

# The Gnatcatcher

## Newsletter of Juniata Valley Audubon

Vol. XLIX, No. 4 — Sept/Oct 2017

Published bimonthly (except for July and August)

as a benefit for members of the...

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY



### President's Message

## President's Message:

-Laura Jackson

### Summer reflections....

I'm already missing the morning chorus of bird songs. Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanagers, Ovenbirds, Cerulean Warblers, and Hooded Warblers aren't singing near my house any more, even though the Carolina Wrens, Indigo Buntings, and Eastern Towhees are still serenading us. The Field Sparrow goes non-stop from dawn to dusk, but the dawn assemblage is reduced to a few soloists and is missing the wow power that I enjoyed just a few months ago.

More native shrubs are providing food for the migrants. Just a few months ago, birds were flocking to the Serviceberry fruit. On June 15, Mike and I watched 5 scarlet tanagers (4 males and 1 female) in the small Serviceberry tree in our front yard, feasting on the sweet dark fruit. That was exciting! Now the Spicebush and Winterberry Holly are advertising their bright red fruit. Catbirds and Robins are feasting on the fruit of our Black Chokeberry and Elderberry shrubs, but fruit on the Pokeweed and Dogwood shrubs aren't ripe yet. Later migrants will benefit from these fruits when they ripen.

Right now, the insect pollinators are the stars in our yard as they feast on pollen and nectar of Joe-Pye-Weed, Ironweed, Swamp Milkweed, Boneset, and Cardinal flowers. The big clump of Boneset in our rain garden had over 100 bees on it last week. Our Partridge Pea patch is in full bloom and that's a bumble bee heaven each morning. Oddly enough, the bumble bees are gone from the patch in the afternoon - did they take all the nectar or does the Partridge Pea release its nectar only in the morning?

The heavy rains we had in late June knocked down the populations of butterflies, but now it's thrilling to see so many Monarch butterflies, Fritillaries, and Spicebush Swallowtails nectaring on a variety of native flowers. Having so many insects to watch this time of year makes it a little easier to say goodbye to the birds.

It's exciting to watch the progression of plant blooms, insects, and birds as different ones come and go throughout the seasons. We'll see some birds only as migrants that come to our bubbling boulder for water: Bay-breasted Warblers, Palm Warblers, and the endangered Blackpoll Warblers drop by for a drink and a bath in the spring and fall. The sound of the recirculating water attracts the birds and they will often bathe in the little pools on the rock, or they'll sit right at the bubble and create quite a splash. Other birds, like the Tufted Titmouse, are regular visitors. First one drops down from the Redbud tree above the boulder, then another, and another - a family group. I was surprised one day this summer to see a Black-and-White Warbler drop down from the tree to take a bath. What other birds hang out in that tree that we don't see at all?

I admire the rare bird chasers who drive for hours to see birds like the White-winged Tern, a Eurasian species that showed up for the first time in Pennsylvania earlier this summer. I'm challenged enough chasing after the birds and insects in my own yard. I wonder what will show up tomorrow?

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

- ♦ 814-652-9268
- ♦ [mljackson2@embargmail.com](mailto:mljackson2@embargmail.com)

**Vice President,** Mark Bonta

- ♦ 610-348-3282
- ♦ [mab86@psu.edu](mailto:mab86@psu.edu)

**Secretary,** Sharon Clewell

- ♦ 814-207-5387
- ♦ [sclewellp@hotmail.com](mailto:sclewellp@hotmail.com)

**Treasurer,** George Mahon

- ♦ 814-942-2658
- ♦ [gsm815@hotmail.com](mailto:gsm815@hotmail.com)

**Immediate Past President,** Dave Bonta

- ♦ 814-686-7274
- ♦ [bontasaurus@yahoo.com](mailto:bontasaurus@yahoo.com)

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Membership Committee,** Debra Grim

- ♦ 814-667-2149
- ♦ [Dsgrim02@gmail.com](mailto:Dsgrim02@gmail.com)

