

# The Gnatcatcher

**Newsletter of Juniata Valley Audubon**

Vol. LVI, No. 4 September – October 2023

Published bimonthly (except for July and August)

as a benefit for members of the

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY



[www.JVAS.org](http://www.JVAS.org)

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER** by Mark Bonta

Dear JVAS Community,

I hope everyone has had a productive summer despite the rain, heat, and bugs. Ah, the bugs! At times, it has felt like the North Woods out there. Even so, JVAS has had a few activities going on this summer, including the monthly first Tuesday hike at the Ray Amato Memorial Nature Trail at the Northern Blair County Recreation Center in Tipton, led by George Mahon and Eric Oliver (see page 6). We also had our annual picnic at Canoe Creek State Park in June, where Catie and Ethan Farr served up some delicious smoked chicken.

*-Continued on pages 8 and 9*



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message.....Pages 1,8,9  
Christmas Bird Count and Lenca Coffee.....Page 2  
Evening Programs.....Pages 3-5  
Field Trips.....Pages 6,7

Birding Altoona.....Page 9  
Conservation Crossroads...Pages 10,11  
JVAS Chapter Membership...Page 12

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 Mid-Atlantic, the district 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).

#### OFFICERS

**President,** Mark Bonta

- ◆ 814-600-8394
- ◆ markabonta@yahoo.com

**Vice President,** Laura Jackson

- ◆ 814-494-4439
- ◆ jacksonlaura73@gmail.com

**Secretary,** Catie Farr

- ◆ 570-651-3839
- ◆ catiegk5059@gmail.com

**Treasurer,** George Mahon

- ◆ 814-942-2658
- ◆ gsm815@hotmail.com

**Immediate Past President,** John Carter

- ◆ 814-933-7426
- ◆ carter@0206@aol.com

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Membership,** Denice Rodaniche

- ◆ 814-502-8431
- ◆ denicrod@outlook.com

**Conservation,** Laura Jackson

**Partners in Neotropical Bird Conservation,**

Laura Jackson

**Education,** Susan Braun

- ◆ 814-574-0795
- ◆ braun3112@gmail.com

**Field Trips,** Michael Kensinger

- ◆ 814-505-3410
- ◆ michaelkensinger@gmail.com

**Publications & Publicity,** Matt Karabinos

- ◆ 412-860-7297
- ◆ mattkarabinos@gmail.com

**Hospitality,** Catie Farr

- ◆ 570-651-3839
- ◆ catiegk5059@gmail.com

**Historian,** Mike Jackson

- ◆ 814-494-3631
- ◆ mljackson2@icloud.com

**Website Administrator,** Dave Bonta

- ◆ 814-686-7274
- ◆ bontasaurus@yahoo.com

**The Gnatcatcher Editor,** Laura Jackson

#### DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

- ◆ Warren Baker
- ◆ Sharon Clewell
- ◆ Paola Jaramillo Calderon



It's NOT too early to plan for the Christmas Bird Count (CBC)!!

JVAS sponsors the Culp CBC, which is usually held two Saturdays before Christmas, but this year we are moving the count to

**Saturday, December 23, 2023**

**Here's how this will work:**

1. Plan ahead: get your baking and shopping done early
2. Decorate your tree before December 23
3. Keep December 23 open FOR THE CBC

We need volunteer counters – Call or email Mark Bonta or Laura Jackson if you'd like to help. If you live in the CBC circle you can count birds at your feeders, or you can cover an area inside the circle by walking or driving. We'll help you figure out what to do.

The **Tally Rally** will be held at the **U.S. Hotel Tavern**, 401 S. Juniata St., Hollidaysburg, PA 16648. Each person pays their way.

We'll meet at **5:30 pm in the Gold Room**, order from the menu, and after we eat, we will do the bird species tally. Menu:

<https://www.ushoteltavern.com/tavern-menu/>

You don't have to be a counter to join us, but let **Laura know by Saturday, Dec. 16** if you plan to attend since seating is limited.



**Celebrate Earth Day Every Day  
Drink Shade-grown Coffee**

**Emilio Garcia**, our partner who produces shade-grown coffee on his farm 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://lencacoffee.com> Order the Honduran coffee if you want Emilio's single origin, direct trade coffee.

