



Kingfisher Courier

Combined issue

Newsletter of Appalachian Audubon Society

December 2010-January 2011

Note the date!!

December 9, 2010

Clean Air Board: Efforts in Education and Advocacy

Cumberland Valley is among the worst areas in the country for fine-particulate air pollution, which has been shown to have significant health impacts. In August 2005, 75% of the physicians in Cumberland County drafted and signed a public letter raising the alarm over the deteriorating air quality. The Clean Air Board of Central Pennsylvania (CAB), an interfaith citizen advocacy group, was formed and since then has been working to monitor fine-particulates, educate the public about the hazards of poor air quality, and advocate for reduction in particulate pollution.

Rev. Duane Fickeisen, Treasurer of the CAB, will present this program about the hazards of particulates in the air we breathe, the efforts of the CAB, and what we can do to help. Duane has B.S. degrees in zoology and biological oceanography, and M.S. degrees in fisheries, organization development, and divinity. His past environmental work includes research on the effects of energy production on aquatic ecosystems. He currently serves with his wife, the Rev. Judy Welles, as parish co-minister of the Unitarian Universalists of the Cumberland Valley.



The Rev. Jennifer McKenna, CAB President, discusses CAB's petition to the Environmental Quality Board asking them to regulate idling by diesel highway vehicles. Credit: www.cleanairboard.org.

AAS monthly programs (September—May) typically take place 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.*

January 20, 2011

Managing Pennsylvania's Bats

White Nose Syndrome (WNS) was first reported in New York three years ago, and has quickly spread to Pennsylvania and several other states. The mortality rate is more than 90 percent. The syndrome causes bats to wake during hibernation, when there are no food sources available, and as a result, the bats use up their energy stores.

Aura Stauffer, Wildlife Biologist for Pa DCNR Bureau of Forestry will provide an update on WNS, including the latest research

and how the disease is spread. She will also discuss bat management on state forest lands.

Aura has B.S. and M.S. degrees from the Pennsylvania State University in Wildlife and Fisheries Science. She has worked with the Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Wetlands and Waterways in Washington, DC, and for the Audubon Society at the Audubon Camp in Maine as a marine biology instructor.



Credit: Marvin Moriarty/USFWS

OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Paul Zeph: 691-0288

Vice-President

Vacant

Secretary

Carole Norbeck: 766-0956

Treasurer

Annette Mathes: 566-0149

DIRECTORS

Term Ending May 2011

Kathie Bard: 238-0004

Judy Bowman: 761-3815

Susan Miller: 697-6696

Term Ending May 2012

Jane Barnette: 657-2055

Kathy Kuchwara: 319-0828

Sue Strassner: 243-5731

COMMITTEES (JOIN US!)

Bird Seed Sale

Tom Lehman: 732-5087

Conservation

Paul Zeph: 691-0288

Education

Marci Mowery: 236-7644

Field Trips

Judy Bowman: 761-3815

Hospitality

Lorrie Preston: 732-5615

Newsletter Editor

Holly Smith: 960-9441

hsmamabear@embarqmail.com

Membership

Marcia Wilson: 215-0633

Kathy Kuchwara: 319-0828

Programs

Holly Smith: 960-9441

Publicity

Vacant

Trout Run

Jon Dale: 432-0335

Kathy Kuchwara: 319-0828

President's Perch

Paul Zeph

Time to Pause and Watch

With all the politics swirling around us this election season, and the environmental issues that seem to be piling up lately, it's easy to forget what brings us together as a group in the first place. Birds!

At our October program meeting, we took a few minutes before the speaker (as we usually do) to share exciting experiences and sightings. The responses were varied and fascinating:

- ◆ "We saw 50 bald eagles at Conowingo Dam – and two peregrines hunting in front of us!"
- ◆ "The juncos are back – and red-breasted nuthatches!"
- ◆ "Great-horned Owls are being heard pairing up in Harrisburg!"
- ◆ "I saw a Pileated Woodpecker on my property!"

It reminded me that, despite the problems and daily wrangling over budgets, permits, enforcement and pollution, that the Earth keeps turning. Seasons march on, and birds continue to do what they've done for millennia. Some migrate, while others join a flock and hang around. All molt and get a new winter coat.

'Tis the season – to feed and watch birds! Take time to pause and watch in wonder. Bundle up and get outside. November and December is Golden Eagle months at Waggoner's Gap. Chickadees and nuthatches are out in force in our parks and game lands making the sounds we love to hear. Interesting waterfowl spend a day or two at Wildwood Lake or the Susquehanna River as they stop for a rest on their travels.

There will always be new problems to solve and political buffoonery to enrage us. So, make time to refuel your spirit by watching a beautiful red cardinal on a bare branch; or listening to a White-throated Sparrow sing "O Sweet Canada Canada Canada." The Great Backyard Bird Count is February 18 – 21. Check out the website and then count some birds! www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

Happy birding!

See story on page 3.



The unobstructed view from the new amphitheater at Waggoner's Gap provides a spectacular year-round view of the Cumberland Valley.

