



The Gnatcatcher

Newsletter of Juniata Valley Audubon

Vol. XLVI, No. 4 — September / October 2014

Fall Migration Is in Full Swing — Visit a Nearby Hawk Watch

BY LAURA JACKSON

Fall means birds are on the move, and that makes it exciting for anyone who likes to watch birds, especially raptors.

Pennsylvania's many hawk watches are in full action, as counters and casual observers look to the skies for migrating hawks, eagles, songbirds, monarch butterflies, and dragonflies. I enjoyed

soon into the forest and we didn't hear them again.

My Internet research showed that the stone pile was named after Mike Sausser, a longtime trail-builder who saved the trail from being abandoned many years earlier when the Keystone Trails Association considered dropping it from



"On the Wind"

Photo by Mike & Laura Jackson, JacksonsJourneysPhotography.com

part of a day at the Stone Mountain Hawk Watch recently. It was a nice stop on a 3-mile hike on Standing Stone Trail, which we accessed where Allensville Road crosses Stone Mountain. It was an easy, but rocky, 1/3-mile walk north from the turnout to the hawk watch.

After visiting the hawk watch, we hiked farther north and sat on Sausser's Pile (a large talus slope) while we ate lunch. There wasn't much bird activity, but then later in the day we watched an adult bald eagle fly south, then head west over Stone Valley. A few broad-winged hawks flapped by, and we were entertained briefly by ravens calling to one another. Their harsh vocalizations were fascinating, but they disappeared all too

their care. I'm glad Mike persevered to keep the trail open, as it was exhilarating to hike with friends along the top of the world in central Pennsylvania.

Broad-winged hawks fill the skies in mid-September at the Stone Mountain Hawk Watch when the winds are from the west or northwest. If the winds are from the southeast, then more birds will be seen at the hawk watch on Jacks Mountain, in Mifflin County, and the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch, in Bedford County.

There may be a special sighting on Jacks Mountain — no matter how the winds are blowing — on Sunday, September 28, when Shaver's

[*Continued on page 3*]

The Gnatcatcher

VOL. XLVI, NO. 4 — SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2014

Published bimonthly (except for July and August)
as a benefit for members of the...

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 42
Tyrone, PA 16686-0042

The Juniata Valley Audubon Society (JVAS) is a chapter of the National Audubon Society and is dedicated to the conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity. Juniata Valley Audubon accomplishes its mission through advocacy, science, land stewardship, and education — working directly with Audubon Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania state office of the National Audubon Society.

The JVAS is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit, educational organization as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Gifts are deductible for income tax purposes (Tax ID # 25-1533496).

OFFICERS

President Laura Jackson 652-9268
mljackson2@embarqmail.com

Vice President &
Programs Committee Chair Mark Bonta 652-9268
mab86@psu.edu

Secretary Kristin Joivell 386-6267
kristinjean@hotmail.com

Treasurer George Mahon 942-2658
gsm815@hotmail.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership Committee Charlie Hoyer 684-7376
charma77@verizon.net

Conservation Committee Dr. Stan Kotala 946-8840
ccwiba@keyconn.net

Education Committee Ruby J. Becker 515-6312
rubyjb@atlanticbb.net

Field Trips Committee Deb Tencer 932-9183
naturehikergal@gmail.com

Publications & Publicity Committee Vacant

Hospitality Committee Marcia Bonta 684-3113
marciabonta@hotmail.com

Historian Mike Jackson 652-9268
mljackson2@embarqmail.com

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Warren Baker 684-4549

Dave Bonta 686-7274
bontasaurus@yahoo.com

President's Message

The Tube-free Challenge...

Have you seen the ad for Scott Naturals® tube-free bathroom tissue? Scott maintains that over 17 billion toilet paper tubes are thrown away each year — enough to fill the Empire State Building. Twice. You won't find any toilet paper tubes in our house. We had gone tube-free over a year ago. We've always recycled the cardboard tubes, but it seems that most people just throw them away. How much waste is that? According to the Kimberly-Clark Corporation, the paper giant behind Scott Naturals, toilet paper tubes add as much as 160 million pounds of waste going to our landfills each year.

How many trees will tubeless rolls save? I couldn't find the answer to that question, but I did find out some other interesting facts from **bidet.org**: roughly 27,000 trees are cut each day to provide toilet paper for the world, and around 50 percent of these trees comes from old-growth, virgin forests. Another Web site stated that 70 to 75 percent of the world's population don't even use toilet paper. Imagine how many more trees would be logged if more people used toilet paper!

