



Kingfisher Courier

Newsletter of Appalachian Audubon Society

May 2010

Boost Your Bird & Wildlife Habitat While Supporting Our State Parks & Forests

Choose from a wide selection of native trees, shrubs, vines, and perennials at the upcoming

Native Plant Sale

hosted by the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, with assistance from Appalachian Audubon Society Volunteers

Sunday May 23

10:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.

at Meadowood Nursery

Proceeds support native plantings in area state parks

*To volunteer, contact
Lorrie Preston at 732-5615 or
GardensNaturally@aol.com*

Directions to the Nursery:

From the north: take Route 81 to Exit 77. Proceed south/east on Route 39 approximately 3 miles and turn right on Red Top Road. Proceed 1 mile and turn right on Long Lane Drive. Take the first left onto Meadowood Drive (see below for rest of directions).

From the south: follow signs to Hershey Park. From Hershey Park Drive in front of the Giant Center, follow Route 39 north/west approximately 3 miles and turn left on Red Top Road. Proceed 1 mile and turn right on Long Lane Drive.

Take the first left onto Meadowood Drive. At the "Y" at the end of the road, stay to the left and take the drive on the left up the hill to the nursery.

Meadowood Nursery is located in a residential neighborhood. Thank you for using caution while traveling through our neighborhood.

Can't Make It To The Native Plant Sale On May 23rd ?

Check out the *Audubon at Home* website for a list of many native plant sales to be held in PA this spring.

Native plant sales in our area are listed under "Central"

<http://pa.audubon.org/habitat/NewsEvents.html>

And don't forget to mark your calendar for Appalachian Audubon's 5th Annual Fall Native Plant Sale – Saturday Sept. 18

Top-rated Native Plants for the Mid-Atlantic Region

There are lots of great native plants out there to choose from, but did you know that not all native plants are created equal? Some plants stand out above the others for their benefit to birds and wildlife. By adding these outstanding plants to your landscape, you can really make a difference and improve your wildlife habitat.

Dr. Douglas Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, has developed a set of plant lists that grow in our region of the country, and their comparative value to Lepidoptera species (butterflies and moths) throughout the insects' life cycles.

The following are excerpts from his lists:

10 Most Valuable Woody Native Plants for Supporting Biodiversity in the Mid-Atlantic

Quercus – Oak
Prunus – Black Cherry
Salix – Willow
Betula – Birch
Populus – Poplar

Malus - Crabapple
Vaccinium – Blueberry
Acer – Maple
Ulmus – Elm
Pinus - Pine

10 Most Valuable Perennial Native Plants for Supporting Biodiversity in our Area

Solidago – Goldenrod
Aster – Asters
Helianthus – Sunflower
Eupatorium – Joe Pye, Boneset
Ipomoea – Morning Glory

Carex – Sedges
Lonicera - Honeysuckle
Lupinus - Lupine
Viola - Violets
Geranium - Geraniums

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hsmamabear@embarqmail.com

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Marcia Wilson: 215-0633

Kathy Kuchwara: 319-0828

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President's Perch Double Your Giving Pleasure

Paul Zeph

This year's annual appeal arrived at your door or in your e-mail a couple of weeks ago. Beth and John Carricato have devoted their lives to rehabilitating injured wildlife throughout central Pennsylvania as Dauphin County Wildlife Rescue. We discovered that they needed to rebuild most of their holding and rehab pens, but were finding it impossible to do on their own. They didn't ask for a handout, but to many of us they are family. They've helped us for decades without asking for anything but the wounded and orphaned wildlife we encounter. We certainly can help give back a little in their time of need.

Another giving opportunity remains the tract of property at Waggoner's Gap for which we have raised funds the last two years. Generous local donors and state grants have whittled down the debt on the loan to around \$50,000; but, due to the economic downturn, finding the remaining donations has been very difficult. Interest must be paid each month on this unpaid debt, so there is tremendous urgency to pay off the loan and transfer the property to Audubon PA.

