

THE

Gnatcatcher

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol 11 No 4

May 1979



The Noble Nature

It is not growing like a tree
 In bulk, doth make Man better be;
 Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
 To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere:
 A lily of a day
 Is fairer far in May,
 Although it fall and die that night;
 It was the plant and flower of Light.
 In small proportions we just beauties see;
 And in short measures life may perfect be.

- Ben Jonson

The May Meeting

TIME: 7:30 p.m.
 DATE: May 29th 1979 - Tuesday
 PLACE: 28th St. Church of the Brethren
 Union Ave. & 28th St. Altoona

PROGRAM: Bird Calls

Bill Rosevear, John Orr & Truth Close will set up tapes and opaque projections of numerous area species so members can hone their skills at identification of birds by voice and sighting. Many people have voiced a need for a workshop sort of get-together that would let us listen to calls while at the same time see the bird making the call.

The Executive Committee will meet Tuesday evening one hour prior to the regular meeting (6:30) Anyone may attend. Please get out for the last meeting of the season - the last at the church until September.

The Proposal for Amending the Constitution

All members received - mostly by mail - the proposed amendments to the 1969 JVAS Constitution. Everyone is urged to take a second of time to check off the block YES or NO and drop the post card ballot into the mail. We need the vote as an expression from the total membership of its concern for the group. The outdated document was (still is) a drag on the efficient operation of our business. Please send in the cards. If a member (new or old) who did not get the Constitution and sheet of proposed changes - and ballot - call John Orr (943-5629) right away. The sending out of a constitution to each and every member is an accomplishment many have spoken out for many times past. This document is not best seller reading but it is critical to the continued success of our conservation organization.

The Annual Banquet: Another Success!

Nearly 75 members and friends attended this annual affair. Again, a fine meal! Very nice program - our thanks go to Bill Rosevear who was able to get Mike Ondik as our guest speaker. The banquets have consistently had excellent programs - and pie!

Audubon Workshop in Connecticut

Last call from anyone interested or from those who might nominate a recipient of this one week scholarship sponsored by JVAS. Person selected need not be a member but should be able to put the knowledge gained in Connecticut to use in our community. See or call (674-5021) Bill Rosevear on this. Call Bill collect on any and all business.

June Meetings / Outings ----- Fort Roberdeau

We have had June meetings - wild food dinners would be one example - but an indoor gathering has not been our custom. This June 26th we will meet at the Kiwanis Farm (nature center) at the fort for a walk along the trails and a slide/film show in the building. Meet at 6:00 - 6:30 p.m. and bring a bag lunch if you wish. Drinks will be served (provided). This will be an informal outing. We hope the public will attend and take part in both the planned activities.



Alaska: Halfway There!

An Alaska Coalition update (May 22nd) informs us that protection of the Alaskan lands is now close at hand. The House just voted 360 - 65 in favor of H.R. 39, the Udall-Anderson substitute bill. This allows 125 million acres to be set aside and provides for a balanced approach to development. The Coalition says that grassroots support led to this victory. Now the Durkin bill, S-222, has 19 co-sponsors and needs more. Write to Senators Heinz and Schweiker asking if they will be co-sponsors. (Address: U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510) See Time magazine for an up to date article (May 28th) on the Alaska situation. It mentioned that there seems to be sentiment running now against the oil interests in Alaska. Not hard to understand why in these troubled times.

Kestrel in the City

Joann Noonan reports that a pair of kestrels has nested near their home at 1703 22nd Avenue in Altoona. The hawks are up in the eaves. A nest of robins two doors down has caused a problem as the parents fly vigorously at the kestrels' chests. It seems as if the robins are trying to distract their neighbors from their own nest of newly hatched young. The Robins' eggs hatched the 12 & 13th of May, but the attacks started 2 to 3 weeks before that.

Miscellaneous Notes

Colette Heller has asked if we would put a lost and found note in on missing flower holders (frogs) and planters from the banquet. Call her at 742-7481 if you accidentally took them.

The Keystone Festival will be held on September 8th & 9th and we will be in it with a booth showing what our group is actively working on. We'll also be selling something - possibly lemonade. John Orr is chairman for this operation - call him at 943-5629 if interested in working there or if you have some good ideas on this.

The water quality of our area streams and rivers is now in the news as an EPA grant might go to Altoona if the city matching funds are available. It is a long time coming and we must keep informed on the matter. Many millions of dollars could be awarded for improvements on the sewer system if the study grant is given and a subsequent "need" is shown. This will be an item of business at the May meeting.

"Big Day in May"

This annual census is loosely structured - a date early in May for the enterprising birder who wants to challenge a 24 hour limitation on a count within the Christmas Count circle. This year only Stephen Bonta reported a tally. He went out for birds on his farm which lies tucked away up a hollow in the mountains just barely out of Tyrone on Rt.#350 heading off the Rt220 by-pass. The Bonta's farm is high up and off to your right as you leave Tyrone. There on May 13th, Stephen saw 52 species - pretty good for one limited habitat of mountain woods and fields. His list follows: catbird, indigo bunting, rose-breasted grosbeak, song sparrow, chipping sparrow, redwing blackbird, brown-headed cowbird, common crow, Cape May warbler, magnolia warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, American redstart, common flicker, white breasted nuthatch, blue-gray gnatcatcher, wood peewee, great crested flycatcher, scarlet tanager, Baltimore oriole, orchard oriole, golden-winged warbler, pine warbler, yellow-breasted chat, yellow-throat, eastern phoebe, yellow-throated vireo, red-eyed vireo, brown thrasher, Tennessee warbler, blackburnian warbler, ovenbird, Louisiana water thrush, worm eating warbler, tufted titmouse, black-capped chickadee, cardinal, broadwing hawk, red-tailed hawk, ruby-throated hummingbird, turkey vulture, bay-breasted warbler, chestnut sided warbler, barn swallow, cerulean warbler, black-throated warbler, downey woodpecker, hooded warbler, mourning dove, field sparrow, rufous-sided towhee, American goldfinch, house wren. Eighteen warblers is a fine number for a day. This list shows what can be seen with some work early in May for the warbler group. (note: yellow-throat, chat, ovenbird, water thrush and redstart are warblers.)

Unusual Warblers sighted May 8th

Steve Bonta saw a rare stray (migrant?) sighted only a couple of times before by the St. College people - a yellow-throated warbler. It was in a pine tree near his home. On the same day - May 8th - he sighted a blue-winged warbler in the same vicinity. Two most notable species for our area.

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May 29 = meeting with
bird call presentation.
June 26th = meeting/outing
at Ft. Roberdeau