

February Meeting: Insect Life

Thursday, February 15 at 7:30 p.m.

(for location and directions, see page 2)



Steve Rannels will discuss his lifelong interest in insects and how he has come to appreciate and share their natural history through photography. The program will deal with aspects of the life cycle and the ways different species protect themselves from predation, as larvae and adults. His focus is butterflies and moths, but some other orders will also be discussed.



Waggoner's Gap Hawkwatch Results

From August 1 to December 31 each year, a dedicated group of people count the migrating raptors that pass over Waggoner's Gap Hawkwatch, located on Route 74 just north of Carlisle. Waggoner's Gap is now owned by Audubon Pennsylvania. The hawkwatch is open to the public, and Appalachian Audubon members are particularly encouraged to visit the site. The following is the 2006 season's report from Dave Grove, the compiler for Waggoner's Gap. The fall season at the Audubon Hawkwatch at Waggoner's Gap had the second highest totals in the 50-plus year history of the site. 24,834 raptors were counted during 1,186 hours over 147 days. Seasonal records were set for Osprey, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. Single day records were established for both eagles (20 BE, 29 GE) and most species were above 5 year averages. Notably below average were Northern Goshawk, Rough-legged Hawk and Merlin. The warm weather pattern of the fall was, as usual, the biggest factor for both the pluses and minuses. Monarch butterfly counts were the highest in history (6882) with a high single day count of over 1,500. The popularity of Waggoner's Gap resulted in over 3,000 visitors climbing the rocks this fall. Everyone in the Appalachian Audubon family is invited to join in and visit in the fall of 2007.

Total bird counts are as follows:



Northern Harrier—366
 Sharp-shinned Hawk—7931
 Cooper's Hawk—986
 N. Goshawk—29
 Red-shouldered Hawk—306
 Broad-winged Hawk—7421

Black Vulture—134
 Turkey Vulture—1415
 Osprey—682
 Bald Eagle—332
 Red-tailed Hawk—4239
 Rough-legged Hawk—3

Golden Eagle—275
 American Kestrel—358
 Merlin—82
 Peregrine Falcon—82
 Unidentified Raptor—193

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www.appalachianaudubon.org/

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Please Don't Forget...

Please let us know what your email address is so we can keep our membership list up-to-date. Send an email to Ramsay Koury at rkoury123@aol.com with your name and email address. Thanks for your help!

State Parks Calendar



Pennsylvania State Parks has created a 2007 online calendar and is offering it for free! You can download it at www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/calendar.aspx. The purpose of the calendar is to showcase the beauty and variety of our State Parks and provide a handy reminder to "Get Outdoors". The calendar has all of the opening and closing dates of campgrounds and cabins, plus many of the big events in state parks, a few tips for wildlife watching, and of course, scenic photos from throughout the state. In 2008, the calendar will be offered in a print version that will be sold online and through the state parks reservation call center (1-888-PA-PARKS). Enjoy all the recreational opportunities that our state has to offer... "Get Outdoors!"

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.

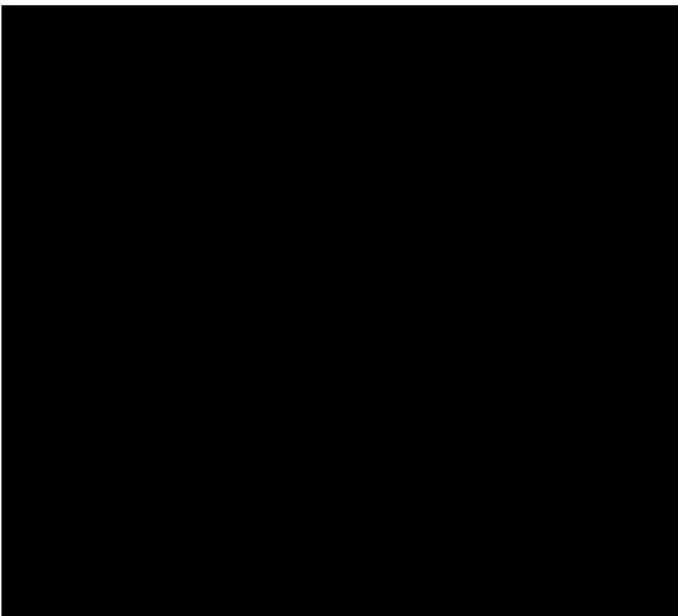
Directions: Take New Cumberland exit off I-83; cross Carlisle Road. Turn left onto Allendale Way; take first left at Deerfield Road (from the south, take New Cumberland exit, turn left onto Carlisle Road, left onto Cedar Cliff Road, left on Allendale Way, then left onto Deerfield Road) to the church.

