

PSO PILEATED



December 2006

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Volume 17, Number 4

Plan Now to Attend the Annual PSO Meeting May 18-20, Harrisburg, PA

In conjunction with the Appalachian and Quittapahilla Audubon Chapters, the 18th annual PSO meeting will be held at the The Best Western Inn and Suites located just off of Exit 247 of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The meeting will feature field trips, local vendors, Saturday afternoon sessions, and a presentation Saturday evening by renowned Pulitzer Prize finalist author and naturalist Scott Weidensaul.

Events will begin Friday afternoon, May 18, with a planned canoe float on the Susquehanna River. Thanks to Pennsylvania Audubon, a special reservations-only float trip on the Susquehanna River will feature the famous Wade Island mixed rookery.

Wade Island is home to nesting Great Egrets, Black-crowned Night-Herons, and the state's only Double-crested Cormorant nesting site.

Our weekend birding will continue with our usual Saturday and Sunday morning field trips. A sample of locations under consideration include the following:

Stoney Creek Valley, located 15 minutes north of the capitol, this narrow valley hosts a wide variety of nesting warblers and is also the gateway to the second largest roadless tract of forest in all of PA!

Wildwood Lake Sanctuary, situated within Harrisburg city limits, this urban green space offers a vast array of potential sightings.

Conoy Creek Towpath Trail, an easy three-mile walk along an abandoned canal towpath, offers mature riparian habitat and is home to nesting Prothonotary and Yellow-throated Warblers.

Chickies Rock and Breezyview Overlook is a 400+ acre park located along the Susquehanna River. Opportunities exist for neotropical migrants and possibly Mississippi Kites, which have been seen multiple times from the overlook in late spring.



This year's meeting pin will feature Great Egret.

Photo by Roger Higbee

State Game Lands 169 and Mud Level Road comprise an excellent mix of fields, woodlands, and wetlands. SGL 169 has potential for nesting Least Bittern, rails, and Prothonotary Warbler. Nearby Mud Level Road contains quality farmland with nesting Barn Owl, Horned Larks, and grassland sparrows.

Conejohela Flats, famous as a waterbird mecca, offers numerous possibilities. Late spring can be a good time for migrant shorebirds including state rarities like Piping Plover and Whimbrel. Sightings in past springs have included Long-tailed Jaeger and Arctic Tern!

Middlecreek Wildlife Management Area, well known for its annual waterfowl migration, is also good later in spring. Past May big days at Middlecreek have tallied 125+ species. This special tract has been set aside by the Pennsylvania Game Commission for the protection, propagation, management, preservation, and controlled harvest of wildlife. This area, containing more than 5,000 acres of habitat for waterfowl, forest wildlife, and farmland birds, includes a 400-acre shallow water lake and a 70-acre impoundment.

This is merely a tease of more than a dozen locations

picked for potential trips. There is bound to be a trip for you!

Saturday evening will be capped with a talk by our own Scott Weidensaul. Scott, the author of more than two dozen books, is one of fewer than 200 federally licensed hummingbird banders in North America. Scott, who is dedicated to working on the ecology and movements of the Northern Saw-whet Owl, is an enthralling and dynamic speaker. He entertained us at the 2001 meeting held in State College, and we welcome him back to work his magic on us once again!

We hope you will attend the 2007 meeting in Harrisburg. Come to see what great birding the capitol region has to offer!

– Deuane Hoffman



Birding Babylon

by Carmen T. Santasania

*Birding Babylon*¹ is a short book based on Jonathan Trouern-Trend's year of service in Iraq where he served as a National Guardsman from Connecticut's 118th Area Support Medical Battalion. The book is taken from a blog, <http://birdingbabylon.blogspot.com/>, set up by Trouern-Trend while in Iraq.

Trouern-Trend began his tour in Iraq in early 2004. Sergeant First Class Jon Trouern-Trend has been a birder since age 12; so naturally he looked for birds – and found them in surprising number and variety around Anaconda Base in the Sunni Triangle where he was stationed: old-world warblers near the laundry pond, kestrels at the dump, Wood Pigeons by the airstrip, owls on the cement bunkers. And whenever he got "outside the wire" – collecting water samples from the Tigris, delivering supplies to school children, at a forward operating base in Mosul, or on a trek to the ruins of ancient Babylon – his lifelist grew longer.

From nearly the day he arrived until he left Iraq, Trouern-Trend wrote about his sightings in an on-line journal, which attracted thousands of readers and was excerpted in the press. Now some of the highlights of his *Birding Babylon* blog are collected in a small book designed to resemble a birder's journal. In the preface, the author looks back on his experience and ahead to what the future might

hold for the rooks, doves, storks, bulbuls, and sparrows of Iraq, and for its people.

This little book cuts through the politics of war like bird song, reminding us of our imperishable connection with nature; of how birds and their journeys tie the world together; of the persistence of life even in a wasted land.

From *Birding Babylon*:

March 18, 2004

On our convoy up from Kuwait we had to stop because one of the Humvees had a flat. We all piled out of the vehicles and set up a defensive perimeter with our weapons pointing out. It was a bit of a surreal scene, because as I'm lying on the ground with my eye on some guy racing around in a pickup truck, wondering if he's going to take a potshot at us . . . a pair of Crested Larks was not even ten feet from me, the male displaying and dancing around.

