



November, 1993

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK...

Thanks for the suggestions, comments, and offers of assistance we received from the questionnaire in the July newsletter. You will notice some results in this newsletter. Mark Henry will provide articles on conservation/legislative issues that are important to birders. Names and addresses of officers will be listed. Please continue to offer your suggestions.

Planning for the 1994 annual meeting has begun. The meeting will be held in southwestern PA. Details will be provided in the winter newsletter. Tentative dates are May 20-22. We already have an offer from Alan and Monica Gregory to host the 1995 annual meeting in northeastern PA.

The PA Working Group, Partners in Flight, steering committee met in State College on October 6, 1993, to adopt a mission statement and to organize committees.

MISSION STATEMENT: To promote and enhance cooperative conservation efforts for neotropical migratory birds and their habitat in Pennsylvania, through research, management, monitoring, and education.

COMMITTEES AND CHAIRS:

Research and Management--Dan Brauning
Information, Education,
and International--Paul Zeph
Monitoring and Inventory--Chuck Yohn

The committees will be open to all interested parties. The formal steering committee will consist of two representatives from each committee and two representatives from each of the following groups: government agencies, nongovernment agencies, academic institutions, and industry.

However, steering committee meetings will be open.

We continue to encourage interest for Game Commission acquisition of the Piney Tract in Clarion County. Game Commission President George Miller toured the tract on September 3 and was impressed by the abundance of raptors.

Another issue brought to my attention this summer concerns the possible negative impact to raptors by a proposed construction project on U.S. Route 220 along Bald Eagle Ridge in Centre County. The draft environmental impact statement should be available this month. The Bureau of Forestry, DER, will be holding discussions on forest district strategic plans in October and November. Watch for the announcement of the meeting in your area or contact me for additional information.

Don't forget to vote on the Act 93 Bond issue November 2.

--Bob Martin, President

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SUSQUEHANNA RIVER
CORRIDOR STUDY**

The Bureau of Forestry, DER, will need volunteers in the spring and summer of 1994 to assist in a study of migration patterns of Pennsylvania's avifauna related to river corridors. The objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the use of river islands in the Susquehanna River by migrating birds during the spring migration.
2. To document occurrences of avian species of concern on the river islands.
3. To provide data to identify management considerations and future research direction for the state-owned river islands

of Pennsylvania.

The importance and ecology of Pennsylvania's river islands remains largely undocumented. These islands remain relatively undisturbed by human and predatory mammals due to their inherent inaccessibility. In order to properly manage these potentially important and sensitive habitats, base ecological information is vital. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Merlin Benner, Wildlife Biologist, Forest Resource Planning Section, PA DER, Bureau of Forestry, P.O. Box 8552, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8552. Phone: 717-787-3444.

PARTNERS IN FLIGHT ACTION PACKET

National Audubon has recently produced the Birds in Balance Action Packet to help local chapters participate in Birds in Balance and Partners in Flight activities. The Action Packet provides guidance for monitoring, habitat protection, education and outreach, and international partnership project ideas. It also contains contact lists for Partners in Flight working group chairs and state agency representatives, as well as a resource list of key reference and educational materials available from NAS and other participating organizations. To obtain this packet, send \$2 to Birds in Balance, NAS, 666 Pennsylvania Avenue S.E., Washington, DC 20003.

THE CONSERVATION PAGE

This issue of the PSO Newsletter features our new conservation editor, Mark Henry. If you would like to offer suggestions or comments, contact Mark Henry, P.O. Box 873, State College, PA 16804.

PA BIRDERS: VOTE FOR THE BIRDS

In July, 1993, Lt. Governor Single signed house bill 52 into law. This created the Keystone Recreation and Conservation Fund, now referred to as Key 93. This fund will provide much needed money for state parks, local parks, forest lands,

and natural areas of Pennsylvania. Monies for the fund will come from two sources: the first, from a 15% levy on the state's share of realty transfer taxes and the second, from a \$50 million bond issue if approved by voters November 2. The \$50 million will be divided as follows:

\$17 million to DER for state parks and state forests,

\$19.5 million to Department of Community Affairs for improvement of local recreation and park facilities,

\$3 million to the Fish and Boat Commission and Game Commission for recreation and natural areas,

\$2.5 million to Department of Education for public libraries,

\$8 million to PA Historical and Museum Commission for state historic sites and museums.

Over 90 groups have endorsed Key 93, but in order for the bond issue to proceed, voters need to approve the issue. Groups including NAS, Audubon Council of PA, PA Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Western PA Conservancy, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation are urging all their members to vote for this bond issue.

