



Kingfisher Courier

Newsletter of Appalachian Audubon Society

April 2010

Public Program: April 15, 2010 **On The Rocks: The Life and Times of the Allegheny "Goodrat"**

The Allegheny woodrat (*Neotoma magister*) is a very good and important rat in Pennsylvania with a fascinating life history.

Jerry Hassinger, biologist and retired chief of the Wildlife Diversity Section of the Pa. Game Commission, has spent many years researching this cute, threatened critter of our rocky ridges, and will share with us some interesting facts and stories about this furry-tailed pack rat.

Jerry will also provide an update on research being done to monitor

woodrat populations and implement conservation measures to reduce its steady population decline.

AAS monthly programs (September—May) typically take place on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the **Christ Presbyterian Church, 421 Deerfield Road, in the Allendale neighborhood of Camp Hill.** Join us at **7:00 pm** for refreshments and conversation.

The program begins at 7:30.
Directions to church on back page.

Common Name:
Allegheny woodrat
or Pack rat

Scientific Name:
Neotoma floridana

Habitat: Rock-slides, cliffs, rocky ledges, and caves at high elevations.

Diet: Herbivorous— including fruits, especially berries of dogwood, blackberry, cherry, and mountain ash, as well as fungi, fern, and other vegetation that it finds.

Interesting Facts: The mysterious decline of Allegheny woodrat populations throughout eastern North America has been the focus of much research in recent years.

Above facts provided by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History's "Mammals of Pennsylvania On-line Resource" www.carnegiemnh.org/mammals/index.html



New State of the Birds Report Released

Dept. of Interior partners with Audubon & other conservation groups on report

Climate change threatens to further imperil hundreds of species of migratory birds, already under stress from habitat loss, invasive species and other environmental threats, a new report released today by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar concludes.

The State of the Birds: 2010 Report on Climate Change, follows a comprehensive report released a year ago showing that that nearly a third of the nation's 800 bird species are endangered, threatened or in significant decline.

"For well over a century, migratory birds have faced stresses such as commercial hunting, loss of forests, the use of DDT and other pesticides, a loss of wetlands and other key habitat, the introduction of invasive species, and other impacts of human development," Salazar said. "Now they are facing a new threat--climate change--that could dramatically alter their habitat and food supply and push many species towards extinction."

The report, a collaboration of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and

experts from the nation's leading conservation organizations, shows that climate changes will have an increasingly disruptive effect on bird species in all habitats, with oceanic and Hawaiian birds in greatest peril.

(Continued on page 4)

Nearly a third of the nation's 800 bird species are endangered, threatened or in significant decline.

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A Call to Action for Bird Conservation

The State of the Birds Report that is covered extensively in this issue of the *Kingfisher Courier* focuses on the long-term impacts of climate change to the birds of North America. Coastal birds are particularly vulnerable due to the expected rise in ocean levels; and narrow-niche species are at great risk as they are least adaptable to nesting or food changes.

The report notes that forest birds, on the whole, are not as vulnerable as others, with two important exceptions: 1) large insectivores that depend on catching insects on the wing, such as Chimney Swifts and Whip-poor-wills; and 2) riparian-nesting species, including numerous species of warblers, thrushes, flycatchers, and orioles.

“Long-term management practices will enable forests to respond to change. Examples include . . . connecting landscapes by protecting large forest blocks and creating corridors, especially along latitudinal and elevation gradients.” Forests will need contiguous protected corridors from south to north to enable this change and to provide habitat corridors for the movement of plant and animal species. The Susquehanna River Greenway initiative has become more timely than ever, and now takes on a new purpose for the future of riparian bird species in Pennsylvania.

Another concern pointed out in the report is that: “Habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation from the development of new wind farms and associated transportation corridors and power lines can cause direct mortality and indirect impacts to birds. Development of new technologies for renewable energy must account for potential new stressors that will negatively impact bird populations.” We’ve been saying that Pennsylvania’s ridge-tops are poor places to site industrial wind complexes, and this report underlines that point very clearly.