Living Gardens

By Lorrie Preston, Penn State Master Gardener,

The beginning of winter has been unusually mild this year and there have been some **unusual winter sightings in my backyard wildlife garden**. Every mild day that we have had finds the protruding golden eyes and little nostrils of my water garden's resident bullfrog floating above the surface of the water, enjoying the break from the cold. He will stay like that for hours, not moving, not eating, just enjoying the sweet freedom of spring-like weather. I laugh when I see him – January 8th he was up. If he shows himself in February, he will have made an appearance every month this year.

Another visitor that has had much interest in the water garden recently is a great blue heron. They are always a treat to see on nearby Conodoguinet Creek, but they sure do look out of place in the suburban backyard!



This one has his eyes on the goldfish in my pond, and probably even the frog that I mentioned above, but he is quite cautious in his quest for a meal, and so to my knowledge, he has not scored yet in my backyard. One day I looked out to see this 4' heron perched like a songbird in the high branches of a thin

ash tree along my woodland edge. He looked so gangly and uncomfortable up there. Several times I have caught him striding cautiously toward the pond, with nervous sideways glances. He seems to be able to detect even the slightest movement within the house, then off he flies, his 6' wing span taking him high above the nearby rooftops.

My pond isn't the only one this bird is stalking, though. A pond-owner that lives a half mile from me as the crow flies came home to find two of her largest koi flapping about on the ground in late December. Her fish are large – estimated at over 2 pounds a piece. They were roughed up and had lost a few scales, but were lucky, as they recovered once she returned them to the water. Later the same week, the heron was back in her yard, confirming our suspicions about who was responsible for removing the fish from the pond.

It has also been a great winter for cardinals and gray squirrels. There are regularly 7 of each in my backyard. The squirrels look like prize-winners, with their sleek, shiny, luxurious coats and fat bellies. They are not burning all those calories to stay warm and are having the time of their lives scampering through the woods. This year we had a blue spruce for our Christmas tree, and as always, when we were done with it we propped it up in the woods behind the feeders for the birds to use as shelter in cold weather. A squirrel industriously gathered the buds one at a time from each branch of the spruce, repeatedly scurried with his treat back up into the branches of the ash trees, and hurriedly devoured his precious snack. There's never a dull moment in the wildlife garden!





Youth Scholarship Opportunity!



As a demonstration of our commitment to education, Appalachian Audubon has continued to send young people to environmental education camps. Hog Island, Maine offers a unique camp setting with enriching programs. Appalachian Audubon will pay full tuition for two campers this year. Parents will be responsible for transportation to and from the camp. **The camp runs from July 29 to August 4, 2007.**

This camp for boys and girls (ages 11-13 at time of camp) was developed to instill an appreciation, respect, and sense of stewardship for the natural world. Led by dedicated science and environmental educators and naturalists who have strong backgrounds working with middle-school-aged youth, campers learn about nature, themselves, and how they relate to the natural environment. A camper-to-instructor ratio of seven to one and enrollment of just 52 campers creates a warm and personal atmosphere for learning. The curriculum is wide ranging and includes marine science, geology, forest ecology, ornithology, and field and pond studies.

Interested persons should contact Pete Fox at (717) 583-2639 or pfox@raiderweb.org.