Members of PSO also need to vote for this referendum because there are groups in the state trying to defeat it. Those opposed are saying that the state is out to grab more land, that taxpayers' money will be siphoned off, and that the money will be mismanaged by bureaucrats. DO NOT be misled; this money is sorely needed for our state and local parks and forests. This is our chance to say "Yes" for birds and other wildlife.

The referendum will appear as follows on the November ballot:

"Do you favor the incurring of indebtedness by the Commonwealth of \$50,000,000 to provide for the funding of nature preserves and wildlife habitats, and for improvements to and expansion of state parks, community parks and recreation facilities, historic sites, zoos, and public libraries?"

ACTION NEEDED: Vote "YES" on the November 2, 1993, bond issue; and ask friends, relatives, and others to do likewise. Future habitat for birds and other wildlife depends on our "yes" vote.

ACTION ALERT

PSO members, now is the time to come to the aid of the endangered Endangered Species Act. The Act is up for reauthorization and needs your support. The "forces of darkness" are at work to gut the Act, and over the next few months they will be contacting legislators to weaken the Act. We, as responsible conservationists, must counter their half-truths by writing our legislators in Washington D.C. and urging them to support a strong but reasonable Endangered Species Act. Senate bill S.921 and House bill H.R. 2043 are the bills that need your support and your legislators' support.

Please write Senators Arlen Specter and Harris Wofford as well as your Congressman\woman and tell them that you care and want a strong Endangered Species Act (S. 921 and H.R. 2043). Tell them that this Act will not only protect endangered species but will contribute to human health through medicines (40% of prescription drugs come from or are derived from plants and animals), to agriculture (an endangered species of wild maize was saved, and it was crossed with corn to produce a disease-resistant corn), and to the economy through industries such as the salmon industry.

Letters to the Senators may be sent to Senator_____, U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510; letters to Congressmen\women can be addressed to Congressman\woman_____, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515. Please write; the Endangered Species Act needs your help, or it will become like the Passenger Pigeon--extinct.

Action needed: Write both Senators and ask them to support S. 921. Write your representative and ask him (her) to support H.R. 2043.

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY IS FOCUS OF INTERNATIONAL EXHIBIT

Art and education go hand in hand at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History in Jamestown, New York, where an international nature photography exhibit opened October 2. Nature Photography--A Current Perspective is a collection of the best images from 1993 calendars, plus award-winning photographs by young photographers, and editors' choices. Eighty photographs are on display at the new headquarters of the R.T.P Institute, 311 Curtis Street (adjacent to Jamestown Community College). The exhibit is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m.; Wednesday and Friday evenings till 8; closed Thanksgiving Day. Adults: \$3; Seniors, \$2; Students, \$1. Telephone 716-665-2473.

AUDUBON'S WATERCOLORS

For more than 125 years, Audubon's Watercolors have been housed at the New York Historical Society. This fall, for the first time, 90 paintings will travel in an exhibition that opened at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, on October 3. This will run through January 2, 1994.

WILD RESOURCE CONSERVATION FUND LICENSE PLATES

Preparation for the production and distribution of the Wild Resource Conservation Fund's new motor vehicle license plate has begun. The Commonwealth will begin accepting applications for the new plate December 1, 1993. Applications will be available at various outlets including auto clubs, Penn DOT, state legislators' offices, as well as from WRCF. Purchase of this plate benefits the WRCF and the Commonwealth's unique flora and fauna. From the single charge of \$35 per plate, the WRCF will receive \$15 and the Motor License Fund the remaining \$20.

This four-color plate pictures a Saw-whet Owl perched on a hemlock branch. The

background fades from orange to yellow with the black and white owl and hemlock greenery in the foreground. "Conserve Wild Resources," Pennsylvania, and the state's keystone symbol are also printed in black on the plate.

Anyone interested in obtaining an application from WRCF once they become available should send his/her name and address to WRCF, Box 8764, Harrisburg, PA 17105, to be placed on the mailing list.

The WRCF receives no monies from the general fund and is supported solely by private contributions.



Raven Reporter

Calling All Seasonal Reports

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Special Areas Project in 1993. It has been a very successful year due to the contributions of dozens of birders. The project added several new parks and other special areas. We continue to add sponsoring organizations and involve birders with diverse backgrounds from all parts of the Commonwealth.

V-formations of honking Canada Geese are flying overhead, the leaves are turning brilliant colors, and it's time to send in your summer Seasonal Reports. With longer nights and shorter days, we all have more time to transfer data from the daily sheets to the Seasonal Report Forms. It's something to do between innings of the World Series or during the commercials of your favorite football game. It is a good time to catch up with the paper work.