August 31, 2004

. . . The next morning I birded in the ruins of Babylon proper. An Iraq Babbler sat obligingly on a fence for a few minutes before diving into the reeds. In the same area I saw a few young White-cheeked Bulbuls that were just fledging. A pond near an amphitheater from Alexander the Great's time had a Black-crowned Night-Heron, a few Little Egrets, Pied Kingfishers, and Black-winged Stilts...I really enjoyed the lush surroundings, the birds, and the history of Babylon, not to mention that this base is much safer than mine – it almost never gets attacked.

The blog posts themselves are fascinating and good reading. They really made me search the internet for the birds he was describing.

Jonathan Trouern-Trend currently works for the American Red Cross Blood Services in their Epidemiology and Surveillance program. He lives in Marlborough, Connecticut, with his wife and their five children.

You can read the blog posts at <http://birdingbabylon.blogspot.com/>. Or you can purchase the book for \$10 at most bookstores or on-line.

¹ Much of this article was based on book reviews and the actual blog postings from Iraq.

2007 Winter Raptor Survey

The 2007 Pennsylvania Winter Raptor Survey (WRS) will be conducted from January 20 through February 11. This will be the 7th year for the survey. Last winter, volunteers surveyed 144 routes (7900 miles) in 61 counties, accumulating 477 hours of observer effort. Nearly 3000 raptors were tallied along with more than 2000 vultures.

Interested birders are invited to participate in 2007. In December I will contact past participants by e-mail. If you have a new e-mail address since last winter, please contact me. If you wish to participate for the first time or at least get more information, contact me via e-mail at gwg2@psu.edu. The 2006 WRS results were published in *Pennsylvania Birds* (Volume 20, No.1). Red-tails and kestrels were found in good numbers last winter (second highest WRS counts), an especially encouraging sign for the kestrels, which may be in decline in the eastern U.S. Vultures and Bald Eagles, were counted in record numbers. Rough-legs were down, perhaps because of the mild conditions last winter.

Potential new participants, please read carefully to get an idea of what the survey entails. The surveys are done from a vehicle along a route designed by the participants.



Rough-legged Hawks were down last year on the WRS.

Photo by Frank and Sandra Horvath



American Kestrels were found in good numbers last year on the WRS.

Photo by Sandra and Frank Horvath

In counties with previously established routes, I ask that new participants either join an established route or coordinate *to ensure that new routes do not overlap established routes*. I do encourage development of new but *non-overlapping* routes. For new folks I will provide e-mail addresses of previous participants in your county so that all parties can coordinate.

Routes should be largely in open country (not easy in some counties!) and should be designed with safety as the top priority. In other words, routes should not be on busy roads, or minimally so.

Detailed (but rather simple) guidelines for the WRS will be provided well before January 20. All raptors and vultures, as well as owls and shrikes, are to be recorded.

Beyond counting raptors, participants are asked also to record whenever possible age/sex/color-morph data as appropriate for raptor species (see forthcoming guidelines for details).

I close by expressing my appreciation to past participants and hope that you can all get out there again this winter.

– Greg Grove

Upcoming Conference – Bird Conservation on Non-Native Grasslands

Seneca Rocks Audubon Society and the Clarion University of Pennsylvania are proud to announce a conference: Bird Conservation on Non-Native Grasslands. This conference will be held on Friday and Saturday, June 1 and 2, 2007. Dan Brauning, Wildlife Diversity Section Supervisor, Pennsylvania Game Commission, will be the keynote speaker after the banquet on Friday evening. Field trips to Piney Tract (State Game Lands 330) will be offered each day. Saturday's programs by grassland management experts will conclude with a panel question-and-answer session and a summary. Friday's events will be held at the Clarion Holiday Inn, and Saturday's presentations will be held at Still Hall, Clarion University. Mark your calendar

and watch the SRAS website, www.senecarocksaudubon.org, and this newsletter for more information as it becomes available.

Inviting Nominations

This is the last call for nominations for the Earl Poole Award and the Conservation Award. Nomination deadline is January 15, 2007. The next *PSO Pileated*, in early spring, will announce the winner(s). The Earl Poole Award will be given to a person who has made a significant contribution to ornithology in Pennsylvania. The Conservation Award, which may or may not be given each year, depending on nominations, is to be awarded to a person or group for work on a significant conservation project in Pennsylvania.

You may visit our website for previous winners. To make a nomination, please send a letter or e-mail listing the nominee's qualifications to Flo McGuire, HC1 Box 6A, Tionesta, PA 16353 or fmcguire1@verizon.net.

