



March, 1994

### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK...

In my neck of the woods, the old-timers said that this was one of the most severe winters they have seen; however, the winter invasion of northern species was not spectacular. Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins arrived early but continued moving south. Guess they knew what was coming this winter. We did have a large number of redpolls this winter. Maybe next year will be more interesting.

Plans are complete for the fifth annual meeting of the PSO to be held at Florence Lockhart Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Rector, PA, on May 20-22, 1994. Information concerning the meeting is included in this newsletter. This is our first meeting in southwestern Pennsylvania, and we are looking forward to a great time and to meeting new birders.

An article in this newsletter by Susan Drennan, Editor, *American Birds*, outlines the new format for *American Birds*. This is a direct result of a budget deficit of \$3.5 million for the Audubon Society who subsidized *American Birds* for many years. In a letter to his cooperators, George Hall states, "*American Birds* is the only ornithological publication in this country that presents a running account of the changes in birdlife on the continent as time goes by. The technical ornithological journals like *The Auk* no longer print this material, and the popular birding magazines (e.g. *Birder's World*) cover a totally different aspect of the subject. The seasonal accounts in *American Birds* represent a tremendous cooperative project involving several thousand cooperators (all of you), and in these times so perilous for our environment such a project should not die."

NAS and most other national envi-

ronmental groups are experiencing a decline in membership. In order to eliminate \$2.5 million of their deficit, NAS cut eleven full-time staff positions and reduced the number of issues of *Audubon Activist*, in addition to changing the format of *American Birds*.

Birders spend considerable time and expense ("Average yearly spending by active birders averages between \$1500 and \$3400, with travel being the major expense." Paul Kerlinger, p. 32, *Status and Management of Neotropical Migratory Birds*. Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station) collecting valuable data. Although we may not be pleased with the new format, let's continue our subscriptions and promote *American Birds*. If the regional reports should fail, we all lose! Continued publication of our data is important now and for the future.

Hope to see you at Powdermill Nature Reserve in May.

--Bob Martin, President

### FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING

*Volunteerism in Ornithology* is the theme of our fifth annual meeting to be held May 20-22, 1994, at the Powdermill Nature Reserve, a 2,000-acre field research station of the Florence Lockhart Carnegie Museum of Natural History near Rector in Westmoreland County. Resident ornithologists Bob Leberman and Bob Mulvihill conduct extensive bird banding activities at Powdermill, and we will have an opportunity to observe and assist their activities as part of our field trips. Additional field trips will be made to nearby state parks and Forbes State Forest. The Westmoreland Bird Club will provide leaders for our field trips. Groups will be small in order to provide good birding opportunities. On



Sunday Dr. Thomas Dick of the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society will conduct a field trip to the Dunnings Creek Wetland Study and the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch site. Can we top the 122 species observed on the 1993 field trips?

On Friday evening we will hold the annual business meeting which will include the election of the board of directors and officers. In addition, we will have an opportunity to socialize with new and old friends. The Saturday afternoon sessions at the new nature center will provide an informative agenda including the discussion on the activities of two western PA conservation organizations (Florence Lockhart Carnegie Museum of Natural History and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy), review of the Breeding Bird Atlas information, an example of volunteerism in action, update on the PSO's Special Areas Project, new information on screech-owl behavior, and a warbler identification program.

The second annual banquet will be held Saturday evening at the nearby Ligonier Country Club. Our speaker will be Dr. George A. Hall, Professor Emeritus, West Virginia University, and regional editor, Appalachian Region, *American Birds*.

Accommodations are limited at Powdermill. The first 39 persons registering for rooms at Powdermill can be confirmed. Please register early. All others will need to find nearby accommodations.

#### Motels:

Additional lodging is available at:

Fort Ligonier Motor Lodge 412-238-6677  
11 U.S. Route 30  
Ligonier, PA 15658

(All rooms have two double beds. Non-smoking rooms are available. Some rooms will be held for PSO members. Please inform the motel that you are a PSO member, and make your reservation early.)