The ultimate toilet paper would have to be soft and be made of 100 percent recycled paper as a tube-free roll. Maybe that will be the next big invention in toilet paper?

Why are tubeless toilet paper rolls such a big deal? Kimberly-Clark obtains a lot of its wood fiber from North America's largest ancient forest: the Canadian boreal forest. I've never seen it, but Mike and I had visited a small pocket of inland rainforest dominated by old-growth cedar trees in British Columbia in 2011. The Driscoll-Ancient Forest along the Yellowhead Highway was a serendipitous discovery that became one of the highlights of our road trip. We spent an afternoon among trees, some of which were over 2,000 years old. (See the photograph on page 8.) These ancient trees were not in a national park like our giant sequoias or redwoods; it was just a small area that local residents decided to protect.

Our walk among the giants inspired me to read the book, *Tongass: Pulp Politics and the Fight for the Alaska Rain Forest*, by Kathie Durbin — a very

disturbing and enlightening read. We had seen a lot of logging in the Tongass when we visited Alaska; this book exposes the dirty politics behind some of it.

Going tubeless will help protect Canada's forests, which provide habitat for more than a billion birds (many of which are threatened species), including bald eagles and golden eagles. Woodland caribou and wolverines live in the boreal forests. These forests are the world's largest storehouse of terrestrial carbon, which soaks up an estimated 186 billion tons of carbon.

To be fair, paper is a renewable product made from trees, but we seem to care more about profits than sustainability. Using Scott Naturals is easy and might be a swipe in the right direction.

Show up at our first JVAS program for the year on Tuesday, September 16, and you'll be rewarded with a free roll of Scott Naturals Tube-free bathroom tissue to take home. I hope you'll try it and then take the pledge to go tubeless. ❖

... Fall Migration [*Cont'd from cover page*]

Creek Environmental Center will have two live raptor programs featuring a golden eagle, a broad-winged hawk, and a red-tailed hawk. The programs will be held at 2 P.M. and again at 3 P.M. For more details, click on the goose image on the home page of the Friends of Jacks Mountain Web site, savejacksmountain.org.

Bald eagles and golden eagles are the largest raptors in the eastern United States and it is a thrill to see them as they ride the air currents. These birds must have invented the concept of cruise control, since they can ride the wind for miles without a wing beat. Bald eagles are flying south now, while golden eagles fly in late November when the colder winds push them south.

Plan to visit a hawk watch this fall to enjoy the migration on a good flight day and fantastic views on clear days. Warm, sunny days with no winds attract more visitors, but are not ideal for seeing many raptors. Strong winds after a storm may bring a flush of birds. When do the different species of raptors migrate? Here is how raptor biologist Kim Van Fleet describes it:

Fall migration occurs over an extended period of time; however, bald eagles, northern harriers, red-tailed hawks and golden eagles migrate throughout the entire season. Overall, each species tends to migrate within a certain time frame and experiences peak migration periods. Ospreys and broad-winged hawks are usually the first birds to migrate through Pennsylvania. Shortly thereafter, American kestrels, merlins, and peregrine falcons start to move. By mid-September, sharp-shinned hawks and Cooper's hawks are migrating through the region. In early October, the red-shouldered hawk flight begins, followed closely by red-tailed hawk movements. By mid-October, vultures, rough-legged hawks, and northern goshawks can be observed. From mid to late October through early December, golden eagles are observed in numbers.

- Stone Mountain Hawk Watch access: Level, rocky, 1/3-mile trail from the Allensville Road turnout to the platform.
 - Best winds: West or northwest
 - Wind forecast: Check for State College, PA online at wunderground.com.
 - More details and directions: Check the State College Bird Club's Web site at scbirdcl.org.
- Allegheny Front Hawk Watch access: Short walk from the parking lot to the hawk watch.
 - Best winds: East
 - Wind forecast: Check for Cairnbrook, PA at wunderground.com.
 - More details and directions: Check the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society's Web site: alleghenyplateauaudubon.org.
- Jacks Mountain Hawk Watch access: Drive to the parking lot, which is adjacent to the hawk watch. This site is great if you don't want to walk, but just stand by your car.
 - Best winds: Southeast
 - Wind forecast: Check for McVeytown, PA at wunderground.com.
 - More details and directions: Check the State College Bird Club's site: scbirdcl.org.

