

The Gnatcatcher

Newsletter of Juniata Valley Audubon

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as a benefit for members of the...

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY



It is Election time for JVAS and we want you to have a voice and cast your vote. Elections will be held at the next chapter meeting on Tuesday, September 15th at 7 pm. Join the Zoom meeting to cast your vote.

Directions on how to join the Zoom meeting are on page 2 of the newsletter.

Nominations are listed below. If you would like to nominate someone (with their permission) please email your nomination and their contact information to JVAS@gmail.com or mail in your nomination to:

Juniata Valley Audubon Society
PO Box 1031
Altoona, PA 16603

President: John Carter

Write-in Nomination: _____

Secretary: Schawanne Kilgus

Write-in Nomination: _____

Vice President: Laura Jackson

Write-in Nomination: _____

Treasurer: George Mahon

Write-in Nomination: _____

Nominations are due by Wed., Sept. 8, 2020.

The Board is also looking for a new **Fieldtrip Chair** and a new **Membership Chair**. Subject to approval by the Board, the Field Trip Chair shall plan, organize, and arrange for field trips that may be participated in by members of the Society and others interested in the purposes and objectives of the Society. The Committee shall offer at least six (6) field trips a year (under normal circumstances). The Membership Chair shall maintain the Society's membership records and promote membership. The Membership Chair must use an Excel Spreadsheet and Google Sheets. The Chair shall conduct local membership campaigns to enroll new members and endeavor to retain current members.

Please contact the board at JVAS@gmail.com if you are interested in either of these positions.

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Juniata Valley Audubon Society Zoom Programs

Juniata Valley Audubon Society (JVAS) is a chapter of the National Audubon Society and is dedicated to the conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity.

Juniata Valley Audubon accomplishes its mission through advocacy, science, land stewardship, and education – working directly with Audubon Pennsylvania, the state office of the National Audubon Society.

The JVAS is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit, educational organization as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Gifts are deductible for income tax purposes (Tax ID # 25-1533496).

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- ♦ John Carter

The JVAS Board has decided that we want all of our members to stay safe during these Covid-19 uncertain times. Because we care about your health and safety, and because we want our members to feel connected, we are offering virtual meetings this fall via **Zoom**.

Before joining a Zoom meeting on a computer or mobile device, you can download the **FREE** Zoom app from **the Download Center** (<https://zoom.us/download>). Otherwise, you will be prompted to download and install Zoom when you click a join link.

You can also **join a test meeting** (<https://zoom.us/test>) to familiarize yourself with Zoom.

JVAS Fall General Meetings via Zoom:

When: **Tuesday Sept. 15, 2020 at 7pm**

When: **Tuesday Oct. 20, 2020 at 7 pm**

When: **Tuesday Nov. 17, 2020 at 7pm**

When: **Tuesday Dec. 22, 2020 at 7 pm**

To join any one of these meetings, follow these instructions:

Try to log in about 5 – 10 minute before 7 pm.

- To join by computer, use this link:

<https://psu.zoom.us/j/97418229426>

- To join from the Zoom app on a smartphone: enter this meeting ID:
974 1822 9426

You will need the passcode: 123456

- To join by phone, call this number: +1 301 715 8592 (US Toll)

Enter the meeting ID followed by the pound sign.

974 1822 9426

The passcode is 123456

Zoom Program: Tuesday, September 15, 2020: "Member's Night"

Presented by JVAS Members

This will give members a chance to use Zoom without worrying about missing a formal presentation. If you'd like, you can share any nature-related adventures you've had since our last meeting in February.

Zoom Program: Tuesday, October 20, 2020: "Birds Can Tell Us Things and We Should Listen: Lessons from the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and Pennsylvania's Forest Species"

Presented by Ron Rohrbaugh, Director of Conservation Science and Forest Programs at Audubon Pennsylvania

Ron will explore the many ways in which birds serve as bioindicators to inform global conservation science and how we can learn from extinction and contemporary species declines.

Ron's biography is on our website: <https://www.jvas.org>

JVAS Programs

Zoom Program: Tuesday, November 17, 2020: “Preserving, Enhancing, and Creating Wildlife Corridors in Pennsylvania” Presented by Jason Beale, Animal Care Program Director at Shaver's Creek Environmental Center

Jason will focus on the importance of wildlife corridors for migration, mating, and population viability. We will examine natural corridors as well as human-constructed, from home scale and beyond. The program will conclude with an update on the Endangered Species Coalition's efforts to garner support for HR670, a feasibility study on establishing wildlife corridors in Pennsylvania.

