



**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet**  
**April 16, 2019 Annual Banquet**  
**1969 - 2019**

**[www.JVAS.org](http://www.JVAS.org)**

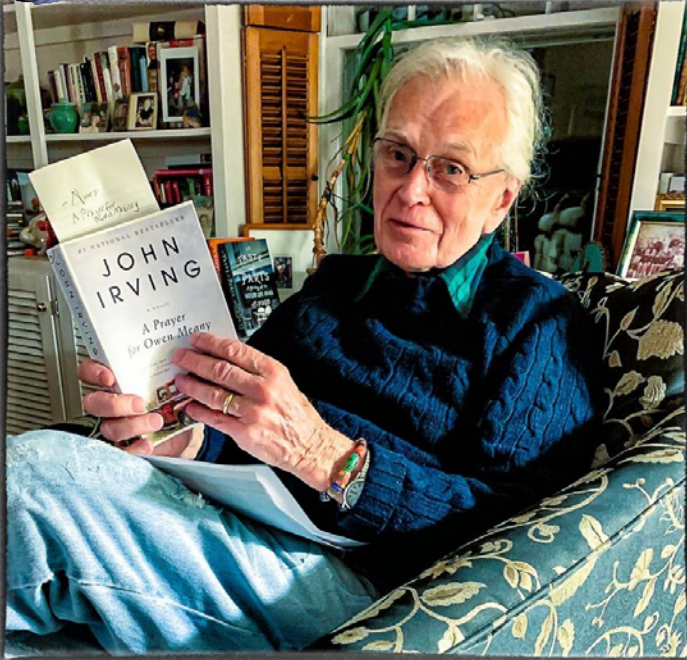
## Preface

Only fifty years! In a way, it seems hard to believe that there was ever a time when Juniata Valley Audubon Society *didn't* exist, especially for those of us who grew up with it, and have so many fond memories of outdoor adventures with the likes of Truth Close, Al Burd, Melvin Lane, Terry Wentz, Fran Burgoon... so many great naturalists and eccentrics, I can't begin to list them all. Though birds are most Audubon chapters' sole focus, JVAS members have always refused to limit ourselves to just one aspect of nature, and for most of our history, we've had as many wildflower enthusiasts as birders, with herp fans close behind.

Education has always been a core mission. In the early years, before the Discovery Channel brought nature documentaries into everyone's living room, JVAS focused heavily on screening films, but as time went on we shifted toward bringing local and regional speakers to our meetings, realizing that between Pennsylvania's dense network of universities and its welter of state conservation agencies, we could draw upon a nearly inexhaustible supply of scientists, conservationists, and wildlife photographers. In the 1980s, Colette Heller spearheaded the creation of a speaker's bureau to bring our own members into local classrooms, and to this day, current and retired school teachers make up a sizable proportion of our most active members.

We've stepped up to fight for conservation when needed, protecting the Altoona watershed from acid mine drainage, helping local townships adopt wildlife-friendly wind power ordinances, stopping a proposed quarry that threatened an endangered springtail, and more—making what civil rights hero John Lewis calls "good trouble" in the defense of nature and ecological justice. In the 1980s, JVAS was also one of the very first Audubon chapters to recognize the importance of tropical rainforest to the survival of "our" songbirds, and National Audubon itself borrowed some of our ideas. In the years since, we've built relationships with local conservationists from Peru to Honduras to Mexico. "Think globally, act locally" has always been our guiding philosophy. And as it happens, that slogan was coined by David Brower in 1969—the very year that JVAS was born.

-Dave Bonta



This booklet is dedicated to John Hunter Orr,  
Founding Father of Juniata Valley Audubon Society.  
John also served as President and The Gnatcatcher editor for many years.  
John is a visionary and dedicated conservationist.  
Thank you, John, for your vision.

## JVAS OFFICERS

### **1969 – 1972**

Pres John Orr  
VP Al Richardson  
Sec Gladys Glisson  
Tr Jack Hancock

### **1972 - 1974**

Pres Earl Higgins  
VP Al Richardson  
Sec Margaret Chonko  
Tr Truth Close

### **1974 - 1978**

Pres Mike Chonko &  
Don Wharton (1975)  
VP Mary Slippey &  
Bill Rosevear (1976)  
Sec Betsy Vogel &  
Claire White (1976)  
Tr Martha Sullivan

### **1978 - 1980**

Pres Bill Rosevear  
VP Truth Close  
Sec Anne Borland  
Tr Colette Heller

### **1980 - 1984**

Pres Colette Heller &  
John Orr (1982)  
VP Truth Close &  
Wilson Kreitz (1982)  
Sec Anne Borland  
Tr Madge Quick

### **1984 - 1988**

Pres Marcia Bonta  
VP John Lennox  
Sec Angeline Stout  
Tr Janet Neely

### **1988 - 1990**

Pres Wilson Kreitz  
VP Dave Kyler  
Sec Jana Atwell  
Tr Janet Neely

### **1990 - 1994**

Pres David Kyler  
VP Bill King  
Sec Gene Zielinski  
Tr Janet Neely

### **1994 - 1998**

Pres Stan Kotala  
VP Bill King  
Sec Gene Zielinski  
Tr Marge Hoyer

### **1998 - 2000**

Pres Terry Wentz  
VP Charlie Hoyer  
Sec Gene Zielinski  
Tr Marge Hoyer

### **2000 - 2004**

Pres Charlie Hoyer  
VP Cindy Moore  
Sec Gene Zielinski  
Tr Marge Hoyer

### **2004 - 2006**

Pres Cindy Moore  
VP Dave Bonta  
Sec Shirley Wagoner  
Tr Warren Baker

### **2006 - 2009**

Pres Stan Kotala  
VP Dave Bonta  
Sec Shirley Wagoner  
Tr Warren Baker

### **2009 - 2010**

Pres Terry Wentz  
VP Dave Bonta  
Sec Charlie Hoyer  
Tr Warren Baker

### **2010 - 2014**

Pres Dave Bonta  
VP Laura Jackson  
Sec Alice Kotala  
Tr Warren Baker

### **2014 - 2018**

Pres Laura Jackson  
VP Mark Bonta  
Sec Kristin Joivell &  
Sharon Clewell (2015)  
Tr George Mahon