One last thing — don't forget to take your binoculars!❖

Fall JVAS Programs

JVAS programs are presented on the third Tuesday of the month except for July, August, and December. Unless otherwise specified, program meetings begin at 7 P.M. in the meeting room of the Bellwood-Antis Public Library, 526 Main St., Bellwood.

Directions: Take Interstate Rt. 99 to the Bellwood/Route 865 Exit (Exit 41). Follow Rt. 865 through the Sheetz/Martin intersection. Proceed about four blocks and turn right at the **BUSINESS DISTRICT** → sign. Turn left at the dead end and travel to the stop sign. Continue a short distance; the library will be on your right.

JVAS programs, designed for a general audience, are free and open to the public.

“Mushrooming for Beginners”

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Karen Croyle, a founding member of the Central Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, will talk about how to safely collect fungi for the table. Karen knows where to look for mushrooms and will help you learn how to identify the ones you find, which ones are edible, and which are toxic.

Karen often speaks at state parks and other venues to promote the understanding of fungi. She was an apprentice to Dr. Barrie Overton at Lehigh University and has been collecting mushrooms for the table since childhood.

“All You Ever Wanted to Know About Gall-inducing Insects”

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21

Dr. John Tooker will discuss the biology and ecology of gall insects, which are fairly common, but often misidentified or misunderstood. He will talk about what they do, where they can be found, how they evolved, and why someone would spend any time at all studying them. Dr. Tooker is an associate professor of insect ecology and an extension specialist in the Department of Entomology at Penn State University. His research and extension programs aim to help farmers of Pennsylvania to more effectively manage their insect pest problems in field and forage crops. As well as he can, he continues to maintain a research program on gall insects because they are very cool.

“Greenland 2013 — Camping, Culture, Hiking, Kayaking!”

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Gary Thornbloom will show his slides of Greenland, a spectacular but rapidly changing part of our world. While on the world's largest island, Gary witnessed the booming of glaciers and the sharp crack of icebergs breaking up. Arctic foxes were his companions at camp. He visited the communities of Ilulissat and Uummannaq, and hiked to pre-Christian burial sites, rock fox traps, and tent rings.

Going north has always appealed to Thornbloom. Since the 1980s, he has plied the wilderness waterways of Maine, northern Minnesota, Alaska, the Hudson Bay, and Iceland. He also has worked to protect many special places in Pennsylvania, and for the past 15 years has been a leader in the Moshannon Group of the Sierra Club.

Fall JVAS Field Trips

JVAS field trips are coordinated by JVAS board member Deb Tencer. For more information about any field trip, phone Deb at 932-9183 or send her an e-mail at naturehikergal@gmail.com.

Spring Creek Canyon

1 P.M. — SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Easy hike of about 4 miles

Meet at Fisherman's Paradise (see a map and other info online at fishandboat.com/images/fisheries/fcs/bellefonte-sfh.htm) for a stroll following Spring Creek, in the world-famous Fisherman's Paradise fly-fishing area. See the fish hatcheries, the geology that created the canyon, and the remnants of past activities, including ponds.

This easy hike of about 4 miles includes a shuttle and ends with dinner at the Gamble Mill Restaurant. Fisherman's Paradise is the Bellefonte State Fish Hatchery: 1115 Spring Creek Rd., 2 miles southwest of Bellefonte.

Trip leader: Gernilee Carter, (814) 574-3275,
gernilee@gmail.com

Old Logger's Trail Loop with Sheep Rock Spur

10 A.M. — SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4

About 6 miles of moderately challenging biking

Hike near Raystown Lake on the Old Logger's Trail to see streamside sections, the Lake, and hilltop areas, while hiking through a wide range of vegetation and habitat. You'll be able to observe that much of the area is managed for grouse habitat in conjunction with the Ruffed Grouse Society. Sheep Rock Spur passes one of the best scenic overlooks of Raystown Lake.

We'll meet at 10 A.M. the trailhead parking lot on Baker's Hollow Rd., which services *both* the Old Logger's Trail and the Allegrippis Trail System. (See map at allegrippistrails.com/map.)

Trip leader: Kristin Joivell (814) 386-6267,
kristinjean@hotmail.com

Indian Steps and Mid-State Trail

1:30 P.M. — SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

Four-mile loop hike — rocky

We'll meet at Jo Hayes Vista on Pa. Rt. 26 south of Pine Grove Mills at 1:30 P.M., then drive to the starting point along Harry's Valley Rd. for a 4-mile loop hike. The Indian Steps seem to be another mystery of Penn's Woods. Nobody today can explain their location (up a mountainside) or say with certainty who built them. (For more info, go online to trails.com/tcatalog_trail.aspx?trailid=HGN175-031.)