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!**

**JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY EVENING PROGRAMS**  
**will be HYBRID: in person and by Zoom**

**Follow these instructions, if joining by Zoom. Try to log in about 5 – 10 minutes before 7 pm.**

- To join by computer, use this link:

**<https://psu.zoom.us/j/97418229426> Passcode: 123456**

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

**974 1822 9426 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**

**6 PM: A free dinner catered by Catie Farr – THANK YOU, CATIE!!**

**7 PM: In-person meetings at the Bellwood-Antis Library, 526 Main St. Bellwood, PA**

**SEPTEMBER PROGRAM: Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2023 @ 7 pm via ZOOM and  
In Person at the Bellwood-Antis Library, 526 Main St. Bellwood, PA**

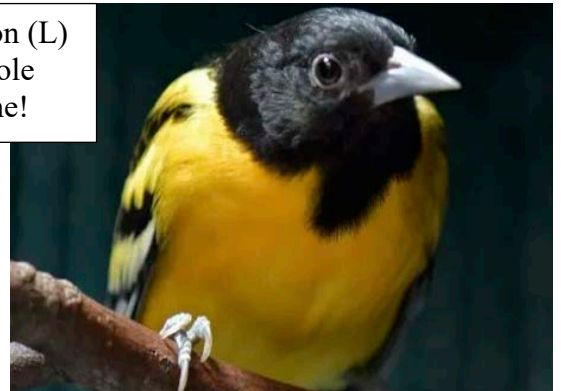
**Join us for a Walk on the Wild Side, featuring 4 live animals. This program is geared for all nature lovers – young and old alike!**

**6 PM DINNER MENU: Salad Bar!** Two different kinds of mixed greens, and tons of toppings including chicken and steak, beans and so much more. **Vegan** and **gluten free** options. Dessert will be gluten free lemon bars and chocolate trifle. Honduran shade-grown, organic hot coffee is also served.

**7 PM PROGRAM: Walk on the Wild Side:** featuring 4 live animals from Centre Wildlife Care  
-Presented by Robyn Graboski



Artemis the Peregrine Falcon (L) and Oreo the Baltimore Oriole are anxious to meet everyone!



Robyn Graboski, licensed wildlife rehabilitator, who founded and directs **Centre Wildlife Care** (the area's top wildlife rehab facility), will present a program featuring **Artemis** the Peregrine Falcon, **Oreo** the Baltimore Oriole, **Opal** the Opossum, and **Bruce Wayne** the Big Brown Bat. These animals are used for educational programs by Centre Wildlife Care since their injuries prohibit their return to the natural environment. For more information about Centre Wildlife Care: <https://centrewildlifecare.org/about-us>  
Nature lovers of all ages will enjoy this program.

**OCTOBER PROGRAM: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 @ 7 pm via ZOOM and In Person at the Bellwood-Antis Library, 526 Main St. Bellwood, PA**

**6 PM: A free dinner catered by Catie Farr – THANK YOU, CATIE!!**

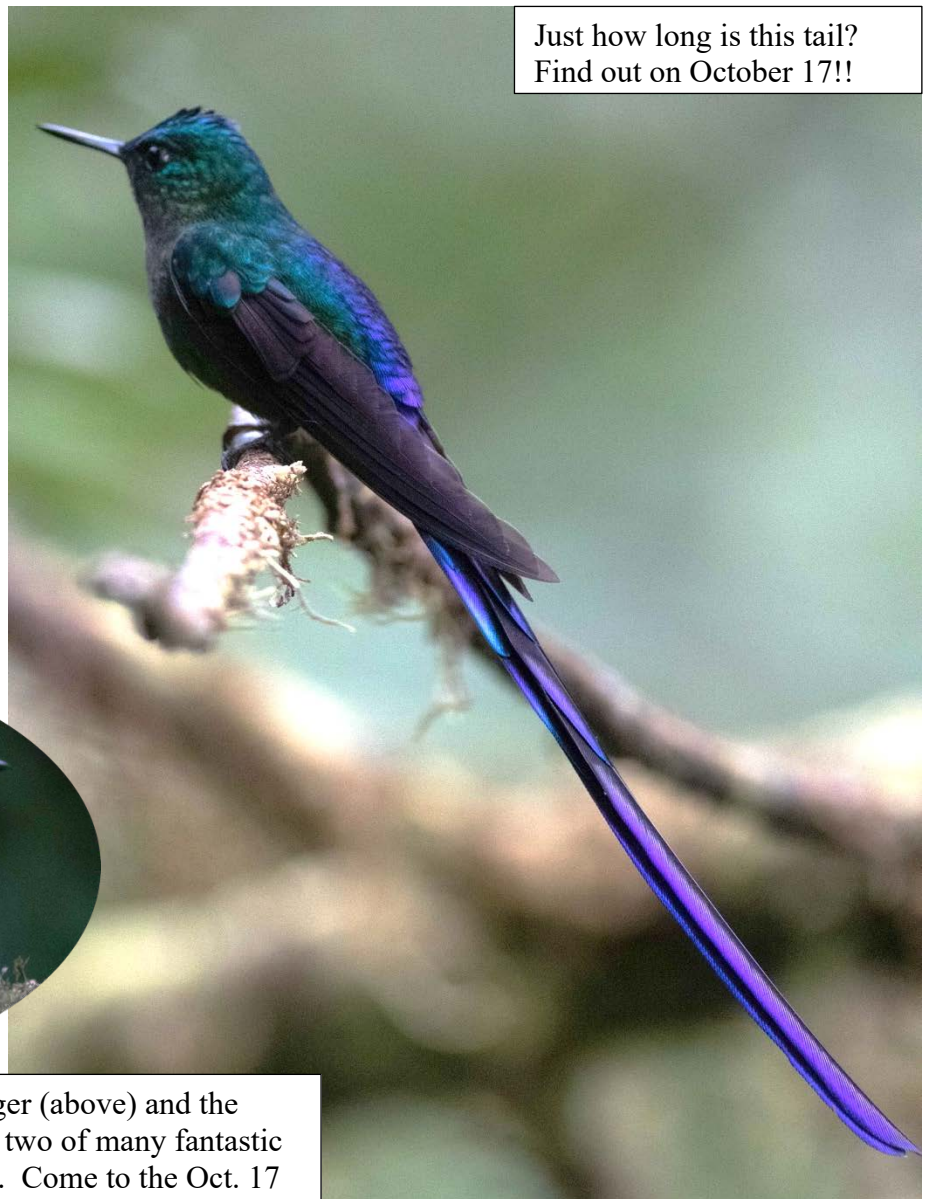
**7 PM: In-person meeting at the Bellwood-Antis Library, 526 Main St. Bellwood, PA**

