



APPALACHIAN AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 2006

“BATHING BEAUTIES OF THE BIRD WORLD,”
AKA, WARBLERS!

Seventeen years ago Art Kennel built a little pond in his woods. “If you build it, they will come,” the saying goes. Well, come, they did — and still do!

Twenty-seven different warbler species rank high among the many visitors to his pond at “Warbler Woods,” to date. Art will share his slides of twenty-one of those species at our April program. Warblers are said to be among the “crown jewels” of the birding world, with their striking, neon-bright breeding plumages and high levels of activity, and the fact that most of us don’t see them three-quarters of the year. Most warblers are residents of the Neotropics (Mexico, Central and South America), coming up our way just for the summer, to breed and raise the next generation. Cerulean warblers, Blue-winged, Worm-eating, Wilson’s, Canada, Yellow-throated, Redstart, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blues and Greens — all visitors to Art’s woods near the battlefield in Gettysburg, and the list goes on. The name “Warbler Woods,” however, was originally bestowed in honor of the Kentucky Warbler pair that nested there one summer.



Spring and fall bring the highest numbers to Art’s pond. These tiny feathered jewels, dusty and dirty from their long journeys, drop down from the skies for a welcome bath and to refuel, often staying the night before continuing on their migratory paths.



Program Presenter Art Kennel managed the Gettysburg Country Club for 25 years before retiring, and has been birding since his high-school days. He participated in Pennsylvania’s first Breeding Bird Atlas census, and is a former director for the North American Bluebird Society. Art photographs the birds at his pond with his trusty Canon Elan camera, a flash and a 300mm lens from inside the blind he established near the pond. Twenty-one of his twenty-seven visiting warbler species are now immortalized on slides in his files. In addition to sharing these little beauties in public slide programs, he sells some of his images to travel and birding magazines.

JOIN US, THURSDAY, APRIL 20th
at 7:30 p.m.!

(for location and directions, see page 2)

NEXT MONTH: THURSDAY, MAY 18: ANNUAL BANQUET & SILENT AUCTION:

SCOTT WEIDENSAUL PRESENTS

“RETURN TO WILD AMERICA: A YEAR-LONG SEARCH FOR THE CONTINENT’S SOUL.”

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

Appalachian Audubon Society (AAS) is a National Audubon Society chapter. *Kingfisher Courier*, (copyright AAS; please request reprint permission) is a membership benefit, published monthly, September to May, by AAS: P.O. Box 15123; Harrisburg, PA 17105-5123. Email submissions to editor by the 15th of month prior to desired publication (files < 100KB requested; otherwise, contact editor). Editor & Board reserve publication decisions, per chapter mission/ space available.

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NOTICE TO MEMBERS:

The Annual Election of Appalachian Audubon Society Officers and Directors will be conducted at the AAS annual chapter meeting on Thursday, May 18, 2006.

The Nominating Committee and Board of the Appalachian Audubon Society present the following slate of nominees for AAS Officers and Director positions:

Secretary: Denna Claypool

Treasurer: Ernie Johnson

Directors: Nancy Juris, Gary LaBelle

EDITOR NEEDED—FOR FALL, 2006

The *Kingfisher Courier* editorship is a volunteer position, as are all of the Appalachian Audubon Society's board and committee positions. Due to other commitments, our current editor has limited her term of service this time around to a one-year term; she will step down as editor after the summer issue. If you are either an experienced editor looking for an opportunity to serve the chapter, or are someone who would like to have an editorship and newsletter production experience, please contact Ramsay Koury, the current president, or Karen Atwood, the current editor (see sidebar). We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you!

GIFT CARD PROGRAM

As a fundraiser, Appalachian Audubon is selling gift cards to Giant and Weis grocery stores. These stores are kind enough to give non-profit organizations a discount on gift cards to their stores. We will have them for sale at our monthly programs and hope you will consider using these cards to purchase your groceries. There is **no additional cost to you**, beyond the face value of the cards, but your use of them will help our chapter in its fundraising efforts. Thank you!