Single and Double Weekend Rates  
excluding tax:  
\$51 (Cash rate)  
\$54 (Credit card)  
Third person--add \$6

Other motels available include:

Donegal	Days Inn	412-593-7536
Greensburg	Sheraton Inn	412-836-6060
	Super 8	412-838-8080
Somerset	Ramada Inn	814-443-4646

#### Campgrounds:

Kooser State Park 814-445-8673  
R.R. 4, Box 256  
Somerset, PA 15501

45 primitive sites  
no hookups

Laurel Hill State Park  
R.R. 4, Box 130  
Somerset, PA 15501

270 modern sites  
no hookups

#### Cabins: (waiting list only)

Linn Run State Park 412-238-6623  
P.O. Box 50  
Rector, PA 15677

If you want to spend extra time in the Laurel Highlands Region and would like deluxe accommodations, you may desire to stay at one of the two outstanding resorts available.

Hidden Valley 800-458-0175  
Seven Springs 800-452-2223

Please contact Dr. Shonah Hunter if you have any questions concerning registration.

Dr. Shonah A. Hunter (717) 893-2062  
Department of Biological Sciences  
Lock Haven University  
Lock Haven, PA 17745



# THE CONSERVATION PAGE

## THE TRUTH ABOUT "TAKINGS" BILLS

Over the last few years, the anti-environmental movement (Wise Use groups/PA Landowners Association) has promoted legislation called "takings" bills. These bills, according to their sponsors, are designed to protect "private property rights" from burdensome regulations. In fact, these bills threaten property rights, would create costly new state bureaucracies, and would impair efforts to protect health, employee safety, and the environment.

There are two types of "takings" bills being introduced. The first is called an "assessment" bill that requires state agencies to prepare elaborate reviews of proposed laws and regulations, ostensibly to avoid potential takings. These bills, if passed, result in extensive legal review of all proposed state regulations which in turn necessitates the hiring of additional lawyers, all at taxpayers' expense. They also act as a delaying tactic such that critical regulations are held.

The second type of "takings" bill generally requires the government, whether state or local, to pay compensation whenever a regulatory program is implemented that reduces a property's market value by some arbitrary percentage, typically 50 percent. If the government cannot pay the compensation, then the regulation affecting the property must be "rolled back." This would then allow the property owner to do what he/she wanted. This type of bill is particularly onerous because most state governments, including Pennsylvania, as well as local governments, are strapped for cash and cannot afford to pay compensation. The result would be the "rolling back" of all regulations including environmental protection and conservation, employee protection, zoning and planning, civil rights, and health and safety.

In PA, House Bill 803 was introduced earlier this year and was sent to the House Committee on Local Government. This bill is

one of the second type of "takings" and requires compensation if a property's value is reduced by any regulation or law (state or local) by 50 percent or more. This bill undermines the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution which requires compensation when the government "takes" property. Under the Constitution, a court determines whether a "takings" has occurred; however, under this bill, there is no such review.

Further, under this bill, local land use and zoning regulations would be decimated leaving municipalities open to development of almost any kind in any area of the community. This would occur through and because of local budget constraints and taxing limitations. Most, if not all communities, are unable financially to award compensation called "inverse condemnation costs" required by this bill. Thus, communities would be required to roll back land use planning and/or zoning regulations. The resulting social and community harm is unconscionable; imagine a commercial adult book store locating next to a church or school.

Lastly, current environmental protection programs, which have been reviewed by state and federal courts and found to be constitutional, would be dismantled as there is not enough money to compensate all the private landowners who would claim a "takings." The result would be a roll back of environmental regulations allowing such "nightmares" as mining under homes and the location of hazardous waste sites next to a housing development.

Although House Bill 803 did not come out of committee last year, it will continue to be pushed by anti-environmental groups. It will, in all likelihood, be reintroduced this year; all PSO members who support environmental protection and conservation are encouraged to speak out against such legislation by contacting their state legislators.