**6 PM DINNER MENU: Soup and Salad night! Gluten free Italian wedding soup, vegan chili, and jambalaya for those who like a little heat. Rolls will also be provided. Dessert will be gluten free peach and apple crisps. Honduran shade-grown, organic hot coffee is also served.**

**7 PM: PROGRAM: Birds That I Have Seen in Colombia** – presented by Nick Bolgiano

In 2022, Nick’s son Walton moved to Colombia and married a Colombian woman. This year, Nick and his wife Betsy visited them twice in Pereira, Colombia, which is in the west-central part of the country between the western and central Andean mountains. Both times, they did a bird tour, as Colombia has over 1900 species of birds, the most of any country. This presentation is about the many beautiful and unique birds that Nick has seen and photographed while on these trips.

Nick Bolgiano is a long-time birder from State College. He is co-author of *Birds of Central Pennsylvania*; he has been the Christmas Bird Count editor of *Pennsylvania Birds* for 25 years; he has written many articles on bird trends in Pennsylvania and eastern North America, including the effects of West Nile Virus upon birds; and helps to run three hawk watches at Tussey Mtn., Stone Mtn. and Bald Eagle Mtn. In 2019, Nick received the Earl Poole award for contributions to Pennsylvania ornithology.



Just how long is this tail?  
Find out on October 17!!

The stunning Blue-winged Mountain Tanager (above) and the amazing Violet-tailed Sylph (right) are just two of many fantastic birds that Nick saw on his trip to Colombia. Come to the Oct. 17 program to be amazed by many other gorgeous tropical birds!

**NOVEMBER PROGRAM: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 @ 7 pm via ZOOM and In Person at the Bellwood-Antis Library, 526 Main St. Bellwood, PA**

**6 PM: A free dinner catered by Catie Farr – THANK YOU, CATIE!!**

**7 PM: In-person meeting at the Bellwood-Antis Library, 526 Main St. Bellwood, PA**

**6 PM DINNER MENU:** Pasta Bar! Salad, bread, meatballs, chicken, white and red sauce, with **gluten free** and **vegan** options. Dessert will be **gluten free** cheesecakes and pumpkin pie. Honduran shade-grown, organic hot coffee is also served.

**7 PM: PROGRAM: At Home in the Middle of Nowhere: Insights from an Ecopoetry Practice** – presented by Dave Bonta

Poet and photographer Dave Bonta has made a practice of writing as he walks, producing what he calls walking poems, and in the process cultivating a mindset that might be closer to pilgrimage than science. Re-visit familiar places through his serendipitous photos and the ideas they spark, from Plummer's Hollow, where he's lived since the age of five, to the Little Juniata Natural Area, Mt. Etna, Tytoona Cave, Bell's Gap, and more. Along the way, we'll be asked to consider how a simple walk in the woods can lead to new insights about the universe.