### **2018 - 2022**

Pres Catie Farr  
VP Laura Jackson  
Sec Sharon Clewell  
Tr George Mahon

**Juniata Valley Audubon Society  
Conservation Award Winners**

<b>2018</b>	<b>Dr. Mark Bonta</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>Stephen Gerhart Family</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>Greg Grove</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>Pam Grugan</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>Ron Singer</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>Mike &amp; Laura Jackson</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>Bill Anderson</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>Hazel Bilka</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>Lee Slusser</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>Michael Joseph</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>Heidi Boyle</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>Margaret "Peggy" Goodman</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>Huntingdon Middle School Environmental Club</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>Joe Gurekovich</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>Jody Wallace</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>Rhonda Calhoun</b>



Juniata Valley Audubon Society (JVAS)  
50 Years of Conservation and Education in  
South Central Pennsylvania

We know you'll enjoy reading the highlights of JVAS activities gleaned from 50 years of ***The Gnatcatcher***, the JVAS newsletter. Copies of ***The Gnatcatcher*** have been scanned and can be read at [\*\*www.jvas.org\*\*](http://www.jvas.org).  
**Click on the JVAS NEWSLETTER tab.**

## 1969

- JVAS received a provisional charter from National Audubon Society on September 29, 1969.
- John Orr was elected as the 1<sup>st</sup> President, which was only fitting since he initiated the application.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> newsletter, *The Gnatcatcher*, was printed in April.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> fieldtrip was to Fort Roberdeau in Sinking Valley.
- The chapter advocated "for protection of the alligator and rare fur-bearing species." (The Endangered Species Act would not be passed until 1973 - our chapter was already advocating for this important Act four years before it was passed by Congress.)
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count was held on December 28, 1969. The count circle is centered around Culp in Sinking Valley. Total number of species was 32; the surprising statistic was that horned larks outnumbered European starlings. Evening grosbeaks were also seen.

## 1970

- JVAS advocated a letter writing campaign to support PA Bill #498 which would protect hawks.
- The 1st JVAS Earth Day Celebration took place on April 22, 1970. JVAS members worked with a group of students and teachers called S.O.A.P. (Students Organized Against Pollution) at Altoona High School to hold assemblies with 17 speakers and evening programs for the public.
- In September 1970, JVAS received its "full permanent branch status."
- Al Richardson, the Vice President and a regular contributor to the newsletter, reported a steady stream of monarchs migrating on October 3, 1970. He counted 40 – 50 in ten minutes and commented the butterflies were heading south toward some "unknown destination." (It wasn't until 1976 when scientists discovered that monarchs wintered in the mountains of Mexico.)

## 1971

- The film-lecture series was a popular community event. Season tickets were sold and many people attended the series at the Altoona Area High School auditorium.
- Jim Samuels and his field trail committee surveyed the proposed Juniata Gap-Wopsy Trail and a field trip was held on Sunday April 25 to enjoy early wildflowers.
- Earl Higgins proposed the 1<sup>st</sup> JVAS Seedling Sale, which was held in December 1971. Species available were both native and non-native: white pine, American redbud, flowering dogwood, multiflora rose, and autumn olive. (Obviously, no one realized that multiflora rose and autumn olive would be the scourge that they are in 2019.)

## 1972

- The 1971 Christmas Bird Count was actually held on a very rainy Jan. 2, 1972. A confused brown creeper was seen on a brick wall, but most birds were hiding so the count was only 31 species. (Of all the counters listed, only John Orr continues to participate in the Count almost every year.)
- The 1st Spring Banquet was held on May 30 at Chilcoat's near Newry, with Alan Miller from National Audubon as the guest speaker. Alan was instrumental in "getting our branch started."
- Earl Higgins, the new JVAS President, led the group on a field trip to Spruce Creek (Colerain State Park) and Indian Lookout to show a forest clear cut and explain even-age management.
- Nine issues of The Gnatcatcher were available to non-members for just \$1 per year. A single membership in National Audubon (which included membership in JVAS) was just \$12 per year.
- A barn owl was reported to be residing in the belfry of St. John's Lutheran Church in Sinking Valley.
- Paul and Irene Luckner hosted a covered dish dinner for the Christmas Bird Count Dinner. Thirty bird species were seen, but alas, no barn owl.

## 1973

- Joe McMullen, a biology teacher from Juniata Valley High School, was the featured speaker at the Second Annual Spring Banquet held at Marietta's Restaurant in Duncansville. Joe owned the Spruce Creek Trout Farm and is active in Trout Unlimited.
- Purple Martin numbers have dropped due to the impact of Hurricane Agnes in June 1972.
- House Bill 197, recently passed, "allows Pennsylvania Municipalities to establish conservation commissions."
- There are 8 "Local Branches" of National Audubon in Pennsylvania.
- Credit was given to Al Burd for his "hours of work and sharing of years of knowledge and know how" to young people. Al worked with the Sylvan Know 4-H Club at the 4-H Conservation Site. He identified or planted over 60 wildflower specimens and over 45 trees and shrubs.
- The endangered Kirtland's warbler showed a small population gain from 201 singing males in 1971 to 216 in 1973. (In 2018, population stood at over 2,000 pairs, more than double the recovery goal. It was removed from the Endangered Species list in April 2018.)
- Hawk Mountain Sanctuary requested a "no spray" policy from the State Agriculture Dept., but it was sprayed anyway with Dylox and Sevin. The curator, Alex Nagy, reported a strange silence after the spraying – "a silence coming from the lack of insect noises."
- A new species for the Christmas Bird Count was located on the "back road" in Sinking Valley: a red-headed woodpecker! The total count on Dec. 30th was 34 different species, including evening grosbeaks.