The ridgetop portions of the hike are on the orange-blazed Mid-State Trail, which is notoriously rocky, so wear hiking boots. The views from the top are truly spectacular.

Trip leader: Larry Broadbent, (814) 414-5754,
broadbent.lr@verizon.net

Centre Furnace Mansion Tour and a Walk in Marsh Millbrook

1 P.M. — SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5

East walking

We'll meet at 1 P.M. at the Centre Furnace Mansion parking lot to tour the home and grounds of ironmaster Moses Thompson. (Go online to centrecountyhistory.org for more info.) Mr. Thompson donated the land for the Farmer's High School, which became Penn State University. After the tour at Centre Furnace, we'll walk through Millbrook Marsh. It's a gem of nature surprisingly close to the "urban area" of State College. Discover the boardwalk, wildlife blinds, magnificent oaks, and maybe a deer or two. We may debrief at the Happy Valley Brewing Company, in State College, for dinner.

Trip leader: Gernilee Carter, (814) 574-3275,
gernilee@gmail.com

Big Valley Vista

12:30 P.M. — SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

Moderate 2-mile hike

Meet at 12:30 P.M. at the Military Museum in Boalsburg or at 1 P.M. at the Seven Mountains Rest Stop trailhead, which is accessible only from the westbound lanes of U.S. Rt. 322, a limited-access highway. The moderate, 2-mile hike follows a nature trail along with spurs of the Mid-State Trail and leads to a stunning overlook called Big Valley Vista. We'll visit the Seven Mountains Winery, located a short distance from the trailhead, followed by dinner at the Mt. Nittany Inn. If you are traveling eastbound on Rt. 322 (away from State College) you'll have to continue 5½ miles to the Milroy Exit, turn around, and come back up the mountain to the rest stop.

Trip leader: Gernilee Carter, (814) 574-3275,
gernilee@gmail.com

Proposed change to JVAS Bylaws...

The JVAS Board of Directors has approved the following addition to the Bylaws, which will be voted on at the general membership meeting on October 21: "*The immediate past president will become a JVAS board member.*"

Canoe Lake at Canoe Creek State Park

11 A.M. — SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

Easy 3–4 hour hike

Join us to enjoy the autumn leaves and cooler weather for a 3-to-4 hour hike around Canoe Lake at Canoe Creek State Park. Meet at 11 A.M. at the east shore launch parking lot, ½ mile north of U.S. Rt. 22 on Beaver Dam Rd. There'll be a lunch break, so bring water and food.

See: dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/canocreek/index.htm

Trip leader: Dave Hunter (814) 317-7826,
davmhunter@aol.com

Staff Sergeant Franck Campion Memorial Hike

2 P.M. — SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

Three-mile easy walk

Meet at the PSU Seminar Forest parking lot at 2 P.M. for a 3-mile stroll through the fall woods.

See: pennsylvania.sierraclub.org/moshannon/ott/ott14-03_seminar_forest_penn_state_altoona.htm

Trip leader: Stan Kotala (814) 946-8840

Allegheny Front Hawk Watch

10 A.M. (EACH DAY) — SATURDAY & SUNDAY,
NOVEMBER 8 & 9

Short walk to hawk watch

This is a great time of year to see migrating golden eagles — if the wind is right. Bring a chair, binoculars, and/or a spotting scope along with plenty of warm clothes. JVAS members are invited to join this Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO) event.

Detailed directions are found on the PSO Birding/Events Field Trips Web page:
pabirds.org/events/psofieldtrips.php

For more information on the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch, go to the HawkWatch page of the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society's Web site:

alleghenylateauaudubon.org/hawk-watch.php

To sign up, contact Mike Lanzone, mlanzone@gmail.com, or Chad Kauffman, chadkauffman@earthlink.net.

Baker-Henry Nature Preserve and Elizabeth Evans Baker Peace Chapel

1 P.M. — SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Moderate 5-mile hike

Meet at the Peace Chapel parking area off Warm Springs Rd., in Huntingdon, for a 5-mile hike through the deciduous woods.