Dave Bonta, son of naturalist-writer Marcia Bonta, is best known as a multimedia poet and editor/publisher of a website devoted to poetry film. His books include *Failed State: Haibun* and *Ice Mountain: An Elegy*, which was a finalist in the 2017 Banff Mountain Book Competition. In addition to ecopoetry, he's 11 years into a project to make erasure poems from every entry in the 17th-century *Diary of Samuel Pepys*. You can read most of his work for free on Via Negativa ([www.ViaNegativa.us](http://www.ViaNegativa.us)), the long-running literary blog that he shares with Virginia-based poet Luisa A. Igloria.



## JVAS FALL 2023 FIELD TRIPS

**Please contact Field Trip Chair Michael Kensinger if you have any suggestions for field trip locations or would like to lead a trip.**

**FIRST TUESDAY of Each Month: 9/5, 10/3, 11/7, 12/5/2023 from 10 AM TO 12 PM  
Birding the Ray Amato Memorial Nature Trail behind the Northern Blair Rec Center**

**Address for Northern Blair Rec Center:** 4080 E Pleasant Valley Blvd, Altoona, Pa.

Join George Mahon to bird the **Ray Amato Memorial Nature Trail behind the Northern Blair Rec Center** every first Tuesday of the month from 10 AM to 12 NOON. We will stroll a little over a mile of the trail and get a close look at the Little Juniata River. Let's track what different bird species we see each month, what different plants we encounter and have an enjoyable walk.

What to bring: binoculars, comfortable walking shoes, drink and snack as desired.



*Did you know? Fall is the best time for foraging fungi.*

**SATURDAY, August 26, 2023: 9 AM - 12 PM Reservoir  
Park Walk in Tyrone**

Meet at Tyrone public pool parking lot: [901 W 15th St, Tyrone, PA 16686](https://www.google.com/maps/place/901+W+15th+St,+Tyrone,+PA+16686)  
There is also parking along the edge of the lake across from the pool lot.

Join wildlife artist, writer, and naturalist Michael Kensinger for a jaunt around Reservoir Park in Tyrone in search of birds, mushrooms, and wildlife. Easy walking trails with no inclines, plenty of benches and picnic areas make this park very accessible. A beautiful clear trout stream creates stream-side habitat in a woodlot consisting of evergreens and hardwoods.

What to bring: binoculars, comfortable walking shoes, drink, packed lunch for after if you choose to hang out. If you have any questions or need more information please contact trip leader, Michael Kensinger, at (814) 505-3410, or email him at [MichaelKensinger@gmail.com](mailto:MichaelKensinger@gmail.com). If inclement weather occurs, please contact Michael to verify that the event is still taking place.

**SATURDAY, September 9, 2023: 9 AM - 12 PM Marina Meanderings at Glendale**

Meet at the Glendale Marina parking area in Prince Gallitzin State Park: [197 Gibbons Rd, Patton, PA 16668](https://www.google.com/maps/place/197+Gibbons+Rd,+Patton,+PA+16668)

Join JVAS field trip chair Michael Kensinger for a jaunt around Glendale Marina and adjacent trails in search of birds, mushrooms, and wildlife. Gulls, Bald Eagles and a myriad of other bird species can be found here.



What to bring: binoculars, comfortable walking shoes, drink, packed lunch for after, if you choose to hang out. If you have any questions or need more information please contact trip leader, Michael Kensinger, at (814) 505-3410, or email him at [MichaelKensinger@gmail.com](mailto:MichaelKensinger@gmail.com). If inclement weather arrives this day, please contact Michael to verify that event is still taking place.

## SATURDAY, October 7, 2023: 9 AM - 12 PM Glendale Waterfowl Watch

Meet at the Glendale Marina parking area in Prince Gallitzin State Park:  
[197 Gibbons Rd, Patton, PA 16668](https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/locations/prince-gallitzin-state-park)

Join Michael Kensinger for a jaunt around Glendale Marina to scan for waterfowl during fall migration. Gulls, Bald Eagles, and a myriad of waterfowl species can be found here. If we do not see much in the way of activity, we may drive down a short distance to Muskrat Beach for additional birds.

What to bring: binoculars, comfortable walking shoes, drink, packed lunch for after, if you choose to hang out. If you have any questions or need more information please contact trip leader, Michael Kensinger, at (814) 505-3410, or email him at [MichaelKensinger@gmail.com](mailto:MichaelKensinger@gmail.com). If inclement weather arrives this day, please contact Michael to verify that event is still taking place.