Appalachian Audubon monthly (Sept.-May) programs normally take place on the 3rd Thursday of each month in Christ Presbyterian Church, 421 Deerfield Road, in the Allendale neighborhood of Camp Hill, at 7:30 p.m. **Exceptions are announced in this newsletter**, as are field trips and other activities.

PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Program Location: Take New Cumberland exit off I-83; cross Carlisle Road. Turn left onto Allendale Way; take first left at Deerfield Road (*from the south, take New Cumberland exit, turn left onto Carlisle Rd., left on Cedar Cliff Rd., left on Allendale Way, then left onto Deerfield Rd.*), to the church.

NEW LOCAL GLOSSY PAPER RECYCLING OPTION!



Mechanicsburg Middle School (MMS), right in the middle of our chapter's "territory," is now an official site for recycling GLOSSY PAPER in support of the Ronald McDonald House in Hershey. This opportunity benefits MMS, the district, the community and the Ronald McDonald House. **Please recycle your magazines and glossy advertising slicks from your newspapers and mail at MMS. All members of the community are welcome. Just drive right up** to the recycling bin, located in the parking lot between Upper Allen Elementary School and MMS on Route 114, and deposit your glossy paper. Deposit the glossy paper into the recycling container through the openings on the front and back of the

bin (there is no opening on top). Please ONLY deposit the glossy paper. Do NOT deposit the glossy paper in bags, in boxes, in plastic, tied or bundled with rubber bands, etc. ONLY the glossy paper items themselves may be placed in the recycling bin. We appreciate your support with this endeavor. Together we can make a difference! Note: the sign on the bin may still say, "Magazines Only," but ANY glossy paper may be deposited for recycling.

The Middle School (MMS) is on Route 114 in Upper Allen Township, just off Route 15 South — take the Bowmansdale/Mechanicsburg exit, go toward Mechanicsburg. Cross Old Gettysburg Road at the first light; continue up the hill. The schools are on your left, at that second light.



END-OF-YEAR ANNUAL BANQUET AND SILENT AUCTION,

MAY 18, 2006!



Once again our annual banquet in May will include a silent auction of birding and other nature-related items. Auction proceeds will benefit AAS educational programs. If you have a **new or gently used** item to donate to this event, please contact Susan Miller at 697-6696 or millerscorner@msn.com; let her know if you want the item(s) to be listed with a minimum bid. Previous donations have included optics, artwork, hiking gear, bird feeders and houses, jewelry, plants, privately guided field trips, books, and lots of surprises.



Reminder: Auction purchases may be made by **cash or check only**, so start saving for those treasures that are sure to show up!



LOOKING FOR *SPRING* THINGS TO DO? TRY THESE!

- **Wetlands Day** at Wildwood Lake Sanctuary, **April 29th**; call 717-221-0292; see www.dauphincounty.org.
- **Ned Smith Center Native Plant Sale** (Millersburg), **May 6th**; 717-692-3699; www.nedsmithcenter.org
- **Manada Conservancy Native Plant Sale** (Hummelstown), **May 13th**; 717-566-4122; www.manada.org

COMING SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD, 2006!

Mark your calendar today for the environmental event of the year! Coming this fall, **Saturday, September 23rd, 2006: Walkin' Jim Stoltz** — long-distance wilderness hiker and folk singer from Big Sky, Montana — brings his **FREE, multi-media, 20th Anniversary, "Forever Wild-2006"** public concert to the Mechanicsburg Middle School auditorium. View breath-taking images of America's wild places and wild critters; hear songs and stories of his experiences on the trails. Enjoy educational displays from local environmental organizations. Get inspired to protect our rich natural resources, and enjoy an unusual evening out! For more information about Walkin' Jim Stoltz, visit his website: www.walkinjim@walkinjim.com.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS



APRIL:



Spring Wildflowers at Shenk's Ferry: Saturday, April 22. Target species include Trillium and Virginia Bluebells. The drive to Shenk's Ferry takes about an hour. The group will meet at 9:00 AM and return to the Harrisburg area by about 1:00 PM. For details, contact trip leader Walter Koerber at 938-9618, or wakoerber@yahoo.com.