## 1974

- The 28th St. Church of the Brethren on Union Ave. in Altoona is the new meeting location.
- The Banquet was held in February. Four new officers were installed and artist Joan Stern from Roaring Spring spoke on "art and nature."
- The Pennsylvania Mirror printed an article on Feb. 17th, promoting JVAS and the State College Bird Club.
- Chapter members voted to send \$150 from the bank balance of \$461.74 to National Audubon to reduce the film series debt.
- Al Burd, field trip chair, led members to see wild flowers in western Pennsylvania, as well as a wildflower and bird trip to Black Moshannon State Park on June 2nd.
- JVAS member, Anne Krick, reported watching a male cardinal catching bumble bees and feeding them to a female cardinal.
- The 6th Annual Christmas Bird Count was a "record breaker:" the most counters, the most species (43), and the highest number of birds (3,137).



## 1975

- President Mike Chonko and other officers met on February 22 with other groups to discuss starting a PA Audubon organization.
- Plans were made to participate in the Annual Migration Count, which was called the "Big Day" in May.
- Copies of Aldo Leopold's Sand County Almanac were sold by the Conservation Committee and Kurt Gansauer for \$2.00 each; JVAS made a profit of 40 cents on each book sold.
- Don Wharton wrote a weekly column in the Altoona Mirror called CONSERVATION NOTES. He wrote, "After Peoples Park was lost to the religion of athletics, the LeVan house fell to the planners of progress. How long will the aesthetic values remain subverted to the ignorant, unecological lurchings toward 'pie in the sky' progress?"

## 1976

- The Wild Foods Outing and the Wild Foods Banquet was held for a 2nd year at Prince Gallitzin State Park. The potluck dinner consisted of "wild edibles" and typical picnic fare. (Most likely Euell Gibbons' book, *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*, inspired Al Burd to coordinate this event.)
- The Pennsylvania Audubon Council is working on listing the endangered flora and fauna in our state.
- The State College Bird Club had some impressive counts. The club saw 119 different species of birds on April 25, but on May 9, the "Big Day," they saw 141 species. This was the 35th Big Day Count, which covers a circle with a 25-mile radius centered around Old Main on the Penn State Campus in State College.



## 1977

- Bill Rosevear saw a black-bellied plover at Prince Gallitzin State Park on May 12<sup>th</sup>, an unusual migrant.
- Al Burd and Bill Rosevear were directly involved in developing an outdoor education facility, nature trails, and an interpretive brochure for the public and school children's fieldtrips at Fort Roberdeau.

## 1978

- A Regional Waterfowl Census was conducted by John Orr, George Mahon, Fran Burgoon, and Bill Rosevear on April 2nd, covering a 25-mile diameter circle that included Prince Gallitzin, Mill Run, Canoe Creek St. Park, Horseshoe Curve, and Sinking Valley. Forty-three whistling swans (now called tundra swans) were counted, but only one Canada goose, one coot. Other water birds were more numerous, with a total of 18 species.
- Peggy Goodman, a teacher and JVAS member, was the first scholarship winner and attended the Audubon camp in Greenwich, Ct.
- The 15 Pennsylvania Audubon branches met quarterly in Harrisburg for informal working sessions.
- The Bellwood Women's Club worked with President Bill Rosevear to set up more bluebird houses.
- The club's 1st Bird Seed Sale was a success: 1.5 tons of bird seed were sold. A 50-lb. bag of mixed seed sold for \$5.50. A 50-lb. bag of better seed was \$6.70. (Information from Monthly Meeting Minutes)



## 1979

- Joann Noonan reported that a pair of kestrels were nesting in the eaves of her home at 1703 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in Altoona.
- Steve Bonta saw a rare stray (migrant?) in a pine tree near his home – a yellow-throated warbler. He also saw a blue-winged warbler in the same vicinity.
- Janet DeMuth was the winner of the JVAS Patch contest with her portrayal of a gnatcatcher and the name of our group.



## 1980

- Incentives to get new members included: (1) a Roger Tory Petersen Field Guide of your choice for the person who gets the most new members; (2) a beautiful 14" x 17" Audubon Birds of America print for the person who gets one new member; and (3) an Audubon key chain for anyone who gets a second member.
- Marcia Bonta, chairman of the Program committee, developed a full season's program. It was the first time a whole year's events brochure was printed and made available to the public in libraries and other businesses. Thanks too, to Wilson and Teddie Kreitz, Truth Close, and Bruce Bonta, who worked on this project.