## SATURDAY, October 14, 2023: 9 AM - 12 PM Canoe Lake Waterfowl Watch

The address for Canoe Creek State Park is 205 Canoe Creek Rd, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648. Meet in the parking lot near Pavilion 2 which is the lot below the Terry Wentz Educational Center.

Join wildlife artist, writer, and naturalist Michael Kensinger for a jaunt around Canoe Lake in search of migratory waterfowl species, in addition to other birds and wildlife. October is the peak of fall migration for many species that use the lake, including many species of dabbling ducks, divers like loons, grebes, cormorants and more. Let's see how many species we can tally for the day! At the end of the watch, we will rendezvous and enjoy snacks and conversation as we go over the results of the morning's tally.

What to bring: binoculars, comfortable walking shoes, drink, packed lunch, for after if you choose to hang out.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact trip leader, Michael Kensinger, at (814) 505-3410, or email him at [MichaelKensinger@gmail.com](mailto:MichaelKensinger@gmail.com). If inclement weather arrives this day, please contact Michael to verify that event is still taking place.

## SATURDAY, October 28, 2023: 9AM – NOON 3<sup>rd</sup> Halloween Weekend Nature Walk around Shawnee Lake in Shawnee State Park at 132 State Park Rd, Schellsburg, PA 15559

Join Mike and Laura Jackson for a leisurely 4 mile walk around Shawnee. We will meet at Picnic Area #2 Access parking lot near the boat rental to start the hike.

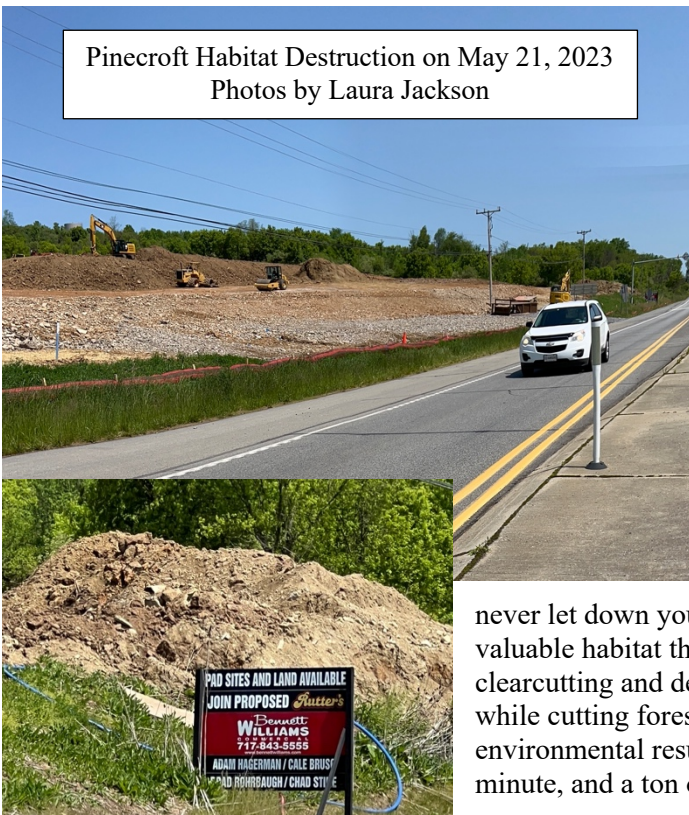
What to bring: binoculars, good walking shoes, water and snacks. Bring a lunch if you'd like to stay longer when the walk is over – you can keep your lunch in your vehicle until we return.

Contact trip leaders Mike and Laura Jackson if you have questions at 814-494-4439 or email [jacksonlaura73@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonlaura73@gmail.com)

Help us plan some field trips for November – contact Field Trip Chair Michael Kensinger if you have any ideas!



I want to give special thanks to past president Catie Farr for not only providing delicious food for our meetings and picnics, as hospitality chair, but also stepping up and taking over as secretary, in addition to coordinating the Earth Week Birding Classic. We hope her scheduled meals for the fall meetings in Bellwood can help entice you to join us live for some exciting talks. If not, however, we will endeavor to provide a virtual option as well for those who are joining us long-distance, or for any other reason can't make it in person.



Pinecroft Habitat Destruction on May 21, 2023  
Photos by Laura Jackson

While the Juniata Valley environmentalist community has been rushing around on our vacations and family visits, the forces of destruction have not stayed idle, unfortunately. On the one hand, the Old Crow wetlands remain at dire threat from a Rutter's, despite a fierce struggle mounted by a coalition led by Claire Holzner; on the other hand, another Rutter's is being erected at the Pinecroft exit of I-99, obliterating important habitat. As if that weren't enough, the Borough of Hollidaysburg recently decided to have the side of the mountain in front of iconic Chimney Rocks clearcut so that folks could see the rocks better.