Not only are the ridge-tops unique habitat areas of heath barrens, shale barrens, rock outcroppings, and early successional shrub/scrub, they are upslope for many forest species. When the climate warms, many animal and plant species will need to move to a higher altitude, not necessarily a higher latitude, to survive. The tops of our ridges will be important refuges in the decades to come and should not become cleared for wind turbine access roads and thus entryways for edge-effect predators.

If Pennsylvania’s forests are to remain healthy habitat for birds into the future, our policies and government subsidies need to steer development away from riparian corridors and ridge tops, and instead help to permanently protect this natural, green infrastructure. The future of Cerulean Warblers, Wood Thrushes, Scarlet Tanagers, and dozens of other species is at stake.

Trout Lilies by Ralph Kinter

(originally published July 1992)

On our annual Shenk's Ferry trip, we were looking at some yellow trout-lilies when we did a double take. About half way up Grubb's Run there is a small tributary, where we can always find the most interesting plants. This year was no exception. Here was a beautiful display of yellow lilies with extruding red stamens. The color, of course, is due to the color of the pollen, and we had always



seen yellow pollen on our trout-lilies.

This caused us to do a little research on trout-lilies. There are three species, with one variety and two races east of the Rocky Mountains, and nine species in the Rockies and along the west coast.

The generic name, *Erythronium*, comes from the Greek and means purple lily, which is the color of the European species. Only one of ours is purple.

The same common names seem to apply, regardless of the species. Trout-lily is applied because they bloom in trout season. Fawn-lily is used because of the fawn colored mottling on the leaves, although some species lack it. Dog-tooth violet comes from the shape of the flower, which vaguely resembles an oversized violet.

Our eastern species usually have one flower and a pair of mottled leaves. The western species mostly

have two or more flowers, while the leaves may or may not be mottled.

E. americanum, our common trout-lily, is yellow, and bears a single flower. It has a clavate (club like) style, topped by a united and erect stigma. The lateral veins in the petals fork and arch outwardly. The plant spreads vegetatively by underground off-shoots from the corm (bulb), not unlike the lilies-of-the-valley. There are two races, one with yellow anthers, the other with red anthers, which we found at Shenk's Ferry.

E. albidum, which is our white dog-toothed violet, bears a single bloom. The lateral veins on the petal do not fork; the style is clavate only near the top, with the stigma divided into three feathery projections. It can be found on the flood plain of the Conodoguinet Creek, but is commoner in the western part of the state and in Ohio, and westward. Like *E. americanum*, this species spreads vegetatively, by underground offshoots from the corm, but gives way to:

Trout lilies are so named because they bloom during trout season.

E. albidum v. mesochoreum, which spreads by shoots, above ground but just below the leaves. It is limited to areas west of the Mississippi. The mottling on *E. albidum* is very faint. *E. propullans* bears a single pink to roseate flower. It has a slender style, and a united stigma. It is limited to Goodhue and Rice Counties in Minnesota.

New Jersey Field Trip Report

By Ramsay Koury

I had fun on March 6th leading nine other intrepid birders to the New Jersey shore. We had delayed the trip two weeks due to our very snowy February weather. It was a good decision as we had a beautiful day at the coast.

We began at Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge, just north of Atlantic City, is a great spot for migrating waterfowl. The nature trail at the headquarters was not very birdy, but we did have great looks at a Hermit Thrush. We spent the morning birding wildlife drive. This eight mile drive goes through both salt and freshwater habitats. We saw Snow Geese, both Tundra and Mute Swans, Brant, and a variety of other waterfowl. A Peregrine Falcon perched on the nesting tower was a nice find.

We spent much of the afternoon at Barnegat Light at the northern end of Long Beach Island. The inlet and long stone jetty here are a hotspot for wintering waterfowl, gulls and shorebirds. Usually in the winter this is a miserably cold and windy spot, however the weather was almost perfect on our visit. We encountered no wind, comfortable temperatures and lots of birds. On the walk out the jetty we saw a number of Common Loons, Red-breasted Mergansers and Long-tailed Ducks (Oldsquaw).