Info: <http://hcap.artstor.org/cgi-bin/library?a=d&d=p890>

Directions: juniata.edu/services/museum/coll_peacechapel.html

Trip leaders: Kristin Joivell, (814) 386-6267,
kristinjean@hotmail.com,
and Stan Kotala, (814) 946-8840

The Gnatcatcher has turned into The Albatross!

What? It's true, we're spending thousands of dollars each year to print and mail our newsletter, *The Gnatcatcher*. It's become a significant financial burden for the JVAS, just as the dead albatross became a burden to the sailor in Coleridge's poem, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

There are a number of advantages with the digital version:

- ✓ You'll get *The Gnatcatcher* sooner.
- ✓ The photos will be in color.
- ✓ You'll feel good that you're helping to preserve the financial stability of the JVAS.

We need your e-mail message to Laura Jackson at mljackson2@embarqmail.com. Don't forget the 2 after *Jackson*, and make sure you type the *q* as in *quiz* — not a *g*.

Just state that you'll accept the digital version of *The Gnatcatcher*.

Your e-mail message will be a wonderful conservation donation that won't cost you a dime, and it will let us keep *The Gnatcatcher*!

We pledge to keep your e-mail address confidential and won't share it with other organizations or companies.

Brush Mountain Notebook: Watcher at the Pond

BY MARCIA BONTA

From early spring until early summer, I spend time watching our seasonal pond. Formed in a depression on top of our wooded mountain ten years ago, it has been an excellent place to observe the life cycle of wood frogs — the calling and mating of the adults, the laying of their eggs, the hatching of those eggs into tiny tadpoles, and the grand race between a shrinking pond and maturing tadpoles. If I am very lucky, I even see little wood frogs leaving the pond.

Every year, the number of egg masses and the subsequent number of tadpoles has increased, and this last spring and summer the pond seethed with tadpoles. Yet I saw no sign of cannibalism, which has been reported about wood frog tadpoles. Every time it rained, I rushed up to see if the pond had expanded. For the first time ever, the pond survived until the middle of July, although the last of the tadpoles did not. Still, a great many did mature and leave the pond, and the soup of tadpoles gradually diminished.

Every year, I make new discoveries as I sit there, but this year was particularly surprising. On June 20, in the midst of the tadpoles, I noticed a faintly spotted beige creature with a broad and rounded head, a long body, and a light brown ruffle curling up from what appeared to be a neck. Otherwise, it was larger than the tadpoles with a fin that extended forward to the middle of its back. The tadpoles ignored it, and it never moved while I watched it. On a later day, I saw two of these strange creatures that turned out to be the larvae of marbled salamanders according to the excellent photo of one in *Amphibians and Reptiles of Pennsylvania and the Northeast* by Arthur C. Hulse, Clarence J. McCoy, and Ellen J. Censky. The photo had been taken by Hulse in Union County.

I was pleased to add a new amphibian to Bioplum — our record of all the plants and ani-

mals we have found so far on our property. Apparently, this smallest of the mole salamanders lives most of its life underground and is difficult to see. In Pennsylvania, most observations have been made in the fall when the marbled salamanders mate.

I checked off all the characteristics of their life history as I read the Hulse account. They are mostly inhabitants of upland forests and lay their 48 to 200 eggs in late fall in small nests under vegetation or leaf litter and in an area that will fill with water in late winter or early spring such as our seasonal pond. The females attend their nest of eggs and when the nest is inundated the eggs hatch immediately, and the larvae enter the pond.



The larvae are carnivorous and feed on zooplankton as well as adult aquatic beetles, but possibly not on wood frog tadpoles, which may have been why the wood frog tadpoles totally ignored them. Probably I didn't see the larvae earlier when the pond was larger and deeper because they usually spend their nights near the surface of the pond and their days down in the leaf litter at the bottom of the pond. In addition, they take until the middle of June until early July in Pennsylvania before they mature into salamanders, and this year was the first time our pond lasted long enough for that to happen.

When the pond had shrunk to less than six feet across, in mid-July, white tadpoles appeared. That was another unexpected discovery, and I haven't been able to find a reference to white wood frog tadpoles. Hulse also makes it clear that not a lot is known about the lives of marbled salamanders either, which is why I will continue to be a watcher at my seasonal pond next spring. There is still so much to be learned about our natural world. Who knows what discoveries I will make? ❖



Mike Jackson meanders among the ancient cedars in British Columbia.

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

Junjata Valley Audubon
P.O. Box 42
Tyrone, Pennsylvania 16686