### ACTION NEEDED:

Members of PSO concerned about such destructive legislation are encouraged to write or call their legislators and tell them they are against "takings" bills such as House Bill 803. These bills are costly to



the taxpayers and can dismantle the very regulations passed to protect property from abuse by neighboring property owners. Your letter to your legislator may be sent to House Post Office, PA House of Representatives, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

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If you would like to comment or offer suggestions, please contact Mark Henry, PSO Conservation Editor, P.O. Box 873, State College, PA 16804.

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### AMERICAN BIRDS

--by Susan Roney Drennan

In these tough fiscal times the National Audubon Society has had to critically examine the economic viability of all its activities, including its publications.

In the last few months, as part of this analysis, we have concluded that *American Birds*, which has a small and dedicated audience, is no longer financially viable in its current form. We have therefore reluctantly decided to scale back this magazine and continue it in a form which includes essential and timely information about birds but without the color, features, columns, and photography that have made it so attractive to our readers.

The last issue of *American Birds*, in its current format, will be published in the spring of 1994. The publication will continue as a quarterly and will include the regional reports under their old and established title *Audubon Field Notes*. We will also continue to publish the annual Christmas Bird Count as we have for the past 93 years.

To honor our subscription obligations we will be offering *American Birds* subscribers one of several choices, probably including subscriptions to quarterly *Audubon Field Notes*, the Christmas Count Annual, or a subscription to *Audubon* magazine.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SPECIAL CONCERN ATLAS OF 1994

A variety of bird survey opportunities are being developed for volunteer birders this year. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated...and I'm sure these will be fun.

Before anyone becomes overwhelmed by the thought of repeating the Breeding Bird Atlas--we're not, yet. The Special Concern Atlas is a smaller-scale effort, looking only for Endangered, Threatened, and a selection of Special Concern birds--25 species in all. It has been five years since the last year of the Atlas Project. So, it's time to review these locations again!

Why should we look at these sites? There are several reasons; the specific locations of all Endangered and Threatened species are maintained in environmental review databases and PNDI. These databases are searched every time a permit is requested from DER or the Game Commission. The occurrence of an Endangered or Threatened bird can preserve a wetland, reroute a road construction project, or otherwise protect valuable habitat. Your observations are being put to use, and we need to keep the records current. Also, most of these species have no specific monitoring program, so we really don't know how they are doing. Your observations help update the legal status of Endangered and Threatened birds and will help make those designations meaningful.

A variety of other projects are being established, including a survey of birds using restored wetlands. Several of PA's Breeding Bird Survey Routes remain unassigned. If you'd like to help on one or more of these projects, send a note to Dan Brauning, Special Concern Bird Surveys, PA Game Commission, 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110. Thank you!!!

--Daniel W. Brauning, Wildlife Biologist  
PA Game Commission





## RAVEN REPORTER

### My New SAP Area

We birdwatchers focus much of our collective attention on public lands. This fact is the main rationale for the Special Areas Project. Yet, over 70% of northeastern United States is privately owned. Sometimes I feel that we expect too much from public lands, especially if we expect public lands to provide everything for birds. The lands must be managed to please a diversity of interests, often commercial or recreational. It is very hard to keep everybody happy with the way a particular piece of land (or water) is managed.

Should we expect old growth forests to be preserved or managed only on public lands? All wetlands of all types? All open grasslands? Every old field and thicket? Can we expect every kind of environment to exist on each parcel of management area? I think the answer to all of these questions is a resounding "No!" It is unrealistic to think that birds can survive only on what is offered them on public lands, especially since this represents such a small percentage of the total. Private lands must be a big part of the solution.

