

# THE Gnatcatcher

JUNIATA VALLEY  
AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 13 No 4 May 1981

Spring Oak

Above the quiet valley and unrippled lake  
While woodchucks burrowed new holes, and birds sang,  
And radicles began downward and shoots  
Committed themselves to the spring  
And entered with tiny industrious earthquakes,  
A dry-rooted, winter-twisted oak  
Revealed itself slowly. And one morning  
When the valley underneath was still sleeping  
It shook itself and it was all green.

- Galway Kinnell



The May Meeting TIME: 7:30 p.m.

DATE: May 26th / Tuesday

PLACE: 28th St. Church of the Brethren / Altoona, Pa.  
- Union Ave. & 28th St. →

PROGRAM: Identifying, Gathering and Preparing Wild Foods.

Dr. Paul H. Risk, an Associate Professor of Recreation and Parks at Penn State, will present a talk and demonstration on wild edibles next Tuesday. Dr. Risk will deal with both edible and poisonous plants. He has experience as a teacher of basic and advanced wilderness survival courses. His background includes work as a park ranger-naturalist, an arboretum naturalist, a mountain rescue specialist, a high school teacher, a consultant on environmental interpretation, and an originator and director of a 4-H Outdoor Adventure Program in Michigan.

Dr. Risk's program concludes our regular series of monthly meetings and will be a prelude to the June 28th Wild Foods Dinner at Ft. Roberdeau. Enjoy this last gathering in the social hall of the 28th St. Church of the Brethren. Park in the rear by back entrance. Cookies and drinks will be served.

Al Burd Receives 1981 George Award Wednesday evening, May 13th, Al Burd was honored by the Altoona Chamber of Commerce which presented him with its annual award that recognizes a Blair Countian for volunteer work to improve life and "get the job done." Al was given a silver bowl at a banquet held at the Jaffa Mosque. He 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 Williamsburg's Physical Fitness and Nature Trail and gave many volunteer hours in getting the Prince Gallitzin Nature Center going. Al has talked to dozens of scout, 4-H, garden and school groups. He is our own field trip leader and long time active executive committee member. The George Award went to a well deserving man - Al Burd, a noted amateur botanist, an expert photographer, an ardent conservationist. Our congratulations to him!

June 28th Wild Foods Dinner Fort Roberdeau - Nature Center on the hill.  
2:00 p.m. Sunday, June 28th (Note error in the blue program of events. Corss out 23rd and mark in 28th.) Al burd announces that the dinner will be a "tasting table" this year. Members and friends are to bring a regular picnic lunch for this outing. The wild items will be a limited offering. Anyone who is able should plan and prepare a favorite wild edible dish for sampling by others. Call Al at 943-0586 if you need some help on this. Already awaiting the gourmet wild foods enthusiast are turtle soup and porcupine! Bring on your specialties! Please remember, though, to bring your own regular style picnic lunch.

The Annual Banquet: A Success Over 70 guests and members attended a very nice banquet Tuesday, April 28th. The apple butter was nice. The pies were, of course, great. And, the speaker gave us a quick overview of some beautiful central Pennsylvania trails. Tom Thwaites gave a nice talk - a slide lecture that was informal and easy going. The church presented us with a good family style meal.

New and Old Officers

Wilson Kreitz was elected to the position of vice-president of our Society and Madge Quick was re-elected treasurer. Best of wishes to these two officers. Our thanks and appreciation must be extended to Truth Close who has served two years as vice-president. She has worked hard on the executive committee and has made many good suggestions on plans and programs. Her knowledge of wildflowers has been valuable on many of the field trips.

May 17th Big Day Count

How many different species can be seen in one 24 hour day in Central Pa.? 100? More than that? Certainly an intriguing question - especially when one considers that many, many birds are in our area but do not get sighted. Well, our group's sum total with a few parties yet to report in now stands at 102. Katherine Evert's red-bellied woodpecker put it at 100 and Janet DeMuth's mockingbird and red-headed woodpecker pushed it past the magic number. The individual's goal is to personally sight 100 different birds. In our area that can be done but it would not be easy. Carol Lehman saw an evening grosbeak: #99. The Kreitzs were out + Stouts, Rosevears and Colette Heller - and others. John Orr, June Brandt and George Mahon in one party and Steve Bonta and family in another saw over many hours some really great species. Bontas saw: warbling vireo, yellow-throated vireo, state bird, 17 or 18 warblers, cedar waxwing, least flycatcher, green heron, rough-winged swallow and more. Orr's group saw orchard oriole as their best bird. Plus: Tennessee warbler, female canvasback duck, night-hawk, common loon, solitary sandpiper, and kingbird. Both of these last two parties saw yellow-breasted chats ( a large warbler), great-crested flycatchers, yellow-bellied flycatchers, and yellow-billed cuckoos. Anyone else who was out looking Sunday should/could pass on their listing to John Orr, count compiler, at 3001 4th Ave./ Altoona, Pa. 16602 (943-5629)

Coal Mining and Altoona's Water Supply

Wasn't the old battle over lands fought out long ago - in the old days? In the days of massive wasting of areas? Silly question. Any conservationist knows where we have been moving. More and more valuable farm land lost each year. More green spaces lost to construction, dredging and expansion. Islands of green is just what we may end up with in the year 2, \_\_\_\_. Conserving does touch our pocketbooks as well as precious natural landed areas. So, what if Altoona's water bills go sky high from added costs of treatment at the water purification plant? Do the coal operators care? Does our director of water - our councilman - care? The mayor? We have not taken, again, the action side in looking into this issue. Will the watershed be damaged to the point of making the water more acidic, more sentimental? Does it now cost \$450,000 to operate the water treatment plant - including \$100,000 for chemicals (per year) ?? WRITE the mayor, WRITE the city councilmen, WRITE DER. Ask what is happening. Our group intends to ask questions. We will watch to see what the over-burden studies (core samplings) may turn up. No one asked about the proposed coal mining operations. Not one citizen. Not one of our own city officials even raised the question publicly or otherwise! Thanks to Don Hopey and the Altoona Mirror for their excellent investigative reporting.

Hotline No. to NAS's Washington, D.C. Office:

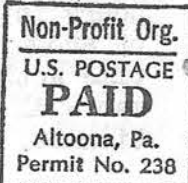
(202) 547-9017. Call for recorded conservation legislation reports. Best time: after 11:00 p.m.

Fourth Pymatuning/Conneaut Marsh Eagle Nest Found

First new nest in many years. Mike Puglisi, Pa. wildlife biologist and a recent speaker at Audubon (March 1981), is excited about the new find. As the Game Commission's coordinator for threatened and endangered species, he is very busy in the upper northwest corner of the state on the eagle nesting project. There is an eaglet in the nest.

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3001 4th Avenue  
Altoona, Pa. 16602  
943-5629

May 26th - Regular Meeting  
June 28th - Wild Foods Dinner



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