Latest Improvements to the Cliff Jones Field Station At Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch by Paul Zeph

A lot of activity has taken place over the summer and fall at Waggoner's Gap to move forward the vision of creating a more useful education and research facility around the Hawk Watch. A number of improvements have been made to the parking lot trail entrance, and just south of the hawk-watching area.

The biggest change is just down the hill from the Hawk Watch on the south side – the transformation of an overgrown, former restaurant site into a rock amphitheater that “grows” out of the hillside. Made of ridge-top stone obtained nearby, the amphitheater has seating for plenty of students, and provides an outstanding view south across the Cumberland Valley to South Mountain.

Leading up to the construction was an amazing volunteer effort to remove 40 or more years of growth of the non-native bush honeysuckle, *Lonicera tartarica*. The red berries of this tall shrub is eaten and widely dispersed by many birds, but is not a high quality food. If unchecked, the plant crowds out native plants and destroys an area ecologically. AAS members, Audubon PA staff, Jones family members and assorted friends were on site two Saturdays in the summer to pull, chop, cut and chip the dastardly shrub, as well as open the view for hawk watching.

With a large area cleared, the construction was able to take place on top of the old cement slab that was the site of a small restaurant that (I'm told) burned down. We don't know anything more about it except that it was called the Sky High Inn; if any AAS members have information about the restaurant's history, we would like to hear about it!

Once construction on the amphitheater was completed, volunteers again helped to plant native shrubs, trees and perennials from the Meadowood Nursery to replace the invasives that were removed. More planting needs to be done in the spring, but the space looks terrific and is ready for use. It is fortunate to have this unique place to take groups of youth or adults to give an orientation to migration, hawk-watching, or the value of the Kittatinny. The site can be used by educators of all ages to use the magnificent view for lessons on land use, geography, watersheds, pioneer history, or other topics.

In addition, a local scout group created a picnic area down the hill and west of the Hawk Watch.

The benefit for hawk-watchers is that there are now two places away from the Hawk Watch site itself that leaders can take a noisy group when they are finished with hawk-watching, or to eat lunch or do other activities.

Other improvements took place at the north parking lot. A new sign has been added that describes the history of data collection at Waggoner's Gap, and highlights Cliff Jones and his lifelong dedication to connecting people, particularly youth, to nature. There is also a terrific rock that has taken the place of the plastic bench at the head of the trail. This impressive hunk of stone can be used as a podium, bench or picnic table. (One day in October I used it as all three!)



This photo from 1961 shows the Sky High Inn at Waggoner's Gap before it burned down where the new educational amphitheater now sits.

There are still future improvements in the planning stages, particularly the addition of handicapped parking on the west side by the AT&T tower and a walking bridge across Route 74. Stay tuned for future updates, but in the meantime stop by to see the new features and help spread the word to educators. The site is free and open to the public, but Audubon PA may need to take school group reservations as its popularity increases! (See more photos on page 4.)

Recent Improvement Efforts at the Cliff Jones Field Station at Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch



Eagle Scout candidate Mitch Kohler (far left) and his crew building the picnic tables at Waggoner's Gap.

Audubon PA Executive Director Phil Wallis (center) thanks the many partners involved with the latest improvements to the Cliff Jones Field Station at the annual "Hawk and Hike Day" held October 30.



AAS members and other volunteers plant native species above and next to the new amphitheater.



Ellen Zeph enjoys the new amphitheater, built from large ridge-top rocks, designed as an educational site for large and small groups.

2011 Field Trips

Please note: some trips listed below for June were not in the printed brochure included in the September newsletter.

Sunday, January 23, 2011: Nature Walk at Wildwood

Join Jane Webster, naturalist at Wildwood Park, part of the Dauphin County Park System, for a healthy and invigorating walk around the beautiful trails and lake at Wildwood. Please dress for the weather. Meet at the Olewine Nature Center parking lot at 1:00. No advance reservations required. Contact Jane at 221-0292 or jwebster@dauphinc.org for more information.

February 2011: Ramsay's Winter Road Adventure: (Date and time to be announced)

Join our AAS "birder extraordinaire" on another winter birding trip. Ramsay will again surprise us with a well-researched location to maximize our experience. Be prepared to possibly travel out-of-state for a day-long trip. Contact Ramsay at 761-1871 or rkoury123@aol.com.

Sunday, March 13, 2011: Ned Smith Waterfowl Watch

Hosted by the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art, this annual waterfowl watch along the Susquehanna River in Millersburg was also an annual event for beloved artist and outdoorsman, Ned Smith. Birding experts will be on hand to help identify and count the waterfowl. The event is held from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Please dress warmly and bring along your binoculars and spotting scopes. Contact Beth Sanders at the Ned Smith Center at 692-3699 or Judy Bowman at 761-3815 for further information.

Sunday, March 19, 2011: Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area – Snow Geese, Swans and More!