Reports to Pennsylvania Birds

Since my last Raven Reporter, I was

reminded by some birders that the Seasonal Report Forms are arranged in different time periods than the Pennsylvania Birds "Summary of the Season" quarterly periods. This makes it somewhat awkward to use the SAP Seasonal Reports strictly as data sheets for the Pennsylvania Birds Summaries. I admit this, but the small inconvenience does not diminish the usefulness of SAP Seasonal Reports to organize data for Pennsylvania Birds reports. The phenological and numerical data required for Pennsylvania Birds are already on your SAP forms. Why not use them to find early and late dates as well as high and low numbers of the species you observe?

We selected a slightly different reporting period for the Special Areas Project in order to ease the work load of the local SAP Leaders. SAP reports are arranged in the following periods: December - February, March - May, June - August, and September - November. This corresponds roughly to the ornithological seasons. The Pennsylvania Birds reports are arranged on a calendar year basis, starting in January. With the one-month gap, birders would not have to get two reports done at once. The PSO wants to make the Special Areas Project enjoyable and eliminate undue burdens to our many volunteers.

Importance of Our Natural Areas

A few of our Special Areas Projects are being conducted in PaDER Natural Areas. These are usually fairly small plots of land nested in a much larger State Forest. Most Natural Areas are mature, if not virgin, forests with special biological significance.

Natural Areas are not usually the kinds of places to make big daily lists or even big yearly lists, but they are still important places for birders to visit. A paper published in the most recent issue of Conservation Biology (Volume 7, Number 3, pages 618-622) indirectly points out the importance of these fairly isolated forest reserves. This paper was written by Paul Porneluzi, James Bednarz, Laurie Goodrich, Nancy Zawada, and Jeff Hoover, all associated at one time or presently with the Hawk

Mountain Association. The title of the paper pretty much tells you what it's all about: "Reproductive performance of territorial Ovenbirds occupying forest fragments and a contiguous forest in Pennsylvania."

Anyone interested in the conservation and biology of our forest birds should read this paper by the Hawk Mountain group. It explores the relationship between the size of forests and the reproductive success of the Ovenbird, a common ground-nesting forest bird in Pennsylvania which winters in the neotropics. The Hawk Mountain study is thorough and rigorous in its techniques. Ovenbirds were captured, marked with unique band combinations, and watched in several study plots. The plots were censused and nests were found and monitored to find their success rate.

The results of this study are startling. To quote from the discussion section of the paper: "Within eastern Pennsylvania, our data suggest that forests as large as 183 ha <hectares> do not sustain functional breeding populations of Ovenbirds." One hundred eighty-three hectares is equivalent to 452 acres or 0.71 square mile. That is a pretty big woodlot, much bigger than most that are found in suburban or agricultural parts of the state. This means that the Ovenbirds in smaller woods may set up territories and attempt to nest, but these birds are rarely successful in raising a brood.

Small fragmented forests become population sinks for Ovenbirds. We can count the singing Ovenbirds there, but these birds are not actually successfully reproducing. We may be counting successfully breeding birds only in the woodlots that are fairly large (greater than 0.7 square mile). The reasons for the lack of nesting success in small woods are not yet fully known. It may be different for each species and in each local circumstance. The Hawk Mountain group strongly suspects that nest predation is the most important limiting factor. I think that they are onto something.

So, our Natural Areas are very impor-

tant places to count and monitor breeding birds because they are part of large forest tracts. It is in these more extensive forests that our small songbirds are being most successful in their reproductive efforts. The big woods are the sources of birds found elsewhere.

We need to keep an eye on them.

--Douglas Gross

NEW BIRDS FOUND ON FOREST

The second year of a cooperative breeding bird monitoring program between the Allegheny National Forest and the Forest Sciences Laboratory in Irvine has documented the occurrence of several birds never before known to inhabit the Forest.

Joe Hovis and John Puschock, two Penn State University students hired this summer to conduct breeding bird surveys, found two Virginia Rails at Buzzard Swamp, the only known occurrence in Forest County and the ANF, according to the Breeding Bird Atlas. In Penoke Swamp near Marienville, the students found three singing male White-throated Sparrows, one Nashville Warbler, and five singing Yellow-rumped Warblers. In the tornado blowdown, White-eyed Vireos and a male Northern Harrier were observed.

A singing male Kentucky Warbler was observed near Ander's Run, south of Youngsville. This southern species has never before been recorded in Warren, McKean, or Forest Counties and was suspected to be "lost" and not breeding.

The cooperative monitoring effort is expected to continue in 1994. A minimum of 10 habitats are being surveyed for birds at least three times during the breeding season. The information gathered will help us better understand which birds are breeding in which habitats, leading to better assessments of effects for land management activities.

