

PSO Newsletter



The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

August 1999

Volume 10, Number 2

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK...

The summer season is rapidly drawing to a close, although it's still hot and dry as I write on the last day of July. Many waterways in northeastern Pennsylvania, in fact, are at or near record low levels. Perhaps the same is true where you live. (Hope for rain!).

The spring and summer field work for the year, however, again yielded more surprises for birders in Luzerne County: Undiscovered Grasshopper Sparrow colonies on mine reclamation sites; successful Bobolink nesting on hayfields that remained unmowed until mid to late July, and new Northern Goshawk nests.

The season also brought visits to several bogs in our county - neat and interesting places for people with interests spanning the botanical and avian fields.

A late July outing took me to several such places in Luzerne County. Although the transition from the nesting season to migration is now well under way, there were lots of birds to be seen and heard at magical places with names like Cranberry Pond and Cranberry Creek bog.

And there were Special Areas Project outings to Hickory Run and Nescopeck state parks to fill in other dates on the desk calendar.

Some of this year's field work was done in support of the Luzerne County Natural Areas Inventory, a cooperative project between the Pennsylvania Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the county, and local conservationists, naturalists, and other wildlands advocates.

It is truly an exciting time to be involved in on-the-ground conservation work in Pennsylvania. If your county natural areas inventory has already been completed, I urge you to get involved in ensuring that the key areas identified in the inventory are given the full level of

conservation protection they deserve. And if you live in a county where such an inventory has not been completed, please encourage your county leadership team to sign on.

These inventories, by the way, do not constitute signals that some unknown force is trying to lock up the land. Far from it. They are, instead, a key first step toward ensuring that the best and most important natural areas that don't already have protection are identified so that conservation measures can be implemented now, to ensure their protection for tomorrow. And the inventories serve an equally important role in helping to ensure that development is steered toward lands of low conservation value.

County natural areas inventories in the western half of the state are coordinated and accomplished in cooperation with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, which is based in Pittsburgh. In the eastern half of the state, the Pennsylvania Chapter of The Nature Conservancy has the overall responsibility.

Please tell me if you'd like more information on this program, including how you might become involved in getting started.

Despite all that humans have done to the landscape of Pennsylvania, there remain many, many key natural areas that serve as homes for astounding levels of natural diversity - from birds to butterflies and on to rare moths and plants and salamanders and snakes and sedges and fish.

Get involved. There is much more to conservation than just writing letters to the editor and notes to members of Congress (although there's a place for that too!).

Our 10th annual meeting is just weeks away now and it promises to be the best yet with excellent speakers and outstanding field trips to several key bird sites in the Berks County region. And to make this meeting even more attractive, all of the indoor sessions will be held under the

same roof as our lodging. We thank - in advance of the meeting - Frank and Barb Haas for assuming the leadership roles needed to ensure a successful meeting. See you in Morgantown!

-- Alan Gregory, President

THE RAVEN REPORTER

New Milestones of the Special Areas Project: 100 SAPs!

The Special Areas Project has achieved a few milestones this year. SAP volunteers have contributed bird data for over 100 areas. This includes 36 State Parks; 23 State Game Lands; 20 DCNR Forests, Natural, Wild, or Scenic areas; six county or municipal parks; three Fish and Boat Commission sites; three federal sites; three environmental education centers; two private reserves; two Nature Conservancy preserves; and two corporate sites.

There have been 982,006 birds of at least 283 species counted on SAP field trips. There were 723 field trips conducted in 1997 and 494 trips logged into the SAP database so far for 1998 (some are still coming in from last year!). This means that we will reach the one million bird threshold as soon as the spring 1999 data are entered into the database.

Thanks to all of you that have contributed to the burgeoning SAP database.

State Park Checklists with Special Areas Project Data

The PSO is working with the Bureau of State Parks on a series of bird checklists for the parks with Special Areas Project data. The new checklists will be graphical representations of bird occurrence through the year. The bar-graph design will be a great boon to better understanding bird phenology at each location. The design also demands that we visit the sites as often as we can in order to fit as many data points across the page as possible. SAP relative abundance data (birds per party hour and frequency of occurrence) will be translated into "ease of finding" codes that will give beginners a good guide to bird occurrence in each month.