Ornithological Literature Notes

The Powdermill Avian Research Center in Westmoreland County was well represented with technical presentations at the Fourth North American Ornithological Conference in Vera Cruz, Mexico, in October. Seven staff members and interns were among more than 1,700 participants at the conference. They provided speaking programs and posters explaining the great variety of research that is underway at Powdermill:

- * Mike Lanzone, assistant field ornithology projects coordinator – a program titled “A New Method for Recording Flight Call Notes from Passerines.”
- * Emma DeLeon, bioacoustic technician – a poster, “Migration Patterns at High and Low Elevation Sites in the Mid-Appalachians Based on Bioacoustical Monitoring.”
- * Tricia Miller, geographic information systems manager – a poster, “Assessment and Development of Bird Habitat Association Models Using Data from the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas.”
- * Felicity Newell, research assistant – a poster, “The Impacts of Stream Acidification on Louisiana Waterthrush Breeding Biology: A Long-Term Study.”
- * Adrienne Leppold, bander in charge – a slide and audio show, “Boreal Bird Communities at Migration Banding Stations: Banding as a Means for Effective Monitoring.”
- * Bob Mulvihill, field ornithology projects coordinator – a poster, “Overview of the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas (2004-2008): New Initiatives and Preliminary Results.”
- * Annie Lindsay, bioacoustics intern – a poster, “Bird Banding and Bioacoustics: A Useful Combination for Migration Monitoring?”

Links to the posters are available on the Powdermill web site: www.westol.com/~banding/Fall2006_NAOC.htm. Mike's and Adrienne's audio-visual presentations will be added to the site shortly.

– Paul Hess

Lancaster's Wintering Crows: A Community Response Public Forum

The Lancaster County Bird Club and Franklin and Marshall College cosponsored a community meeting to discuss the Lancaster wintering crow roost and management strategies on Friday, October 25, at Franklin and Marshall College. The forum format included a panel of participants who fielded questions from a moderator, discussion of some points between the panelists themselves, and a question-and-answer period from the audience. Panel participants included: Dr. Kevin McGowan from Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Dr. Paul Green from the Citizen Science office of the National Audubon Society; Dr. Margaret Brittingham, professor of Wildlife Resources at Penn State and director of the research on Lancaster's winter crow roost; Chris Croson, Eastern District Supervisor of Wildlife Services and the head of WS response to the Lancaster crows; and Eric Tillman from Wildlife Services whose role has been to help conduct research into the best crow dispersal methodology. The forum moderator was Dr. Jim Kellam, a biology professor from Franklin and Marshall. Jim directed questions to the panelists, and later in the evening, I fielded questions from the audience and directed them to the panelists.

Our goals for the forum were two-fold: first, to educate the public about crows in general and the complexity of the Lancaster situation and secondly, to provide an atmosphere of meaningful discussion amongst all involved. I know we accomplished the first, though I am not so sure about the second. Kevin McGowan led off with a presentation about crows in general and what is known and, as yet, unknown about their habits. It was Kevin's best guess that most of the crows that migrate to Lancaster are likely coming from northern New York and southern Canada. He talked about the fact that adult crows have a 90% chance of living from one year to the next, an amazing number! Crow offspring may stick around with their parents for up to 8 years and usually don't start their own breeding efforts for 3-4 years. In huge flocks, like the one in Lancaster, there is a constant coming and going of individual crows. The individual birds don't necessarily come and stay for three months; and though the roost size remains more or less constant, it can be comprised of different individuals at different times, with those same individuals coming and going over the several months that the roost is intact. Kevin also touched on the impact of West Nile on crow populations and its devastating nature. Crows seem to not be showing resistance to the disease, and it has increased the normal crow mortality ten times. In areas where West Nile has hit, there is a dramatic downward American Crow population shift, and those populations are not showing signs of rebounding.

Chris Croson was the next panelist to speak, and his responses focused on the history of the Lancaster roost, the repeated calls he has received over the years for help in doing something about the problem, and his best ideas as to what it will take to remedy the situation. He explained that Wildlife Services work as a fee-for-service agency and that when the money runs out, so does their involvement. In the past that fact has impacted both methodology and outcome and has limited what we know today about roost management results. Chris outlined, in detail, his thinking about the decision to use the avicide DRC-1339 last year and the techniques and restrictions that are placed on its usage by law. It was still his thinking that the use of the avicide is an important piece of a multi-faceted harassment program. An interesting facet of the Lancaster situation is that it is not just the crows' night roosting habits that are upsetting people, but their staging habits as well. The crows leave the roost in the morning and actively feed for several hours in surrounding farming areas and then by mid-afternoon, congregate into large staging flocks until almost dusk when they return to the overnight roost. A flock of about 50,000 crows, congregating and leaving a few staging areas has the potential for making quite a mess! Interestingly, I believe a lot of people in the audience were favorably impressed with Chris's demeanor and presentation, and he came across as a thorough and careful manager, rather than the vilified murderer he has been made out to be. Eric Tillman also shared information about what has been found to be most helpful in Lancaster and other settings regarding harassment techniques.

Dr. Margaret Brittingham spoke next, and her thoughts primarily dealt with what has been discovered in the roost research so far and the large number of unanswered questions still remaining. Penn State only became involved in the research in January of 2006, so there has not yet been time to gather a lot of data. What is known so far is that the crows have been spreading out 30-40 miles from the roost to feed in agricultural fields and that last year the highest number of crows was noted between early January and early February. Further research will focus on such matters as the makeup of the roost, the areas the crows seem to favor, the types of buildings and lighting that attract them, and the relationship between resident and migrant crows.