This short-sighted decision will result not only in erosion of the fragile soil but also a hostile takeover by invasive plants. JVAS and other local groups are currently looking at ways to mitigate the damage, but the message is clear:

never let down your guard when it comes to habitat. Be proactive: if you see valuable habitat that appears protected, never assume it's safe from clearcutting and development, even if it's on public land of some type. And while cutting forest has undeniable economic benefits, the inevitable environmental result now seems to be vast thickets of privet, barberry, mile-a-minute, and a ton of other invasives.

Case in point: along the I-99 corridor between Bedford and Lock Haven are literally hundreds of small wetlands, of which only a handful have any meaningful protection. Any wetland, no matter the size, or whether it's vernal or permanent, is important, but pretty much every single one is vulnerable to development, despite existing federal and state legislation. Sometimes, it's not even the wetland itself that gets directly destroyed or polluted, but, as in the case of Old Crow wetland down in Huntingdon, an adjacent piece of land. Nevertheless, I know personally of wetlands large enough to hold breeding herons, Wood Ducks, and much more, that are at the back of junkyards, have garbage dumped into them, and are otherwise abandoned, neglected, and forgotten. It is high time that we took a more systematic approach to finding, studying, and anticipating possible protection measures for such threatened places. Look at the success that Wetlands for Everyone has had with the Soaring Eagle Wetland and the Dreibelbis Viewing Area (former Julian Wetland) along HWY 220 in Centre County. Within a few miles of Tyrone in either



direction are close to a dozen similar places, a few of which are "protected," but for how long? To mention a few: Moorhen Marsh by Altoona, wetlands around Bellwood, wetlands on either side of the Tipton-Grazierville exit including the Charlottesville Wetland, wetlands around Olivia, Vail, and Bald Eagle—and of course, the Northern Blair County Rec Center wetlands that Angie Spagnoli has been instrumental in studying and promoting.

The Friends of Tipton Wetlands has been promoting the Charlottesville wetland all the summer, with photo essays by Frank Nale on their Facebook page that show the beauty of this location and the hard work put in by JVAS board member and talented wildlife artist Michael Kensinger, who has erected nesting boxes here as well as at Old Crow and along the Ray Amato trail and elsewhere (Michael Kensinger's photo at left – just one of many duck boxes he has installed at local wetlands).

...Continued on page 9



If you are as interested in the subject of Logan Valley-Bald Eagle Valley wetland protection as I am, please let me know. I'm thinking about ways we can be several steps ahead of the developers. Companies, private landowners, the state government, and most importantly, local governments, should be partners in this, not adversaries. Perhaps it's time for all the different local environmental NGOs, coalitions, and Friends groups to get together to discuss some sort of unified strategy.

### **Birding Altoona** – article and photos by Michael Kensinger

As a native of Tyrone, it's hard to believe I've been living in Altoona now for nearly 12 years. Altoona, I thought, would be far less interesting for birding. But when I met the love of my life, I didn't think twice about moving here, because sometimes that is just how life works.

Shortly after moving to Altoona, I found I was wrong in terms of the birding. Altoona is brimming with birding excitement. I first recognized that when I realized the arborvitae and hemlocks in our back yard were a favorite wintering ground for White-throated sparrows. Watching my winter feeders as a small boy in Tyrone, I never recall seeing a White-throated Sparrow. Suddenly, in Altoona, my back yard was filled with them - and even a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Mockingbird!

With the Altoona campus so close to my house, I've been able to get up close and personal with typically shy waterfowl such as Horned Grebe, Ruddy Duck, Gadwall, and a very trusting Hooded Merganser hen. We've had many Bald Eagle and Black Vulture fly-overs, nesting Common Nighthawks, and perhaps more interestingly, a resident pair of breeding Merlin.

I spent much of 2022 chasing Merlin calls around Altoona. I knew what I was hearing, but I needed to confirm it by sight. I caught a glimpse of one outside Hobby Lobby that was in hot pursuit of a Common Grackle. As the two birds disappeared behind the building, I became obsessed with finding more. It wouldn't be long before I would hear one calling from a tall pine 3 miles away from that location, while I ate my lunch in my Jeep. And three Merlin were observed by my partner and me in Greenwood near a cemetery along old Rt. 220.

Elated with my sightings, I sat down at my art desk to continue work on a painting when I heard the familiar cry, once again, of a Merlin. I jumped out of my chair, looked out the window and saw two Merlins interacting on a dead ash tree just outside my studio room. I immediately ran outside with my camera.