Jason’s biography is on our website: <https://www.jvas.org>

Zoom Program: Tues., Dec. 22: Blair County Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Results

This is a working meeting so CBC participants can tally their results.

Please join us to celebrate the birds in Blair County. CBC details will be in the next newsletter.

We will email the Zoom links before each meeting if we have your email address.

If you aren’t getting emails from JVAS, please send us your email address so we can communicate with you more effectively. We will not share your email.

Just email JVAS@gmail.com

JVAS Fall Field Trips

All JVAS field trips have been cancelled due to Covid-19 concerns. We encourage you to get outside as much as you can, but please follow social distance guidelines, and wear a mask. Enjoy nature by yourself or with your family.

Or, you could participate in virtual field trips! There are 11 virtual trips recorded on the Audubon PA website: <https://pa.audubon.org/chapters-centers/virtual-field-trips>



Three of the trips were presented by JVAS members Laura Jackson, Debra Grim, and Sam Dietze.

We hope to resume field trips in the spring of 2021, so stay tuned.

In Memoriam

We gratefully acknowledge the following supporters, who donated to Juniata Valley Audubon Society in honor of Dr. John Arthur Jubala, the Chief Psychologist at Mercy/Bon Secours Hospital in Altoona, who recently passed away.

Mary Anne Murphy
Rebekah J. Morris
John D. and Judith B. Grove

Off the Shelf



We hope "Off the Shelf" will appear in every issue of *The Gnatcatcher*, but that will only happen if you send in your reviews of natural history books. We also welcome feedback. Email Laura Jackson to contribute a book review, or if you have a comment about a book that was reviewed. Please note that contributions for the next newsletter should be sent to Laura by **October 10, 2020**. Good reading!

THE EIGHT MASTER LESSONS OF NATURE: What Nature Teaches Us About Living Well in the World by Gary Ferguson Book Review by Doug Mason

The COVID-19 pandemic has been emotionally and spiritually draining, but this book helped ground me with an attitude of gratitude for most of what awaits outside the door. The essays may encourage you to take a walk... my wife and I had Scotia Barrens in Centre County to ourselves except for a thrush, several deer and a lot of skunk cabbage in these days of social distancing.

Reading this prose brought back many happy childhood memories with reflections that plumbed my soul, reminding me at several junctures about how lucky I was to be raised in a Philadelphia neighborhood near the forested Wissahickon section of Fairmount Park. Be forewarned... Ferguson may bring on an occasional tear, too, as when he relates stories about carrying his dying mother for a final walk in the garden, or the tragic wilderness accident that took the life of his first wife, Jane.

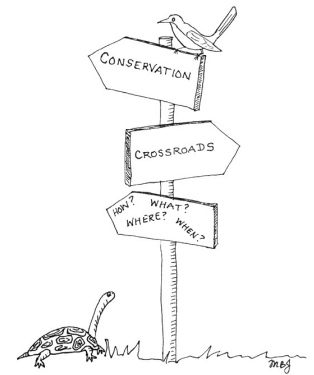
The first chapter explores the mysteries of wonderment and how it leads to wisdom. He suggests turning off your eyes and experiencing the surroundings with the rest of your senses. I recalled a long hike in the Costa Rican rainforest where I rested, then fell asleep. I truly communed with nature that unforgettable evening as I hunkered in place without so much as a match to reveal the sources of numerous sounds, smells, etc. that permeated the pitch blackness.

The author cites numerous authorities in this intellectual journey. The second chapter (lesson) on interdependence encourages readers to leave behind Cartesian thinking by exploring the vast, dynamic webs of connection in the natural world and recognizing that we are part of it. After pointing out that plants give off phytoncides, which are beneficial to human health during our forays in the woods, he underlines that discussion with Frances Ming Kuo's observation that, "the less green a person's surroundings, the greater their risk of disease and death." In chapter five (on relatedness), we learn how animals make us feel better by stimulating production of the love hormone, oxytocin, or later in the book, are told that looking for other things to be grateful for outdoors causes boosts of dopamine and serotonin (mimicking the effects of antidepressants like Wellbutrin and Prozac).