## 1981

- Al Burd was honored with the George Award by the Altoona Chamber of Commerce, an annual award that recognizes a Blair Countian for volunteer work to improve life and “get the job done.” Al was recognized for his work in getting the Fort Roberdeau trail system started. Besides laying out the trails and inventorying the park’s flora, Al helped set up the Williamsburg’s Physical Fitness and Nature Trail and gave many volunteer hours in getting the Prince Gallitzin Nature Center going. He was the JVAS field trip leader and long-time active executive committee member.
- 42 observers participated in the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Bird Count and set a new JVAS count record of 61 different species (4,960 individual birds).
- Upwards of 500 American robins were sighted at one time a few days after the Christmas Bird Count.
- Truth Close and June Brandt worked on collecting items of interest for a JVAS history scrapbook dating back to 1969, when the chapter was started. Specifically needed were pictures from Ft. Roberdeau activities, outings to Ohiopyle, The Pulpit, Hawk Mountain, Raccoon Creek, and Canoe Creek State Parks.



## 1982

- The first time JVAS had a Members’ Night was at the January meeting. Wilson Kreitz was the coordinator. Members were asked to set up at specific spots and others rotated around listening and taking it all in. Members shared artwork, poetry, photography, and anything with a tie-in to nature.
- This was the best ever bird seed sale since the 1<sup>st</sup> one was held in 1978, when 1.5 tons of seed were sold. This year there were 210 orders for 12 tons of seed and JVAS grossed \$6,500, with a profit of \$900.
- DER held a hearing on JVAS’ petition to designate the Mill Run Watershed unsuitable for mining.

## 1983

- JVAS members testified at the Mill Run Public Hearing urging the Environmental Quality Board to accept the petition to protect Mill Run. (Mill Run Watershed was eventually protected from mining by DER, thanks to the efforts of JVAS and other conservation groups. Kudos to Paula Ford for spearheading this effort.)
- JVAS members' "wild" names: Berry, Burd, Cherry, Feather, Fox, Gill, Hill, Root, and Weed.
- Angeline Stout reported a palm warbler eating suet at her home in Greenwood in February and it was also noted on the State College Christmas count last December.
- Changing of the guard: John Orr stepped down as President, Colette Heller filled in as acting President, and Marcia Bonta as acting Vice President.
- A pair of snow geese spent the week of November 28 at Prince Gallitzin State Park. One was white with black wing tips and the other one was the "blue goose" (color morph) with a white and black head and blue-gray wings.

## 1984

- John Orr won the William Dutcher Award from National Audubon Society for "outstanding service to the Audubon case at the regional level." John was a charter member of JVAS, the chapter's first president, *Gnatcatcher* editor for many years, PAC worker and representative, 1983 president, and worked on the Mill Run petition.
- *Gnatcatcher* editor, Paula Ford, thanked her friend, Cynthia Spencer, for designing the new *Gnatcatcher* masthead, which included the drawing of a gnatcatcher.
- JVAS changed from mimeographing to photocopying *The Gnatcatcher* and the executive board also approved changing the size to 8.5" x 11". (Previously, it was printed on 8.5" x 14" paper.)

## 1985

- JVAS started a speakers' bureau where club members presented talks on environmental topics from anthropology to wildlife photography to schools and other interested local groups. Arlene Lennox coordinated the project.



## 1986

- President Marcia Bonta explained National Audubon's Adopt-A-Puffin Project, where JVAS would adopt a puffin and receive reports on its fledgling success and details of future sightings once \$100 was raised. Biologist and bird enthusiast, Dr. Stephen Kress, first came up with the idea of transplanting breeding puffins to Easter Egg Rock Island and Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge off the coast of Maine. JVAS member, Jesse Perry, donated \$50 toward the goal and the executive board voted overwhelmingly to name the puffin, "Perry", or "Perri", if it's a girl.
- JVAS member, Dave Kyler, was the coordinator for the Breeding Bird Atlas program.
- Marcia and Mark Bonta went afield for the "Big Day" and were delighted to see a male scarlet tanager, with variant colors – an orange back and orange and yellow belly!
- JVAS and Blair County Conservation District sponsored the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Envir-Olympics for high school students, held at Canoe Creek State Park.
- Following the purchase of the Tytoona Cave Natural Area by Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, John Orr headed the JVAS Cave Committee to help police the area and protect it from vandalism and littering.
- President Marcia Bonta reported that Becky and John Peplinski of the State College Bird Club saw a northern fulmar circling Beaver Stadium as Penn State battled Notre Dame on the gridiron!

## 1987

- Bruce Bonta filed the necessary forms with the IRS for JVAS to obtain 501 (c) (3) tax exempt status.
- The JVAS Gnatcatcher patch, designed by Truth Close and Janet De Muth, was featured in the March issue of *Audubon Magazine*.
- A Member of the Year Award was presented by President Marcia Bonta to Paula Ford, outgoing editor of *The Gnatcatcher* and co-chairperson of the Conservation Committee.
- Jim Winsor volunteered to be the new *Gnatcatcher* editor.
- Dave Kyler led a field trip to a new hawk watch established by the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society outside the town of Everett, in Bedford County. It was called the Tussey Mountain Hawkwatch.

## 1988

- Game Commission Wildlife Technician Cal Butchkoski reported there was a single colony of 1,000 little brown bats adjacent to Canoe Creek State Park. He said it was the largest nursery he had observed statewide.
- Anne Borland collected cash register receipts for many years from members who shopped at BiLo Foods and Riverside Markets. She then redeemed the receipts for **cash** for the JVAS.