Counting birds has been one of the valuable parts of the SAP experience. The quantitative data collected "as you go" during SAP visits gives the data a deeper dimension. We can sketch profiles of the bird communities by knowing the relative abundance of each species. So, count all the birds as you can. If really common species are hard to count, don't give up. Try to estimate population totals to the nearest 10 or 100 in those species that are hard to count. The more precise the data, the better. The potential for SAP data use

in checklists prompts us to make more trips to our favorite bird spots at all times of the year. As if we need the excuse.

SAP Data Are Being Used for Park Management Plans

The Special Areas Project has collected data from 36 Pennsylvania State Parks. Wise use of the data can promote better management of the park for birds and other wildlife. With the growth of birding as a recreational activity, it makes lots of sense for the state parks to accommodate birders more than they have in the past. More and more park visitors are using binoculars and scopes to enjoy their visits, and asking for information on the parks good bird spots. Bird habitat should be a high priority for the state's park system for conservation reasons as well.

State Parks asked SAP for bird data collected at the developing Nescopeck State Park in Luzerne County. Some of you may have visited Nescopeck at the PSO meeting held at Hazleton. Alan Gregory collected most of the Nescopeck data, sometimes with the help of his wife, Monica, and birders in the North Branch Bird Club and Greater Wyoming Audubon Society. Thanks, Alan!

The Pennsylvania Important Areas Project Book is Out!

The Pennsylvania Audubon Society has published a book on the state's Important Bird Areas. A total of 73 sites were designated for their importance in maintaining bird populations. Several of the site accounts were augmented with SAP data collected by PSO and Audubon members. SAP is an easy way for birders and conservationists to keep an eye and ear on their local IBA, or a spot that they think deserves to become an IBA.

For a copy of the state IBA book, please contact the PA Audubon office: 1104 Fernwood Ave., Suite 300, Camp Hill, PA 17011. Phone: 717-763-4985. Copies of the book cost only \$20.

Migration Time: Add Species to the Site List with a Little Help from the Drought

August is migration time already. Reports are flying around about flocks of migrant warblers and vireos. Many songbirds that migrate to the Neotropics start their southbound trek in mid- to late-July and are well on their way south by mid-August. Their exodus may be rushed even more than usual this year by the drought that has gripped much of our state. When it is this dry, insects, fruits, and other foods can be in limited supply in the normally moist Northeast. For this reason, late August and early September might be especially good times for adding a few birds to the migrant list of your Special Area.

With little rain and run-off, many streams and ponds are revealing rocks and mud-flats rarely seen in recent years.

This is bad for canoeing, but great for shorebirds. I predict that many of the more uncommon plovers and sandpipers will be reported as a result. Even remote beaver ponds and smaller streams may host a few dallying shorebirds where we might normally never expect them. Get out your binos and scopes and start checking!

Documenting Breeding Behavior Is Challenging and Rewarding

One of the most valuable aspects of SAP is the framework it provides field observers to document the breeding status of birds. This dimension of SAP takes the birding experience a step past species listing to behavior watching and ecological studies. By observing breeding bird behavior, the birder learns firsthand about aspects of bird biology that often go unnoticed or rarely explained in books or magazines. By witnessing courtship, territory defense, nest-building, and caring for young, we peek into the private lives of birds and learn more about their world. You can go a step past Kenn Kaufman's book to studying breeding behavior yourself. There is much that we do not know about what we think of as familiar species. Basic behavior watching adds to our own personal growth as field observers.

As an example, many birders consider Eastern Wood-Pewees as dull, common birds that they shrug off after adding them to their trip list. Yet, few birders have found a pewee nest or watched adults feed young or protect the nest from predators. The pewee nest is a gem of avian construction that artfully and pragmatically blends in with the tree branch it is built on. The female's sculpture of lichens, fine plant fibers, and spider webs is so artfully constructed that each one can easily be mistaken for a bump on the tree limb. As is typical for tyrant flycatchers, pewees tenaciously guard nests from intruders and call to their mates (*pee-errrr!*) regularly, maintaining a pair bond. I have usually found the nest by following the female back to it after she has foraged for flying insects in tree foliage.

Achieving a certain amount of intimacy with birds that live in our favorite places has its own rewards. It is one of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of birding. Confirming breeding activity requires patience and persistence. The low confirmation rate of most flycatchers during the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas show that few take the time or effort to learn more about the nesting habits of many of our common breeding birds. It is time well-spent.