Dr Paul Green had, perhaps, the most unusual presentation, in terms of throwing out ideas to be considered. He said he was there to "stir the pot," and the ripples were felt by the audience. Some of the thoughts Paul shared concerned people's attitudes and the effect those attitudes brought to the Lancaster situation, suggesting that this was a community problem and that the community needed to become involved in its solution. He introduced the idea that since these crows are coming in from points north and clearly come here because it increases their chances of winter survival, perhaps Lancaster has a responsibility to actively host them through the winter season rather than

trying to drive them away. He also questioned whether, even if the avicide were effective as a deterrent, would it be the ethical thing to do since we would be ultimately impacting the ecosystem from whence the birds came. In closing, Paul reiterated the position that it is people's reactions, rather than the crows themselves, that are the problem, and he challenged Lancaster to celebrate and even promote the roost as a phenomenon to be embraced rather than a nuisance to be culled. He suggested, based on Steve Kress's work with reestablishing sea bird colonies, that finding a suitable area for an alternative roost and trying to lure the crows in with decoys and recorded crow voices might be an encouraging possibility to try.

An interesting aspect of the evening was observing the makeup of the audience and the question-and-answer time that followed the presentation. Since it was my role to field the questions and moderate the tone of this portion of the evening, I'll give my impressions. There were two main contingents represented, it seemed to me. There were people who were wanting first-hand information about the topic and were there to learn. And there were others, in a concentrated and aggressive group who were adamantly opposed to usage of the avicide and whose goal was to challenge Wildlife Services. Some of the questions and comments from the audience included: mode of action of DRC-1339, extent of actual physical damage the crows have inflicted on businesses in the area, reasons that crows are coming to roost in urban areas since they didn't used to do that, relationships between migrant and resident crow populations, impact of West Nile virus on crows here, relationship between West Nile virus and the wintering roost here – threat to humans, roost site attractiveness – what can we do to alter those factors and more. The question-and-answer time lasted more than 45 minutes and would have continued had we not needed to vacate the room.

My overall reactions to the evening were mixed. On the one hand, a great deal of information was dispersed, and the audience of almost 100 left with a lot more knowledge about crows than they came with. I was gratified to hear comments as people were leaving like, "I never knew...." A good number of folks thanked us for making this kind of opportunity available to the community and hoped we would have something like this again, and perhaps we will when more research data is available. On the other hand, I was hoping for more interaction between the panelists and some scholarly debate on the use of the avicide and its effects, both on the crows themselves and on the whole roost population, but that didn't really happen. Dr. McGowan and Dr. Green did question its use and gave their views that it is not an effective management tool, but there really was no give and take or discussion with Wildlife Services. At the end of the evening, it was announced that there would be no use of the DRC-1339 this year and that a new "crow coalition" had been formed, comprised of several of the townships in the area, and that

they would be looking for volunteers to help carry out roost harassment techniques.

Personally, I question the way this has turned out, though time will tell how the effort goes. The coalition is still meeting and is hoping to begin harassment efforts in early December. I am concerned that those efforts may be lacking oversight from a central, knowledgeable source since Wildlife Services will only be briefly involved in some initial training of volunteers and since we are already so late into the roosting season that the window of opportunity for impacting roosting habits significantly may have closed. As I said, though, time will tell, and perhaps I will be proven wrong.

We'll keep you posted!

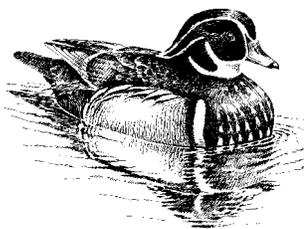
– Ann Bodling, President
Lancaster Bird Club

Bird Quiz

How well do you know your Pennsylvania winter birds?

1. Which is the only tern species ever recorded here in winter?
2. Which of these sparrows would you most likely find in mid-winter: Chipping, Savannah, or Swamp?
3. Two *Myiarchus* flycatcher species have made extraordinary appearances in January. Which species?
4. Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers are both regular in winter, but which of them would you more likely encounter on a Christmas Bird Count?
5. Major invasions of Pine Grosbeaks are nothing but a memory today. Take a guess: What was Pennsylvania's highest statewide Christmas Bird Count total?

See Answers on page 8.



JOHN SIEBELA/BLZ

Conservation Corner

A couple of thoughts for this edition of Conservation Corner...

First, in the October 2006 edition of *PSO Pileated*, Dr. Stan Kotala clearly outlined the issue of improper siting of industrial “wind farms,” and if you haven’t read the article, I urge you to do so. Currently in Pennsylvania, “wind farms” are being placed in or being planned for areas that, from a wildlife standpoint, are inappropriate. PSO members are urged to contact their local and state officials to express your concerns about these “farms” being placed on migration pathways, fragmenting forests, and being placed in areas where there are concentrations of bats. This is not to say that “wind farms” don’t have a place in our energy plans, but they need to be properly located.