On the jetty itself were a number of shorebird species that allowed very close looks - Black-bellied Plovers, Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstones, a Sanderling and a number of Purple Sandpipers. Near the end of the jetty we found a number of Harlequin Ducks. This location is well-known for wintering Harlequins and this beautiful sea duck often allows you to get very close looks.

There were dozens of Black Scoters, a few Surf Scoters, hundreds of calling Long-tailed Ducks and a few Red-throated Loons. There was also a flock of dozens of Common Eiders, a bird that in past years was hard to find in New Jersey. A number of Great Cormorants on the tower was also a nice find.

State of the Birds

Continued from page 1

In releasing the report, Salazar cited the unprecedented efforts by the Obama Administration and the Department of the Interior to address climate change.

Last week in Anchorage, Alaska, for example, the Interior Department opened the first of eight new regional Climate Science Centers that will engage scientists from all of Interior's Bureaus and partners to research climate change impacts, work with land, natural, and cultural resource managers to design adaptation strategies, and engage the public through education initiatives.

The Climate Science Centers will help support a network of new "Landscape Conservation Cooperatives" that will engage federal agencies, tribal, state, and local governmental and non-governmental partners, and the public in crafting practical, landscape-level strategies for managing climate change impacts on land, natural, and cultural resources within the eight regions.

"Just as they did in 1962 when Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, our migratory birds are sending us a message about the health of our planet," Salazar said. "That is why--for the first time ever--the Department of the Interior has deployed a coordinated strategy to plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change on the resources we manage."

Key findings from the "State of the Birds" climate change report include:

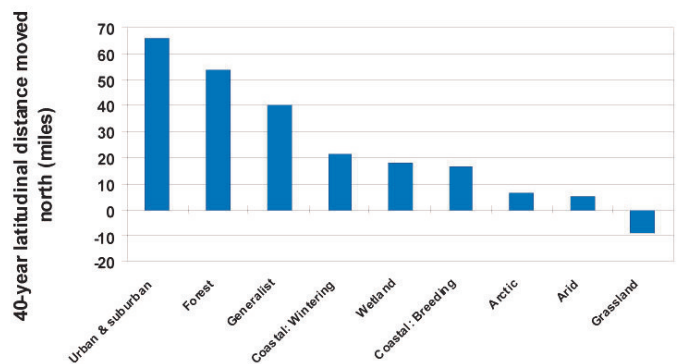
- Oceanic birds are among the most vulnerable species because they don't raise many young each year; they face challenges from a rapidly changing marine ecosystem; and they nest on islands that may be flooded as sea levels rise. All 67 oceanic bird species, such as petrels and albatrosses, are among the most vulnerable birds on Earth to climate change.
- Hawaiian birds such as endangered species Puaiohi and 'Akiapōlā'au already face multiple threats and are increasingly challenged by mosquito-borne diseases and invasive species as climate change alters their native habitats.

- Birds in coastal, arctic/alpine, and grassland habitats, as well as those on Caribbean and other Pacific islands show intermediate levels of vulnerability; most birds in arid lands, wetlands, and forests show relatively low vulnerability to climate change.
- For bird species that are already of conservation concern such as the golden-cheeked warbler, whooping crane, and spectacled eider, the added vulnerability to climate change may hasten declines or prevent recovery.
- The report identified common bird species such as the American oystercatcher, common nighthawk, and northern pintail that are likely to become species of conservation concern as a result of climate change.

"Birds are excellent indicators of the health of our environment, and right now they are telling us an important story about climate change," said Dr. Kenneth Rosenberg, director of Conservation Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "Many species of conservation concern will face heightened threats, giving us an increased sense of urgency to protect and conserve vital bird habitat."

continued next page

Latitudinal movement by habitat



This graph shows range shifts compiled from 40 years of Christmas Bird Count data. Birds in most habitats showed the northern range shift. Urban and suburban birds shifted the most, and forest birds shifted the second most. Arctic and arid-land birds did not show significant shifts, and grassland birds were the only group that shifted to the south more than to the north.