The good news is that a donor match has been found for part of the debt, so donations made in the next few months will be matched 1-to-1! We're almost there — even if you've given before you can help get the project over the top!

Help injured raptors by supporting Dauphin County Wildlife Rescue, and help protect migrating raptor habitat on the Kittatinny Ridge. Whatever you can send in to either or both projects, you're helping to support very meaningful work that touches us all.

Send donations to our treasurer, Annette Mathes. Indicate which project your check is to support, or how much is for each if you are giving to both. The birds can't speak, so I'll say it for them: Thank you!



Make check payable to AAS. Mail to:
Annette Mathes, 661 South 80th Street, Harrisburg, PA 17111

Milkweeds by Ralph Kinter

(originally published September 1998)

The milkweeds have always fascinated me, with their pinkish ball-like flowers, and their long upright pods that open in the autumn, exposing fluffy, flossy cotton which acts as a parachute or a balloon, carrying the seeds afar.

And, when the pods first open, and that fluffy material begins to unfold, the milkweed is at its photogenic best. Small wonder that one finds the milkweeds fascinating.

Milkweeds come in a number of species which cover a full range of habitats from the uplands through the wetlands; from the mountains to the prairies; and from coast to coast.

One species, the butterfly weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, is an upland species, found in open fields, but is more common in sandy soils, is now being cultivated for our gardens. You can find plants of this species at your favorite garden shops.

Another species that is rapidly becoming popular as wetland gardens come into vogue, is the swamp milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*. This species has delicate pink to red flowers, and is much visited by insects for its nectar.

More rare is the four-leaf milkweed, *Asclepias quadrifolia*, with its few pale, white flowers. This, too, is an upland species, found in thin woodland habitats.

But, it is our common milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*, that I am particularly interested in. This is an uplands species, normally found in our open fields, and waste places. When I was a teenager, it was much more common than it is today. The reason is that, just as the name implies, it is a weed, and most people today prefer to eliminate weeds.

And in those days we could find many larvae of the monarch butterfly and the milkweed tiger moth, as well as the milkweed longhorn beetle and the small milkweed bug.

None of these insects are harmful to man, nor to his crops. In fact the monarch butterfly and the milkweed longhorn beetle don't really even harm the host plant. But the milkweed tiger moth larvae and the small milkweed bug live in dense colonies, and they can strip the milkweed plant in short order.

And, as a teenager, I used to delight in capturing the little longhorn beetles, who would squeal until you turned them loose--almost as if begging to be set free.

Today, it is rare to find any of these insects, largely because we have destroyed most of the large stands of milkweed. These four species of insects live almost exclusively on milkweed, and without the large stands of milkweed, they have no home, no place to breed.

All four of these species, plus the queen butterfly and the larger milkweed bug, both of which are found in our Southern states, can live on the milkweed, because they are immune to its toxins. In fact, all six species, not only are immune, but they make use of the toxins as a protection against their enemies.

Further, all six are gaudily marked so that their enemies know to leave them alone.

Well, I admire the milkweeds, and when, a few sprang up on a corner of our half acre, I left them stand. We have had monarch butterflies visit them for nectar, as well as our other flowering plants. But only twice in 16 years have we seen any monarch larva.

Then in 1987, we had a colony of milkweed tiger moth larvae strip the plants of their leaves. This year, we were delighted to see a pair of milkweed longhorn beetles with their bright red coloration and black dots visit our milkweeds.

We never see the larva of these beetles, as they are bores, living inside the milkweed stems. So far we have not seen any of the lesser milkweed bugs.

All told, there are some 25 species of milkweeds, but we have only seen five of them, plus the climbing sandvine. The sand vine, *Ampelamus albidus*, is a form of climbing milkweed, found along river banks in alluvial soils.

Monarchs need our help !

The *Monarch Watch* program has a great website with everything you want to know about milkweeds and monarchs. And, if you can plant a large milkweed patch of at least 15 square yards, you can register your area as an official monarch migration "Waystation."



