

THE Gnatcatcher

JUNIATA VALLEY

AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 14 No 1 January 1982



Let him push
at the door --
in the chimney
roar, and rattle
the window pane;
Let him in
at us spy
with his icicle eye,
But he shall not
entrance gain.

- T. Noel, Old Winter

The January Meeting

DATE: January 26th TIME: 7:30 p.m. PLACE: 28th St. Church
of the Brethren,
Union Ave. & 28th
St. Altoona, Pa.

PROGRAM: Next Ever Annual Members Night

Something new. Next Tuesday night Audubon members will share interests and talents in any area - art, photography, literature or anything else under the sun. Wilson Kreitz, vice-president of Juniata Valley Audubon, is coordinating this informal gathering. He reports that six or seven members have already volunteered to share their particular interests. A few more are needed. Call Wilson at 695-0126 to let him know you are willing to talk on something. In recent years our group did not meet in January. The risk of bad weather is always a factor but the program committee felt a members night would afford one and all a good chance to exchange pleasantries, learn from one another, and partake of choice gat aux. Anyone who has a good birdseed cookie recipe, for example, ought to bake up some and present a talk while the others sample the fare. Anything goes for this evening's program!

Anyone needing a ride should call 943-5629. Car pooling, especially in the winter, is a good idea. Parking is in the rear lot as is the entrance to the social hall. Remember, guests are always welcome. Bring a few!

February 14th Owl Rowl An evening program at Shaver's Creek Nature Center (at Stone Valley). Leaving Pleasant Valley Shopping Center at 4:30 p.m. (Meet near Family Host.) Call Teddie Kreitz for more information at 695-0126. We will carpool down.

The Sinking Valley Winter Bird Trip Sunday, January 10th, 10 daring Auduboners braved sub-zero temperature and wild winds in search for horned larks and snow buntings. The trip began calmly enough with a pleasant visit to the house of Katharine Everts near Fort Roberdeau. There the group saw firsthand a good dozen birds in a few minutes at a wonderful feeding set-up. Especially nice were the red-bellied woodpecker, tree and white-throated sparrows. Also nice were the assorted homemade cookies Katharine offered the winter visitors. Leaving that warm birding station, the group moved directly down valley past the beautiful and hidden St. John's Lutheran Church, and on the way toward Skelp the larks appeared! A few seemed to blow past over a rise in the field of corn stubble. Out and after them, the lark hunters had to fight the biting winds in a catch-up effort that proved fruitful as many larks - perhaps a hundred or more - whirled away downfield. Knowing the dangers of such cold, the group had just minutes to scan for snow buntings and lapland longspurs. The buntings reeled by. Perhaps fifty or so. The flashing white marked them as such in mid-air flight. More quick looks gave a quick conclusion that no longspurs were in this mixed group. The winds stung the faces of the retreating ten frozen figures. Their eyes pained and one person noticed a frozen teardrop on her glasses once safely inside the warm car. Later sweeps through the

very lower parts of Sinking Valley failed to locate rough-legged hawks. No rough-legs have been seen by anyone so far this winter! Those taking part in this mad foray were: Bill & Mary Jane Anslinger, Steve Bonta, Al Burd, Lynn Langer, George Mahon, John Orr, Jesse Perry, Bob Richers, and Carol Showalter.

Some Winter Sightings of Note

A woman at Sickles Corner found a common loon in early January. Nursing it along, she released it January 12th in the Little Juniata. John Orr has had one chipping sparrow (Jan. 16, 17 & 19th) at the feeder plus one male ring-neck making his rounds since December 20th. Also there in Columbia Park he had 11 pine siskins on Jan. 17th. Red-breasted nuthatches have been seen often by watchers. Nancy Rampe had one in December in Altoona. An interesting owl turned up in Jim Young's fireplace on Quail Ave. John Orr, son Bill and Virginia Smeltzer gave advice and help (with door) as Jim carefully put the welding gloves to a small gray phase screech owl that once outside on the bannister flew off into the trees.

The 1981 Christmas Bird Count Results

Sunday, Dec. 20th, 37 observers, 27 in ten parties and 10 at feeders, chalked up a very nice 57 different species for the 24-hour count. The afternoon was overcast and many felt the lack of sun hurt the totals. Last year's record 61 species was not seriously threatened. An American coot was seen during the count period (Bob Richers). The list of birds sighted:

great blue heron 1	turkey 19	common snipe 1	eve. g-beak 4
Canada goose 4	rock dove 318	tufted t-mouse 157	catbird 1
mallard 121	mourning dove 228	bl-cap. chickadee 293	starling 760
wood duck 1	screech owl 2	red-br. nuthatch 6	hs. sparrow 3
green wg. teal 1	gr. horned owl 4	wh.-br. nuthatch 98	r-wg. blackbird 1
sh. shinned hawk 4	kingfisher 6	brown creeper 23	grackle 1
Cooper's hawk 3	flicker 2	winter wren 1	cowbird 65
red-tailed hawk 7	pileated wd-pecker 6	Carolina wren 17	cardinal 154
marsh hawk 1	red-Bel. wd-pecker 8	mockingbird 9	pur. finch 14
kestrel 13	hairy wd-pecker 32	robin 53	hs. finch 140
ruffed grouse 16	downy wd-pecker 90	bluebird 1	goldfinch 89
ring-neck ph. 6	horned lark 230	gold.-cr. kinglet 23	juncos 566
goshawk 2	blue jay 55	water pipit 1	tr. sparrow 28
killdeer 1	crow 134	cedar waxwing 133	wh/thr. sparrow 63
	song sparrow 29		

Most notable species included: catbird (Everts), green winged teal (Rosevear), goshawk (Kreitzs), flicker (Bonta), killdeer (DeMuth), winter wren (Bonta), water pipit (Rampe/Orr/Mahon), great blue heron (Orr/Mahon). 12 birds were single sightings! Our estimates are that 70+ species are out there but we need more people and better habitat analysis to get that magic number. It is a fine goal to shoot for, though. Another great gathering afterwards at the covered dish supper / tally ended the day's adventure.

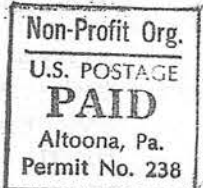
Fort Roberdeau Association Memberships

Now newly reformed into an association, annual memberships at \$5.00 a person may be had by writing and sending check to Fort Roberdeau Association / Blair County Court House / Highland Hall Annex / H-burg, Pa.

Reminder: Citizens Mobilization Sheets

Send in as soon as possible with as many names as possible!

The Gnatcatcher
3001 4th Avenue
Altoona, Pa. 16602



Northern Birds Alert:

Keep eyes peeled for snowy owls, pine grosbeaks, cross-bills, redpolls, boreal chickadees, black-backed 3-toed woodpeckers.

William E. Rosevear
RD Box 63A
Patton, Pa. 16668

Notice of proposed change to Constitution & Bylaws:

Vote to be taken at January 26, 1982 meeting to change name of group from Juniata Valley Audubon Society to Juniata Valley Audubon Society, Inc.