

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 the month prior to desired publication (files <100KB requested; otherwise contact editor). Editor and Board reserve publication decisions, per chapter

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A Request for Silent Auction Items

Once again Appalachian Audubon will hold a silent auction with our annual banquet on May 17th. Previous auction items have included bird feeders and houses, binoculars, nature related books, artwork and jewelry, outdoor equipment, and plants that provide food for wildlife.

If you have a new or gently used item to donate to the auction, please contact Susan Miller at 697-6696 or millerscorner@msn.com by May 15th.

All auction proceeds will benefit Appalachian Audubon educational activities, including student scholarships to Audubon environmental education camps. **And a reminder** - purchase of auction items will be by cash or check only, so start saving and bring your wallet or checkbook to the big event!



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 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.



Upcoming AAS Field Trips



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

Shenk's Ferry is a fantastic spot for wildflowers. Target species include Trillium and Virginia Bluebells. For trip details contact Walter Koerber at 362-1233.

Stony Creek Valley Warbler Walk – Saturday, May 5th – 7 am

The Stony Creek Valley is a hotspot for migrating songbirds. This walk is reliable for finding Yellow-breasted Chats and a variety of warbler species. For trip details contact Tom Smith at 921-2461.



Carlisle Springs Warbler Walk – Sunday, May 6th

There could be 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 12th

This survey provides excellent opportunities for birdwatching, while contributing to a database. Various trip leaders scour Pennsylvania counties to count as many species as possible within the day. For details contact Jan Getgood at 566-9875 (for Dauphin County) or Ramsay Koury at 761-1871 (for Cumberland County).

John Heinz Wildlife Refuge at Tincum – Saturday, May 19 – 7 am

Please note the date change (*originally April 28*).

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



PA Society of Ornithology Annual Meeting

The 2007 Pennsylvania Society of Ornithology (PSO) meeting will be held at the Best Western Inn and Suites at 815 Eisenhower Boulevard during the weekend of May 18, 19 and 20. The business meeting will be the evening of May 18. Field trips will be held in the morning on Saturday, May 19 and Sunday, May 20. On Saturday afternoon, May 19, there will be four speakers giving a variety of ornithological talks.

The banquet is on Saturday evening, May 19 and Scott Weidensaul will be the banquet speaker. His topic "Of A Feather: A (Brief) History of American Birding" will be about his upcoming new book. PSO members will receive their registration forms in the upcoming PSO newsletter. If you are not a PSO member and wish to become one, visit the website at www.pabirds.org to obtain a membership form.



Living Gardens

by

Several years ago I hired a chimney sweep to clean out the chimney to the natural gas fireplace at our house. The problem was that each summer we would have birds nesting in our chimney, and I was afraid the nests would block the upward flow of the natural gas exhaust, causing toxic fumes to remain in the house. I intended to get the chimney cleaned out once and for all, and to put a mesh cap on the chimney to keep out future inhabitants. When the sweep showed me what he had found, however, I had a change of heart.

There, on the inside, vertical wall of the chimney was a half saucer-shaped nest of the **Chimney swift** - *Chaetura pelagica*. It was made of twigs which were glued together and adhered to the wall using the birds' saliva, which dries like cement. It was small and tidy, and the chimney sweep assured me that the birds posed no danger in blocking the chimney. While the chimney sweep finished his work, I went to my bird book and read about Chimney swifts. I quickly decided that the swifts would be welcome visitors in future years and that the chimney cap was not needed, after all. Every year since then, our chimney has been successfully used for nesting by these interesting birds.



Chimney swifts are 5 1/4 inches long, and sooty gray in color, appearing black in flight. Their long narrow wings curve back towards their stubby, lightweight body. They live their daylight hours in the air and are some of the fastest fliers. They have a short, wide bill and a large mouth, which they use for scooping many kinds of flying insects out of the air, making them an asset in controlling pests. They do not perch in trees or land on the ground like most birds can. They are on the wing all day; feeding, drinking, bathing, mating, and gathering nesting material while soaring through the air.

They are social birds and forage and roost in flocks. They fly like a bat - with shallow wing beats and erratic turns high in the sky as they spy insects to consume. Chimney swifts create a loud, chattering twitter sound in flight. The nestlings twitter when a parent shows up with food, too. We hear their voices rise with excitement many times a day inside the glass-doored fireplace.

Chimney swifts return to our area in mid to late April, and raise a single brood through the months of June and July. Their breeding range is throughout the eastern 2/3rds of the U.S. and into southern Canada. It is believed that the birds mate for life. The female lays 4 to 5 white eggs in the nest. Both sexes incubate the eggs for 18 to 21 days, and then feed them regurgitated insects for the next 20 to 30 days. The young will then be ready to fledge and join the flock in flight. In August or September, they head south and spend their winter in the upper Amazon basin. They have a life span of about 4 years.

Chimney Swifts used to live in hollow trees and caves in forested areas, but they have adapted well to man-made structures and now nest almost exclusively in the chimneys of homes, factories, and schools, where they are protected from weather and predators. Once the birds return for the season and take up residency in a chimney, the chimney should not be used for heating or fires, as it could be fatal to the birds.

When large chimneys are available, hundreds or thousands of Chimney Swifts may feed and roost together. Just before sunset, they form a circular tornado-like swirl, funneling into the chimney together for the night. One place this amazing spectacle can be seen locally is the Bishop McDevitt High School, 2200 Market Street in Harrisburg.





3rd Annual John James Audubon Juried Art Show
 April 20-29, 2007
 John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove



This year's theme is "Nature's Healing." Come view a variety of artistic media, ranging from oils and acrylics to sculptures and photography. Visitor admission is free. Interested artists can submit up to three pieces. Prizes of more than \$1,200 total will be awarded. To obtain a pre-registration form, go to <http://pa.audubon.org/PDFs/Art-Show.pdf>. A percentage of all artwork sold will go towards the Center.

Hours for the show are as follows: Friday through Saturday (*closed Mondays*) - 10 am to 4 pm
 Sundays - 1 pm to 4 pm

The center is located at 1201 Pawlings Road, Audubon, PA 19403. For information on this and other events at the Center, call 610-666-5593 or send an e-mail to millgrove@audubon.org.



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: 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.

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April 2007

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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!