Visit their site at:

<http://monarchwatch.org/waystations/>

Top-rated Plants

Continued from page 1

The complete set of Dr. Tallamy's lists (in Excel spreadsheet format) are available to download at <http://copland.udel.edu/~dtallamy/host/index.html>

Steve Saffier, director of *Audubon at Home* for Audubon Pennsylvania, created the following lists of native plants "for the birds:"

Top 10 Seed-producing Native Trees

Pinus – Pitch Pine	Ulmus - Elm
Pinus – White Pine	Alnus - Alder
Betula – Birch	Acer - Maple
Liquidambar – Sweetgum	Tsuga – Eastern Hemlock
Picea – Spruce	Liriodendron – Tuliptree

Top 10 Fruiting Native Trees, Shrubs & Vines

Rubus – Blackberry	Nyssa – Black Tupelo
Prunus – Cherry	Sambucus - Elderberry
Morus – Red Mulberry	Parthenocissus – Va. Creeper
Amelanchier – Serviceberry	Ilex - Holly
Cornus – Dogwood	Rhus - Sumac

Article by Lorrie Preston

Silent Auction Donations Needed

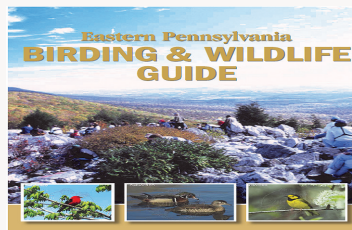
Once again Appalachian Audubon will hold a silent auction as part of our annual banquet on May 20th. If you have a new/gently used nature-related item to donate for the auction, please contact Susan Miller at 697-6696 or millerscorner@msn.com.

Donations we've received for past auctions include binoculars, field guides and other nature related books, jewelry, artwork, bird feeders and houses, native plants and plants that provide food for wildlife, hiking equipment, and some surprises.

Auction proceeds will support AAS educational activities including scholarships for environmental camps for students and educators.

Also - bring your check book and plan to bid on some unique auction items — someone else's donation might just be the treasure you've been looking for!

Bird Resources



Eastern Pa Birding & Wildlife Guide

"Eastern Pennsylvania is a birding paradise." So begins the introduction to the new *Eastern Pennsylvania Birding and Wildlife Guide* — an introduction written by Pulitzer Prize finalist Scott Weidensaul.

The easy-to-use 130-page spiral-bound book presents readers with a road map on where, when and how to explore that paradise. The book was introduced in 2009 and funded in part through a PA DCNR grant from Growing Greener. It was created through a partnership of the Schuylkill River Heritage Area (SRHA), Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (D&L) and Lehigh Gap Nature Center.

The guide covers 13 counties and includes a variety of sites such as parks, state game lands and wildlife sanctuaries. Site descriptions are concise and useful, and include information about which species of birds and other wildlife may be seen in every season. Full-color photographs and illustrations abound.

Guides are available free of charge at selected parks, nature centers and birding sites while supplies last. They can also be ordered from the SRHA and the D&L at a cost of \$10 to cover shipping and handling. For a list of locations where the guide can be obtained, or to order a copy, visit the SRHA Web site at www.schuylkillriver.org, or the D&L Web site at www.delawareandlehigh.org.

Answer to Last Month's Quiz

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



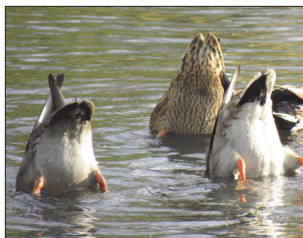
A: The "eyes" on the rear are merely markings on the skin to appear like a larger creature to predators, such as birds. Also, when very young, it resembles a bird dropping, and the chrysalis looks like a dead leaf!

Spring Birding Hot Spots in South-Central Pennsylvania

Our region has many excellent locations for birding. Both the Susquehanna River and the Appalachian Mountains are major flyways, making our region a “crossroads of migration.” Some of the more productive locations within a half an hour drive of Harrisburg are described here. There are many other good spots in the area, this is not an exhaustive list.