Generalists (species with fewer specific habitat preferences) shifted their ranges north more than those with more specific habitat preferences except for forest bird. Each of the 305 species in the study showed a different amount of range shift. If climate continues to change, future wildlife communities will look very different from those of today.

(Continued from page 4)

“All of the effective bird conservation efforts already taking place to protect rare species, conserve habitats, and remove threats need to be continued,” said David Mehlman of The Nature Conservancy. “Additionally, they need to be greatly expanded to meet the threat climate change poses to bird populations.”

“The dangers to these birds reflect risks to everything we value: our health, our finances, our quality of life and the stability of our natural world,” said Audubon’s Glenn Olson. “But if we can help the birds weather a changing climate, we can help ourselves.”

“While there is much to be concerned about in this report, we can reduce the impact of climate change by taking immediate action to reduce carbon emissions and find creative conservation solutions to help birds adapt to the changes that are already in process,” said David Pashley, vice president of the American Bird Conservancy.

The report offers solutions that illustrate how, by working together, organizations and individuals can have a demonstrable positive impact on birds in the U.S. Specifically, the report indicates that the way lands are managed can mitigate climate change and help birds adapt to changing conditions. For example, conserving carbon-rich forests and wetlands, and creating incentives to avoid deforestation can reduce emissions and provide invaluable wildlife habitat.

The report is the product of a collaborative effort as part of the U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative, between federal and state wildlife agencies, and scientific and conservation organizations including partners from the American Bird Conservancy, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Klamath Bird Observatory, National Audubon Society, The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey. For the complete report, visit: www.stateofthebirds.org

"The 2010 U.S. State of the Birds Report is a powerful wake up call. It says we must all tackle the threats of a changing climate, not just for the birds but for our own good as well.

"We must not tolerate the loss or even the decline of birds that this report shows to be at risk from climate change. The vulnerability of species from the Black-footed Albatross to the common Nighthawk reminds us of how vulnerable we are, too.

"Fortunately, people can still make a difference for these birds and for the future. We can restore and protect the critical habitats that will help vulnerable species to weather challenges of a changing climate. We can demand the local and legislative changes that can shrink our contribution of climate-altering emissions. The birds are telling us we must act now."

**Dr. Frank Gill
President
National Audubon Society**

In Memorium

Frances Eileen Lon Freet, 88, of Carlisle died Feb. 17.

Born Nov. 23, 1921, in Gray (Lycoming Co.), she lived the majority of her life in Chambersburg, Millerstown, Waynesboro and Carlisle.

She was a nurturer, not only of children and family, but also of community, knowledge and the appreciation of natural beauty. For many years, Frances served the Girl Scout and Boy Scout programs as a leader and supporter, fostering lifelong interests for her children and their friends.

Frances had a passion for nature, beginning with the simple pleasures of flower gardening, advancing to the cultivation of an extensive wildflower garden and extending to the lifelong study of botany and birdlife. She participated

in many wildflower pilgrimages and in world-wide travels devoted to birding.

Her travels included trips and symposiums within the U.S. as well as to South America, Africa, Costa Rica, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Great Britain and Antarctica. Her enthusiasm for and commitment to nature were shared with all AAS members who knew her. She was a longtime member of the Audubon Society and the Cornell Ornithological Society and had a special interest in the Waggoner's Gap.

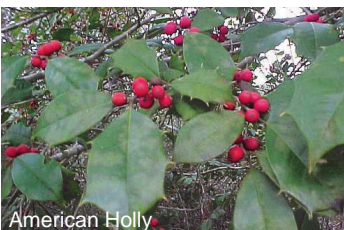
In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in her name to the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy, 401 E. Louthier St., Suite 308, Carlisle, PA 17013; or NAMI Pa., 2149 N. 2nd St., Harrisburg, PA 17110-1005.

Living Gardens by Lorrie Preston Audubon at Home

We have just come through the most difficult month of the year for birds and wildlife. March can be a real struggle. Food can be extremely scarce at this time of year. Fat reserves are low after a long winter. Returning migrants, awakening hibernators, and overwintering inhabitants can be depleted of energy and in desperate need of calories and protein.

