its first week, but the silence is ended until November's frost again bites deep. The lesser sounds of new life, life resurrected, have begun, and in their sum they will soon outspoke the wind.

KOTOLA 99



Junata Valley Audubon
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Altoona, PA 16601

Marcia Bonta
P.O. Box 68
Tyrone PA
8/11/2007
16686-0068