Beginners' Neighborhood Birding at Italian Lake Park, Harrisburg: Saturday, April 29. This walk is geared for beginners, children or birdwatchers of any level. Contact trip leader Ed Chubb at 233-4807 (H), or 599-5188.

MAY:



Stony Creek Valley Warbler Walk: Saturday, May 6. The Stony Creek Valley is a hotspot for migrating songbirds. This walk is reliable for finding Yellow-breasted Chats and warbler species. The walk begins at 7:00 AM. For details contact trip leader Tom Smith at 921-2461.

Carlisle Springs Warbler Walk: Sunday, May 7. Leader Pete Lusardi has found a great variety of migrating songbirds at Carlisle Springs State Gamelands 230, including the secretive Kentucky Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat. Contact trip leader Pete Lusardi at 243-6419.

Pennsylvania Migration Count: Saturday, May 13. This survey provides excellent opportunities for birdwatching and learning while contributing to a database. Various trip leaders scour areas of Dauphin and Cumberland counties in order to count as many species as possible within the day. Contact County Coordinators for details:

Dauphin County: Jan Getgood, 566-987; Cumberland County: Ramsay Koury, 761-1871



Riverside Birding: Saturday, May 27. The Bainbridge area is the site of this trip. One of the highlight species of the trip is Prothonotary Warbler, which has nested in this area in previous years. This trip is offered in conjunction with the Lancaster Bird Club. Contact trip leader Larry Coble at 367-5083.

Join Appalachian Audubon Society *AND* National Audubon Society

AT THE SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY RATE OF \$20 (\$15 FOR SENIORS & STUDENTS)

This application is for **NEW** members joining Appalachian and National Audubon for the **FIRST** time (**for members renewing, renewal information will come to you directly from National Audubon**). This Introductory Offer includes membership in both National and Appalachian Audubon societies, the beautiful *Audubon* magazine, and our own *Kingfisher Courier* newsletter. Please send the form below, with **check** payable to **National Audubon Society**, to: Appalachian Audubon, PO Box 15123, Harrisburg, PA 17105-5123.

New Member's Name: _____

Address: _____ E-mail address: _____

Phone: _____ Senior Membership? _____ Student?: _____ **U07 7XCH**

Chapter-Only Membership: \$12.00 per year

Chapter-Only members receive the *Kingfisher Courier* and support the local Chapter. Make **check** payable to **Appalachian Audubon Society**; send to: Appalachian Audubon, PO Box 15123, Harrisburg, PA 17105-5123

Chapter-Only Member's Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Email address: _____ **U07 7XCH**

LIVING GARDENS

— Lorrie Preston, Penn State Master Gardener - Cumberland County



Spring has sprung! It's time to get back out in the garden. Before you head out to the nursery this year to buy plants, however, let's talk about an issue that is beginning to get attention in some gardening circles – “hybridized plant cultivars.” These may look attractive, but may not offer nectar and/or pollen for wildlife.

A plant “cultivar” (or “CULTIVated VARIety”) is produced by man. Plant scientists take a plant that occurs in nature and make changes in order to develop a completely new variety of that plant, which looks or behaves differently. Plant hybridizers can scientifically cross-breed a plant possessing certain qualities with another plant possessing other qualities, to produce a totally new cultivar that has never before existed.

Plants are cultivated and hybridized for a number of reasons – in an attempt to create a new color, a larger size, a sturdier plant, disease resistance, longer bloom time, etc. However, nectar and/or pollen production is sometimes lost in the process, and plant breeders and growers are paying very little attention to this fact. **It results in plants being sold that look good to us, but offer little or no value to wildlife.** Both native-plant cultivars and ornamental-plant cultivars are being affected. It is a double whammy to our suburban landscapes. Our suburban landscapes are already being over-planted with plants from Asia and beyond, which are useless to our native birds, insects, and wildlife.