**Conservation Committee,** Ethan Farr

- ♦ 570-317-5734
- ♦ [Efarr6647@gmail.com](mailto:Efarr6647@gmail.com)

**Education Committee,** Jake Vaughn

- ♦ 814-934-0018
- ♦ [jrv5164@psu.edu](mailto:jrv5164@psu.edu)

**Field Trips Committee,** Susan Braun

- ♦ 814-574-0795
- ♦ [Braun3112@gmail.com](mailto:Braun3112@gmail.com)

**Programs Committee,** Mark Bonta

- ♦ 610-348-3282
- ♦ [mab86@psu.edu](mailto:mab86@psu.edu)

**Publications & Publicity Comm.,** Dave Bonta

- ♦ 814-686-7274
- ♦ [bontasaurus@yahoo.com](mailto:bontasaurus@yahoo.com)

**Hospitality Committee,** Catie Farr

- ♦ 570-651-3839
- ♦ [Catiegk5059@gmail.com](mailto:Catiegk5059@gmail.com)

**Historian,** Mike Jackson

- ♦ 814-652-9268
- ♦ [mljackson2@embargmail.com](mailto:mljackson2@embargmail.com)

**Website Administrator,** Dave Bonta

- ♦ 814-686-7274
- ♦ [bontasaurus@yahoo.com](mailto:bontasaurus@yahoo.com)

#### DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

- ♦ Warren Baker
- ♦ Marcia Bonta
- ♦ Kristin Joviell

## JVAS Bluebird Trail and Pollinator Garden at Fort Roberdeau Report

by Stan Kotala

- ♦ The JVAS Bluebird Trail at Fort Roberdeau has grown to 40 boxes. About half were occupied by bluebirds and half by tree swallows, as usual. This year was less successful than last due to very cold weather in early May resulting in the loss of several bluebird broods.
- ♦ The nesting season is now over and Stan has begun cleaning and repairing the boxes. Several have needed new roofs. Pictures of the trail can be found on the JVAS Facebook page.
- ♦ The JVAS Pollinator Garden at Fort Roberdeau was expanded this year with the removal of the non-native yews that were planted at that location in the 1990's. Pictures of the garden can be found on the JVAS Facebook page.



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



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

# Earth Day Birding Classic 2017

FINAL TALLY & SUMMARY by Mark Bonta

From noon on April 22 to noon on April 23, seven teams with 23 members total competed in four categories in this second annual competitive birding fundraiser coordinated by the Juniata Valley Audubon Society. Catherine and Ethan Farr organized the event, with assistance from Mark Bonta, Laura Jackson, and Jake Vaughn. Though the potential count area included six counties, teams focused their efforts on Centre, Huntingdon, Bedford, and Blair. Notables included White-eyed Vireo in Centre, Marsh Wren and American Bittern in Huntingdon, Bobolink and Caspian Tern in Bedford, Great Egret and Rusty Blackbird in Blair, and a plethora of waterfowl as well as wood-warblers and other Nearctic-Neotropical migrants, including several FOY (first-of-year) reports for the area. In total, **135** species were recorded—seven more than in 2016.

We would like to thank all participants, as well as the sponsors and assistants who made the prizes and Sunday closing-ceremony feast possible--and, most of all, the many donors who pledged over \$1600 to support bird conservation and education in the area. For a full accounting of sponsor and donor support, and for any questions involving organization of the Classic, please contact Catherine Farr (catiegk5059@gmail.com). See you next year!

Teams, except the Coots, were required to have 3 members:



- **Beards and Birds (BB)**. Won Grand Prize (RUFFED GROUSE) for highest tally, with 103 species. Led by Jon Kauffman with Noel Bond, Ben Steines, and Doug Wentzel. Birded Huntingdon Co.
- **Scranton Spotters (SS)**. Won TOWHEE prize with 52 species in a single county (Blair Co.). Led by Matt Pettinato, with Matt Learn, Brendan Scanland, and Andrew Brandt (all college students).
- **Feathered Body Inspectors (FBI)**. Won PIPIT prize with 91 species - walked over 16 miles on foot at Bald Eagle State Park. Came in 2<sup>nd</sup>. Led by Brian Schmoke with John Carter, Linder Carter, Mark Nale, Sean Herrmann, and Allie Causey.
- **The Raptors (RP)**. Won OSPREY prize with 31 species for a Penn State student team. Led by Jake Vaughn with Angie Spagnoli, and Korey Weyant, and help from 9-year old Anthony Spagnoli - the youngest birder in the Classic. Covered Blair Rec area in Tipton and also Canoe Creek State Park.
- **Black Valley Buzzards (BV)**. Won COOT prize with 78 species. Coot teams can have 2 or more members, but all members must be 65+ years of age. Led by Laura Jackson with Mike Jackson. Birded at Old Crow Wetlands in Huntingdon, and the northern part of Bedford Co., including Shawnee State Park.
- **White-crowned Sparrows (WCS)**—Blair Co. (Coot category). 53 species. Led by Marcia Bonta with Bruce Bonta. Birded Plummer's Hollow, Sinking Valley, and Canoe Creek State Park.
- **The Trés Amigos (3A)**—Blair Co. (Coot category). 66 species. Led by John Orr with George Mahon and Larry McGraw.



## A Few Photos from JVAS Community Activities

JVAS took part in the Juniata Valley Elementary Family Science Night on May 10, 2017, organized by Kristin Joivell. The students enjoyed the bird activities supervised by Mike Jackson. Sixth grader, Katie Boone (pictured below with Kristin), won the free bird guide book in the JVAS drawing.



After a JVAS picnic at Canoe Creek State Park, we went on a Nature Walk open to the public. The food was great, especially Susan Braun's owl cookies, and we all enjoyed a leisurely walk along Mary Ann's Creek.



The Wings In The Park was a popular event at the Snetsinger Butterfly Garden in State College on July 22, 2017. Hundreds of children and adults stopped by the JVAS "Hummingbird Central" booth to take part in educational activities, directed by Laura Jackson and Susan Braun.



# JVAS Field Trips for 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](http://www.JVAS.org).**

Field trip chair is Susan Braun: [braun3112@gmail.com](mailto:braun3112@gmail.com), cell phone (814)574-0795

## **Saturday, August 26: Nature Walk from 9 am - 11 am**

Enjoy summer's best at Juniata College's Raystown Field Station (Shuster Hall at the Lakeside Center) followed by optional Partners in Neotropical Bird Conservation committee meeting and lunch at 11 am. Bring your own lunch. Trip leaders: Ian Gardner and Laura Jackson [jacksonlaura73@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonlaura73@gmail.com) (814)-652-9268 Directions to Shuster Hall at the Lakeside Center can be found at <http://www.juniata.edu/offices/field-station/directions.php>.

## **Saturday, Sept 9: Wonders of Wetlands from 1 pm - 3pm**

Tour of the Northern Blair Rec Center Wetlands just north of Altoona, Pa.

Visit the Wetland Demonstration Area behind the Northern Blair County Recreation Center. JVAS is supporting this wetlands restoration project by Angela Spagnoli. This is a nearly 15-acre wetland, consisting of vernal pools (seasonally flooded) and year-round inundated pools — making it a vital ecosystem for many amphibian and reptile species, plants, and birds. Come learn about this project, the importance of this wetland and how Angie plans to create a healthier, more functional habitat, as well as her plans for community outreach. Contact trip leader Angela Spagnoli for more details: [aas5101@psu.edu](mailto:aas5101@psu.edu) (814)889-5475

Directions: Northern Blair County Rec Center, 4080 E Pleasant Valley Blvd, Altoona.

