



Kingfisher Courier

Newsletter of Appalachian Audubon Society

March 2013

March 21

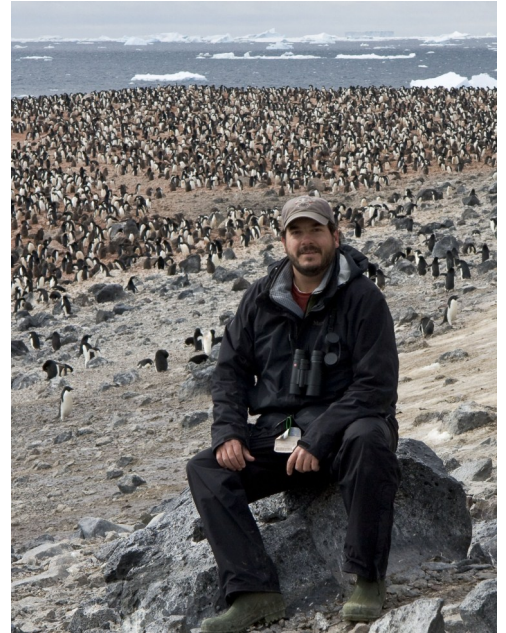
*p*Ornithology: The Birds and the Birds and the Bees

George Armistead has guided birding tours for 10 years, leading trips to all seven continents. He is a research associate at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and the events coordinator for the American Birding Association.

George will give us a review of some interesting reproductive strategies in birds and the associated unusual behavior, with copious innuendo and anthropomorphism to keep the concepts in perspective.

Come and join us for this fun and entertaining program!

George Armistead with an Adelie Penguin colony at Paulet Island, Antarctica.



Program time, location, and driving directions are on the back page.

Volunteers Sought for Stream Ecology Field Trips

If you have an interest in helping children learn more about the health and ecology of streams—even if you don't have any experience—the Carlisle Area School District and Audubon Pennsylvania would like to hear from you.



Students from a Carlisle elementary school investigate aquatic insects.
Photo Audubon PA

Each year in spring and fall, elementary students from Carlisle Area School District visit local waterways with teachers and Audubon educators to investigate what makes the region's famous limestone creeks so special, exploring stream ecosystems, identifying aquatic insects, understanding the dynamics of the creek and how nearby land uses impact it.

Audubon and the school district are seeking volunteers who have flexible weekday schedules during April, May, September and October to assist with the field trips, including helping students determine water quality, catching aquatic invertebrates, and providing equipment care and maintenance.

No experience is necessary. A free training session will take place at LeTort Park in Carlisle on Saturday, March 23, with a rain date of March 24.

To volunteer or for more information, contact Holly Smith with Audubon PA at hsmith@audubon.org, or call (717) 213-6880 ext. 5. (*Background checks are required for all persons age 18 and over. Paperwork will be provided.*)

The President's Perch is on vacation this month.

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Juniata County Winter Birding Field Trip

Twenty-eight Appalachian Audubon members and friends participated in the popular field trip through Juniata County to look for winter birds. The group was led by Juniata County birding experts Chad Kauffman and Aden Troyer. The group started at Lost Creek Shoe Shop, where White-crowned Sparrows were abundant, and then proceeded through the beautiful countryside. A few were lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the female Evening Grosbeak at an area feeder. Everyone was excited when one stop produced three Red-headed Woodpeckers that provided some good long looks through the spotting scopes.



Red-headed Woodpeckers were a trip highlight.

The group ended a great day of winter birding looking for birds that are most active at dawn and dusk. Many thanks to Chad and Aden for another great trip!

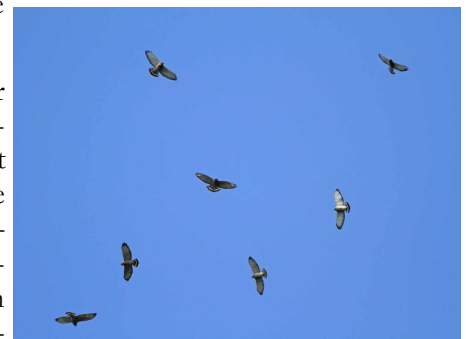


As dusk falls, Chad Kauffman (center) leads the group to a spot where Short-eared Owls, Northern Harriers, and a Northern Shrike can often be found. The group was successful in spotting two low-flying Northern Harriers and a Red-tailed Hawk.

About this month's Bird Blog (see page 3)

This month our bird blog is a slightly abridged version of the summary of the year in hawk watching at Waggoner's Gap, prepared annually by Dave Grove. Dave has been the official compiler for Waggoner's Gap since 1994, and with over 1,000 hours of counting as the season norm—well—you do the math!