On another more positive subject, the recent mid-term election was, in a number of cases, a win for wildlife. In California, Rep. Richard Pombo lost his bid for re-election to Jerry McNerney. Rep. Pombo, chair of the House Resources Committee, is one of the most anti-environmental legislators in Congress. He tried to dismantle the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, two of our most important conservation laws. Pombo also wanted to sell off public lands, promoted oil and gas drilling on public lands, and is one of the League of Conservation Voters “dirty dozen.” Jerry McNerney, on the other hand is against selling off public lands, supports the strengthening of environmental regulations such as the Clean Water Act, and believes that Congress has a moral obligation to protect our natural heritage.

On the Senate side, Sen. Conrad Burns (Montana) lost to Jon Tester in a close race. As with Rep. Pombo, Sen. Burns is one of the League of Conservation Voters “dirty dozen.” Sen. Burns, as chair of the Interior Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, consistently tried to undermine environmental laws. For example, he voted against protections for our national forests and tried to limit the public’s right to comment on logging, mining, and drilling projects on public land. Jon Tester, a Montana state senator, received the support of the Montana Conservation Voters and is a strong supporter of protecting public lands for recreation and renewable energy sources.

And as you are aware, right here in Pennsylvania, Sen. Santorum lost his bid for re-election to Bob Casey. Sen. Santorum has a long history of anti-environmental action and is also listed as one of the “dirty dozen” by the League of Conservation Voters. He has ignored the global warming issue, voted against an environmental funding bill, supported drilling in the Arctic Refuge, and supported

(continued on page 7)

84th Pennsylvania IBA Designated

Audubon Pennsylvania announces the designation of the Allegheny Front as Pennsylvania's 84th Important Bird Area (IBA). This new IBA includes part of the Allegheny Front Section of the Appalachians Plateau Province extending from the Pennsylvania/Maryland border north to where Route 322 crosses the Front in Centre County, varying in width from one to three miles. The Allegheny Front was approved as an IBA by members of the State Ornithological Technical Committee (OTC), which is comprised of professional biologists from across Pennsylvania who work as college professors, museum curators, private consultants, non-profit conservation organization biologists, and state employees, as well as skilled amateur ornithologists.

The Allegheny Front is recognized as an IBA because it is a critically important corridor for tens of thousands of raptors, songbirds, and other land birds that migrate through Pennsylvania during spring and fall. In addition, the large unbroken tracts of forest provide exceptional habitat and resources for many interior forest bird species that call Pennsylvania home during the breeding/nesting season as well as stopover sites for those passing through in migration. Furthermore, numerous Pennsylvania Species of Conservation Concern and several state and federally listed threatened and endangered species, including Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, have been regularly observed throughout the year along areas of the Front.

Important Bird Areas are sites that are part of a global network of places recognized for their outstanding value to birds and bird conservation. The IBA program is a vital initiative designed to help combat threats to bird populations and the habitats we often share with them. The goals of the Pennsylvania IBA program are to identify a network of sites throughout the state that are essential for sustaining wild bird populations, and to protect or manage these sites for long-term conservation purposes. By focusing attention on the most essential and vulnerable areas, the IBA program helps to promote proactive habitat conservation that ultimately benefits birds, other wildlife, and us.

New Members Wanted! New Brochures Available!

We will soon have available for distribution a new PSO brochure. If you know a nature center, park, or organization that would like to display the brochure, please contact Frank Haas fchaas@pabirds.org, and he will send you a supply.

We are always looking for new members, and distributing our brochure to as many locations where birders visit is our best way of doing so. You can help by taking brochures to local sites that have brochure racks or other information display areas.

How about giving a PSO Membership as a Christmas gift?

Special thanks to Frank Haas for his work creating a top-notch brochure!

Conservation Corner *(continued from page 6)*

offshore drilling. As opposite on environmental issues, Bob Casey has a history of strong support for the environment. Among other issues, he supports strong clean water regulations, addressing global warming, and opposes drilling in the Arctic Refuge. And prior to the election, he was endorsed by the Pennsylvania League of Conservation Voters. This is clearly a win for the environment, wildlife, and conservation in Pennsylvania.

PSO members can now be hopeful that this new Congress will be more environmentally friendly, support adequate funding for our resource agencies and initiate efforts to deal with issues such as global warming. Let's all hope the Congress meets these expectations.

– Mark Henry, Conservation Chairperson

PSO T-Shirts Still Available Get yours while supplies last! This is the perfect Christmas gift for the birder!

PSO T-shirts are available for sale in pale green and light blue. Just a few off-white are left. Sizes range from small to XXL, but check with Linda Wagner for size availability (lwagner342@msn.com).

The fabric is a blend of 50% cotton, 50% polyester. These shirts feature the PSO Pileated logo in a three-inch diameter circle on the left front. On the back is an outline of the state with the counties outlined as well. Superimposed on the state is the flying Pileated Woodpecker, complete with red crest. Bold letters above the state declare "Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology."

These great shirts cost \$19.50 which includes postage and handling. See ordering instructions in the checklist article on page 11 of this newsletter.



National Aviary Expands Conservation, Research Programs

Noted Conservation Biologist, Author, Dr. Steven Latta Joins Staff

(PITTSBURGH - November 28, 2006) The National Aviary continues the expansion of its U.S. and international conservation efforts and welcomes conservation biologist Steven C. Latta, Ph.D., to its staff. Latta's book, *Birds of the Dominican Republic and Haiti*, the first complete treatment of all of the birds of Hispaniola, has just been published by Princeton University Press.

