

The Gnatcatcher

Newsletter of Juniata Valley Audubon

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as a benefit for members of the...

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY



President's Message

President's Message:

-Laura Jackson

Have you heard about National Audubon's new program? It's called **Plants for Birds:**
www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds

Based on your zip code, the program not only lists and describes shrubs, trees, and fruit that are best for birds, but it also provides a link to local and regional plant nurseries where you can buy the native plants. While it is a challenge to find native rooted plants, it is relatively easy to purchase seeds. What? Plant a tree from a seed? Dr. Tallamy does - his oak tree that grew from the acorn he planted in his front yard is now a beautiful tree, fourteen years after planting. If you aren't that patient, and need to buy potted plants, one of the best resources to consult is the **Pennsylvania Native Plant Society**. They organize a wonderful native plant sale the first Saturday in May and list the plants on their website prior to the sale, so you can check with vendors in advance. Their list of native plant sources and plant sales is quite extensive: www.panativeplantsociety.org/

Dr. Doug Tallamy, author of "Bringing Nature Home," points out that everyone who has a yard can help birds by planting native trees, shrubs, and flowers that provide food for birds - especially those plants that support caterpillars. His research shows that white oak trees support the most species of caterpillars, followed by other oaks, native cherry, willow, and birch.

Unfortunately, most landscape designers deliberately choose non-native plants because they aren't eaten as much by our native insects, but that effectively creates a "no-fly" zone for birds. Birds have to fly right past the exotic plants because these plants don't have the insects needed to sustain them, especially when birds are feeding young. Doug Tallamy has found that contrary to what many people believe, "birds do not reproduce on berries and seeds. **Ninety-six percent of terrestrial birds rear their young on insects.**" Because native caterpillars did not evolve with nonnative plants, most lack the ability to overcome the plants' chemical defenses and cannot eat them.

Fall is considered by many to be the best time to plant trees and shrubs since new root growth is encouraged without new top growth, when the air becomes cooler than the ground. There is usually more moisture in the fall, too, so the plants have a better developed root system by next spring when the plant begins to grow.

Inventory your yard this fall and find a spot where you can plant a native tree. Then stand back and watch for chickadees!



Dr. Tallamy found that during the breeding season, Carolina chickadees and other birds need a lot of insects - in the case of chickadees, more than 5,000 per clutch of hatchlings - and most of these were caterpillars.

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).

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Calling All Christmas Bird Counters!



The JVAS Blair County Christmas Bird Count (CBC), centered around Culp, will be held on **Saturday, December 16, 2017** with a Tally Dinner (aka "tally rally") to be held at The Dream Restaurant, starting at 5 P.M. The pay-your-own dinner is open to all, so you can attend even if you can't help with the CBC. The Dream is located at 1500 Allegheny St., Hollidaysburg, PA.

Please contact Christmas Bird Count Coordinator Laura Jackson no later than **Saturday, Dec. 9** to reserve your place at the Tally Dinner. Call 814-652-9268 or email jacksonlaura73@gmail.com.

We hope YOU will be a counter this year! We are always in need of more participants, so check with birder friends and invite them to participate, too. Participation is free. In addition to field surveys, we need feeder watchers. If you live in the count circle (within 7.5 miles of Culp), you are encouraged to record the birds you see on your property or at your feeder.

Counters will be assigned a section of the circle to cover, so if you have a favorite area, be sure to sign up early. Register by calling Laura Jackson. You will receive a map showing which part of the circle to cover, a species checklist, and pointers on any bird hot spots that might be in your part of the circle. We will assign the count areas in early December, so if you have a favorite area that you want to cover, contact Laura before December 10.



Also, we hope you will attend the **Sunday, Dec. 3 Pre-CBC Workshop** to help us organize the event. We will meet at 2 pm, Hawthorn Building Lobby, Penn State Altoona campus. Call Laura if you plan to attend.

There are 3 other Christmas Bird Counts in our area that need participants:

Huntingdon Co. CBC is centered around Donation, PA.