You don't have to lose yourself in the remote SE corner of Yellowstone (though it is author recommended) ...nature reveals its marvels in your backyard, as any birdwatcher can attest. But don't merely focus on a single life-form...search out the surrounding context. Note that diversity is strength (lesson three) and that healing the planet, and ourselves, means recovering the feminine (chapter four). Other lessons cover efficiency and disruption, while the eighth chapter on old growth is about the wisdom of age. I needed this encouragement as I hit 70 in April because, "whatever else may be happening, we're still here, wolves and lions and hawks and humans, all of us in our own way rising in the morning, faces to the sun."

The afterword emphasizes that nature's beauty holds every lesson. If stuck in life, heal your relationship with beauty to start moving again. Your every breath nurtures the trees with carbon dioxide, which in turn give oxygen for your next breath. "And so, the world turns. And so, you turn the world."

CONSERVATION CROSSROADS is a section of *The Gnatcatcher* that features environmental issues across a spectrum of local, national, and global concerns. Contact JVAS Vice-President Laura Jackson, if you know of an issue that deserves our attention and subsequent action. More information on these concerns is found at www.JVAS.org Click on the Conservation tab.



1. Industrial Wind Project Proposed for Dunning/Evitt's Mountain in Bedford County: CPV Kettle Wind Project: Nothing new to report.

Read more: www.jvas.org/category/conservation-news/wind-energy-development/

2. Pumped Hydro Storage Projects:

Background: A **pumped hydro storage project** is designed with two reservoirs – upper and lower. Like every other **hydroelectric** plant, a **pumped-storage** plant generates electricity by allowing water to fall through a turbine generator during the day. Daytime-produced electricity is then sold to the grid at a higher cost than what is used to pump the water to the upper reservoir at night. Consequently, these projects make a profit, although more electricity is used than produced. Pumped hydro storage projects are sometimes described as a “liquid battery.” While these projects are a type of renewable energy, they destroy wild habitats, farmlands, and use more electricity than they produce.

Merchant Hydro Developers, LLC wants to build three projects on the Allegheny Front: **Bacon Ridge** and **Allegheny** projects in Blair Co. and **Snoosh Mountain** project in Bedford Co. – all three will destroy forested areas on the Allegheny Front and degrade habitat for birds and other wildlife. The reservoirs do not provide suitable habitat for wildlife and actually put birds at risk since the upper reservoir in each project is built near a wind project. The Bacon Ridge project would be near Sandy Ridge wind project, Allegheny near Allegheny Ridge wind project and the Snoosh Mountain project near the Stoney Creek wind project.

Update: The Allegheny and Bacon Ridge preliminary permits were not renewed, so it's possible the applicant decided not to continue research on these projects. Unfortunately, the Snoosh Mountain Project permit was renewed. An email to the developer was not answered.

3. Proposed Rutter's Gas/Convenience Store upslope from Old Crow Wetlands near Huntingdon, Pa. JVAS members have expressed their concerns and opposition to the Smithfield Township supervisors. The supervisors are still waiting to hear from PennDOT, which is currently reviewing the traffic changes proposed by Rutter's. The supervisors meet on the first Tuesday of each month, at 7:00 pm. The location is the township building in Smithfield, on the corner of 13th Street and Mt. Vernon Avenue, or 2 blocks south of Rt 26 (Pennsylvania Ave.). Please try to attend the township meetings.

4. Raystown Lake Draft Master Plan protects Hawn's Bridge
However, the Huntingdon County Commissioners have proposed that the Army Corps of Engineers provide handicapped access to the eastern side of Raystown Lake, claiming that the Corps needs to provide ADA (Americans with Disability Act) accessibility.

On Feb. 14, 2020, the Huntingdon County Commissioners, Mark Sather and Scott Walls, presented their plans for new development above Hawn's Peninsula during the Friends of Raystown Lake (FRL) meeting. Residents and the public have made it clear that development on the eastern side of Raystown Lake is not supported; Terrace Mountain provides important forested habitat for bats and other wildlife. The mountainous terrain and remote site are better managed for wildlife conservation, not recreation. A call to the Commissioners, asking for an update, has not been returned.

5. GOOD NEWS: The Lower Trail and Moshannon State Forests are wonderful bird habitats

Many thanks to author and researcher Nick Bolgiano for dedicating so much time to documenting our local birds. From Nick:

There is something special about learning about and monitoring uncommon species that occur in unusual concentrations in your home area. For birds this includes Golden-winged Warblers in the spring/summer and Golden Eagles during spring and fall migration. However, there are two other wood warbler species in our area with this combination of uncommonness and local concentrations.