Pull into the Rec Center and drive behind the building. There is a dirt road that runs parallel to the river alongside the ball field. Look for the wooden sign which says "Wetlands Demonstration Area." Pull into the grass right beside the sign. <https://goo.gl/maps/PamqXN254Ax>

## **Sunday, Sept 24: Bald Eagle to Barrens from 1 pm - 3pm**

Bald Eagle to Barrens Wildlife Corridor Tour. Trip leader: Susan Braun

The Barrens to Bald Eagle Wildlife Corridor is one of the last remaining natural connections allowing free passage of wildlife between State Game Lands 176 and Bald Eagle Mountain. The corridor is forever protected through a joint public/private partnership between ClearWater Conservancy, Halfmoon Township Open Space

Preservation Program, County Planning and Community Development Office, and private donors. The Scotia Barrens and Bald Eagle Mountain are both designated "Important Bird Areas" and "Important Mammal Areas" because they provide large, unique, or critical habitat for many bird and mammal species. Residential development threatens to isolate these two natural land masses from each other as well as the wildlife populations they support. The wildlife corridor provides a natural connection between two critical habitats, forever ensuring safe passage.

We will tour the grass and wildflower meadows and woodland areas to learn about the importance of wildlife corridors and the diverse community of bird, mammal, plant, pollinator, and amphibian species they support. This is an easy walk over mown paths.

Directions: Address: 235 Harness Downs Road, Port Matilda, PA

Take US 322 West to SR 550 (Buffalo Run Road). Travel 2.9 miles to Saddle Ridge Road on the left. Travel Saddle Ridge Road taking first right onto Harness Downs Road. Follow Harness Downs Road to its end and the parking area. The hiking trail begins in the extreme left-hand corner of the parking lot. Please note: speed limit is 25 mph on Saddle Ridge and Harness Downs Roads. Please be a thoughtful visitor and strictly obey the speed limit. <https://goo.gl/maps/ufw4DK7Z9VL2>

## **Sunday, October 1: A Walk in Penn's Woods from 2pm - 5pm**

A Walk in Penn's Woods is a new initiative to get people out in the woods. Trip leaders: Mike and Laura Jackson (814)652-9268. Address: 8621 Black Valley Road Everett, PA

This exploratory nature walk will feature habitat projects like vernal pools and young forest management that attract a diversity of wildlife. Bring your binoculars, if possible, and your curiosity, as we will take a close look at all sorts of plants and animals. Meet at the Jackson's house a few miles south of Everett, PA.

**Directions:** Take I-99 South to the Everett exit. Follow Rt. 30 East for about 8 miles. Take the exit for Business Rt. 30 into Everett. Turn Right onto 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and cross a bridge over the Raystown Branch. (If you pass the Everett Foodliner you have gone too far.) Then make an immediate Right onto Black Valley Road. After 2.5 miles, turn Right onto a gravel road labeled "The Jacksons." Follow this lane for 0.5 miles and watch for parking signs. Note: Your GPS may not take you far enough on Black Valley Road, so keep going until you see our lane on the Right.



## JVAS Field Trips for 2017 continued...

### **Saturday, Oct 21: Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch from 8am - 4pm**

Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch: Joint trip with State College Bird Club. October 28 is the rain date. Trip leaders: Susan Braun and Jon Kauffman

Join State College Bird Club for a trip to Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch in Carlisle, PA. October is a great time for a variety of raptors and maybe even an early golden eagle. Bring your camera and binoculars, pack water and a lunch, bring sun protection, and dress in layers of clothing (conditions are often cooler and windier on the ridge). A low chair or soft cushion is helpful if you don't like sitting on rocks. There is a portable toilet at the north parking lot. Plan to meet at Pennsylvania Military Museum in Boalsburg, PA at 8am to carpool to the site or plan to drive on your own and meet at the site.

Directions to: Pennsylvania Military Museum  
<https://goo.gl/maps/LCVCK3dVNq82>  
Address: 51 Boal Avenue, Boalsburg, PA

Directions to: Waggoner's Gap  
<http://www.waggap.com/Directions.htm>

### **Friday, Nov 24: Lower Trail Hike from 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.

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## JVAS Fall 2017 Programs

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

We meet in the Bellwood-Antis Library at 526 Main Street, Bellwood, PA for our evening meetings, except on Oct 12, when we will be at the Altoona Library.

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.

New this year: Hospitality  
Chair, Catie Farr, and Chef  
Ethan Farr, will provide a hot  
dinner starting at 6:30 pm.  
Yippee!!