Contact compiler Deb Grove: 814-643-3295 or dsg4@psu.edu

Bedford Co. CBC on Saturday, December 30, is centered around Manns Choice, PA.

Contact compilers Mike and Laura Jackson: 814-652-9268 or jacksonlaura73@gmail.com

Raystown CBC: Contact compiler Greg Grove for more details: gw2@psu.edu

JVAS Events in November and December 2017

Check our Facebook page for updates. If you are not on Facebook, join the JVAS Listserv. Directions may be found at www.JVAS.org.

November Evening Program:

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

A free dinner is included and starts at 6:30 PM.

We meet in the Bellwood-Antis Library at 526 Main Street, Bellwood, PA.

Directions: Take Interstate I-99 to the Bellwood/Route 865 Exit (Exit 41). Follow Rt. 865 through the Sheetz/Martin's intersection. Proceed about 4 blocks and turn right at the "Business District" sign, just before the railroad overpass. Turn left at the dead end and travel to the stop sign. Continue straight for a short distance; the library will be on your right.

Evening Program: Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2017: Birding Trip to Gambia by Susan Braun

Join us for an exciting evening as we travel far-afield with Susan to relive her birding trip to Gambia. Susan is also teaming up with Catie Farr to create some delicious Gambian food, so come early to enjoy dinner.

"Birding and Ecotourism in The Gambia" – The Gambia is one of the smallest countries in Africa but it is a bird watcher's paradise. It has a variety of habitats: estuaries, mangrove swamps, riverine forests, marshland, and the edge of the West African savannah forest. With over 560 bird species of birds, abundant nature reserves and many eco-lodges, it has many birding and nature watching opportunities. Susan Braun will describe her experience when she visited this tiny country three ½ years ago.

Field Trip: Friday, Nov 24: Lower Trail Hike 1 - 4 pm

Shed those turkey and pumpkin pie pounds while enjoying an easy hike from Mount Etna to Alfarata on the Lower Trail. Meet at the Alfarata Station Trailhead parking lot on Main Street in Alexandria at 1pm. We'll carpool from Alfarata to the Mount Etna Trailhead and then hike approximately 5 miles on this rail trail along the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River back to Alfarata. After the hike, we can gather at Paesano's for food and drink (but definitely not more turkey and pumpkin pie)! Contact field trip leader, Kristin Joivell, with any questions you may have at (814)386-6267.

Workshop: Sunday, Dec. 3: Pre-Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Workshop 2 pm - 4 pm

We will strategize our efforts on finding the most birds on the CBC Day and organize counter locations so participants know what areas to cover. Meet in the lobby of the Hawthorn Building on Penn State Altoona campus. Please contact Laura Jackson if you plan to attend: 814-652-9268 or jacksonlaura73@gmail.com

Christmas Bird Count and Tally Dinner: Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017: Blair County

Please contact Christmas Bird Count Coordinator Laura Jackson by December 1, if you can participate in the CBC and call no later than **Saturday, Dec. 9** to reserve your place at the Tally Dinner. The pay-your-own dinner is open to all, so you can attend even if you can't help with the CBC. We will meet at The Dream at 5 PM on Dec. 16, which is located at 1500 Allegheny St., Hollidaysburg, PA. Call Laura at 814-652-9268 or email jacksonlaura73@gmail.com.

Christmas Bird Count and Tally Dinner: Saturday, Dec. 30, 2017: Bedford County **The Tally Dinner will be at Ed's Steakhouse at 5 pm on Dec. 30.**

Contact compilers Mike and Laura Jackson: 814-652-9268 or jacksonlaura73@gmail.com
There are 2 other Christmas Bird Counts in our area that need participants:

Huntingdon Co. CBC is centered around Donation, PA.

Contact compiler Deb Grove: 814-643-3295 or dsg4@psu.edu

Raystown CBC: Contact compiler Greg Grove for more details: gwg2@psu.edu

John Lennox, Ph.D.