Cerulean Warblers at the Lower Trail

The Cerulean Warbler is among the most beautiful of our wood warblers; a male's back is the color of a light blue sky and it is most commonly detected by hearing its buzzy "zray zray zray zreeee" song high from a treetop. Cerulean Warblers are found in certain river and streamside forests or on steep hillsides of the Appalachians and the Mississippi River Valley, with the highest concentrations found in West Virginia and neighboring states. The commonality of these habitats is moist deciduous forest with gaps between tall trees, commonly riverside sycamores or hillside oaks. A cluster of Cerulean Warblers can be found from late April to mid-July along the Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River, which the Lower Trail runs adjacent to in Blair and Huntingdon counties.

Nick Bolgiano began monitoring Cerulean Warblers along the Lower Trail in 1998, participating in Cornell's Cerulean Warbler Atlas Survey. More recently, he has conducted annual walking surveys for Cerulean Warblers there, recording GPS coordinates for locations of singing males. This is done over three mornings in early June, with Alfarata, Mt. Etna, Williamsburg, or Flowing Springs as start/stop locations for a particular day. In 2020, he started surveying multiple times within the breeding season in order to understand how singing changes within a season. Additionally, Nick has walked roads and nearby trails and bushwacked along the adjacent ridges to determine where Cerulean Warblers are found.

While the total Cerulean Warbler population in the United States has been declining, survey counts along the Lower Trail have actually increased since the first surveys of 1998 and 2001, consistent with population expansions elsewhere in the Northeast. The below table shows the counts of singing males for the last six annual surveys. (The results from the early years are not shown because they didn't include the Williamsburg-Flowing Springs trail section, which opened later.) These are only a few Pennsylvania locations where Cerulean Warblers can be heard in such concentrations.

Lower Trail			
Year	Cerulean Warblers	Year	Cerulean Warblers
2015	51	2018	54
2016	65	2019	72
2017	61	2020	67

The highest concentrations of Cerulean Warblers along the Lower Trail are usually along the four miles of trail south of Mt. Etna, where the riparian forest is more extensive between Tussey Mt and the smaller ridge west of the river. While Cerulean Warbler is probably the bird species of highest conservation importance here, there is a dense concentration of birds here, which is why the area was named an Important Bird Area.

The below table shows the 2020 early June counts of the common Neotropical migrants found here.

Species Lower Trail	2020 Count
Eastern Wood-Pewee	37
Acadian Flycatcher	45
Yellow-throated Vireo	15
Warbling Vireo	51
Red-eyed Vireo	185
Wood Thrush	46
Orchard Oriole	14
Baltimore Oriole	37
Worm-eating Warbler	16
Louisiana Waterthrush	16
American Redstart	106
Cerulean Warbler	67
Northern Parula	8
Yellow-throated Warbler	6



Cerulean Warbler

(Photo by Alan Schmierer in Flickr, Creative Commons)

Canada Warblers in Moshannon State Forest

Central Pennsylvania is also the summer home of another uncommon and declining riparian wood warbler, the Canada Warbler. Here, its habitat is commonly rhododendron thickets along fast-flowing mountain streams. In Pennsylvania, it is unusual to count more than 20 Canada Warblers at one place. In seven miles along Black Moshannon Creek and Benner Run just north of Black Moshannon State Park, Nick has counted 20 or more Canada Warblers eleven times in the last seven years, including 72 on one day in 2016, an eBird record high for the U.S. As with the Cerulean Warblers, he is trying to understand the variation that he sees in Canada Warbler numbers.



Canada Warblers (photos by Mike and Laura Jackson)

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON

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ALTOONA, PA 16603

Address Service Requested



Honduran Coffee for sale on-line

Emilio Garcia, our partner who produces shade-grown coffee in Honduras, has expanded his coffee sales to include sustainably harvested, shade-grown coffee from other countries. You can order freshly roasted coffee (ground or whole bean) from **Lenca Coffee Roasters**: <https://lencacoffeeroasters.com>

Fair Trade shade-grown **decaf coffee** from Colombia is also available.

Emilio sells his green coffee beans through <https://lencafarms.com>

Remember, shade-grown coffee is good for you and good for our birds!