--Brad Nelson, Wildlife Biologist

SONG SPARROW

--by Georgette Syster

Isn't it wonderful that the natural world is so packed with sights and sounds and smells that at any given moment we may simply pause and enjoy? Or if we are fortunate to pause long enough in this break-neck pace we set for ourselves, we may catch glimpses of nature's drama unfolding before our eyes. It need not be as dramatic as a Peregrine Falcon in a dive or as majestic as an eagle in flight but as seemingly inconsequential as a Song Sparrow feeding her fledglings in the flower bed.

I must confess that by July I have tuned out the *Melospiza melodia* that are so common in my backyard. But while lingering over a cup of coffee on a rainy July morning, I managed to recapture some of the magic of my first days as a birder.

As the rain poured down, a Song Sparrow with a brood of three moved through the delphinium toward the evening primroses. Though all three possessed flight feathers and appeared identical in plumage, their tails were markedly shorter than the parent's. They were all begging with loud, high-pitched notes and practicing short flights and hops from the ground to the little fieldstone wall.



The parent-- the sexes are alike and both male and female share in the feeding of the fledglings--was apparently a regular at the feeder and flew up to feed. One of the young attempted the 4.5 foot flight to the tray but bailed out at the last minute amid much flapping of wings and a rather abrupt landing among the wood chip mulch.

At this point, all three began to beg

loudly, and the adult began the first of 23 flights carrying seeds to the offspring. The young did not stay in the same spot but scampered among the flowers and ferns calling the entire time. They ended each short flight slightly off balance, teetering back and forth with many attempts at correctly smoothing their primaries.

Little dramas like this unfold every day for those who look for them or for those who take the time to realize what is happening, or even for those who stumble upon them by accident. The entire episode lasted about ten minutes and was, as they say, "well worth the price of admission."

RENEWALS

It looks like the dust has settled (sort of) and the confusion has abated (kind of)--over changes in the way PSO determines membership renewal dates. Since we joined forces with PA Birds, we adopted their membership schedule. All memberships now begin in May and end in April.

By now you should have received either a membership card or a renewal notice. (Please let me know if you haven't.) The label on this newsletter should accurately reflect your membership expiration date unless you have renewed recently.

The renewal rates are listed below:

One year individual PSO membership	\$10
One year individual + PA Birds	\$26
One year family PSO membership	\$15
One year family + PA Birds	\$30

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance March 12, 1993	\$3817.18
Income:	
Dues and Gifts	\$1472.00
Annual Meeting	<u>\$3478.72</u>
(Registration, lodging, etc.)	
Total Income	\$4950.72

(continued on page 9)

PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY

SUGGESTION AND PARTICIPATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Yes, I would like to participate in PSO activities. I have checked the activities below which I would like to assist.

ACTIVITY	LEAD ACTIVITY	WORK ON ACTIVITY
FIELD TRIPS	_____	_____
PUBLICITY	_____	_____
ANNUAL MEETING	_____	_____
MEMBERSHIP	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

HAVE YOU ATTENDED AN ANNUAL MEETING? YES ___ NO ___ IF YOU
HAVE ATTENDED, HOW COULD WE IMPROVE THE MEETINGS?

IF NOT, WHAT CAN WE DO TO INTEREST YOU IN THE MEETING?

DO YOU WANT PSO TO SPONSOR FIELD TRIPS, LECTURES, ETC.? IF SO
PLEASE STATE YOUR INTEREST.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE: HOME _____ OFFICE _____

RETURN TO: BOB MARTIN, 125 ELMWOOD CT., EMPORIUM, PA 15834

Expenditures:

Annual Meeting	\$3277.81
Newsletter	\$ 774.32
Membership Notices	\$ 87.00
Bank Service Charges	<u>\$ 21.00</u>
Total Expenditures	\$4160.13

Balance October 16, 1993 \$4607.77

--Eugene Zielinski, Treasurer

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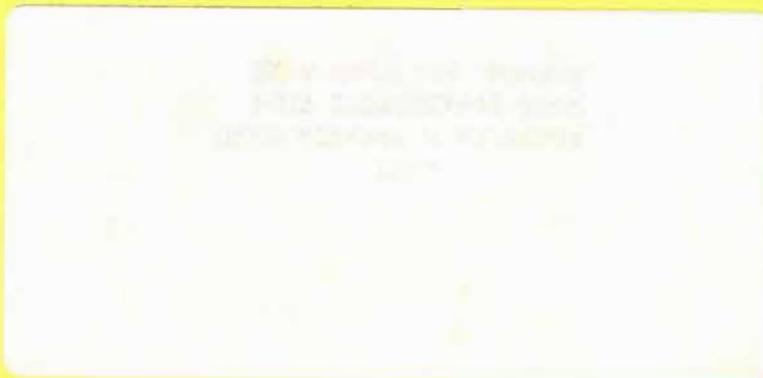
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