We who care about wildlife and the habitats necessary to maintain viable populations of wild species must demonstrate how important good habitat is for wildlife. We must set the example of good stewardship of private lands. If we want mature forest, much less "old growth," we must manage whatever we can on our own land. Wetlands? Let's preserve and promote them on our own holdings. Grasslands and early

successional forests? Who needs lawns anyway? Even backyards can help provide good bird habitat with native trees and shrubs substituting for grasses and exotics.

So, as you've probably guessed, my new Special Areas Project is my own property. I've been keeping notes on the bird species and numbers since the start of the year (and before). And, my wife and I have already noted some breeding behavior this year. Great Horned Owls have been hooting and Eastern Bluebirds have been singing for the last month. Of course, I am not abandoning my other SAPs. And, I promise to help with other SAPs being conducted by the North Branch Bird Club. Another NBBC member Bob Hawke is conducting a SAP on his old family farm near Briggsville, Luzerne County. I'll bet those weedy fields and hedgerows are packed with birds.

### Special Areas Lists

Some SAP Coordinators have sent in summaries of their SAP data. Some of these locations were poorly known by birders before this project. Thanks to all for contributing to making the lists full and well-documented.

Karen Lippy has been leading the inventory of Codorus State Park in York County. Codorus features Lake Marburg, a reservoir east of Hanover and only a few miles north of the Mason-Dixon line. Several York Audubon Society members have participated in the project and found 193 species by the end of 1993. The list includes many waterfowl found on the lake and on mudflats created when the lake is drawn down. The big highlight of Codorus SAP was its well-documented Ross's Gull. Thanks to Al Speise for helping to edit the Codorus data, an important step in maintaining our database quality.

The Juniata Valley Audubon Society has been inventorying Fort Roberdeau County Park. Stan Kotala keeps detailed notes on the Blair County location, recording a very respectable 94 species in 1993 in an area



covered by woods and fields. The Juniata Valley group has also done a fine job at Canoe Creek State Park.

In an unusual SAP location, Scott McConnell has compiled a list of 140 species for the Norristown State Hospital grounds in Montgomery County. The list includes an impressive number and variety of breeding species. The Norristown State Hospital effort proves that you can find birds even in suburban sprawl if a little habitat is available.

One of the newest, but also one of the oldest, SAP areas is "the Muck" of State Game Lands 313 in Tioga County. One of the PSO board members, Bob Ross, has been collecting data on this fairly large high elevation wetland near his home. His original data are not in SAP format and were not meant to be part of the SAP effort, but they are very valuable documentation of the birds found there. At least 99 species have been found in "the Muck" thanks to Bob's efforts.

These are just a few examples of SAP accomplishments. I will share more data in future columns. Coordinators are encouraged to send in their data and tally their lists. It is a good excuse to enjoy reminiscing your birding successes and finding holes in your data set.

Of course, a good way to increase your SAP species list is to plan a Migratory Bird Day visit to your SAP area and really hit those migrant passerines hard in 1994. Get those warblers!

--- Douglas A. Gross, PSO Special Areas Project, c/o Susquehanna SES Environmental Laboratory, Berwick, PA 18603 (717-542-2191), or R. R. 1, Box 147, Orangeville, PA 17859 (717-458-4564).



## ROGER TORY PETERSON INSTITUTE

### ART:

Earth Angels: The Art of Roger Tory Peterson

July 15 through November 15, 1994

Roger Tory Peterson Institute

311 Curtis Street  
Jamestown, NY

See the life works of Roger Tory Peterson, well-known American naturalist and painter of birds. On display at the Institute's brand new headquarters designed by world famous architect Robert Stern. Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. Closed Mondays. Adults \$3, senior citizens \$2, children and students \$1. Telephone 716-665-2473.

### EDUCATION:

Writer's Workshop for Teachers  
October 7, 1994

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Roger Tory Peterson Institute  
Jamestown, NY

Newberry Medal winner Jean Craighead George and author-illustrator Lynne Cherry explore connections to the natural world and the importance of writing as a medium for transforming education. \$100 fee includes book signing and lunch. Telephone 716-665-2473.

