

WATERBURY

JUNIATA VALLEY FOLK SOCIETY

Vol. 8 No. 1 January 1976

Larks

They came down in a patch of wheat,
and, as we drew near,
the flock flew away
and left the startled field quite empty.

In the thicket they look like fire;
when they rise, like silver darting.
And they go by even before they go,
cutting through your wonder.

Our poor eyes, knowing only
that the whole flock has gone,
cry "Larks!" to those who rise,
and are lost, and sing.

In the sorely wounded air
they leave us full of yearning,
with a wonder and a quiver
in body and in soul...

Larks, son! Above us sweep
the larks across the plain!

- Gabriela Mistral

(Translated from the Spanish by
Langston Hughes)

Benedict Arnold's March to Quebec. - January Meeting.

TIME: 7:30 p.m. PLACE: 28th St. Church of the Brethren
DATE: January 27th Union Ave. & 28th St. Altoona, Pa.
DAY: Tuesday

We will be treated to a most unusual program Tuesday evening when Bill Anslinger presents his slide talk on a journey he took last year across upper New England to Quebec. Bill was one of the marchers in the reenactment of Arnold's march on Canada. His slide work is quite good and the coverage of this area of our country should be most appealing. Arnold's role has often been misconstrued in history, so in the concern for accuracy and truth join in on an enlightening view of the past.

So much of the Bicentennial seems commercial which might have some basis in the early Yankee outlook on work and profit, but much of the celebration has to do with a reevaluating of the people and the land. Many are looking not only into the past of our nation but into the total or all encompassing identity of ourselves. It is good to put Arnold in his proper place. It is healthy to seek a refined definition of who and what we are and were. This looking to the roots of existence relates to our conservation work for the parts of the eco-system all interact to create the non-static whole. Our awareness, then, is critical to our healthy existence as a people in harmony with the land.

There has been such a variety of great programs! Bring out the friends and everybody for a nice evening's gettogether. This would be another fine program for younger people.

Winter Field Trips

There is talk of having a few outings late in January or early February for birds. Sinking Valley is just right for seeing good hawks and larks. In with the larks could be snow buntings. Definite plans will be made at the Tuesday meeting. If interested in going with these groups of birders call Al Burd or John Orr.

Seventh Annual Christmas Bird Count

New records were set this year as 32 observers spent a good day counting. This is the most we have had taking part. A record of different birds seen was set at 48. A great blue heron was seen in the count period but not on the count day for an over-all total of 49 - just 1 shy of our best total of 50! We missed some good ones - birds that are expected: meadowlarks were not seen with the horned larks. No golden-crowned kinglets could be found. No winter wrens, cedar waxwings, red-breasted nuthatches, great horned owls, red-headed woodpeckers, purple finches or snow buntings were picked up. If these and some of the others that are known to be winter occupants can be found, our count will be going for a total of 60! Few people realize how many winter birds are to be seen here. Our territory is such, though, that some shore and river birds are not as common as elsewhere.

The birds seen are as follows:

whistling swan 1	common snipe 6	common crow 108	comm. grackle 11
Canada goose 180	rock dove 125	bl-cap chickadee 246	br. head. cowbird 14
mallard 57	mourning dove 27	tufted titmouse 135	cardinal 136
accipiter hawk 1	screech owl 2	wh-br. nuthatch 90	eve. grosbeak 113
red-tailed hawk 5	belted kingfisher 6	brown creeper 2	house finch 5
rough-legged hawk 1	common flicker 1	carolina wren 17	Amer. goldfinch 13
marsh hawk 2	pileated woodp. 3	mockingbird 6	Dk.-eyed junco 350
American kestrel 11	red-bellied woodp. 2	American robin 1	tree sparrow 92
ruffed grouse 7	hairy woodp. 17	ruby cr. kinglet 2	wh. cr. sparrow 5
ring-necked pheasant 1	downy woodp. 83	starling 959	wh. thr. sparrow 23
turkey 8	horned lark 321	house sparrow 367	song sparrow 17
killdeer 19	blue jay 76	red-wg. blackbird 8	bob-white 1

The carolina wren total was a high. These southern birds are coming in fast. The house finches were a first as were the red-winged blackbirds. Don Wharton's team saw 6 common snipe - another first. The Canada geese were in two different flocks. Mike and Margaret Chonko saw the one; Earl Higgins, Anne Marie Lehner and Stuart Forer saw the other. Bill Rosevear's team saw an accipiter hawk. The house finches were seen by Madge Quick's team in Bellwood. This was a great year for evening grosbeaks.

The temperature was 22 to 30 degrees and there was a light snow on the ground. A great covered dish dinner was held, as usual, and many would agree that there is a lot of fun to be had at these affairs.

February Banquet

Make your reservations now for this annual dinner. It will begin at 6:30 p.m. on February 24th - Tuesday - at the 28th St. Church of the Brethren. Price is \$3.50. Call your reservations in to Martha Sullivan (695-0052). The final deadline has to be firm and is Sat. February 21st. This will be a home style meal. Dick Martyr, our Mid-Atlantic Field Representative will be our guest and speaker.

Winter Birds Sighted Dec. 27th - 6 snow buntings: Mike Chonko; Dec 28th Mile C., John Orr & John McCall saw 2 snow buntings. All these were in Sinking Valley. Bernice Levinson had a goldfinch, 2 house finches and 1 pile siskin at her feeder Jan. 17th. John Orr had 6 male house finches and 3 female Jan. 11th. A great horned owl was photographed sitting in a snow bank near Bellwood last week. Bill Rosevear was reported by the State Police who were doing their own count and had a lead from someone in the Tipton area sometime near the 21st - 23rd on a suspicious character! A building was burned down the 23rd - just one more of a long line of arsons in that area. Bill's team covered that section of the circle. This incident shows us the problem of going out in the field when some local crime has the whole county jumpy.

Election of Officers At our January meeting we will have elections. Bill Rosevear is listed as the candidate for vice-president; Claire White is slated as the candidate for secretary. Nominations may be made from the floor.

Miscellaneous 1. Anyone interested in owl calling - call John Orr. John and Bruce Black called in two screech owls on the count. Don Wharton and his sister and John Orr called in a few screech owls in late December. We would like to get the great horned owl and the barred owl.

2. Bluebird Report: Bill Rosevear reports that the houses this year are being built for Sinking Valley and will be out by March 1st. He's got flying squirrels living in one of his houses now at Prince Callitzin. Talk to Bill about this project at the January meeting.

3. American Birds reports. We are now doing a 4 seasons reporting to this journal on populations in our general area. Keep lists of birds seen: arrival dates, departure dates, population data, etc. The current reporting period ends April 15th.