I saw the Merlin fly to a telephone pole near a tall evergreen. Knowing their preference for evergreens, I approached the tree and looked upward to find an old nest. It appeared to be a crow's nest - which would be perfect for a Merlin. And sure enough, about 50 yards away one of the two Merlins was calling at me, in an agitated manner. I exited the little woodlot, afraid to disturb them anymore. I was able to get a photo, thankfully.

The Merlins returned just in time for the Birding Cup last spring. I coaxed my teammates to drive up the street, and there, 50 yards from last year's nest site, the pair of Merlin consummated their love by mating atop a maple tree!

The moral of the story is - Altoona is a FINE place to go birding! Our neighborhoods are riddled with woodlots that are homes for a wide variety of birds that you might not expect.

**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 conservation concerns is found at [www.JVAS.org](http://www.JVAS.org) then click on the Conservation tab.



**1. Proposed Rutter’s Gas/Convenience Store upslope from Old Crow Wetlands near Huntingdon, Pa.**

Rutters submitted their application to the Huntingdon Co. Conservation District, and it’s being reviewed by DEP.

JVAS members have repeatedly expressed their concerns and opposition at Smithfield Township meetings. We encourage you to attend the monthly township meetings and express your concerns. Township meetings are the first Tuesday of each month, at 6:00 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.). More details about the May DEP Hearing on page 11.



Join the Coalition to Save Old Crow Wetland FB page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/271112655092285>

We are waiting to hear from DEP about the permit approval. If DEP does approve the permit, the Coalition is prepared to take action.

**2. Proposed Rutter’s Gas/Convenience Store upslope of Sandy Run Exceptional Value Wetlands along Sabbath Rest Road, beside the Days Inn & Suites by Wyndham in Pincroft, Pa.**

The concerns for this Rutter’s Store (with parking for 53 trucks) are similar to those in Huntingdon. Stormwater and any hydrocarbon pollution will flow into the wetlands along Sandy Run, classified as a High-Quality Coldwater Fishery. The Pa. Fish & Boat Commission classifies Sandy Run as a Class A Wild Trout stream with naturally reproducing wild trout, thus making it an Exceptional Value wetland. JVAS President John Carter and other local conservation groups participated in a DEP public hearing to share water pollution concerns.

**Unfortunately, DEP did approve the permit and habitat destruction is now underway (see photos, page 8).**

**3. Anthracite Ridge Wind Project (proposed) impacting four mountain tops in Schuylkill Co.**

**Good News!** This project – very close to Hawk Mountain - was recently terminated by the developer. We are waiting for more details from Fort Indiantown Gap, which also opposed the project since the turbines would interfere with air space needed for pilot training.

**4. Macaw Mountain Bird Park and Nature Reserve near Copan Ruins in Honduras**

was devastated by flash flooding that caused severe damage to aviaries, bridges and walkways on July 31, 2023. Tragically, six Scarlet Macaws and other beloved birds lost their lives. Since then, the global conservation community has donated over \$14,000, including Juniata Valley Audubon Society (JVAS). Using funds generated by our partnership with Lenca Coffee Roasters, JVAS sent \$1,000 (for a triple match) to help in the restoration effort. Our donation was made possible by folks like you who purchase the Honduran shade-grown, organic coffee from JVAS. We are celebrating 8 years of promoting Lenca Coffee Roasters Honduran coffee. We have sent thousands of dollars to Honduras to help with bird conservation, bird education, and repairs caused by flash floods and hurricanes. Many, many thanks to all who purchase coffee and/or donate!

Here's the link to the fundraiser if you'd like to make a donation:

[www.mightycause.com/story/MacawMountain?fbclid=IwAR0N1BBKnp3wX\\_V7wtGSZD4PszuxsTiaVHCFSq2uk-noy3JplqywAf7294](http://www.mightycause.com/story/MacawMountain?fbclid=IwAR0N1BBKnp3wX_V7wtGSZD4PszuxsTiaVHCFSq2uk-noy3JplqywAf7294)

If the PADEP approves the NPDES permit application, Rutter’s will discharge point source runoff into Old Crow Wetland. Yes, there will be subsurface filters, but groundwater flow could render them ineffective. In addition to runoff pollution from Rutter’s (oil, gasoline), there will also be light pollution, noise pollution, and increased litter issues from having a truck stop adjacent and upslope from Old Crow. These last concerns are not addressed by the NPDES permit application but would negatively impact the wetland and its creatures. As the conservation chair for PSO and Juniata Valley Audubon Society, I participated in the hearing – adding my concerns about pollution, loss of water quality, and potential habitat degradation to the other 30+ comments.