Documenting breeding behavior is rewarding for science and conservation, too. Among other things, it helps us understand what is important to birds and why they are successful in certain areas but not others. When we document the various breeding behaviors we observe, we confirm that those species actually nest in our designated

areas. This helps us differentiate between those species that nest in the Special Area and those that travel through in migration.

What's So Safe About Safe Dates?

Safe dates. What does this mean anyway? The term has been derived from Breeding Bird Atlas Projects where volunteers have documented the presence of species when they are normally found nesting but did not actually record breeding behavior. For each species in a geographic area, there is a fairly short period when it is "safe" to say that any bird found is a breeding bird. This period is defined by "safe dates."

The Special Areas Project uses the same safe dates as those used for the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas. These dates were published by the PBBA. They are also found in the *Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania* (D. W. Brauning, editor) - Appendix C (pages 441-445). If you do not have copies of these, I would be glad to provide them to you.

When in doubt, be careful. Consult the Pennsylvania Atlas to get an idea of what species should nest in your county. Consult with the Regional Coordinator of the area or the County Editor for *PA Birds*. It is more fun to work as a team in such matters. Everyone learns from the process. All of the data are checked out. I have found that few coordinators put down breeding codes for species inappropriately. If anything, SAP Coordinators tend to be too conservative about breeding status. Most coordinators have a very good idea of what birds nest in the area and have done a fine job of checking their breeding codes. Thanks for a job well-done.

Since it is time to review the summer records, it is also a good time to check on the breeding codes used for each species in your Special Area.

Send your wonderful Special Areas Project data to:

Douglas A. Gross
PSO Special Areas Project
Susquehanna SES Environmental Laboratory
R. R. 1, Box 1795,
Berwick, PA 18603
Phone: 570-542-2191
E-mail: dougross@sunlink.net

NESTING EAGLES & FALCONS

Bald eagles are nesting in Pennsylvania in record numbers. At least 41 pairs have established housekeeping across the state, up from 28 nests last year and only two pairs in 1980. The state's nesting eagle population has nearly doubled over the past two years. Brenda Peebles, the eagle lady of western Pennsylvania, said "there's a population explosion this year." Nests have been found at 12 new sites within the state this year, including sites in Chester, Crawford, Huntingdon, Lancaster, Mercer, Pike, and York counties. The counties that continue to support nests are Butler, Dauphin, Erie, Forest, Tioga, Venango, and Warren. The wide distribution of eagle nests across our Commonwealth provides greater stability to this still sensitive species. This expansion coincides with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal to remove the Bald Eagle from the U.S. Endangered Species list. This dramatic move will be under consideration for the next year, to permit comment from all interested groups and individuals.

Productivity estimates in late July appear to fall within normal ranges - 1.7 young per successful nest and about a third of active nests not producing any young - for a total of more than 40 young eagles produced from Pennsylvania nests. We are well on our way to seeing the largest production of young eagles ever recorded in Pennsylvania's history, exceeding the previous record of 30 young in 1995. Until last year, the growth followed a predictable pattern of two to four new nests per year, which could have come from local recruitment. Unless many nests were overlooked in recent years (a possibility), the number of new nests this year probably did not come just from local recruitment and could have been fueled by immigration from outside areas.

This expansion was rooted in protections provided by the Endangered Species Act since 1973, banning of DDT, and reintroduction efforts completed by many states. The Pennsylvania Game Commission's own eagle reintroduction program spanned seven years during the 1980s and released 92 young birds. Some of those released birds were subsequently found at nest sites around the state, fueling the recovery of the eagle population in long-vacant habitat. Only 417 nesting pairs of eagles were known in the lower 48 states. Bald eagles were officially declared an endangered species in 1967 in all areas of the United States south of the 40th parallel, under a law that preceded the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

By the printing of this newsletter, it is expected that Peregrine Falcons will be removed from the US Endangered Species list. The decline and recovery of Peregrines followed similar patterns to those of eagles. Peregrines expanded to eight nest sites within the state, all in urban areas

(Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Wilkes-Barre). Productivity has been good this year, with 18 young fledged. In Pennsylvania, at least four Peregrines were released during 1976 and 1977, four in Philadelphia in 1982, and a total of 64 birds at four locations during the 1990s. This recovery is not as dramatic as that of the Bald Eagle, but nation-wide, Peregrines have reached delisting goals, hence the Fish and Wildlife Service's move.