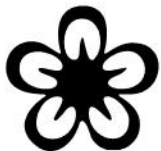
Upcoming AAS Field Trips

Saturday, February 10 — Juniata County Winter Birds — Noon

Join Aden Troyer and Chad Kauffman for an afternoon of winter birding and a visit to Aden's *Lost Creek Shoe Shop* near Mifflintown. Search of winter birds such as Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, Snow Buntings, and Rough-legged Hawks, as well as a dusk search for Short-eared Owls. For more information, contact trip leader Pete Fox at 583-2639 (before 9:00 PM) or pfox@raiderweb.org.

Sunday, March 11— Ned Smith Center 13th Annual Waterfowl Survey — 8 am to 1 pm

Scott Bills of the PA Game Commission will lead this family-friendly waterfowl survey at the Millersburg Gun Club Headquarters at the mouth of the Wiconisco Creek. Telescopes and refreshments will be provided. For more details, contact Pete Fox at 583-2639 (before 9 pm) or pfox@raiderweb.org. (*Directions to the old Millersburg Gun Club Headquarters: Coming from the south, immediately after the bridge coming into Millersburg, turn left off of Rte. 147 onto Keystone Street and follow it to the river. We will be meeting at the old Millersburg Gun Club Headquarters building on the corner of Keystone Street and River Street, at the mouth of the Wiconisco Creek.*)



Saturday, April 21—Spring Wildflowers at Shenk's Ferry

Come see a variety of beautiful wildflowers, including Trilliums and Virginia Bluebells. For details contact trip leader Walter Koerber at 938-9618.



Saturday, April 28—John Heinz Wildlife Refuge at Tincum—7 am

Tincum is considered one of the "gems" of PA's refuges. Tincum offers habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and a variety of songbirds. Contact trip leader Al Mercik at 657-8548 for



The Great Backyard Bird Count is Coming!



The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual four-day event that brings together birders of all ages to count birds in order to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are across North America. Anyone can participate, from novice bird watchers to experts. And it takes as little as 15 minutes. It's free, fun, easy, and helps the birds! And 2007 marks the 10th anniversary of the GBBC, so now is a perfect time to get involved.

The Great Backyard Bird Count runs from February 16-19 this year.

Participants can count birds anywhere they choose, for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They will tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time, and then report their counts by filling out an online checklist at the Great Backyard Bird Count web site at www.birdsource.org/gbbc. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see. A selection of these photos are posted in the online photo gallery. The website also provides birding tips, bird sounds, maps, and other information on over 500 bird species, in order to help participants hone their bird watching skills.

So why you should you help count birds this February?

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where birds are. And since bird populations are constantly in flux, no single scientist or team of scientists could possibly document all the complex movements of so many species in such a short time. That's where YOU come in. Your counts will help answer questions like, how will this winter's weather influence bird populations? How will birds' migrations compare with previous years? How are bird diseases, such as West Nile virus, affecting birds in different regions? What differences in bird diversity occur in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas? And, are any bird species declining to the point that they need conservation attention?



Pennsylvania was the number 2 state in terms of highest number of checklists submitted in 2006 (and 5th for the most birds reported). Let's help make our state number one for 2007... participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count!



Breeding Bird Atlas: Owl Sighting Request



Pennsylvania's Breeding Bird Atlas is entering its fourth year. You can help out right now by letting Ramsay Koury know about any owls you are hearing or seeing. Great Horned and Barred Owls are now calling! Atlas volunteers often miss owls in a particular area unless they make a special effort to look for nocturnal birds. You can help out if you know of any owls in a particular area. Contact Ramsay at rkoury123@aol.com or 717-761-1871, and he will enter the sightings into the atlas database. Thanks for your help!

[Editor's note: On Tuesday, December 5, 2006 the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy celebrated and recognized Clifford L. Jones as the 2006 Conservationist of the Year. In recognition of Cliff's many contributions to the area of birding and conservation, Appalachian Audubon member Jon Dale wrote the following short account of a personal birding experience with Cliff Jones.]