Here are some examples: The straight species *Liatris spicata*, commonly known as Spiked Gayfeather, is a native plant enjoyed for its nectar by bees and butterflies. In one trial planting, it was found that the *Liatris spicata* cultivar ‘Kobold’ was ignored by butterflies. The conclusions were that, either there is no nectar, very little nectar, the nectar is out of reach for butterflies, or the nectar is not as sweet in this cultivar as that of the true species.



Flowers in the genus *Lantana* are tropical plants native to the south, but grown here as annuals during the summer months. They are usually a favorite of butterflies and bees. I have grown various cultivars of *Lantana* over many years and it had always been a dependable summer nectar plant. Last year, however, I planted a new cultivar in an attractive new color – *Lantana* ‘Patriot™ Pillar Marc Cathey’. **Not one bee, not one butterfly – nothing paid any attention to those five vigorous and profusely flowering plants in my garden.**

These plants looked pretty to me, but without being able to feed or support my wildlife, they were a waste of space in my garden. I have recently learned that this particular cultivar is one that was bred to be “sterile,” so that it would not spread readily on its own. By reducing its fertility, through the “genetic engineering” of its seed production abilities, this plant was “selectively bred” for other traits, and its value to wildlife was lost along the way.

The lesson is this: Straight natives consistently receive more wildlife visitors than cultivars. Straight native species can be harder to find in the nursery trade than cultivars, and you may have to ask about them or shop through a native plants nursery.

It has been noted that flowers possessing a strong fragrance usually have nectar that attracts pollinators. If you purchase a flowering cultivar or hybrid, observe it closely to be sure it is being visited by pollinators.

And last but not least, if you discover a flowering cultivar or hybrid that does NOT attract pollinators, please e-mail the information to me at mitandpak@aol.com, so I can continue to study and collect information on this phenomenon. Thanks!





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April 2006

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

IN THIS ISSUE:

April Program: "Bathing Beauties of the Bird World".....	p. 1	Gift Card Program.....	p. 2
May Program — <i>Reservations Required, please note!</i>.....	p. 1	Invasive Plants.....	p. 6
Board of Directors; Chapter Contacts.....	p. 2	Living Gardens.....	p. 5
Annual Banquet and Silent Auction.....	p. 3	LOCAL Glossy Paper Recycling Option.....	p. 3
Annual Chapter Election Notice.....	p. 2	Membership Info.....	p. 4
Editor Needed.....	p. 2	Spring Things to Do.....	p. 3
Field Trips.....	p. 4	Wildlife Concert Coming—Save the Date!.....	p. 3

INVASIVE PLANTS

“Invasive” plants are non-native species that crowd out native plant species, reducing food and habitat for native fauna. Our chapter has formed a traveling work group to help eradicate invasives. The **Ralph Kinter Invasives Strike Force will meet this spring as follows: Sunday, March 26th; Sunday, April 2nd, and Saturday, April 8th.** Call Walter Koerber at 717-938-9618, or e-mail wakoerber@yahoo.com, for time and place. At least one meeting will be at Pinchot Park; the other two may be at Wildwood or Stoney Creek. Please also note: There are public “Volunteer Days” at Wildwood Lake Sanctuary (Harrisburg, near HACC) on the second Saturday of each month, starting in March. Volunteers meet at the nature center from 10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. All are welcome. Call Chris at Wildwood for details: 717-221-0292. Thanks for your help. — Walter Koerber

MOVING...? GOING ON A LONG VACATION...?

To receive AAS mailings when away on long vacations or after moving, PLEASE contact our AAS chapter Membership chair (p. 2) with your address change – this saves us money while keeping you current with our activities. Giving a change of address form to the US Post Office (USPS) **will NOT help**; our USPS addresses are handled by National Audubon. We incur a \$.37 charge per item for each piece of incorrectly addressed, returned mail. Please help!