Veteran trip leader Pete Fox will lead our trip to Middle Creek, which has a wealth of birding opportunities. This time of year is noted for the Snow Geese and Tundra Swans stopping for several weeks during their migration, as well as other waterfowl, eagles, and more! Contact Pete at 583-2639 (before 9 PM) or pfox@raiderweb.org.

Saturday, April 16, 2011: Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge

Join Board member Jane Barnette as she leads our group to Bombay Hook in Delaware; and, if time permits, to Port Mahon along the Delaware Bay for an exciting day of waterfowl, shore birds, and early warblers. Meet at 7 AM at Lowe's on Union Deposit Road. Contact Jane at 657-2055 or jbird558@aol.com.

Saturday, May 7, 2011: Warbler Walk in Stony Creek Valley (Dauphin County)

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 AM by the PP&L substation entrance along Stony Creek Valley Road near Dauphin. Contact Tom at 921-2461 for further information.

Sunday, May 8, 2011: Warbler Walk in SGL 230 (Cumberland County)

This year we're offering an east and west shore warbler-watching option! (Or come on both!) Join trip leader Pete Lusardi for an exciting tromp around the state game lands northeast of Carlisle along the base of the Blue Mtn. Meet at 7:00 AM at the eastern-most parking lot (first parking lot on the right) heading west on Route 944, about ½ mile west of the intersection of SR 34 and SR 944. Contact Pete at 243-6419 or plusardi@cet-inc.com for details or just show up!

Saturday, May 14, 2011: Pennsylvania Migration Annual Survey

This annual survey provides an excellent opportunity for birding and contributing to a scientific effort. Various leaders search the tri-county region to count as many species as possible within the day. For the Dauphin County count: Carl and Nancy Juris, 564-1479, hbgbdrds@verizon.net; Perry County: Ramsay Koury, 761-1871, RKoury123@aol.com; Cumberland County: Vern Gauthier, 385-9526, pabirder@gmail.com.

Saturday, June 4th, 2011: Breeding Birds of the Tuscarora State Forest and More

Join Cumberland County breeding bird survey complier Vern Gauthier for a look at the breeding birds of the Tuscarora, including Cerulean, Blackburnian and 15 other possible species of warblers, Ruffed Grouse, Raven, Yellow-throated Vireo, Acadian Flycatcher and others. We will meet at 7:00 AM at the Colonel Denning State Park day use area. After spending most of the morning walking 4 miles of woodland trails we will stop by some of the local fields for Blue Grosbeak and other field birds. For more information, contact Vern at 385-9526 or pabirder@gmail.com.

* Early Bird Special - Anyone interested in trying for Sora and Virginia Rails and possibly Least Bittern is invited to contact Vern for a 5:30 AM rendezvous at SGL 169.

* Die Hard Special - After the main trip there will be an opportunity for those who wish to see other Cumberland County birds to continue. What is looked for and where will be based on the interests of those who choose this option.

Saturday, June 4, 2011: State Game Lands 246 – Round Top Mountain (Dauphin County)

Join members of the Quittapahilla Audubon Society in search of flora and fauna as well as late spring warbler migrants. Meet Saturday, 9 AM at Karns grocery store parking lot on Cherry Drive, just south of Route 322 (Governor Road). Leader Art Schiavo, 533-1978.

All field trips are free of charge (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. Please contact the trip leader before going on any field trip. For more information on any trip, call Judy Bowman at 761-3815.



Kingfisher Courier
December 2010—January 2011

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.

Printed on 100% recycled paper with
35% post-consumer reclaimed content.



Appalachian Audubon Society
P.O. Box 15123
Harrisburg, PA 17105-5123

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARRISBURG, PA
PERMIT # 486

**Inside:
Public Programs**

**Thurs., December 9th
Clean Air Board**

**Thurs., January 20th
Pennsylvania Bats**

**What's new at
Waggoner's Gap?
Page 3 & 4**

**Please Note:
The next issue of the
Kingfisher Courier will be
February 2010!**

*Have a safe and happy
holiday season!*

**Items for Sale at
Program Meetings**

**Bring your checkbooks, the
holidays are coming fast!**

- ◆ 2011 Audubon Calendars – Beautiful and less expensive than in stores or mall calendar kiosks
- ◆ Coffee that is organic, shade-grown, and bird-friendly (not to mention very tasty!)
- ◆ Audubon caps – tan, summer-weight, and sporty
- ◆ Giant grocery cards – helps AAS raise money, and costs you nothing extra!

We appreciate your presence, and support at our programs!

**Save Trees and
Mailing Costs! Receive the
E-version of the
Kingfisher Courier!**

Recognizing a national trend of organizations converting from paper newsletters to e-versions, AAS would like to offer you an option of receiving the **Kingfisher Courier** by e-mail.

This will result in a significant cost savings to the chapter!

To receive the e-version, please send an email **from the account that you wish to receive the to:**
appaudubonsoc@yahoo.com or call Ed Smith at 717-960-9441.
Please include your name and address in any correspondence so we can match you to our mailing list!

Thank you very much for considering this option!