October 17, 1941 — September 1, 2017

by Paula Ford

If you read John's obituary, you learned the basics of his life: Born in Parkersburg, WV, the son of Andrew and Muriel (Norton) Lennox. Married to Arlene Abel Lennox, father of Colin and Emily, brother of Robert and his wife Joanne, uncle of Kelly and Scott. Graduate of Jenner-Boswell Joint High School, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Chicago with a Master's and Ph.D. in botany. Professor of microbiology at Penn State Altoona. Member of JVAS. He served as vice president from 1984-88 and as interim president in 1985 while the Bontas were in Peru.

Those are the barest of facts, but if you've ever spent time with John at a JVAS meeting or field trip, you learned something because John was a passionate learner and always a generous teacher. I remember an early field trip with John: He named every fern we saw using both common and Latin names, pointed out their growth habits, and discussed their significance in the ecosystem. Although the focus of the field trip was ferns, John also pointed out and discussed other interesting plants along the hike, and of course everyone stopped to look at birds. Soon after, he and Emily took Jessica and me to Tytoona Cave to see walking ferns. He sparked an interest in ferns that I still have.

John's passion for teaching was recognized in the awards he won locally at Penn State Altoona, University-wide, and nationally. Just a few of his many awards were the Amoco Foundation Award for Excellence in Teaching Performance (1984), the Penn State Continuing Education Recognition Award for Academic Excellence (1992), and the National Association of Biology Teachers Two-Year College Teaching Award (1995). In 1999, he was asked to contribute a chapter for *Many Faces Many Microbes: Personal Reflections in Microbiology*, published by the American Society for Microbiology. He titled his chapter "To Be a Teacher," and it laid out his philosophy of good science teaching: "I would suggest that the best method integrates the content, process, and ethics of scientific discourse."



John was eager to share his research on biofilms with local groups like the Bedford Co. Bird and Nature Club.

If you've ever been in the hospital or visited a physician's or vet's office in our area, chances are good that you've talked to a student of John's. Not including students scattered around the country, locally are one practicing vet (and one retired), several optometrists, two physicians, and dozens (probably hundreds) of nurses who studied microbiology with John. Recently, I had an appointment with my dermatologist. He said, "I was taught by giants. First and foremost was Dr. Lennox." He explained that he didn't just learn microbiology from Dr. Lennox, but also learned the scientific method and how to study science. These lessons made his studies at University Park and medical school much easier and more enjoyable.

John's early research was on aflatoxins and after retirement, he spent several summers at the Center for Biofilm Engineering at Montana State. There he developed online resources for teaching about biofilms. At Penn State Altoona, he also developed outreach programs for youth including environmental biology, nature in winter, and dinosaurs. He also served as the Coordinator of the University Scholars Program for many years.

John's interests included ballroom dancing, making jewelry, camping, and hiking. He was an Eagle Scout and later a Scout leader. He and Arlene were avid travelers and always willing to share details of their latest trip. In recent years, he began sketching and watercolor painting in travel and nature journals. He and Arlene gave a JVAS sponsored workshop/field trip that shared techniques for nature journals.

John was one of the best conversationalists I have ever known. He could discuss anything from climate change to critical thinking to the transformation of Sheldon Cooper's character on *The Big Bang Theory*. Every discussion with John would leave me with fresh insights. I'll miss him, and I know those of us from the early JVAS days will, too.

Rest in peace, dearest of friends.



John shared an impromptu lesson on nature sketching at JVAS picnic a few years ago.



A heartfelt thanks to Terri and Alan Swann. They have edited the JVAS newsletters for the past three years and have done a wonderful job, so our conservation message could reach our members in a timely fashion. Our newsletter is attractive, informative, and an important source of conservation news. We greatly appreciated your help, Terri and Alan.

Please email Dave Bonta at bontasaurus@yahoo.com if you are interested in helping with this important endeavor. JVAS is only as strong as our volunteers, so please step up if you are willing to become our next editor for ***The Gnatcatcher***. Articles for the next newsletter are due on December 10, 2017.