## 1989

- Terry Wentz, Park Manager at Canoe Creek State Park, reported nesting goshawks adjacent to the park.
- \$600 was raised to purchase a Kodak slide projector, to be used by members of the speaker's bureau and for presentations at meetings.
- JVAS participated in the National Audubon Birdathon on May 13, 1989, for the first time. 50% of the money gathered by sponsors for each species listed went to JVAS, with the remainder going to the Mid-Atlantic Regional office of Audubon (Walt Pomeroy).
- Jim Winsor, JVAS editor of *The Gnatcatcher*, published the 1<sup>st</sup> summer issue of the newsletter to keep members abreast of Audubon events during the "off season".
- President Wilson Kreitz announced that this was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of JVAS. 105 people, including many charter members and current members, enjoyed a program featuring live raptors from Shaver's Creek Environmental Center. They also enjoyed an anniversary cake. Special recognition was given to John Orr, John McCall, Truth Close, Mary Slippey, Fran Burgoon, and the Reverend and Mrs. Brumbaugh.
- Laura Jackson, high school biology teacher in Bedford, received the Outstanding Conservation Educator Award at the annual conference of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts.
- Mowrie Ebner, JVAS member, retired teacher, and principal of the Altoona Area School District, was honored by having the new Eldorado-area elementary school named after her.

## 1990

- President Dave Kyler established a bird viewing window, feeding station, and appropriate plantings at the new Fort Roberdeau Nature Center in honor of deceased members Al Burd, Gene Root, Doris Thurheimer, and Wilson Kreitz. Vice President Bill King, Secretary Eugene Zielinski, and newsletter editor Stan Kotala also worked hard on the project.
- JVAS member Roy Boyle created a Kid's Nature page, to be included in *The Gnatcatcher*.
- At the March 8<sup>th</sup> board meeting, the JVAS board of directors voted to discontinue the use of Styrofoam cups at all JVAS meetings. Members were encouraged to bring their own mug. A special prize was given for the "best mug."



## 1991

- The PA Game Commission's bat survey at Canoe Creek State Park revealed the endangered Indiana bat population totaled at least 262 individuals.
- The Fort Roberdeau bird observation/feeding area was dedicated on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was funded by JVAS and commemorated deceased members Wilson Kreitz, Al Burd, Gene Root, and Doris Thurheimer.
- JVAS participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> Grassland Bird Survey in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. The survey route is in Sinking Valley and consisted of 30 stops, each ½ mile apart. The duration of each stop was 3 minutes and the survey was held in June. Eastern Meadowlarks, killdeer, vesper sparrows, field sparrows, and ring-necked pheasants were seen or heard.

## 1992

- JVAS participated in the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology's Special Areas Projects by conducting bird population surveys at Canoe Creek State Park, Trough Creek State Park, and at Fort Roberdeau County Park. The Lower Trail Rails to Trails project was later added to the list. Stan Kotala coordinated the effort.
- *The Gnatcatcher* came alive as beautiful illustrations by Stan Kotala and Richard Mock graced the pages of each issue.



## 1993

- The International Issues Interest Group sponsored an exchange program with Honduras, funded by grants from the New Land Foundation and the Bay Foundation of New York. Manuel Rey and Gloria Zelaya, employed by Honduran agencies that maintain parks and natural reserves traveled to Pennsylvania for three weeks for an intensive orientation to wildlife management practices. Mike and Laura Jackson traveled to Honduras for 18 days to backpack in the old-growth forests, experience the wonders of the cloud forests, and talk to Honduran peasant farmers, educators, and bureaucrats who were trying to improve their relationship with the earth.
- Janet Huber, field trip chair, announced six JVAS trips: a weekend trip to the Dolly Sods area of West Virginia, a weekend trip to Sapsucker Woods in New York, a Saturday trip to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, a Saturday trip to Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, a Sunday "Hike in the Hollow" trip to Bruce and Marcia Bonta's property, and a twelve day tour of Arizona (Tucson, Madera Canyon, and the Grand Canyon) and Utah (Bryce and Zion National Parks).
- A serviceberry was planted at the bird feeding area at Fort Roberdeau County Park in memory of Janet Neely, long-time JVAS treasurer.

## 1994

- JVAS celebrated a Silver Jubilee, marking 25 years since the Juniata Valley Audubon Society was granted a charter by the National Audubon Society.
- It was announced that *Appalachian Autumn*, a new book by Marcia Bonta, was available for purchase in book stores. Like her popular, *Appalachian Spring*, it gives day-by-day accounts of the changing world of nature on Brush Mountain.
- JVAS member, Dan Sinal, announced that he would be conducting spur-of-the-moment day field trips to Pennsylvania sites and surrounding areas.
- The new *Checklist of Birds of Blair County* was compiled and made public. It cataloged all birds known to have been sighted in the county over the past 20 years. Compilers were Paula Ford, Bill King, Dave Kyler, Gene Zielinski, and Stan Kotala.

## 1995

- Paula Ford wrote *The Birder's Guide to Pennsylvania*, a comprehensive guide to notable birdwatching locations in the Keystone State. Stan Kotala provided the detailed bird illustrations for the book.
- In January, the large abandoned limestone mine at Canoe Creek State Park sheltered Pennsylvania's largest known hibernating bat population, estimated to be as many as 20,000. The species included Indiana bats, little brown bats, eastern pipistrelles, big brown bats, small-footed myotis, and northern myotis.
- In February, the Wildlife Resource Conservation Fund (Executive Director Frank Felbaum) purchased the 19<sup>th</sup> century "bat church" near the entrance to Canoe Creek State Park for \$5,600. The church housed a population of about 10,000 little brown bats which produced an estimated 2.5 tons of guano (droppings) over many decades.

## 1996

- Laura Jackson traveled to Washington, DC to receive the Presidential Award for Science Teachers, given to one secondary science teacher in every state. She got to meet First Lady Hillary Clinton and received a monetary award to purchase materials for her biology classroom.
- President Stan Kotala began leading very popular "Beginning Birding" field trips to areas such as the Tipton Wetland Demonstration Area, Fort Roberdeau County Park, and Canoe Creek State Park.
- Under Stan Kotala's leadership as President, many of his photos graced the pages of *The Gnatcatcher*, highlighting fieldtrips and other JVAS activities.