As Assistant Director for Conservation and Field Research, Latta's work will focus primarily on developing research and conservation programs with partners in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The island of Hispaniola (where Haiti and the Dominican Republic are found) is a high conservation priority because of the number of threatened and endangered species there, its contribution to global biodiversity, and the need for more attention by conservationists. Because many migratory birds that breed in western Pennsylvania also spend the winter in Hispaniola and Central America, Latta's work will have natural linkages to the Pittsburgh region, where the National Aviary is located.

The National Aviary's Conservation and Field Research department was established by an anonymous philanthropist interested in supporting work to investigate the impact to biodiversity of unbridled human population growth – a critically important wildlife conservation issue but one that is challenging and rarely addressed.

"I am delighted to be joining the dedicated team at the National Aviary in their efforts to conserve birds and their habitats in Pennsylvania, Hispaniola, and around the world," says Latta. "With its many supporters, the Aviary is taking a leadership role in bird conservation in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and is sure to make a lasting contribution to conservation of the critically important birds that make the island their home."

"The department of Conservation and Field Research is thrilled to add such a distinguished conservation scientist to our team," says Dr. Todd Katzner, Director of Conservation and Field Research at the National Aviary. "With Dr. Latta's 12 years of experience working in Hispaniola, we believe that there is no more qualified person in the world to be our point man for projects on this crucially important and imperiled island."

Latta has received numerous academic honors and scholarships, including one for his doctoral dissertation, and has authored or co-authored more than 50 peer-reviewed articles in the scientific literature, principally on Hispaniolan birds. Articles include a bilingual photographic guide to the common birds of the Dominican Republic which is designed to promote appreciation for

native birds among grade-school students and beginning birdwatchers. This month, Princeton University Press is publishing his *Guide to the Birds of the Dominican Republic and Haiti* in English, Spanish, and French, the first complete treatment of all of the birds of Hispaniola.

Latta graduated from Kalamazoo College (BA) in 1981 having majored in biology, earned his MS degree at the University of Michigan in 1988 studying Blue-footed Boobies (*Sula nebouxii*) in the Galapagos Islands, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Missouri in 2000, studying factors affecting survival of overwintering Neotropical migratory birds in the Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic. He held various pre-doctoral positions with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's International Institute of Tropical Forestry in Puerto Rico and with the U.S. Forest Service in Oregon; in addition, he was a research assistant at the Universities of Illinois and Michigan, Michigan State University, and the International Crane Foundation in Wisconsin. He completed a post-doctoral appointment at the University of Missouri, St.

Louis, studying avian malaria across the Caribbean, and then served as Director of the Latin American Program at Point Reyes Bird Observatory for four years.

He is a member of the American Ornithologists' Union, Cooper Ornithological Society, the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds, and the Neotropical Ornithological Society.

The National Aviary inspires respect for nature through an appreciation of birds.

www.aviary.org <<http://www.aviary.org/>
(412-323-7235)
Allegheny Commons West
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Answers to Bird Quiz

on page 6

1. Forster's Tern.
2. Swamp Sparrow.
3. Ash-throated Flycatcher and Great Crested Flycatcher.
4. Gray Catbird (by a 9:1 ratio on CBCs in the last ten years).
5. The record was 655 Pine Grosbeaks on 20 CBCs in 1961.

Christmas Bird Counts Held in Pennsylvania

	Name of Count	County	Compiler	Phone Number	E-mail Address	Date
1	Audubon	Montgomery Delaware Chester	Anthony Fernandes Edie Parnum	610-964-8331		
2	Bald Eagle	Centre	Bob Snyder	814-863-6168	rhs2@psu.edu	1/1/07
3	Beaver	Beaver	Rick Mason	724-847-0909	rdmason@ccia.com	12/16/06
4	Bedford	Bedford	Janet Shaffer	814-356-3553	jgshaffer@yellowbananas.com	12/16/06
5	Bernville	Berks	Ed Barrell	610-926-2962	hawkman501@yahoo.com	1/1/07
6	Bethlehem-Easton	Northampton	Elaine and Donald Mease	610-346-7754	measede@enter.net	12/30/06
7	Bloomsburg	Columbia	Diana McFadden	570-784-8035		12/17/06
8	Buffalo Creek Valley	Butler Armstrong	George Reese	724-353-9649	g.reese@gaiconsultants.com	12/16/06
9	Bushy Run S.P.	Westmoreland	Dick Byers	724-593-3543	otusasio@lhtot.com	12/30/06
10	Butler	Butler Lawrence Mercer	Suzanne Butcher	330-759-1945 724-794-3534	sarbird@hotmail.com	12/16/06
11	Central Bucks	Bucks	Diane Allison	610-847-2085	dalliso@mail.ptd.net	12/30/06
12	Chambersburg	Franklin	Joan Bowen	717-264-9493	pjschaff@innernet.net	12/16/06
13	Clarion	Clarion	Ruth Schurr		karu@penn.com	12/30/06
14	Clarksville	Greene	Terry Dayton	724-627-9665	tdayton@alltel.net	12/30/06
15	Culp	Blair	Heidi Boyle	814-949-9302	hboyle@state.pa.us	12/16/06
16	Curtin	Dauphin	Scott Bills	717-896-8859	sbills@state.pa.us	12/28/06
17	Dallas Area	Luzerne	Jim Hoyson	570-696-4925 570-371-6581 (w)	birdder@aol.com	12/16/06
18	Dingman's Ferry	Pike	Eric Schramm Mike Brubaker	570-828-2319	peec@ptd.net	12/16/06
19	DuBois	Clearfield	Harold Webster Jocelyn Smrekar	814-375-0709	webs@adelphia.net	
20	Elverson	Chester	Robert Cook	610-286-9919	dunlin@dejazzd.com	12/23/06
21	Emporium	Cameron	Bob Martin	814-486-1990	bmartin@adelphia.net	
23	Erie	Erie	Chuck Gehringer	814-746-6299	chuckg58@hotmail.com	12/16/06
24	Gettysburg	Adams	Art Kennell Russell Ryan	717 642-6995 717-334-5171		12/16/06
25	Glenolden	Delaware	Nick Pulcinella	610-583-3201	nickpulcinella@comcast.net	12/16/06
26	Hamburg	Berks Schuylkill	Laurie Goodrich	610-756-6961 570-943-3411 x106	goodrich@hawkmtn.org	12/31/06
27	Harrisburg	Dauphin	Deuane Hoffman	717-564-7475	corvuscorax@comcast.net	12/16/06
28	Huntingdon	Huntingdon	Dave Kyler	814-643-6030	davidkyler@pennswoods.net	12/17/06
29	Indiana	Indiana	Roger & Margaret Higbee	724-354-3493	bcoriole@alltel.net	12/26/06