Not on Facebook? Join the JVAS Listserv for timely updates:

To subscribe, send an e-mail message to JVAS-L-subscribe-request@lists.psu.edu with **SUBSCRIBE** in the subject line.

After you have been added to the JVAS-L mailing list, you can send a message to JVAS-@lists.psu.edu

...which will be routed to all the people currently subscribed to the list.

You can unsubscribe from the list at any time by sending an email to JVAS-L-signoff-request@lists.psu.edu ...with **UNSUBSCRIBE** in the subject line.



Please Welcome Our New Intern: Matt Pettinato



We first met Matt last spring, when he participated in the 2nd Annual Earth Day Birding Classic. Matt organized a college student birding team called the **Scranton Spotters** (his hometown is Scranton), which won the TOWHEE prize, since they “spotted” the highest number of bird species in a single county: 52 species in Blair County, to be exact. Matt is a Junior at PSU Altoona majoring in Business with an Entrepreneurship Option, and has a minor in Environmental Studies. Matt is also a Sheetz Fellows Entrepreneurial Program Aspirant. According to Matt, his favorite birding spot is, “Kayaking along the Susquehanna River near my hometown,” and his favorite bird is the beautiful wood duck. In addition to birding and kayaking, Matt enjoys hiking, mountain biking, skateboarding, and snowboarding. He and a friend just started a new business selling vintage 90’s era clothing. This endeavor seems like a perfect fit with JVAS, as we support recycling. Some of Matt’s duties as a JVAS Intern include:

- Assisting JVAS with the Christmas Bird Count by adding digital route maps, recruiting new counters in the Altoona area, and creating a WhatsApp group
- Adding eBird data for the campus area
- Research on non-profit grant agencies
- Research on new binoculars to purchase for birding workshops
- Contributing to JVAS Board meeting topics

Thank you, Matt, for being willing to work with us and for joining JVAS.

CONSERVATION CROSSROADS is a section of *The Gnatcatcher* that features environmental issues across a spectrum of local, national, and global concerns. Contact JVAS President Laura Jackson, if you know of an issue that deserves our attention and subsequent action. Background information on these concerns is found at www.JVAS.org. Click on the Conservation tab.

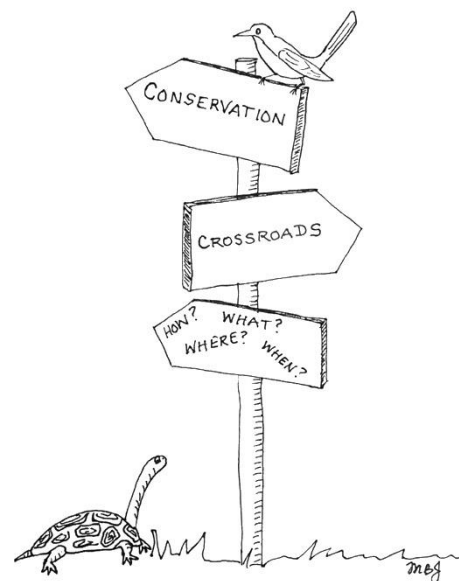
Updates:

1. Proposed Limestone Quarry near the Lower Trail in Blair Co., PA
2. Proposed CAFO in Catharine Twp., Blair Co., PA
3. Sunoco’s Mariner East Pipeline across PA
4. Proposed Hawn’s Bridge Peninsula Development
5. CACAO Project/ Honduras Bird Conservation Projects
6. Industrial Wind Projects
7. Pumped Hydro Storage Projects

Local environmental issues continue to expand in severity and in number. Here are a few updates on the issues listed above.

1. Proposed Limestone Quarry near the Lower Trail in Blair Co., PA

The developer has not yet applied to DEP for a large non-coal mining permit and has not submitted project details to other agencies, so we are in a holding pattern until the application is released.



CONSERVATION CROSSROADS continued...