## 1997

- Collette Heller was recognized for 20 years of service to JVAS. During that time, she served as President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and on the Board of Directors. She also coordinated many banquets, was part of the Speaker's Bureau, and initiated annual program flyers that were inserted in *The Gnatcatcher* to attract more members.
- Melvin Lane was remembered as a longtime member of JVAS who established bluebird nesting box trails, assembled bird displays, and worked with youth in the Envirothon.
- Charlie Hoyer, editor of *The Gnatcatcher*, began listing the officers, committee chairs, and the directors in each issue.
- In a "Did You Know?" segment of *The Gnatcatcher*, it stated that Edgar Allen Poe was inspired to write *The Raven* in Trough Creek State Park.
- JVAS education chair Alice Kotala applied for, and received, a \$500 grant for the creation of a butterfly and hummingbird garden at Penn-Mont Academy in Duncansville.
- JVAS established the 1<sup>st</sup> annual three week summer nature camp at Penn Mont Academy for elementary children focusing on herps, mammals, and insects of PA.

## 1998

- JVAS received a \$500 grant to restore riparian forest along the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River on the grounds of Frankstown Elementary School. Students helped to plant tulip poplar, sugar maple, eastern hemlock, white pine, serviceberry, hawthorn, winterberry holly, silky dogwood, arrowwood viburnum, and nanny berry.
- Stan Kotala was actively involved in teaching the coldwater ecology course, "Stream Class," to many groups. It started in 1997 and was presented to more than 1,000 students.
- A red oak tree was planted near the Canoe Creek Visitor's Center as a living memorial to Fran Burgoon, a longtime member of the JVAS. Fran served many years as membership chair, was a faithful participant in the annual Christmas bird count and was one of three JVAS members who volunteered to monitor bluebird box trails at Canoe Creek State Park established in 1982. In 1987, Fran was honored with the statewide Bluebird Monitor of the Year Award given by the Bureau of State Parks.

## 1999

- JVAS had been actively participating in the Herpetological Atlas the last 3 years, under the leadership of Stan Kotala. Many new discoveries added data about the region's herpetofauna. Stan was the Western Ridge and Valley Regional Coordinator for the project.
- Diane Strohm, Charlie Hoyer's neighbor, reported an all- white (not albino) dark-eyed junco at her bird feeders. Charlie was able to identify and get photographs of this unique bird.
- Shirley Wagoner, JVAS education chair for many years, was actively involved in coordinating Earth Day activities with area students, bird banding, and sharing her experiences from the many birding trips that she enjoyed around the world.

## 2000

- Jody Wallace received the 2000 JVAS Conservation Award at the annual banquet in April. Her merits included being the coordinator of the Sinking Run Restoration Project, leader of Environmental Education for Girl Scout Troop 1215, devoted countless hours to JVAS as environmental education volunteer, taught JVAS Summer Nature Camp at Penn-Mont Academy in 1998, assisted Stan Kotala in teaching the JVAS-sponsored "Stream Class" to school students, and was the Environmental Education Coordinator at Fort Roberdeau.
- JVAS received a \$12,500 grant from the Western PA Watershed Protection Program for the Blair Gap Run stream restoration project. The grant was used in part to fund "bio-engineering" or "soft armor" techniques to restore various sections within the stream as well as protect other reaches from erosion and scour.



## 2001

- The National Audubon Society revealed its new logo, a great egret, sketched by David Sibley. The new logo built on the great equity and tradition of the great egret while eliminating the reproduction problems associated with the more graphically detailed bird in the old logo.
- The birdseed equivalent chart was included in the February issue of *The Gnatcatcher*. Bargain mix = Brussel sprouts; Millet = macaroni and cheese; Black oil sunflower = steak; Peanut suet = chocolate decadence; and Thistle = double latte.
- Joe Gurekovich was awarded the 2001 Conservation Award by Conservation Chair, Mark Henry. Joe headed the effort to clean up one-half mile of land along Elk Run near Ironville referred to as the California Quarries. He not only purchased the property but removed the tons of trash that had been dumped there for years. He also led the Adopt-A-Highway project along the road that bisects his property.

## 2002

- The Canoe Creek Watershed was selected as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BirdLife International. Pennsylvania was the first state in the US to develop an IBA program. Under the direction of Vice-President Bill King, JVAS members conducted an exhaustive survey of the Canoe Creek Watershed's birdlife, starting in 1992. More than 200 species of birds were documented of which 110 are confirmed nesting there. The work involved more than 500 fieldtrips and more than 3,000 hours of observation. The effort and data collected was the impetus for the selection as an IBA.
- Stan Kotala authored the *JVAS Site Guide No. 1: Canoe Creek State Park* to encourage visitors to the park. He highlighted the flora and fauna, trails, and birding opportunities that the park had to offer.
- Anne Borland was remembered for more than 20 years of service with JVAS. She served as the Fund-raising Director for many years, diligently collecting Bi-Lo and Riverside Markets cash register receipts from relatives, friends, neighbors, and Audubon members and redeeming them for cash for JVAS. She also held the office of Secretary and Hospitality Chair.

