

JVA NEWS

 JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol 6 No 4

April 1974

The urgent need for a great creative effort has become apparent in the affairs of mankind. It is manifest that unless some unity of purpose can be achieved in the world, unless the ever more violent and disastrous incidence of war can be averted, unless some common control can be imposed on the headlong waste of man's limited inheritance of coal, oil, and moral energy that is now going on, the history of humanity must presently culminate in some sort of disaster, repeating and exaggerating the disaster of the Great War, producing chaotic social conditions, and going thereafter in a degenerative process towards extinction.

- H.G. Wells

The April Meeting

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

DATE: Tuesday, April 30th

PLACE: Twenty-eighth Street Church of the Brethren - 2800 Union Ave. Altoona, Pa.

Our April Meeting will be devoted to a study of the solid waste problem. Dr. Thomas Russo, Professor of Chemistry at the Altoona Campus and the chairman of the ad hoc committee on solid waste in Altoona, will be our guest speaker. Dr. Russo will give us the latest word on the local problems and will answer any questions members might have about solid waste disposal.

A nice color film entitled "All the Difference" will be presented to supplement our evening's study. This film deals with pollution, ecology and solid waste.

Remember - our meetings are formatted so as to have the first third devoted to members' common interests, discussion, etc. The second third is devoted to the program and the final third is given to an informal period of refreshments and talk. Keep up the good turnouts. Bring somebody new - a friend who might be interested in our programs.

Field Trip to Western Conservancy

Al Burd will be going on a wildflower expedition to the Western Conservancy on the 5th of May - the first Sunday in May - so anyone interested in going along should give him a call: 943-0586. It's possible that several carloads of people might coordinate a trip on this date.

"Bird Watchers Score: In Hawaii, They Discover a New Species"

Eight students flew in by helicopter, established a base camp in one of the world's wettest spots, and promptly discovered a new species of bird. It's a previously unknown kind of Hawaiian Honeycreeper with a distinctive black mask, found in a remote rain forest on Haleakala Volcano on Maui, the second largest Hawaiian island.

The University of Hawaii students were studying the flora and fauna of the Poo-lau and Upper Hana Forest Reserves, where the annual rainfall exceeds 400 inches. Their work is sponsored by the National Science Foundation, and their goal is to write an environmental reference work about this rain forest.

The unnamed bird was the first new one found in Hawaii in 50 years and one of the few discovered anywhere in the past decade. The discovery was called "an extremely rare event" by Dean Amadon, the Lamont curator of birds at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

The bird is 5½ inches long, about the size of an English sparrow. Its back is brownish-olive, and its underside is light buff. The bird's bill, like the mask, is black. The bird picks at tree bark for insects with its conical bill.

The bird was seen at elevations of 5,300 to 6,800 feet, almost always in the

company of three other birds in the Honeycreeper family: the Maui creeper, anakihi, and parrotbill. One of the students, James Jacobi, said the finding of this new bird "demonstrates that everything has not been discovered and documented."

- by James G. Driscoll (in National Observer)

"Rated PG, the Courtship and Mating of a Sparrow Hawk"

On Saturday, April 13, while in the yard whittling a whistle stick for the kids I heard a hawk-like scream that received the majority of my attentions. I scanned the sky to spot the source of the high pitched noise. I saw what I thought was a sparrow hawk. I had never seen one so close to the house before nor in and around the trees. The hawk climbed emitting the call and then plunging toward the ground pulled out of his dive in time at about tree top level. This he repeated several times and then disappeared beyond the pine trees near the house. I thought the show was over and went back to my whittling.

Approaching five o'clock, I heard the cries of the hawk again and saw him land in the top of a large white oak at the end of the yard. At this time I rushed into the house for my binoculars returning to see him still on his perch. I trained the glasses on him and watched for a few minutes. A slight movement about eight feet to the left of the hawk caught my eye. It was another sparrow hawk. I watched the pair for another few minutes and then the female flicked her tail up and male glided over landing on top of her and mated for 15 to 20 seconds. They separated and sat on their separate perches for a few minutes and then the female flew off in a southern direction and the male in a northernly direction.

Later I noticed the same male, or another, calling and diving. After diving five or six times he hovered in mid-air, would glide a piece and hover again. I felt that I was very fortunate to witness this spectacular event and thought I would pass it on to the Gnatcatcher readers. Spring must be here!

- Earl Higgins from Eton Hill, Spruce Ck.

Earl is planning to come in for our April meeting. He and his family will be in their new home in Bellefonte soon.

Miscellaneous Bits and Pieces

A nice graduation gift would be a students subscription to Audubon.

Al Burd is our filed trip chairman. He has proposed another trip - in late May - to the Black Moshannon State Park for birds and wildflowers.

John Orr has information on the Great Dismal Swamp of so. Virginia.

"The Big Day" for birds, especially warblers is May 11th or 12th (Sat./Sun.) One can see plenty of species migrating through on these two days.

May's program will be a slide talk by the people from the Lemmon House.

Bluebirds have been seen. John McCall's neighbors get them in houses in S. Valley; Scott Geesey saw two nesting in houses in Jefferson County, 5 mis. west of Punxsatawney. He and others have said that the lack of fence posts is a major cause of their demise.

JVAS will be represented in the fall fair - a new fair to be held right after Labor this coming Sep. at Lakemont Park. We will have a display. Get more details on this from Mrs. Slippey and Miss Sullivan (by phone or at the meetin's)

If you see violations of environmental law - no matter how seemingly insignificant, call the state officials concerned with them and give your report or complaint.

Earth Day passed quietly - April 22nd.

Peoples' Park on Sixth Avenue across from the Library needs a shot in the arm!

The Gnatcatcher
3001 4th Avenue
Altoona, Pa. 16602

The bird was seen at Altoona on 5/13/68. It was a sparrow hawk, a species of hawk that is common in the area. The bird was seen at Altoona on 5/13/68. It was a sparrow hawk, a species of hawk that is common in the area. The bird was seen at Altoona on 5/13/68. It was a sparrow hawk, a species of hawk that is common in the area.