Berries and seeds that persisted on plants over the winter have mostly been consumed. Insects are not readily available to eat yet, and the leaves that sustain the insects have not emerged. Flowers that provide pollen, nectar, and attract insects are not yet in bloom. It still gets quite cold at night, causing birds and wildlife to use much energy to stay warm. Snow can still blanket the ground. All in all, it is a very tough time of year for birds and wildlife and the goal is survival until temperatures warm up and the cycle of life resumes.

There are several ways that each one of us can help to bridge the gap at this critical time of year. We can offer a variety of high quality seed and suet at feeders. We can provide mealworms and even berries, but that could be expensive! We can hold off cleaning up the garden for just a little while longer so that any remaining seeds are still available. We can provide a site where birds can scratch and hunt for insects by providing rock piles, wood piles, and allowing leaf litter to stay in place in garden beds for as long as possible.



American Holly

With a little planning and planting this year, you can make a big difference to birds and wildlife when next March comes around. By providing the right native plants on your property, you can ensure that birds and wildlife will have the best possible chance at this vulnerable time of year. Remember, plants that are native to our area share an evolutionary history with the birds and wildlife that live here. They share a life cycle that is intertwined, providing food and shelter for each other at just the right times of year.

Provide as many native trees and shrubs as possible that will produce berries which persist, ripen, and

soften over the winter to feed birds and wildlife in February and March. These plants include:

Juniper	Inkberry Holly	Black Chokeberry
Hawthorn	Winterberry	Common Hackberry
Crabapple	Holly	Red Cedar

Secondly, provide native plants that will start their growth as early in the new growing season as possible. These include both woody and perennial plants. Some excellent plants to consider are:

Oak	Dogwood	Wild Columbine
Willow	Spicebush	Mayapples
Red Maple	Serviceberry	Virginia Bluebells

It's almost time to get out in the garden and resume work on creating the healthiest bird and wildlife habitat you can provide. **We'll be glad to help you with your native plant questions and needs as Appalachian Audubon partners with the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation at their Native Plant Sale on Sunday, May 23rd, at Meadowood Nursery.**

Helpful Tip for Buying Native Plants

It is a tricky process at times to know if the plant you want to buy is native to our area or non-native, so don't hesitate to ask your nursery professional to look it up before you purchase.

Or better yet, shop a native plant nursery to avoid the guess work!

“Is it because they are indigenous that we should reject them? What can be more beautiful than our Lobelias, Asclepias, Orchids, and Asters? In Europe plants are not rejected because they are indigenous; and yet here, we cultivate foreign trifles, and neglect the profusion of beauties so bountifully bestowed upon us by the hand of nature.”

Bernard McMahon, 1775-1816
(Thomas Jefferson's gardening mentor)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Sunday, May 23rd

Spring Native Plant Sale!

Appalachian Audubon will be partnering with Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation to assist with their annual sale at Meadowood Nursery.

Together we will raise public awareness about natives and also raise funds for native plantings in local state parks.

Meadowood Nursery

24 Meadowood Dr., Hummelstown

To volunteer the day of the sale or for more info, please contact Lorrie Preston at GardensNaturally@aol.com or 717-732-5615.



Do you know which end of this spicebush caterpillar is the front?

The answer will be in the May issue!

Are you interested in further training on native plants and backyard ecology?

- Do you want to learn more about native plants?
- Would you like to share what you learn with others?
- Would you be willing to provide "customer service" at future AAS plant sales to answer questions and help direct people to plant choices to meet their needs?

If you answered "yes" to all these questions, you are just the type of volunteer we looking for!

We are currently creating a list of AAS members who would like further training about native plants so they can become more confident and knowledgeable about native plants and their interactions with wildlife.

If you are willing to attend a free half-day training workshop, or if you would like more information, please contact Paul Zeph at 691-0288 or by e-mail at pzeph1@verizon.net. Please put "Native Plant Training" in the subject line of the e-mail.

