

THE

# Bnatcher

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol 10 No 9

December 1978



Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
 Thou art not so unkind, as man's ingratitude.  
 Thy tooth is not so keen, because thou art not seen,  
 Although thy breath be rude.  
 Heigh ho, sing heigh ho, unto the green holly,  
 Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.  
 Then heigh ho, the holly,  
 This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky  
 That dost not bite so nigh as benefits forgot.  
 Though thou the waters warp, thy sting is not so  
 sharp,

As friend remembered not.  
 Heigh ho, sing heigh ho, unto the green holly,  
 Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.  
 Then heigh ho, the holly,  
 This life is most jolly.



- The character Amiens in As You Like It (II, vii) - William Shakespeare

## The Tenth Annual Christmas Bird Count

A decade of counts. A flock of turkey. A bevy of quail? Are we asking for too much? Nothing is too far out of the question when several dozen bird watchers get out this Sunday, December 17th for the census. Admittedly, quail are hard to come by - but that's the challenge. Are there any out there? Who will have the distinction of claiming them on a count? And another question: are there many other seldom seen species within the 15 mile diameter circle centered on Culp, the crossroads in Sinking Valley? If our efforts tally 50 species it has been a fine day of searching. To get higher - to 60 and beyond, for example - it will take lots of good luck, diligent watching and a good number of those very uncommon birds. It is an annual challenge that sharpens the counter's senses for a dawn to dusk outing.

Call John Orr (943-5629), count compiler, for details - assignment of territories, rules, etc. A detailed 6 page set of instructions was run off last year as a guide to the count and is still available for those who need it. Counters pay a registration fee of \$1.50 each - a sum collected for the costly printing of the Christmas Count in the July issue of American Birds. The fee may be paid to John at the covered dish dinner Sun. evening. Counters should keep a careful record of all species seen or heard. Only birds positively identified should be included in your listings. If a bird is unusual or rare for our area, try to get someone else to check it. Make a note of where seen, who saw it, and the circumstances, how long or how well observed, all details, type of light, etc. This should all be in writing. Any bird seen within the two week count period that does not get listed by us on the 17th should be called in as we can report it. An easy way to see just how the data collected is finally compiled, see the Christmas Count issue (July) where we are listed as "Culp, Pa." It is most interesting to see how other groups do in Pa. John Orr, Paul Luckner and Bill Rosevear are a few people who have these large count issues.

A big problem on the count is over lap. When moving along a route be sure it is your territory or be sure you've cleared with those near you or with the compiler before adding up totals. A running record of just where each bird or group of birds is seen can be most helpful to us. Note identifying landmarks so as to later correlate any possible overlap. Count not only each different species but the totals of each. On the running record it would be necessary to add up sub-totals at the end of the day for the grand totals.



Those who cannot get out in the field may be able to count at home at feeders. Be sure to get no more than the true number of birds seen at any one time feeding. Help is needed in getting coverage and counters in all areas. We need to get more count circle residents involved. The area takes in Bellwood, Tipton, Grazierville, Tyrone, Ironville, Birmingham, Water St., all of Sinking Valley, Canoe Valley, Mt. Etna, Point View, Canoe Creek, part of Turkey and Scotch valleys, East End, Greenwood, Pinecroft, and part of Juniata. Topographical maps are most useful in getting an accurate overview of your territory.

At dusk all census takers and anyone else - member or friends - should meet at the Skelp Grange Hall in Skelp, a tiny town just over the mountain from Bellwood. At Jack's restaurant just past Bellwood off Rt# 220 from Altoona, turn right and go over to Skelp in Sinking Valley. Try to get together with friends in car pools. Bring a covered dish - your favorite, your choice. Main dish casserole of vegetables, salad, dessert, hors d'oeuvres. We will have a baked ham there but a couple other meat dishes would be fine. Call Olga Orr (943-5629) if you want to coordinate this or ask questions. It is plenty of fun to see what was seen and to enjoy a meeting out in the country with good food and drink. Please plan to attend this supper - whether you are able to get out counting or not.

Those who have never taken part in this annual mad event may do so by getting assigned to a team or by getting an assigned spot for a short period of time with an expert who can help you identify the birds. Call in if interested. There are about 100 species that could be seen. In our first 9 years we've spotted about 75 of these!

Bird Seed Sale: An initial success. 9,100 lbs. sold. (4.55 tons) \$1,305.05 worth of seed. Delivery date to be Dec. 23 or 30th. You'll be called.

Audubon Workshop Nominations: Give names of anyone who has an interest in outdoor activities and might like to attend the summer Greenwich, Conn. workshop with a scholarship. This person should have a desire to share with JVAS what he or she experienced there. Names go to Bill Rosevear.

Early Winter Birds: Winter's not here yet, but feeders report the usual - juncos, house finches, cardinals, mourning doves, song sparrows, wh. br. nuthatches, house sparrows, and a few more. Colette Heller saw 100s of cedar waxwings in the Bellwood area in late Nov.

Incorporation: Our chapter needs to get some good legal advice on the ins and outs of incorporation. Please call Bills Rosevear (674-5021) always collect if you can help.

Common Ground: Paul Winter's newest album.

Another gift idea. Sears and the Natl. Record Mart have it. Paul, who is an Altoonan, has worked up a unique album featuring his consort's instruments - the sax, oboe and cello in harmony with an African fish-eagle, a humpback whale and a Timber wolf.

The Gnatcatcher  
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Notice: No January Meeting!

Christmas Count: Dec. 17th

November Meeting: Charley Brightbill gave a nice talk and slide show on the "Pulpit" hawk watch. Another great program.

Public Feeders: Some extra seed we ordered will go to stock a few feeders to be put up in public areas, parks, campuses, etc. We need a few people with the time and skills to make a few nice feeders for this new project.

Snowy Owl Sighted: Rev. Eboch confirms as do a few others, the presence of a snowy owl in the Prince Gallitzin area. This is a good sighting of a rare northern neighbor!

Audubon magazine & membership: Give this year for a very meaningful Christmas present. The magazine and the cause are important and rewarding.

Nature Items Sale: suet feeders, bird feeders, bug boxes, thistle feeders, etc. + a few book titles, will be here in a week or two. Plans are to sell these items on bird see pick-up day.