Only a handful of species have fought their way back from the United States' endangered species list. The California gray whale, the American alligator, and the bald eagle are a few. Once endangered in all of the lower 48 states, the bald eagle's status was upgraded to "threatened" in 1994, two decades after the banning of DDT and the passing of laws to protect both eagles and their nesting trees. There are now about 4,500 nesting pairs and 20,000 total birds in the lower 48 states.

-- Dan Brauning
State Ornithologist
Pennsylvania Game Commission

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE NOTES

(Editor's note: This is the first in a periodic series designed to highlight recent publications of interest to Pennsylvania ornithologists and birders.)

For many years studies conducted in Pennsylvania have made important contributions to research relating habitat features to birds' nesting success. The tradition continues with diverse recent publications such as these:

* Nest-site selection and nesting success of Wood Thrushes, by Jeffrey P. Hoover and Margaret C. Brittingham. *Wilson Bulletin* 110: 375-383 (1998). This study used data collected from a fragmented forest landscape in Berks County to identify microhabitat characteristics of successful nests and nests that were lost to predators. It found that average concealment in vegetation was greater for successful nests than unsuccessful nests, but that the size of the forest tract had much more influence on the thrushes' nesting success or failure.

Thus the study reaffirms the importance of maintaining large tracts of forest for the long-term health of Wood Thrush populations, which was concluded previously by the same authors and Laurie J. Goodrich in 1995 in their paper, Effects of forest patch size on nesting success of Wood Thrushes (*The Auk* 112:146-155).

PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY

10th Anniversary Meeting

24-26 September, 1999

Holiday Inn

Morgantown, PA

FRIDAY, September 24, 1999

5:00 p.m.	—	9:00 p.m.	Registration
7:00 p.m.	—	8:00 p.m.	Social
8:00 p.m.	—	8:45 p.m.	PSO Business Meeting
8:45 p.m.	—	9:30 p.m.	Field Trip Overview

SATURDAY, September 25, 1999

5:30 a.m.	—	6:30 a.m.	Breakfast
6:30 a.m.	—	11:45 a.m.	Field Trips (*see below)
Noon	—	1:00 p.m.	Lunch
			Afternoon Programs
1:00 p.m.	—	2:00 p.m.	Louis Bevier - Hummingbird Identification
2:00 p.m.	—	2:45 p.m.	Scott Weidensaul - Saw-Whet-Owl Banding in Pennsylvania
2:45 p.m.	—	3:00 p.m.	Break
3:00 p.m.	—	3:45 p.m.	Dave Brandes - Solving the Puzzle of the Spring Golden Eagle Migration through Pennsylvania
3:45 p.m.	—	4:30 p.m.	Scott Klinger - The Impact of Agriculture and USDA Programs on the Abundance of Grassland Birds: Can we Restore Declining Grassland Bird Populations on Pennsylvania Farmland?
4:30 p.m.	—	5:15 p.m.	Paul Rodewald - Habitat Use and Foraging Behavior of Neotropical Migrant Songbirds during Migration in Central Pennsylvania
6:00 p.m.	—	7:00 p.m.	Social including book signing with Pete Dunne
7:00 p.m.	—	9:30 p.m.	Banquet- Our banquet speaker will be Pete Dunne presenting "Spishing 101"

SUNDAY, September 26, 1999

5:30 a.m.	—	6:30 a.m.	Breakfast
6:30 a.m.	—	11:30 a.m.	Field Trips (*see below)

*Field Trips will include the following locations:

Saturday

Carr's Park - This will be an all-walking trip around Morgan Lake in Carr's Park. This has the largest colony of breeding Pied-billed Grebes in the state and has had Ruddy Ducks nesting the past two years. We will look for waterfowl and migrant passerines. There is an entrance fee, therefore we ask that you register for this trip on your registration form.

Lake Ontelaunee - A drive and walk trip around Lake Ontelaunee, one of the premier birding spots in Berks County where many of the records in *A Century of Birdlife in Berks County* came from. We will look for waterfowl, shorebirds, and migrant passerines. If conditions warrant, there will be an approximate 2-mile roundtrip walk to look for shorebirds.

Blue Marsh Lake - This will be a drive and walk trip to Blue Marsh Lake - a Corps of Engineers impoundment - with a great variety of habitat. We will look for waterfowl, shorebirds, and migrant passerines. No strenuous walking.