## JVAS Fall 2017 Programs continued...

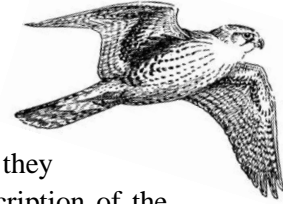
### **Tuesday, September 19, 2017: “Trapping and Banding Migrant Raptors on Tussey Mountain”**

presented by Mark Shields and Randy Flement, with **Thistle**, a live peregrine falcon

6:30 pm: Hot dinner

7:00 pm: Short business meeting, including Bird ID review

7:30 - 9 pm: Evening Program will cover the history of Mark and Randy’s banding efforts on Tussey Mountain: the size of the raptor flight, the species of raptors that they see and capture, including photos of the birds in flight and in-hand. A brief description of the trapping methods and banding procedures will also be explained. A special part of the program will be an opportunity to see a live falcon. We will see and learn about Mark’s Peregrine Falcon, Thistle.



### **Thursday, October 12, 2017: Altoona Library “Chasing Coral” film from 5:30 - 8 pm.**

JVAS is partnering with the Altoona Library to show this free film that documents a team of divers, photographers and scientists as they participate in a thrilling ocean adventure to discover why coral reefs are vanishing at an unprecedented rate. Enjoy free refreshments and a short discussion about the film. Film starts at 5:30pm.

### **Tuesday, October 17, 2017: “The Wonders of Herps: Live Reptiles and Amphibians”**

presented by Jake Vaughn, JVAS Education Chair, and Jason Beale, Shaver’s Creek Program Director

6:30 pm: Hot dinner

7:00 pm: Short business meeting, including Bird ID review

7:30 - 9 pm: Evening program will feature live amphibians and reptiles native to our area of Pennsylvania. Get a close-up look at a variety of turtles, snakes, and frogs. Learn more about the biology of these native species, as well as conservation concerns.

### **Tuesday, November 21, 2017: Two-part presentation:**

#### **“Northern Blair County Rec Center Wetland Restoration and Education Project”**

**presented by Angela Spagnoli and “What Can We Learn From Monitoring PA State Park Nest Boxes?” by Dr. Laura Palmer**

Angela Spagnoli will be presenting an update on her restoration project of the Northern Blair County Rec Center wetland. She will discuss how she utilized funding from the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual JVAS Earth Day Birding Classic to aid in the removal of invasive plant species and the planting of native species. Additionally, she will review conducted surveys, prepared reports, and future planning involving the site.

Dr. Palmer will discuss her involvement with the Cavity-Nesting Trail Program run by the Pennsylvania State Parks. In addition to being a volunteer trail monitor, Dr. Palmer has begun to analyze approximately a decade's worth of data collected by state park volunteers. She will also talk about a recent pilot study aimed at measuring nest box temperatures during the Eastern Bluebird breeding season. This project was also supported by funding from the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual JVAS Earth Day Birding Classic.

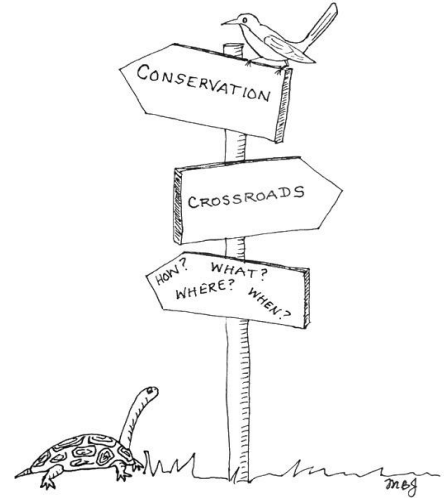
**CONSERVATION CROSSROADS** is a section of The Gnatcatcher that features environmental issues across a spectrum of local, national, and global concerns. Contact JVAS President Laura Jackson, if you know of an issue that deserves our attention and subsequent action.

Background information on these concerns is found at [www.JVAS.org](http://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. Catharine Township supervisors held a meeting with PennDOT regarding concerns over road damage by big trucks and increased traffic. More specific details will be addressed when PennDOT receives the application.