30	Johnstown	Cambria	Sally and Tom Dick	814-266-7912	thomasd@aol.com	12/17/06
31	Lake Raystown	Huntingdon Blair	Greg Grove	814-667-2305	gw2@psu.edu	12/23/06
32	Lancaster	Lancaster	Chris Pederson	717-295-2607	pederson@epix.net	
33	Lebanon	Lebanon	Fritz Heilman	717-273-0487	fh1vw@aol.com	12/17/06
34	Lehigh Valley	Lehigh/Berks	Mark Boyd	610-432-0170	mrboyd@rcn.com	12/16/06
35	Lewisburg	Union, Snyder, Northumberland	Allen and Joanne Schweinsberg	570-524-9833	aschwein@bucknell.edu	12/16/06
36	Lewistown	Juniata	Elmer Petersheim Chad Kauffman		chadkauffman@earthlink.net	12/16/06
37	Linesville	Crawford	Clare Nicolls		tcnicolls@alltel.net	12/17/06
38	Lititz	Lancaster	Bruce Carl	717-859-4179	carls@dejazzd.com	12/31/06
39	Lock Haven-Jersey Shore	Clinton Lycoming	Wayne Laubscher	570-748-7511	wlaubsch@kcnet.org	12/16/06
40	Mansfield	Tioga	Robert Ross	570-376-5394 570-724-3322 x239	rossr@usgs.gov	12/16/06
41	New Bloomfield	Perry	Ramsay Koury	717-761-1871	rkoury123@aol.com	12/23/06
42	Newville	Cumberland	Bill and Linda Franz	717-776-4463	wlf Franz1@yahoo.com	12/30/06
43	Pennypack Valley	Philadelphia	Peter Kurtz	215-342-3638 215-685-0470		
44	Philipsburg		Greg Kojadinovich			
45	Pittsburgh	Allegheny	Jim Valimont	412-828-5338	valimont@verizon.net	12/30/06
46	Pittsburgh South Hills	Allegheny Washington	Nancy Page	412-221-4795		12/16/06
47	Pleasantville	Venango	Russ States	814-676-6320	russ@csonline.net	12/31/06
48	Pocono Mt.	Monroe	Brian Hardiman			
49	Potter County	Potter	Dave Hauber	814-274-8946	haubers3@penn.com	
50	Raccoon Creek	Beaver	William B. Smith	724-375-9613	bersmith@comcast.net	
51	Reading	Berks	Ken Lebo	610-856-1413	klebo@dejazzd.com	12/17/06
52	Rector	Westmoreland	Len and Linda Hess	724-593-3236	lnlhess@lhct.net	12/16/06
53	Ryerson	Greene	Marjorie Howard	724-852-3155	birdwatcher@alltel.net	12/16/06
54	Scranton	Lackawanna	Derry Bird William Speare			
55	Southeastern Bradford	Bradford	Bill Reid	570-836-2734 570-822-8433		12/30/06
56	Southern Bucks	Bucks	Robert Mercer	215-785-1177	ramercer@co.bucks.pa.us	12/16/06
57	Southern Lancaster County	Lancaster	Bob Schutsky	717-548-3303 (10 a.m. to 9 p.m.)	info@birdtreks.com	12/17/06
58	State College	Centre	Jim Dunn Bob Fowles	814-863-8625 814-238-1990	jwd6@psu.edu rbf@psu.edu	12/17/06