2. Hog Farm CAFO in Catharine Twp., Blair Co., PA

We recently learned that the owners of Hemlock Lane Farm withdrew their loan application to the Farm Service Agency, so that ended the environmental assessment process. Construction on the hog farm barn has begun, since the Blair Co. Conservation District approved the construction permit, and DEP issued the CAFO permit on Sept. 1, 2017. This will be the second CAFO for Blair County. If you are wondering why we are concerned about the increase of CAFOs in our chapter area, just Google, "Going Public with Concerns about CAFOs."

3. Sunoco's Mariner East Pipeline across PA

Despite over 85 incidents that include spills of drilling fluid into Pennsylvania streams and rivers, as well as wetland violations, the company continues to drill its way toward Marcus Hook, near Philadelphia. The impact of horizontal directional drilling (HDD) is of special concern. Sunoco has been ordered by DEP to provide additional evaluation reports before more HDD can be completed.

4. Proposed Hawn's Bridge Peninsula Development in Raystown Lake, Huntingdon Co. PA

The Army Corps of Engineers did not approve any development on Hawn's Bridge for now, but the Master Plan for Raystown is slated for an update, which may change the status of Hawn's Bridge.

5. CACAO Project/Honduras Bird Conservation Projects:

The JVAS committee for this initiative is called "Partners In Neotropical Bird Conservation." In addition to JVAS members, it includes a diverse group of birders, biologists, ornithologists, and other groups who are working together to promote bird conservation, with a focus on Honduras and on Golden-winged Warblers. Jody Enck, a new member who is part of the Cuyahoga Bird Club in New York, has set up a program to promote collaboration between different bird clubs and Audubon chapters. Check out: www.sisterbirdclubnetwork.com

6. Industrial Wind Projects:

A. Invenergy's Proposed Shade Wind Energy Center on Shaffer Mountain, Somerset Co.: Shade Twp. recently voted to extend the setbacks from 1.5 times the turbine height to 2.5 times the turbine height to property lines, occupied buildings, and public roads. This restriction will provide a bit more protection to non-participating property owners. No permits have been applied for, or issued for this project.

B. NextEra is pressuring the Pennsylvania Game Commission to allow a wind turbine project named Waymart II Wind Project to be built on State Game Lands #300 in Lackawanna Co. along the top of Moosic Mountain. We are concerned over impacts to scrub oak barrens, nesting Bald Eagles, and Northern Long-eared Bats.

Anyone who hears of new wind leases is asked to contact Laura Jackson: jacksonlaura73@gmail.com

7. Pumped Hydro Storage Projects:

A. What are these? See the article in our Sept./October newsletter for background information.

B. The Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee will hold an Environmental Issues Forum on November 13 at Noon in Harrisburg. Adam Rouselle will discuss his company's plans to build 20 pumped hydro storage projects in Pennsylvania. Two projects are proposed for Blair County, one in Bedford Co. and four in Somerset County. Laura Jackson plans to attend the Forum and hopes to speak during the public comment session. Please contact Laura at jacksonlaura73@gmail.com if you would like to attend the Forum.

Updates on this issue will be posted at www.JVAS.org

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**Support “our birds” on their wintering grounds by purchasing
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Cultivated by a small group of farmers in Maracala, Honduras, Lenca coffee is one of the best Arabica coffees in the world. Emilio Garcia and his family have been cultivating coffee since 1915. Now they partner with Sustainable Harvest Specialty Coffee Importers in Portland, Oregon so they can direct market their top quality, organic shade coffee in the U.S. JVAS is partnering with Emilio Garcia to help direct market his family’s coffee. Freshly brewed Lenca coffee will be available at our JVAS monthly meetings.

You can purchase bags of green coffee or medium roast coffee. Green coffee is \$6.00 per 1-pound bag. A 1-pound bag of medium roast ground, or whole bean, is \$12. A 2-pound bag of medium roast ground, or whole bean, is \$22. Coffee will be served at monthly meetings and will be available for purchase.

You can also order on-line at www.raggededgerc.com. Be sure to order the Honduran Marcala coffee.

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