On a Wing and a Prayer, with Cliff Jones in the Driver's Seat by Jon Dale

As a neophyte Audubon member in the mid eighties, I began participating in our organization's sponsored field trips. Before long, I, like many others, looked forward to the annual winter birding trip, usually to shore points to look for northern specialties, which was invariably led by Cliff Jones. It was during these, and many other field trips and birding excursions organized and led by Cliff, that I continued to develop a deep interest and passion for birding, learning much from him.



But perhaps one of my most memorable trips with Cliff occurred one Friday evening in January of 1997 when I received a call from Cliff inviting me along with him and a few other brave souls on a chase to Portland, Maine. They had the hopes of seeing an Ivory Gull, an arctic rarity that had turned up there. After a nine hour trip, the four of us were standing at the Portland waterfront, ogling at this bird, which was sitting on the roof of a warehouse. What a thrill! But the adventure didn't stop here. Cliff had done his pre-trip planning and communicating, and had more in store for us. We were making a beeline to Middlebury, Vermont where several Northern Hawk Owls, another arctic species, had been reported.

Arriving after dark, we grabbed some dinner and retired early to our motel for a good night's rest. We had to rise early to be in position for a chance to see these owls. I thought I knew what cold was until I stepped out of that motel on that crisp, clear Vermont morning. I think it was somewhere around 12 below it nearly took your breath away. That morning, we all got to see not one, but two Northern Hawk Owls, right where Cliff's directions told him they should be. Cliff also managed to get a tip from a local birder on where we might find a Snowy Owl, another great bird from the northern tier. As we were on route the 10 miles out of our way to see this bird, we were fortunate to get great looks at several dark phase Rough-legged Hawks patrolling frost-bitten meadows. We did find the Snowy Owl sitting atop a huge round hay bail in the middle of a farmer's field, and after great looks, headed south for our long journey home, arriving back in Harrisburg about 6 pm Sunday.



What a trip!! This was a die-hard birder's dream. Nearly 1200 miles traveled, four life birds, three of them difficult birds to get, and one of the three, the Ivory Gull, a real rare find. All of this, in the span of 36 hours over a weekend! But it's not just about the birds, even the rare ones. It's about friendship, camaraderie, learning, sharing the love and wonders of nature, and ultimately, stewardship of our land and resources. I thank Cliff Jones for giving me some great opportunities to experience these things, and thank him for being such a great environmental role model for others and his community. Truly, a rare bird!

Christmas Bird Count Reports



The Harrisburg Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held on December 16. FIFTY people participated this year – the most ever! A record 104 species were found. Three new species were recorded for the count: Iceland Gull, scoter (Black or Surf) and two Palm Warblers. The mild weather also contributed to record numbers for 24 individual species including seven Bald Eagles. A flock of 76 Long-tailed Ducks (Oldsquaw) flying downriver was a great find. Excellent conditions for owling produced record high counts for Screech, Barred and Great Horned Owls.

Next year's count will be held on December 15, 2007. Whether you are a beginner or expert birder, we welcome your participation!

The New Bloomfield CBC was held on December 30. Eighty-four species were found. Three new species were also found on this count: Northern Shoveler, American Woodcock, and a Black and White Warbler. There was very little waterfowl to be found on the river this year, but we recorded many high counts for other species: Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, M. Mockingbird, Song Sparrow, and Lapland Longspur.



Next year's count will be held on December 22, 2007. Come out and join in the excitement!



Join Appalachian Audubon Society AND National Audubon Society
AT THE SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY RATE OF \$20 (\$15 FOR SENIORS AND 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:
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MOVING? TAKING AN EXTENDED VACATION?

To receive AAS mailings when away on long vacations or after moving, PLEASE contact our AAS chapter Membership chair (see 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 \$.39 charge per item for each piece of incorrectly addressed, returned mail. Please help us help you!