## 2003

- Dave Bonta testified at the DEP Public Hearing on the proposed Logan Town Centre Shopping Complex and gave many reasons why the project was not feasible in the sensitive environment that was targeted for construction (and destruction).
- JVAS honored Margaret 'Peggy' Goodman with the Conservation Award. Peggy was a member of JVAS for 23 years and hired as the director of the Fort Roberdeau Association in 1988. She was responsible for developing programs to educate the scores of school children where she blended history with the environment. She thought of the 80 acres at Fort Roberdeau as a playground for the 14,000+ annual visitors.
- Marcia Bonta was praised and thanked for contributing a nature column in **every issue** of *The Gnatcatcher* from October 1994 – the May/June issue in 2003, a total of 60 columns!
- JVAS joined the PA Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Todd Bird Club, and the PA Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs in opposing a commercial resort at Prince Gallitzin State Park.

## 2004

- Heidi Boyle, park naturalist at Canoe Creek State Park, was presented with the Conservation Award by Education Chair Jody Wallace. She not only set up numerous environmental programs at the park, but also planned state conferences and educated the public about the importance of bats by organizing a Bat Festival each August.
- JVAS entered a team of birders in the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Shaver's Creek Birding Cup. The team called themselves, "The Gnatcatchers" and consisted of Stan, Alice, and Helena Kotala, and Cindy and Luis Moore.
- Gene Zielinski was awarded a certificate of appreciation for 15 years of service for JVAS as Secretary. He also led many fieldtrips. Gene was honored at a farewell dinner prior to being transferred to Augusta, Georgia.

## 2005

- Michael Joseph received the Conservation Award for his educational articles in the Centre Daily Times about the environmental hazard created in the Spring Creek Watershed during ongoing highway construction of Interstate 99 on the Bald Eagle Ridge.

## 2006

- Lee Slusser, assistant planning director for the Blair County Planning Commission was awarded the Conservation Award. He helped develop the new county plan that preserved wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes. He also helped create the Blair County Greenways Plan where the preservation of the natural landscape was given first priority.
- JVAS created a butterfly garden at Canoe Creek State Park under the direction of Stan Kotala and park naturalist Heidi Boyle.





## 2007

- As more and more threats to Blair and Bedford Counties forested ridges became apparent, JVAS took a stand to defend those areas from industrial wind development. Special “Emergency Editions” of *The Gnatcatcher* were published to educate the members and the public about those threats.
- JVAS member Tom Harvey constructed and donated kestrel boxes to establish a kestrel trail in Sinking Valley, Blair County. President Stan Kotala installed the boxes at Fort Roberdeau County Park and offered additional boxes to interested private land owners.
- JVAS Conservation Committee member Laura Jackson received the 2007 Western PA Environmental Educator Award for her work with high school environmental science and Envirothon students. She decided to donate her \$5,000 award to a local nonprofit environmental organization, none other than the JVAS.
- Hazel Bilka was awarded the Conservation Award by JVAS Historian, Terry Wentz, for spearheading the planning and development of the Bell’s Gap Rail Trail in the Bellwood area.

## 2008

- Tom Dubbs, dedicated conservationist, forest steward, and long-time member of the JVAS, donated a 65-acre easement on his mountainside property in Huntingdon County to the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy. The property is located on Canoe Mountain with incredible scenic vistas of the gap in Tussey Mountain at Water Street.
- JVAS named the annual picnic the Maxine Leckvarcik Memorial Picnic in her memory. Maxine was a board member for many years, hosted the annual JVAS planning meeting every August, assisted with the newsletter, took part in JVAS citizen projects, and gathered data for the JVAS and PA Game Commission early successional habitat project on State Game Lands 322.

## 2009

- JVAS completed its second and final year in the Canoe Creek Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program under the leadership of Terry Wentz, who served as the DCNR Manager of Canoe Creek State Park for 34 years. Water samples were taken to determine turbidity, dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, hardness, etc.
- Deb Tencer, field trip chair, shared her thoughts and experiences in nature in her Gnatcatcher articles entitled, "Through the Branches."

## 2010

- JVAS joined other organizations to support protection of the Heller Caves Blair County Natural Heritage Area near the Lower Trail. Catherine Properties, a mining company, obtained a Small NonCoal Mining permit from DEP to mine limestone at the Heller Caves site. Heller Caves support a population of the small-footed myotis, a threatened bat, and a species of springtail (a primitive insect) found nowhere else in the world. JVAS sued DEP for failure to protect Heller Caves from mining involving blasting and disturbance.



Springtails are tiny. Their size ranges from 0.25 to 6 mm.



**Please like our Facebook pages:**  
**Juniata Valley Audubon Society**  
**Partners in Neotropical Bird Conservation**  
**Earth Week Birding Classic at Penn State Altoona**

## 2011

- Mike & Laura Jackson donated a conservation easement to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to protect their 114 acres from development. Their detailed records identified 132 bird species, 35 native mammal species, 9 species of snakes, 3 species of turtles, 7 species of frogs and toads, 6 species of salamanders, and 122 species of wildflowers.
- Conservation Chair Stan Kotala and other JVAS members joined the Moshannon Group of the Sierra Club in opposing a proposed Bellwood Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Project. More than 221 acres would be affected on State Game Lands 158, as well as Tipton Run, a state designated Class A High Quality trout stream.
- The Conservation Award was presented to Bill Anderson, President of the Little Juniata River Association, for his efforts in monitoring, preserving, and improving the Little Juniata River and its tributaries. He was fondly referred to as the "Coldwater Crusader."



