

THE

GNATCATCHER

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Variation on a Sentence

"There are few or no bluish animals..."
Thoreau's Journals, Feb. 21, 1855

Of white and tawny, black as ink,
Yellow, and undefined, and pink,
And piebald, there are droves, I think.

(Buff kine in herd, gray whales in pod,
Brown woodchucks, colored like the sod,
All creatures from the hand of God.)

And many of a hellish hue;
But, for some reason hard to view,
Earth's bluish animals are few.

- Louise Bogan

Endangered Species: The May Meeting

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

DATE: May 25th - Tuesday - Last Tuesday of the month.

PROGRAM: A panel discussion on U.S. and Pennsylvania endangered species. A film on threatened wildlife will be shown to start off the program. Four members of the group will discuss mainly mammals and birds but attention could be aimed at other animals - or fauna. The last named is of increasing interest to Audubon and work is being done to get lists of rare and endangered plants.

This informal presentation will involve the entire group. Everyone throw their two cents in! If you have questions on your mind bring them to the meeting. Bill Rosevear and John Orr are heading up the panel. (It is rumored that they have actual photos of a Mexican Eagle.) More toward the truth, a dodo will be shown, in color, as part of the panel presentation. The reason will be left to the audience. Why a dodo? Suitable prize awarded to best reason given.

Refreshments are planned. This is our last regular meeting. The June 20th wild-foods dinner will be our last gettogether, but May is the end of our regular season of monthly programs.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference: June 25, 26, and 27th.

This conference is a big one and an important one. Our group should be well represented. There is lots to learn at one of these meetings. Plan to go if you have the time and interest. It will be at Bucknell University on the weekend. We have an opportunity to offer input to National Audubon. Specifically, this relates to an ordering of National priorities for goals.

Don Wharton announces that our group will vote at the May 25th meeting to give the Executive Committee a sum of \$136.00 for registration fees and costs our officers, committee chairmen and interested members will incur at this regional conference. The Executive Committee would disburse this money to those people. The Seven Mountains Audubon Society is the host chapter. They have planned well for this. There will be wildlife art show, children's programs, nursery care and optional field trips. A number of valuable workshops will be conducted. Richard Martyr, our regional representative, would like to see 10 to 15 of us there. It's not far for us. Call Don Wharton if you want more particulars: 695-6959. If you plan to go, let him know. June 15th is the deadline for money to be in. One will not only learn a great deal at this sort of session but will meet many great people from other areas and states.

The May Count

Our second annual census in May was not up to last year's in totals but was real worthwhile. John McCall, Bill Rosevear, Lee McCartney, Fran Burgoon, Katharine Everts, Charlie Walton, Bill Murray and John Orr were out counting. We totaled 75 different species. Last year's total was 80. The reason for a lower count lies in the fact that we went out 9 days earlier this year. Next year we will hit it on the 11th or 12th of May. Not many warblers were seen. No scarlet tanager, fox sparrow, house finch, indigo bunting, vireos, brown creeper, screech owl, nighthawk, bobwhite, grosbeaks, marsh hawk, horned lark, coot, ruffed grouse, gulls or turkey. We missed a lot.

Mrs. Lee McCartney had over 30 species. She reported an orchard oriole which is similar to the baltimore oriole. (Check your guides on this one) This bird is near Bellwood in an unsprayed orchard. She also saw a rose-breasted grosbeak, a red-breasted nuthatch, a ruby-throat, yellow-bellied sapsucker, and a pine warbler. John McCall saw an osprey near Water Street. Also, he caught a sharp-shinned hawk near his house, a chimney swift, kingfisher, mockingbird and many more. All of us got the usual common sort of birds. Charlie Walton saw cowbirds and Katharine Everts sighted a baltimore oriole.

John Orr saw 5 sandpipers: the spotted, solitary, greater and lesser yellowlegs, and the pectoral. They were moving through and were on ponds at Canoe Ck. and Yellow Spring. John also saw a vesper sparrow, bluebird, phoebe, yellow warbler, red-bellied and red-headed woodpeckers, white-crowned sparrow, bobolink, a water thrush, 2 blue-gray gnatcatchers (!), a woodcock, bufflehead ducks, red-breasted mergansers, a pheasant, 1 tree sparrow, white-throated sparrows, a green heron and 2 wood ducks (male & female) Fran Burgoon saw a northern water thrush (a warbler).

The June Wild Foods Outing

This popular feast is set for June 20th - a Sunday. The place will be announced at the May 25th meeting. Watch also for the last minute details and the location in the Altoona Mirror and the Gnatcatcher for June. Call Al Burd for answers as to what you might bring. Feel free to come out for this. It isn't necessary at all to bring any wild edible foods. Now is the time to collect, dry, store, etc. for the banquet. Call Al at 943-0586. Bring your friends and your children. This is a lot of fun.

Notes - Miscellaneous Charlie Walton reports an interesting nest in Cumberland, Md. It is built into an ivy vine and is perfectly round, about the size of a coconut with a hole in the center. Can you guess the bird? (nerw anilorac) This nest was made of grass and moss and from it hatched (April 20th) and left a brood of young.

John Orr saw two swamp sparrows at Canoe Ck. on May 9th. (1 male and 1 female).

Bill Rosevear led a small group on a bluebird hike May 16th (Sunday) at Prince Gallitzin. Details on that trip and the two bluebird layouts in the June issue. So far no bluebirds in Sinking Valley boxes.

Give John Orr names of people who might like to receive the Gnatcatcher. Those with an interest will get a few copies free. Everybody work actively on the membership build-up.

Note found in the Altoona Mirror: "Bird authorities believe that nature created and discarded 1.6 million species of birdlife, that about 8,500 species exist now, and that the world's bird population may total 100 billion."

How many animals colored blue can you name? Prize to the list with the most at the May 25th meeting! A start: indigo . Note: some birds are labeled as being blue-gray. Is that really a color? Do you think Thoreau was right in his observation?

The Pack trip to Bear Meadows is planned for the first week of June. Call Kurt Gansauer about it at 942-3837 or get information at the May meeting.

Ron Garback of New Paris - and one of our members - would like again to say that he will donate his services as a veterinarian to anyone of our group who has a wildlife problem. He knows a lot about wildlife care - feeding and related sciences. Write to him at RA's Retreat, New Paris, Pa. 15554 or call him at 814-839-2246. He will answer any questions you might have. Questions come up from time to time about injured animals. Just recently a woman called in asking about robin eggs she had found. How long can eggs be away from the nest and mother bird before they are beyond hatching?

Last bits and pieces: John Orr and Marian Plitt saw 87 ring-billed gulls and 7 Bonaparte's gulls April 26th at the Pleasant Valley shopping center. Our program with Nick Miskovsky was very informative - and sobering: the alternatives are - in the energy field - not too promising. The program was nice and the two groups might consider the future possibilities of joint meetings.