59	Thompson	Susquehanna	Stuart Slocum			
60	Tunkhannock	Wyoming	Rick Koval	570-829-4381 570-696-1691 (w)	koval@nblt.org	12/23/06
61	Upper Bucks	Bucks Montgomery Lehigh	Bill Etter	215-964-3613	esbittern@verizon.net	12/17/06
62	Warren	Warren	Michael Toole	814-723-4714		
63	Washington	Washington	Tom Contreras		tcontreras@washjeff.edu	12/16/06
64	West Chester	Chester	Barry Blust	610-458-5616	BarryBlust@comcast.net	12/16/06
65	Western Chester	Chester	Rick Robinson		birder97@comcast.net	12/17/06
66	Western Schuylkill	Schuylkill	Dave Kruel		accip@infionline.net	12/16/06
67	White Mills	Wayne	Voni Strasser	570-226-1460		
68	Wild Creek- Little Gap	Carbon Monroe	Joshua Nemeth Dustin Welch		allroy1313@rcn.com	12/31/06
69	Williamsport	Lycoming	Dave Ferry	570-323-1590	dferry@wasd.org	12/17/06
70	Wyncote	Montgomery	Andy Fayer		AndyFayer@aol.com	12/16/06
71	York	York	Bill Del Grande	717-854-6728	yorkies17403@yahoo.com	12/16/06

Certificates of Appreciation

At the November PSO board meeting, the Board of Directors unanimously passed a resolution advocating and governing Certificates of Appreciation to be awarded to property owners in the state whose efforts have helped or assisted other Pennsylvania birders. To qualify, the recipient must be a private property owner who has allowed birders onto their land to either see a rare bird or to see other species that may not be rare but are habitat specific or hard to find elsewhere.

Anyone can nominate a person or persons for future certificate awards by sending the information to the PSO two-person committee of John Fedak and Arlene Koch. Once all the pertinent information is collected, the committee will determine if the nominee meets the established criteria. Then the Board will vote on the nomination. The first Certificates of Appreciation have been awarded to the following persons: Joseph Shatzer, Franklin County, for a Lark Sparrow; Aden Troyer, Juniata County, for a Harris's Sparrow; Keith Spicher, Mifflin County, for a Snowy Owl; and Steve Wolfe, Northampton County, for a Bullock's Oriole. Nominations should be submitted, preferably via e-mail or postal mail, to John or Arlene, or call them for inquiries or further information: John Fedak, 26 Race Street, Bradford, PA 16701 (814-275-4086), jlfedak@atlanticbb.net; Arlene Koch, 1375 Raubsville Road, Easton, PA 18042, (610-253-6377), davilene@verizon.net.

Christmas Shopping!!! Field Checklists and Patch for Sale

This tri-folded Field Checklist is printed on card stock and is 3.85" W x 6.25" H when folded. It lists all of the species recorded in Pennsylvania (most current printing March 2005) and highlights those species requiring documentation. It has six columns per species (for 6 trips, 6 months, 6 years., etc.). It also has spaces for recording locations, weather, totals, and notes. They are available in packs of 10, 50, and 100. Binders are also available.

- * Pack of 10 Checklists \$3.25
- * Pack of 50 Checklists \$12.50
- * Pack of 100 Checklists \$22.00
- * Binder \$7.00
- * Binder/30 Checklist Combo \$12.00

Our official patch, featuring our emblem – the state with the Pileated Woodpecker imposed on it – is \$3, including postage.

Send your order with a check made out for the appropriate amount to "Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology" and mail to:

PSO
2469 Hammertown Road
Narvon, PA 17555-9730.

PSO Newsletter

This newsletter is published four times a year by the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology. To renew your membership, send your check made payable to "PSO" to:

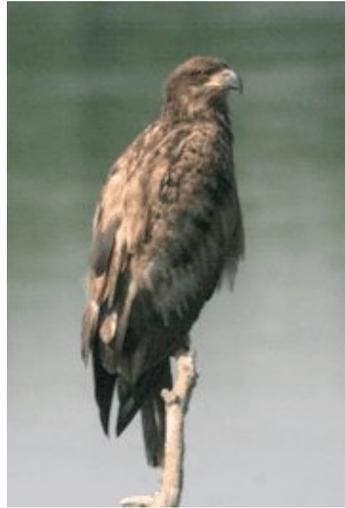
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PSO	Individual	\$ 28.50
2469 Hammertown Road	Family	\$ 32.50
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Stacy Small
Linda Wagner – lwagner342@msn.com

Mid-Winter Eagle Survey



The 2007 Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey will be held from 3-17 January 2007 with target dates of the 12th and 13th.

I coordinate this survey and would like more locations covered in the state. The Delaware River, Susquehanna River's main stem and North Branch, Pymatuning, SGL 213/ Geneva Marsh, and several Army Corps impoundments are covered, but there are

several rivers, lakes, and reservoirs that are not included in this survey. Anyone interested in participating should contact me at one of the addresses below.

Also, the PGC is selling Bald Eagle 100 nest milestone patches at its website. This is a limited edition, collector's item patch that birders would really enjoy.

Douglas A. Gross, PGC Wildlife Biologist
Endangered Birds Specialist
144 Winters Road, Orangeville, PA 17859
570-458-4109 dogross@state.pa.us

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