## 2012

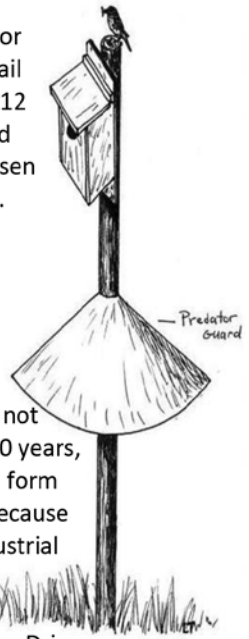
- JVAS won a 5-year protection agreement for Heller Caves after successfully suing the Department of Environmental Protection.
- Mike & Laura Jackson were presented the Conservation Award by President Dave Bonta for their continued efforts to advocate wildlife and conservation issues through their involvement in SOAR (Save Our Allegheny Ridges), practicing good forest stewardship, being wildlife rehabilitator assistants for more than 20 years, as well as citizen scientists, and each were environmental educators.

## 2013

- Luis Moore was awarded the 2012 Cavity-Nesting Monitor Award from the Bureau of State Parks' Cavity Nesting Trail Program for monitoring the bluebird trail for more than 12 years at Canoe Creek State Park. Luis had the longest and most difficult trail with 102 bluebird boxes. Luis was chosen for the award from more than 150 volunteers statewide.

## 2014

- The Conservation Award was presented to Ron Singer, founder of the Jacks Mountain Hawk Watch in Mifflin County, by incoming JVAS President, Laura Jackson. Ron not watched migrating birds on Jacks Mountain for almost 40 years, he was the main facilitator and compiler. He also helped form *Friends of Jacks Mountain*, a community action group, because the Jacks Mountain Hawk Watch was threatened by industrial wind turbine development on the mountain.
- Field Trip Chair Deb Tencer began offering "Natural History Road Tours," which were designed as a loop drive. Drivers went from location to location, where they would make observations from close to their vehicles and not have to do a lot of walking. The Periglacial Landscapes of Central PA and the Golden-winged Warbler Driving Tour were two popular trips.
- Deb Tencer also organized "Nature Rambles," which were designed to be easy walks as opposed to hikes. That allowed time for more bird-watching and wildflower identification and would allow more senior members to explore nature.



## 2015

- Stan Kotala was recognized for his 10 years as Conservation Chair and for his dedication, time, energy, and hard work by helping to protect natural places and wildlife from development. Heller Caves, Fort Roberdeau, Brush Mountain, Canoe Mountain, Lock Mountain, Petersburg Cliffs Biological Diversity Area, and Canoe Creek State Park, all benefitted from his advocacy.
- President Laura Jackson and Vice-President Mark Bonta organized the Golden-winged Warbler Weekend on the Penn State Altoona Campus. Three authorities on golden-winged warblers gave presentations on their research regarding the warblers' need for young forested habitat,

nesting success, and conservation plans for habitat protection in Central and northern South America.

- Under the direction of Laura Jackson, JVAS received two grants totaling \$19,000 and worked with members of the Dutch Corner Historical Society to do historical surveys and inventory of the historic farms and buildings in Dutch Corner in Bedford County. The surveys eventually led to the designation of Dutch Corner as an Historic Agricultural District on the National Register of Historic Places and protected Dunning and Evitt's Mountains from being developed for wind energy.
- In an effort to promote whole lifecycle bird conservation, JVAS partnered with Emilio Garcia to sell shade-grown, organic coffee direct marketed from his coffee farm in Honduras. Research shows that shade-grown, organic coffee farms provide a healthy habitat for birds.



## 2016

- John Orr and George Mahon found and photographed pheasants and non-native chukars feeding in a field in Sinking Valley during the Christmas Bird Count. This was a first-time record for chukars in the JVAS count.
- Vice-President Mark Bonta organized and led a "birding for conservation" tour to Honduras. As part of the tour, JVAS members and friends visited Lenca Farms and found a number of native and migratory birds in the coffee farm, including two golden-winged warblers.
- Catie (Kilgus) Farr, Mark Bonta, and Laura Jackson organized the first-ever competitive birding fundraiser called the Earth Day Birding Classic. Six teams competed in five categories for prizes and trophies. Over \$1,300 was raised to support bird conservation and education. A total of 128 species were recorded.



Chukars are a non-native gamebird.

## 2017

- A big “thank you” went out to Jake Vaughn, a student intern from Penn State Altoona, for scanning many issues of *The Gnatcatcher* and other important historical documents for the JVAS website. Now both members and the public can view those historic records easily by going to JVAS.org and clicking on “JVAS Newsletter.”
- President Laura Jackson and other JVAS members were actively working on 5 projects listed on the “Conservation Crossroads” section of *The Gnatcatcher*: protecting the Hawn’s Bridge Peninsula from being developed with a private marina and resort at Lake Raystown; protecting Heller Caves and the Lower Trail from a proposed mining project; fighting the Mariner East 2 and 3 Pipeline Project from carrying natural gas across PA; protecting an area in Blair County from a proposed Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) pig farm; and supporting the efforts of the Cooperative Avian Conservation and Outreach (CACAO) in Honduras by surveying and documenting the diversity of bird species.
- JVAS welcomed their new student intern Matt Pettinato. He helped with the Christmas Bird Count, added eBird data, researched non-profit grant agencies, and researched brands of binoculars to be purchased by JVAS.

## 2018

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Earth Week Birding Classic, under the direction of Catie Farr, was held at Penn State Altoona with 11 teams counting 133 species. Pledges of over \$1,000 were collected.
- Mark Bonta was awarded the Conservation Award for his efforts in helping with the Earth Week Birding Classic, a Golden-winged Warbler Workshop, establishing a committee called Partners in Neotropical Bird Conservation, and leading two trips to Honduras for birding conservation.

## 2019

- President Catie Farr continued her culinary skills as the former Hospitality Chair by providing a delicious hot dinner for everyone who attended each JVAS meeting. As a result, the attendance at meetings increased exponentially, including our youngest JVAS member, Catie and Ethan’s little boy, Joe.