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## NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT

Saturday, May 14, 1994  
Pennsylvania State Coordinator  
Alan Gregory  
P.O. Box 571  
Conyngham, PA 18219  
Phone (717-788-1425)

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FIFTH ANNUAL PSO MEETING  
POWDERMILL NATURE RESERVE  
May 20-22, 1994

Co-sponsored by Powdermill Nature Reserve  
and Westmoreland County Bird Club

Friday, May 20, 1994

5:00 to 9:00 p.m. Registration--Nimick Nature Center  
7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Social  
8:00 to 8:45 p.m. PSO Business Meeting  
8:45 to 10:00 p.m. Social

Saturday, May 21, 1994

6:30 to 11:00 a.m. Field Trips--Westmoreland County Bird Club  
Bird Banding--Powdermill Nature Center  
11:30 to 12:30 p.m. Lunch--Nimick Nature Center  
1:00 to 1:15 p.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks. **Bob Martin**, PSO President  
1:15 to 1:45 p.m. An Overview of Powdermill Nature Reserve and Volunteer Projects.  
**Bob Leberman** and **Bob Mulvihill**, Ornithologists, Powdermill  
1:45 to 2:15 p.m. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Activities.  
**Charles Bier**, Associate Director, Natural Science and  
Stewardship Programs  
2:15 to 2:45 p.m. Breeding Bird Atlas--What We Missed and What We Know!  
**Dan Brauning**, Biologist, PA Game Commission  
2:45 to 3:00 p.m. Screech-owl Copulation Behavior. **Dick Byers**, President,  
Westmoreland Bird Club  
3:00 to 3:30 p.m. Break  
3:30 to 4:00 p.m. Saving a Great Blue Heron Rookery: Volunteerism at the  
Community Level  
**Robert M. Ross**, Ecologist, National Biological Survey  
4:00 to 4:15 p.m. Special Areas Update. **Doug Gross**, SAP Coordinator  
4:15 to 5:00 p.m. Visual Identification of Warblers. **Bob Mulvihill**, Ornithologist,  
Powdermill Nature Reserve  
6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Social--Ligonier Country Club  
7:00 to 9:30 p.m. Banquet--Ligonier Country Club  
Speaker: **George A. Hall**  
Professor Emeritus, West Virginia University  
Regional Editor, Appalachian Region, *American  
Birds*

Sunday, May 22, 1994

6:30 to 11:30 a.m. Field Trips  
Bird Banding  
Wetlands Tour--Dunnings Creek Study  
**Dr. Thomas Dick**  
Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society  
11:30 to 2:00 p.m. Hawk Watching--Allegheny Front Hawk Watch  
**Dr. Thomas Dick**  
Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society



## MEMBERSHIP DUES

PSO dues are payable May 1 annually.  
Please send your membership renewal to:

Eugene Zielinski  
R.R. 3, Box 71  
Bellefonte, PA 16823

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

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## PROJECT TANAGER

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is seeking birders to assess the breeding status of four tanager species in forests of various sizes. Fragmentation of forested habitats may be part of the reason that

populations of these neotropical migrants are declining. Project Tanager needs local birders to locate tanagers, monitor their breeding behavior, and search for nests. More than 70 teams participated in a pilot study in 1993. They studied tanagers at almost 1,000 locations in 32 states and 2 provinces. Their data suggest that woodlots smaller than three acres cannot support Scarlet Tanagers in the East; Summer and Western Tanagers, however, do not seem to be as sensitive to smaller pieces of habitat. To test this theory, Project Tanager is being launched this spring. All participants will receive a kit containing complete instructions, data forms, and cassette tapes for learning tanager vocalizations. There is no participation fee. Organized efforts by local bird clubs are welcome. For more information or to participate, write to Mindy Westgate, Project Tanager, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850, or call 607-254-2446.

Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology  
c/o R. V. Higbee  
R.R. 2, Box 166  
Indiana, PA 15701