2. **Proposed CAFO in Catharine Twp., Blair Co., PA.** We have not seen any notices of a final review period or other status update on the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process involving the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation hog farm proposal on the Brubaker property, but building plans are moving ahead: Catherine Township has received matching funds for upgrading the township road that goes through the Brubaker property and right by the proposed building site. It ends at PA Game Commission land. The existing road would not have been useable for hog farm traffic. Also, Valley Rural Electric is installing a new 3-phase line on the Brubaker property.

3. **Sunoco's Mariner East Pipeline across Pa.** Despite landowner resistance and industry setbacks, Sunoco (now part of Energy Transfer Partners) continues to build its pipeline through highly populated areas. A visit to one JVAS landowner in Blair County who is impacted showed temporary soil displacement, but also the permanent damage, as a block valve station was built on their property. Block valves are installed for the purpose of shutting off sections of the pipeline to allow maintenance or to stop flow in the case of emergencies.

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:** JVAS has contacted a newly formed bird club in Marcala, Honduras and hopes to work with members on bird education and conservation projects. Chris Fischer, a member of the JVAS Partners in Neotropical Bird Conservation Committee, will give a presentation about our efforts at the 21st Congress of the Mesoamerican Society of Biology and Conservation and 6th International Meeting of Partners in Flight Conference in Costa Rica in November. JVAS is helping to fund his participation.

6. **Industrial Wind Projects:** Invenergy continues to make progress on its potential wind project in Somerset County directly adjacent to Bedford County. In August, the Ogle Township supervisors voted to keep their existing wind ordinance, instead of strengthening the setbacks and noise restrictions requested by JVAS and the adjacent non-participating landowners. Shade Township has not voted on any changes yet, but will address those in September.

Anyone who hears of new wind leases is asked to contact Laura Jackson: [jacksonlaura73@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonlaura73@gmail.com)



## CONSERVATION CROSSROADS continued...

### 7. Pumped Hydro Storage Projects:

A. **What are these?** Water is stored in two reservoirs - an upper reservoir and a lower one. Water is released from the upper reservoir and flows through turbines located near the lower reservoir, which generate electricity during peak daytime demand. The turbines use cheaper electricity at night to pump the water back up to the upper reservoir. There is a net LOSS of electricity, but the developer generates a profit because the electricity sold during the day is more expensive than what is pulled from the grid at night. These are closed loop systems that use the same water over again, so the reservoir levels fluctuate widely and have no beneficial wildlife value. The initial water required to fill the reservoir is taken from nearby rivers and/or groundwater.

B. **Who and Where?** Merchant Hydro Developers, LLC is a 4 ½ year old company owned by Adam Rousselle, located in Doylestown, Pa. He used to run a mahogany logging operation in Honduras. He and his son submitted 17 applications to FERC for projects in Bedford, Blair (2), Bucks, Lackawanna (3), Lycoming, Northumberland, Schuylkill (2), Somerset (4) and Tioga (2) Counties. Most of these projects will require a new upper reservoir to be built on a mountain next to an existing or proposed wind project, with the lower reservoir to be built in the valley below. The two projects proposed for Blair County are next to the Sandy Ridge wind turbine project on Ice Mountain and the North Allegheny Wind project on the Allegheny Front. The project in Bedford County would also be built on the Allegheny Front south of the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch on Shaffer Mountain. There are no existing wind turbines or power lines on Shaffer Mountain, but First Energy is planning to build a new power line that will facilitate the wind and the pumped storage projects.

C. **When?** JVAS and the Department of the Interior, among others, have submitted comments to FERC detailing the potential negative environmental impacts caused by such projects, if allowed to be developed in Blair, Bedford, and Somerset Counties. Unfortunately, FERC has granted "preliminary approval" to these projects, so that gives Merchant Hydro the right to start the study and the permitting process, but no construction is allowed. They have 3 years to complete the preliminary studies and are required to submit progress reports on a regular basis to FERC. JVAS will receive these reports and will take action if it appears that the projects are viable. Fortunately, a high percentage do not progress beyond this point.

