

THE Gnatcatcher

JUNIATA VALLEY

AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 13 No 8 December 1981



I heard the bells
on Christmas Day
Their old familiar
carols play,
and wild and sweet
the words repeat
Of peace on earth,
goodwill to men!

- Longfellow

Glory to God in the highest, and
on earth peace, good will toward
men.

- Luke 2:14

The Christmas Bird Count

Dawn to Dusk / 24 Hours

SUNDAY / DECEMBER 20TH

COVERED DISH SUPPER - Dusk at
Skelp Grange Hall

Thirteen years now, and the quest still holds promise and excitement. Looking for birds. Looking for one's self. We will be, as Byron said, conversing with Nature's charms and viewing her stores unrolled. Some will be out before daylight ready for the first crow while others will sing cantatas (Wilson and Teddie Kreitz, for example) before hearing other songs of an avian note. Some go dawn to dusk. Others put in an hour or so and more keep an eye at home on feeders and yards. It all adds up to a grand happening, a bird watching concentrate that infuses (our cup of tea, so to speak) a wonderful feeling in one and all. The count is fun. It's also a serious affair requiring us to be honest and accurate in the compilation of data that can be used to study such things as: bird populations, their fluctuations, and weather influences; fluctuations in ranges of certain species; winter range distribution; expansion or decline of species; the effects of changes in land use and the influences of urbanization; and identifying areas where endangered species winter and the need to protect such areas.

Members and non-members who want to take part in the count and have not yet been assigned to a team may get an assignment by calling count compiler John Orrat 943-5629. Everybody is welcome to attend the covered dish supper at the Skelp Grange Hall in Sinking Valley beginning at dusk. Just bring any entree (dish). Casserole, dessert, breads, salads, etc. Drinks, utensils, condiments and such will be furnished as will be a large baked ham. The participant fees of counters will once again be paid by our group (courtesy of Madge Quick, treasurer). Counters afield should have very warm clothing, binoculars, good field guide, hot drink, and cookies. For new observers, a call in to the compiler would be the best way of getting a complete, quick rundown of details. Remember: if not sure, don't count! Any bird not normally encountered or expected in our area will have to be well documented. All identifying details must be written up and relayed to compiler. If identification is not certain, members will be interested in your report of the unusual even though you can't count it. Birds may be identified by their songs alone. In covering an area assigned be most careful to mark rough landmarks for birds sighted so as to keep territories apart. Overlap is a big problem.

In 1980 we saw 61 different species for a new record. According to American Birds' special Christmas Bird Count issue, there were 1,358 counts in the U.S. last year. 33,802 people were afield counting a total of 49,060,380 birds. Pennsylvania had 47 counts; Glenolden, Pa. led with 107 species! Lancaster County had 97 species and Harrisburg had 84.

Good luck to all counters! Enlist the help of people within the count circle - especially feeder watchers. The circle is centered on Culp in Sinking Valley and is 15 miles in diameter taking in Bellwood, Tyrone,

Tipton, East End, part of Juniata, Canoe Ck. State Park, Mt. Entna, Water Street, Spruce Creek and Birmingham. Anyone wanting to purchase the count issue should bring \$7.50 to the evening wind-up. The supper is most interesting for it is then that all teams report in and a grand tally is made. The event lasts until about 8:00 p.m. and for some is followed by a night search for owls. Children are welcome at the dinner and car pooling is recommended.

Audubon Sales / Gifts Bill Rosevear announces that Audible Audubon kits will be available for purchase the evening of December 20th at the Grange Hall. \$28.00 is a bargain price. Also, he will have there 3 new Peterson guides, 2 bluebird houses, 1 wren house, bird checklists for Pa., thistle sack feeders (\$2.00), 4 records, 4 regular and 5 thistle tube feeders (guaranteed for 3 years).

January 1982 Meeting: Members' Night Get onto the program by calling coordinator, Wilson Kreitz, at 695-0126. Anyone, member or not - invite others, is asked to share particular interests such as artwork, poetry, photography - anything with a tie-in to nature. The plan now is to have people set up at specific spots and others will rotate around listening and taking it all in. Don't be afraid - call in and volunteer your special backgrounds. This will be the first time JVAS has tried such a program. It is seen as an easy going, informal sort of gathering - a sharing of interests.

Canoe Creek / Beaver Dams Outing A small group - George Mahon, John Orr, Bob Richers, Jesse Perry and Carol Sholwarter - undertook a pre-count outing Sunday, Nov. 22nd. 14 species were sighted including a flock of 31 whistling swans, a nice flock of red-winged blackbirds, a sharp-shinned hawk and 1 red-bellied woodpecker.

Miscellaneous Notes Lucky draw: Rev. John Witmer won the 50 lbs. of Feathered Friend at the November meeting.

Seed Sale: A success. January's newsletter will detail full results. Remember - Imler's has more seed and it does go on sale from time to time. Watch the ads or call.

Unsuitability For Mining Petition: John Orr, Paula Ford-Cameron and Bill Rosevear are working hard now on completing this document. The resolution, finally, of the coal stripping proposal for the Mill Run watershed hinges on this effort. More later on this issue.

A Recipe for the Christmas Count

Old Fashioned Quaker Oats'

Famous Oatmeal Cookies:

3/4 cup shortening, soft (Crisco)	1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup firmly-packed brown sugar	1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
1/2 cup granulated sugar	1 teaspoon salt
1 egg	1/2 teaspoon soda
1/4 cup water	3 cups Oats, uncooked

Beat shortening, sugars, egg, water and vanilla together until creamy. Sift together flour, salt and soda; add to creamed mixture; blend well. Stir in Oats. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto greased cooked sheets. Bake in preheated moderate oven (350°F.) 12 to 15 minutes. (For variety, add chopped walnuts.)

The Gnatcatcher
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He comes, he comes
the Frost Spirit
comes!
You may trace his
footsteps now,
On the naked woods
and the blasted
fields
and the brown hill's
withered brow.

- J.G. Whittier,
The Frost Spirit



William E. Rosevear
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Note: January 10, 1982 - Field Trip for Winter Birds in Sinking Valley
Meet at PVSC at 1:30. (Call 943-5629 for details)