Dave encourages all of us to consider joining HMANA (Hawk Migration Association of North America). Dave says that HMANA's Hawkcount database is the engine that makes the count easy to record and available to hawkwatchers worldwide. It also generates the emails through the LISTSERV that keeps everyone informed. Visit the HMANA web page <http://www.bmana.org>, for details.



Broad-winged Hawks soar in a kettle over Waggoner's Gap.
Photo by Meredith Lombard

Bird Blog

Audubon Hawkwatch at Waggoner's Gap 2012 Final Report

Dave Grove

January 2013

The migration continues! The year 2012 had 28,251 raptors counted during 1,116 hours on 138 days of observation. This count was the third best in our history. Bald Eagles (BE) set monthly records in Sep. and Nov. on their way to a count of 534, close to ten times the seasonal average in the early 90's. This helped give us a new record of 789 total eagles. American Kestrels had their second best year, and both Sharpies and Broadwings (BW) had years well above average. Northern Goshawks (NG) made their best showing in a few years and were very welcome. The daily record for Golden Eagles (GE) was demolished on Nov. 3 when an incredible 50 sailed by, and on a Saturday no less. The Turkey Vulture (TV) with white primaries was seen for the eighth consecutive year as well as three other partially white TVs. Three Osprey and two Bald Eagles were seen carrying fish (one fish was

carried by both species) and three partially white Redtails were noted. The Monarch count almost doubled to 7,269. The hummingbird count was lower at 232. Chimney Swifts decreased to 3,074.



Waggoner's Gap volunteer regular Keith Gingrich is on the job! Photo by Meredith Lombard

August counts are usually driven by BW and BE. This year those species accounted for nearly two-thirds of the month total, with BW setting a monthly record. So did Merlin with 3. The last five days of the month generated half of the monthly count, but that is not unusual. What was unusual was a Mississippi Kite that sailed in to circle overhead on the 12th. As the counter reached for his pencil to record our first ever MIKI, a BW chased it back up ridge. #%^&!#.

For some of our regulars September is an exercise in choosing when to take vacation to view the best BW days. Will they fly in the first wave (the 10th-16th) or the second wave (17th-23rd)? It can be either. The final tally: W1 - 7,941; W2 - 2,797. A clear win for wave 1. Perhaps the best strategy is retirement.

October was warm, wet and cloudy. Sharpshins (SS) and Cooper's Hawks (CH) showed with steady numbers.

Peregrines ended up tying the monthly record of 52. The last third of October usually begins the heart of the buteo and GE flight, but bad weather intervened.



This Bald Eagle's "dirty tail" indicates it has one final molt before attaining pure adult plumage. Photographed at Waggoner's Gap by Meredith Lombard.

Then Hurricane Sandy hit. When we returned on the 31st, we found drizzle and the remnants of the Gallery. Sandy destroyed the centerpiece of the Perry County art world that had graced and relieved us longer than current memory. The eight raptors seen that day left us with only 22 GE for the month, the lowest since 1984.

From Nov. 1st to the 9th we counted 169 GE, 42 BE, and 57 NG. This included setting a GE daily record of 50 on the 3rd, bettering the old record by 21. 24 BE made the 3rd a 74-eagle day that pleased the many visitors. Then the flight nearly stopped for the remainder of the month. Both eagles did set monthly records with GE almost reaching 200.

The first half of December was marked by warmth, fog and rain. Six days were lost to weather. Everyone was happy for good weather on the 31st, as we closed out an odd year that was the third best total in our history.

Thank you to our generous sponsor:

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Kingfisher Courier

March 2013

AAS monthly programs 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 socializing and refreshments. The program begins at 7:30.*

Directions to Christ Presbyterian Church:

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

I-83 Northbound, take exit 40B, turn left onto Carlisle Road/Simpson Ferry Road and go 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 the second lot.

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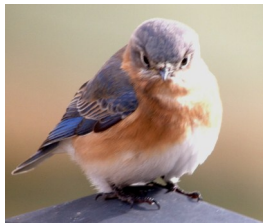
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AAS Wants You!

We are looking for someone to help us compile the Kingfisher Courier!



Are you a wiz with Microsoft Publisher, or do you know the ins and outs of writing and editing?

If so, we need your help! Please contact Annette Mathes at amathes19@verizon.net or 514-4512. Thank you!

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Thanks!

MARCH FIELD TRIPS

Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, March 2 or 3. Snow Geese, Tundra Swans, waterfowl, Bald Eagles, and more!

Ned Smith Waterfowl Watch, March 10. The annual Susquehanna River watch of migrating waterfowl. Dress warmly!

Contact Judy Bowman at 761-3815 or bowma99@aol.com for details on both trips.



The Bufflehead, a diving duck and one of our smallest ducks, is often seen on our March field trips. *Internet photo*