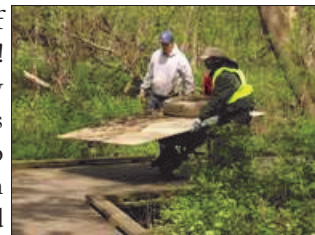
April Activities at Wildwood Park

For details, call the park at (717) 221-0292, or see their website: www.wildwoodlake.org

Wildwood Clean Up

April 10

Wildwood Park needs the help of volunteers and local residents! You are invited to spend the day helping clean up the lake, streams and trails. Volunteers in hip boots or on foot will help clean up the lake, canal, streams and trails of the park. A crew will



pull invasive plants that are just starting to grow. As Earth Day approaches, this is a great opportunity to clean up and give something back to a park that many residents use on a regular basis. Dress for the weather and be prepared to get muddy! Lunch and work gloves will be provided.

When and Where: April 10, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm., Meet at the Olewine Nature Center

(Rain Date: April 11, 12:30 – 3:30 pm)

Registration: Pre-registration is required. Call the Olewine Nature Center at (717) 221-0292.

Fee: Free

Wetlands Festival

April 24

Wildwood Park will launch the celebration of National Wetlands Month with a day full of exciting, fun and educational activities. New for this year will be bird banding demonstrations and additional activities for toddlers and young children. Other events include natural history walks and talks, live critter displays and programs,



hands-on activities for children, live music, exhibitors and food. The day will begin with an early morning bird walk and conclude with a special program presented by ZooAmerica featuring native Pennsylvania animals. A brochure of the entire day's events will be available in March. Pick one up at the Olewine Nature Center or check www.wildwoodlake.org

When and Where: 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Meet at the Olewine Nature Center

Registration: Pre-registration is not required.

Fee: Free Admission



Kingfisher Courier

April 2010

Directions to Christ Presbyterian Church,
421 Deerfield Road in the Allendale
development in Lower Allen Township:

I-83 Southbound, take exit 40B towards New
Cumberland. Stay straight, cross Carlisle
Road to Cedar Cliff Drive. Turn left onto
Allendale Way and turn left onto Deerfield
Road. The Church is on the left. Park in
second lot.

I-83 Northbound, take exit 40B, turn left onto
Carlisle Road/Simpson Ferry Road under I-
83. Turn left again at the light onto Cedar Cliff
Drive. Turn left onto Allendale Way and turn
left onto Deerfield Road. The Church is on the
left. Park in second lot.

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Inside:

Thursday, April 15



Public program featuring
Jerry Hassinger
***On The Rocks: The Life
and Times of the
Allegheny "Goodrat"***

Photo courtesy of Audubon PA

**Read about the new
State of the Birds Report
starting on page 1**

Upcoming Field Trips

Saturday, April 10 ***Shenk's Ferry Wildflower Walk***

Venture to Lancaster County with
Dan Welte to search for Spring
wildflowers. Meet at High Pointe
Commons Shopping Center at 12:00
Noon. Contact Dan at 728-0421 or
dcmawelte@paonline.com for details.

Saturday, May 1 ***Warbler Walk In Stony Creek Valley***

Join birding expert Tom Smith as we
take our annual hike through the
Stony Creek area to experience
multiple species of warblers. Fourteen
species of warblers have been
reported nesting in that area. Meet at
7 a.m. by the PP& L substation
entrance along Stony Creek Valley
Road near Dauphin. Contact Tom at
921-2461 for further information.

More reasons to attend our monthly meetings!

In addition to communing with like-
minded Auduboners and hearing a
great speaker, AAS also offers:

- SHADE-GROWN COFFEE
(it's also organic & fair-trade!)
- GIANT GROCERY CARDS
- AUDUBON HATS
- BIRDING LISTS

All for sale at the meetings!

See the display tables during
refreshments & conversation
prior to the program!

Harrisburg Peregrine Falcon fans
can now follow the falcons' progress at
www.twitter.com/FalconChatter, or by
clicking on the Falcon Cam button on
www.depweb.state.pa.us.

This will be the sixth year this pair of
falcons has nested at the Rachel Carson
building.