Regardless of the permitting decision yet to be revealed, I was filled with hope when Juniata College students testified at the PADEP Hearing. How wonderful that college students care enough to get involved in conservation issues that impact wetlands and birds! I talked to Juniata College student Isaiah Colon after the hearing and he shared a copy of a project that he and Xavier Scharff completed, which formed the basis of their comments at the DEP Hearing. Isaiah and Xavier’s report is too extensive to include in this article, but I hope you will find an excerpt from their report to be of interest and that it might inspire birders to take action when a wildlife habitat is threatened.

### HISTORICAL AND PRESENT ASSESSMENT OF AVIFAUNA OF OLD CROW WETLAND 4/27/2023

Excerpt from Discussion, pages 20, 21:

*“We considered our evaluation of the Old Crow Pennsylvania threatened and endangered species sightings to be staggering (See Fig. 16). Every bird species currently listed as threatened and endangered in Pennsylvania has been seen at Old Crow at least once, with multiple of the species having been seen multiple times throughout the wetlands’ history. These species occupy a variety of niches and are present at varying times of the year. Some of these species, like the great egret and the yellow-bellied flycatcher, are passing migrants in Pennsylvania, while others, like the blackpoll warbler and the American bittern, are a part of the breeding bird population of Pa. in the summer. The bald eagle and the Northern harrier are examples of threatened or endangered year-round visitors to the wetland. Regardless of each of these species’ niche breadth, it is worth noting that they have all relied on Old Crow at some point during the wetland’s history, and based on the increase in their sightings that we have observed (See Fig. 16), will likely continue to do so.*

Fig. 16:

Species	Most recent spotting	Total sightings	# of sightings in 1997-1999	# of sightings in 2000-2010	# of sightings in 2011-2019	# of sightings in 2020-2023
AMBI	4/22/2023	105	0	5	64	36
BAEA	4/20/2023	90	0	0	45	45
BCNH	4/18/2020	37	1	1	33	2
BLPW	5/18/2020	10	0	0	9	1
DICK	12/9/2022	1	0	0	0	1
GREG	4/18/2023	130	0	10	83	37
LEBI	4/27/2020	34	0	0	31	4
NOHA	4/1/2023	30	0	1	12	17
OSPR	4/20/2023	34	0	0	18	16
SEOW	3/3/2021	8	0	0	0	8
YBFL	8/15/2016	4	0	0	4	0
YCNH	6/3/2006	1	0	1	0	0
		<b>484</b>				

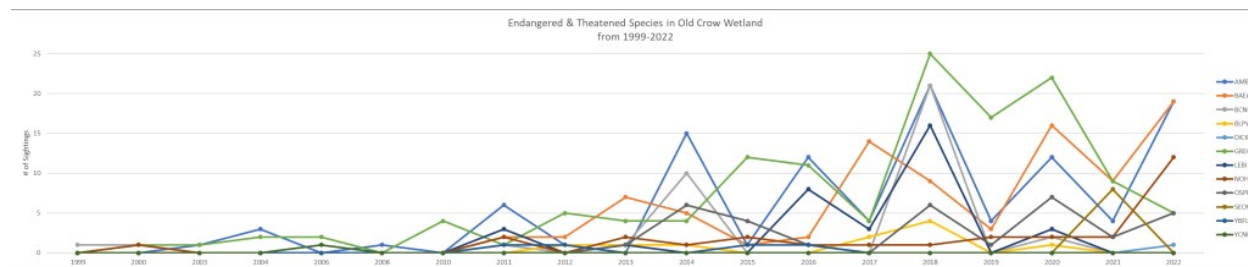


Figure 16. The most recent observations of each PA endangered/threatened species as of the completion of our study and the total number of sightings of each PA endangered/threatened species across Old Crow’s history.

**JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON**

PO BOX 1013  
ALTOONA, PA 16603

*Address Service Requested*



**Become a JVAS Chapter-only member at one of the annual membership categories:**

**Check the appropriate box:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership, \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend of the JVAS, \$50    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership, \$20     | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Membership, \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Membership, \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership, \$500      |

**Membership Year runs from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>**

Make your check payable to **JVAS**

Mail to: Juniata Valley Audubon Society  
P. O. Box 1013  
Altoona, PA 16603

**Or join online at**  
[www.jvas.org/join-juniata-valley-audubon/](http://www.jvas.org/join-juniata-valley-audubon/)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

- Yes, I will accept the digital copy of *The Gnatcatcher*.**       **No, I prefer to receive a paper copy**