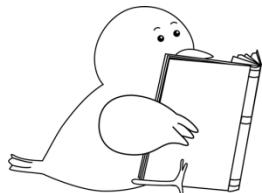
Basic information on Pumped Hydro Storage projects can be found at:

<http://energystorage.org/energy-storage/technologies/pumped-hydroelectric-storage>

Updates on this issue will be posted at [www.JVAS.org](http://www.JVAS.org)

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### Off The Shelf



We hope "Off The Shelf" will appear in every issue of *The Gnatcatcher*, but that will only happen if you send in your reviews of natural history books. We also welcome feedback. Email Laura Jackson to contribute a book review, or if you have a comment about a book that was reviewed. Please note that contributions for the next newsletter should be sent to Laura by **October 8, 2017**. Good reading!

## Off the Shelf continued...

### **Butterflies of Pennsylvania: a Field Guide** by James L. Monroe and David M. Wright

Reviewed by Laura Jackson

It isn't often that I get a free book in the mail, let alone one that is as useful and beautiful as this newly released butterfly guide. It was published in May, 2017 by the Univ. of Pittsburgh Press. According to the authors, Pennsylvania's Lepidoptera (the insect order that contains all the butterflies, skippers, and moths), hasn't been reviewed for 65 years, so you really do need an updated butterfly book even if you already have a half dozen or so on your library shelf. In addition to butterflies, the book also includes the skippers found in Pennsylvania. If you are interested in moths, I highly recommend "The Moth Book," by W.J. Holland.

The "Butterflies of Pennsylvania" field guide has over 900 striking butterfly photos - mostly life-size or larger, a map of the Pennsylvania counties showing distribution for each species, and a bar chart that shows when the butterflies are most likely to be seen. These last two attributes set the book apart from all the other insect books that I own and make it exceedingly useful.

I was surprised to learn that there are 3 species of tiger swallowtails found in our state: one is the common Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and I've always assumed that's what I've enjoyed watching all these years. But no, there is a second species called the Appalachian Tiger Swallowtail that is also found in our area. It's the largest tiger swallowtail species and is most abundant when the eastern tigers are fewer in number. But wait, there is even a 3<sup>rd</sup> species: the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail. It is the smallest tiger swallowtail and is found in the northern tier counties. Centre County is the only county where these two species meet, but they don't overlap. It is hypothesized that the Appalachian Tiger Swallowtail originated at high elevations of the southern Appalachian Mountains in previous glacial periods and may be a hybrid of the Canadian and the Eastern. More information on the genetics can be found at [https://news.utexas.edu/2011/09/09/swallowtail\\_hybrid](https://news.utexas.edu/2011/09/09/swallowtail_hybrid).

In addition to interesting facts and fantastic photos, there is information on distinguishing field marks, traits, the size, habitats, conservation status, and larval host plants. Yes, the descriptions are somewhat technical at times, but the glossary makes for quick translations.

Perusing this book also reminded me that not all white butterflies are created equal, aka the non-native Cabbage White. We do have a native white butterfly called the West Virginia White that has only one brood in the early spring (April and May). The caterpillars feed mainly on toothworts. This species is in trouble, though, due to forest fragmentation, deer browsing the toothworts, and garlic mustard. Researchers have found that the adult West Virginia White butterfly will lay its eggs on the invasive garlic mustard, but the caterpillars don't survive - most likely due to the "mustard oil" that is toxic to these butterflies.

Who doesn't love butterflies? This book helps butterfly lovers look deeper beyond the beautiful exterior of these "flying flowers" to learn just a little bit about their intricate and complex role in nature.

In case you are wondering how I got this book for free, it's because I'm the JVAS president. My term will be over in April, so if you agree to serve as the next JVAS President, I'll give you a new copy of "Butterflies of Pennsylvania: A Field Guide" for FREE.

Male Tiger Swallowtail nectaring on  
Butterfly Weed –  
but is it an Appalachian or an Eastern?



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