

THE

GNATCATCHER



JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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May 1978

May 10th

I mean
the fiddleheads have forced their babies,
blind topknots first, up from the thinking rhizomes
and the shrew's children, twenty to a teaspoon,
breathe to their own astonishment
in the peephole burrow.

I mean
a new bat hangs upside down in the privy;
its eyes are stuck tight, its wrinkled mouth twitches
and in the pond, itself an invented puddle,
tadpoles quake from the jello
and come into being.

I mean, walk softly.
The maple's little used-up bells are dropping
and the new leaves are now unpacking,
still wearing their dime-store lacquer,
still cramped and wet from the journey.

-- Maxine Kumin

The May Meeting

TIME: 7:30 p.m.

DATE: May 30th

DAY: Tuesday

PLACE: 28th Street Church of the Brethren,
Union Avenue & 28th St. / Altoona, Pa.

PROGRAM: "Conservation in Pennsylvania"

Like the new leaves in the poem above, we are wet this May. Everything has the spring rain-green look. Moving through the leaves in sun or drizzle are the small warblers - nearly thirty different species might be seen. This late spring finds us coming to our last regular meeting until fall. After this month people will be getting out more - our June picnic will be at Stone Valley and a number of us will get out to the nature trails at Fort Roberdeau. Some of our members have been already at work helping guide grade school classes and cub scout groups at the center. Please mark the 30th of May on your calendars for another great program: Gary Smith, our District Forester, will speak to us on "Conservation in Pennsylvania". Gary is a state forester and heads the local district that's centered in Ebensburg. Check in for a fine evening: good company, some refreshments, a chance to learn about an important conservationist - and more, to be sure!

A Letter From Kurt Gansauer

2 April 1978

Greetings to Juniata Auduboners

Since moving to the Clarks Summit area, the Gansauers have become hawk enthusiasts. There are several fields around our house which provide ample food for the winged predators. Kestrels are everywhere and a pair of red-tails nests about a mile from our home. However, my real reason for writing is to share with you one of those "great hawking days."

Hawk Mountain is an hour and a half drive south of us. I had been there twice before - once was a skunk - the other nearly so. But last Saturday the weatherman predicted good weather so the Gansauers (including 3 month baby Erin) decided to give Hawk Mountain another try. I wasn't expecting too much since the spring migration is always played down, but the winds were brisk on this day and the hawks were riding them for all it was worth. A little over 100 sightings were made that day - not the thousands of the fall, but the variety of species was good - red-tails, sharp-shinned, cooper's, kestrels.

But the real wonder were the eagles! Four eagles were seen - not bad when you consider that it's roughly 10% of the entire eagle migration for the season at Hawk Mountain. My family and I arrived at midafternoon so we only saw one of the four - one grand and glorious golden eagle off the north point of the North Lockout. The naturalist on duty said it was one of the closest sightings he had ever seen. He was indeed close. It was my daughter's first hike (actually dad carried her all the way) but the sighting of such a great bird made it doubly rewarding.

Best Wishes, Kurt, Susan & Erin Gansauer

The April Meeting

Paul Kurtz gave a very informative program on Blair County geology. Many people said it was one of the best. About 35 members attended. The bird seed sale was discussed. Our group is working on getting the bulk seed for this fall. Madge Quick is in charge of the Seed Committee. It is hoped that we might sell the seed at the Keystone Festival in September. Members are urged to make feeders or houses now for sale then.

Halter Creek Testimony

Bill Rosevear reports:

I attended the public hearings at the Altoona Campus, where the issue concerning the proposal for reclassifying several warm water streams to their actual cold water status was open for testimony. It was a very emotional meeting, especially for those who felt their jobs were at stake. George Mahon was there for most of the evening and he can relate more of his impressions to you if you are interested. What follows is the testimony which I submitted to the Hearing Chairman:

Mr. Chairman,

My name is William E. Rosevear and I am President of the Juniata Valley Audubon Society. I have the following statement to submit as testimony at this public meeting.

On behalf of the members of the Juniata Valley Audubon Society we endorse a policy which will insure that not one job will be lost.

It is the belief of the Juniata Valley Audubon Society that a clean healthy environment is dependent, in part, upon clean healthy water. It is our concern that the water above, at, and below the paper mill be of a safe and healthy nature.

We believe that a cleaner, healthier environment in the Halter Creek Basin can exist with a strong economically sound industry and community.

If a variance, for any industry's HONEST inability to meet cold water requirements, can be included in the proposed changes, then the Juniata Valley Audubon Society will endorse the proposed changes for the Beaverdam Branch Basin, the Halter Creek Basin, and the Frankstown Branch area.

- Thank you very much.

Dues Split / Membership Increases

At the May meeting and later Bill Rosevear will give all the details as they become available on the new changes in fees and such. A compromise has been proposed that should satisfy the members while allowing National to meet its financial obligations.

Sightings: May 3rd John Belin saw 40 pair of purple martins at East Freedom. Go past Chilcoat's to blinking light. Turn there left 1 block & then go right 1 block. There are two houses. / May 2nd Mr. & Mrs. Ellworth Hall saw an albino robin near Newton-Hamilton. It had a yellow beak, black eye and an orange breast. Overall it presented a silver appearance.

The Gnatcatcher

Juniata Valley Audubon Society

3001 4th Avenue

Altoona, Pa. 16602 (943-5629)

June 24th - Stone Valley Picnic/Outing