

# GNATCATCHER

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 JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY
 

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Vol. 7 No. 3

March 1975

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 Fueled

Fueled  
 by a million  
 man-made  
 wings of fire--  
 the rocket tore a tunnel  
 through the sky--  
 and everybody cheered.  
 Fueled  
 only by a thought from God--  
 the seedling  
 urged its way  
 through the thicknesses of black--  
 and as it pierced  
 the heavy ceiling of the soil--  
 and launched itself  
 up into outer space--  
 no  
 one  
 even  
 clapped.

Marcie Hans

## The March Meeting - "The Rewards of Gardening Naturally"

Ruth Hollinger will be our guest speaker next Tuesday evening. She will talk to us about organic gardening and will be leading a discussion on this subject. Ruth is an assistant professor of physics at the Altoona Campus. She has her Ph.D from Penn State (To avoid charges of sexism we will not mention her husband).

Ruth has worked an organic garden as a hobby and has had a backyard garden for 10 years. She says that one reward for her efforts has been a lot of birds. By planting such things as sunflowers she has been able to attract them to her backyard.

TIME: 7:30 P.M.  
 DATE: March 25th  
 PLACE: Twenty-Eighth Street Church of the Brethren  
 Union Avenue & 28th Street, Altoona

## Project Bluebird

Bill Rosevear's committee met Sunday, March 16th, at Prince Gallitzyn State Park to put out bluebird houses on the bluebird trail. According to a report we received the other day, Fran Burgoon said that the group saw bluebirds in the area! The goal of this project is to eventually have an automobile trail on which anyone could travel with a map for a guide to the location of houses. This is an exciting venture that the reader might want to get actively involved with. Get in touch with Bill.

## National Wildlife Refuge Letters

Attached to the Gnatcatcher is a dittoed letter written by Kurt Gansauer for us to use as a guide in writing to E.G. Shuster regarding the bill H.R. 15856. Your letter does not have to be as long or the same as Kurt's. If you feel this to be a worthy cause take a few minutes to write our congressman as soon as possible. This letter writing campaign is a project of the Conservation Committee.

## "It Began With Birds"

The excellent Audubon film on the history and purpose of the Audubon Society can be placed in our main public library if we can come up with the \$100 to purchase it. Mike Chonko is handling the fund raising for the new, 28 minute full-color film. There is \$10 towards it at this point. Send or give contributions to Mike (His address is: 2316 11th St., Altoona)

## The Annual Banquet

Wayne Harpster gave a great talk on native orchids. His slides and commentary were really something! Over 60 people - members and friends - attended another very successful and interesting banquet. The meal was quite good. The church is a fine meeting place and the church members who arranged the dinner are to be congratulated for a fine job.

## Spring Wildfowl

Ring-billed ducks and mallards were sighted at Lake Altoona. The Horseshoe and Mill Run reservoirs are hot spots now for northward migrations. You need good binoculars and care in spotting from a road that has a narrow two lanes. Call in reports of good birds seen or good spots for seeing good birds. (?) (943-5629)

## Sinking Valley Field Trip

March 2nd - a Sunday - Mike Chonko, Al Burd, John Orr, John McCall, Don Wharton, Paul Luckner and Bill Rosevear were in Sinking Valley looking for the last winter birds and new arrivals. 15 species were seen including 2 red-headed woodpeckers, 2 pileated woodpeckers, 150 red-wings, a couple of flocks of fat robins, 3 horned larks, 1 ring-necked pheasant, 2 groups of killdeer - one of 2 and the other of 9 birds, and a few mourning doves.

## Membership Drive

The big drive is on! Send leads - that is, names of those who might be interested in Audubon - to Mary Slippey (695-5200). We will send the Gnatcatcher free to anyone who would like to have it - free for several issues. Also: get brochures at the next meeting so that you can pass them out to friends who are involved with conservation. Any ideas or suggestions on membership would be appreciated by Mary. Be bold! Don't be afraid to ask people to join.

## Ross' Gull - A Rare Occurrence

A rare sighting of a seagull took place last month in Massachusetts at Salisbury Beach. For the first time ever a Ross' Gull was spotted! The bird is a delicate gray-winged Arctic seagull with rosy chest, wedge-shaped tail, red feet and, in summer, a black collar. It breeds in northeastern Siberia and migrates north toward the pole. It is seen regularly at Point Barrow, Alaska in the fall migration. The gull has been there since as early as January 12th. This one happened to be a first for Roger Tory Peterson! (That shows plainly how rare it is) The sighting has been called by some "The birding event of the century". Anyone who sees a color photo of this bird might bring it to a meeting for the group to look at. Maybe it will be in Audubon magazine.

## Miscellaneous 26 Acres?

The 26 acre parcel seems to be heading for a final resolution - we hope it will be possible to include a definite park within it and to have areas or belts of green around and through it. This former Penn Central land should be a model of what is best in all ways for a city - not just a dull, blacktopped commercial center. It needs "Islands of Green".

The Gnatcatcher  
3001 4th Avenue  
Altoona, Pa. 16602



William Rosevear  
RD -  
Dysart, Pa. 16636