Wildwood Lake Sanctuary

This Dauphin County park in north Harrisburg has several miles of trails and boardwalks that encircle the lake. This is an excellent location to view Great Egrets and other wading birds. It is a good spot to look for waterfowl, particularly Wood Ducks, Gadwall, and other puddle ducks. The trails are good for warblers and other



Typical view of puddle ducks feeding at Wildwood Lake.

migrants, and Baltimore Orioles regularly sing around the Audubon PA office entrance in early May. Due to the tremendous diversity of habitats at the park, it has perhaps the greatest diversity of birds of any natural area in central PA. Some of the rare birds which have been seen here include: Glossy Ibis, Little Blue Heron, Red-necked Grebe, Eurasian Wigeon, and Prothonotary Warbler. For more information visit: www.wildwoodlake.org

The Susquehanna River

The Susquehanna River is a major flyway for waterfowl, gulls, terns, swallows and many other birds. Any of the many public access points can be productive. One of the best, is the boat launch in West Fairview, on the west shore of the river, across from the city of Harrisburg. It is located on the north bank of the Conodoguinet Creek where it empties into the river. Almost every species of waterfowl recorded in Pennsylvania has been seen here at one time or another. The best time for waterfowl, March and April, is behind us, but May is good for terns. The Black Tern is usually seen on several different days as it migrates north following the river.

Water birds are not the only attraction at this location. A trail leading up the creek from the parking lot can be good at almost any time of year. Some of the rarities seen at West Fairview:

Harlequin Duck, Least Tern, Franklin's Gull, Long-billed Dowitcher, Willet, and Connecticut Warbler.

Fort Hunter Park

Another excellent vantage point along the River is just north of Harrisburg at Fort Hunter Park. A large variety of waterfowl is possible here, and it is an excellent location



Willetts sometimes show up during migration along the Susquehanna River at the West Fairview boat launch.

to see Double-crested Cormorants roosting on the rocks. This is also a good spot to see gulls, especially migratory species coming through in early spring. This same section of the river can be viewed from Marysville on the west shore of the river. There are two public boat launches - at the north and south ends of town. This section of the river has produced many rarities as well, including: Pomarine Jaeger, Red-necked Phalarope and Common Black-headed Gull.

Stony Creek Valley/State Game Lands 211

Stony Creek Valley runs from the town of Dauphin east to Lebanon Reservoir. There are many good birding spots throughout this area. Stony Creek Road runs east from Dauphin to a gated old railroad bed. There are several trails off of this road before the gate. The railroad bed runs for about 20 miles through excellent forest. This can be walked or biked.

There is an access at Cold Spring Road at Indiantown Gap 7 or 8 miles from Dauphin. Gold Mine Road crosses the railroad bed another 5 or 6 miles east of Cold Spring. You can continue east on the railroad bed to a dead end at the Lebanon Reservoir from this point. This valley is excellent for spring migrants. There are many interesting breeding birds here including: Barred Owl, Whip-poor-will, Red-shouldered Hawk, Blue-headed Vireo, Winter Wren, and many species of warblers.



Many species of warblers, like this Black and White warbler, stop during migration and also nest throughout Stony Creek Valley.



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Appalachian Audubon Society
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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:

- ◆ Top-rated Native Plants for the Mid-Atlantic
- ◆ Ways to give this spring that will help raptors
- ◆ Ralph Kinter on Milkweeds
- ◆ New Birding Guide to Eastern PA
- ◆ Spring Birding Hot Spots in Central PA

***The Appalachian Trail - A Footpath for Those Who Seek
Fellowship with the Wilderness*** by Lorrie Preston **May 25**

7:00 PM Wildwood Park at the Olewine Nature Center

If you missed Lorrie's wonderful presentation at our chapter program last December, you can catch it later this month at Wildwood! In 2006, Lorrie started section-hiking the trail through PA with the local Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club, and has now hiked nearly 1,000 miles of the trail, including the very rugged White Mountains in New Hampshire, all the while capturing the special journey with her camera.

Remember — Our Banquet on May 20 at the
Radisson in Camp Hill is our May program!
Banquet reservations are due in the mail by May 15.

**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?
- 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.