Rte 183 Hawk Watch - One of the easiest hawk watches to get to. Located about 15 miles downridge from Hawk Mountain, it gets great hawk flights. For those who cannot or do not wish to walk far, this trip will be easy on the legs. The hawkwatch is just off the side of the road. Bring a folding chair and sit back and enjoy the flight. The hawk flight will be weather-dependent, of course.

Sunday

SPECIAL SUNDAY FIELD TRIP - Sharp-tailed Sparrow quest - This trip will consist of being taken by boat out to several islands on the Susquehanna River renowned for Sharp-tailed Sparrows in fall migration. Because of the logistics (boats, etc.) this trip is limited to 20 participants. Participants will be chosen on a first-come-first-served basis. You must register for this trip on your registration form so that we can be sure of the number of participants. Be prepared to get wet. Wear either sneakers or waders. There will be walking through knee-high water.

Lake Ontelaunee - see description above.

Carr's Park - see description above.

PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY

Tenth Anniversary Annual Meeting

24-26 September, 1999

Holiday Inn
Morgantown, PA

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: August 24, 1999

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

REGISTRATION FEE	No. of Persons	Cost each	Total \$
PSO Member		\$20.00	
Member's spouse/guest		\$15.00	
Non-Member*		\$30.00	
Non-Member's spouse/guest		\$15.00	
Children under 12		\$10.00	
After Deadline, Aug 24, 1999		add \$5.00	
Sub-Total			

* Includes 1-year PSO membership

Lodging (Make your own reservations)

Motels

Holiday Inn - 800-465-4329 (national reservation number)
or 610-286-3000 (direct number) If you choose the Holiday Inn, please indicate you are with the PSO meeting.

Inn at Morgantown - 610-286-5521

Conestoga Wagon Motel - 610-286-5061

Camping/Cabins - French Creek State Park - 888-PA PARKS

Event	No. of Persons	Cost Each	Total \$
Friday Social (indicate if attending)		no charge	XXXXX
Saturday			
Breakfast (Full breakfast buffet)		\$7.00	
Lunch ON YOUR OWN	XXXXX	XXXXX	XXXXX
Banquet			
Stuffed Chicken Breast		\$20.00	
White Fish Filet		\$20.00	
Vegetarian Stir Fry		\$20.00	
Children's Meal (Chicken Fingers)		\$10.00	
Banquet only (no registration fee)		add \$2.00	
Sunday			
Breakfast (Full breakfast buffet)		\$7.00	
Field Trips			
Carr's Park on Saturday		\$4.00	
Carr's Park on Sunday		\$4.00	
Susquehanna River on Sunday*		no charge	XXXXX
*(You must register for this trip ahead of time so that we can arrange for enough boats)			
Sub Total from Other Side			
Grand Total			

Please make checks or money orders payable to PSO and mail to:

Pennsylvania Birds
2469 Hammertown Rd.
Narvon, PA 17555

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS: AUGUST 24, 1999

* Effects of microsite selection on predation of artificial ground nests, by Richard H. Yahner and Nell H. Piergallini. *Wilson Bulletin* 11:439-442 (1998).

This research was conducted at State Game Lands 176 in Centre County, to compare depredation of artificial ground nests, specifically for Ruffed Grouse and Wild Turkey, in relation to the type of structure (tree or log) adjacent to the nest and the direction (north or south) of a nest from the structure.

No relation was found between nest predation and either the type of structure or the direction. But just as with the Wood Thrush findings by Hoover et al., this study does reaffirm earlier findings by Yahner and various colleagues, using artificial nests at the same site, that avian nesting success declines with reduced forest size or with greater forest fragmentation.

* Effect of border-edge cuts on birds at woodlot edges in southwestern Pennsylvania, by Kathleen K. Fleming and William M. Giuliano. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 62:1430-1437 (1998).

These researchers from California University of Pennsylvania worked in eastern Washington County to determine whether nest success at agricultural field and woodland edge is influenced by "border-edge cuts," where a shrub transitional zone is created, compared to uncut edges.

Border-edge cuts were found to support more shrub- and edge-nesting species, while uncut edges contained more woodland species, but no difference was found in nest-success probabilities between the two edge types.

* A study in nearby Delaware relating habitat quality to nest survival may also interest Pennsylvanians: Forest area and habitat quality for nesting Wood Thrushes, by Howard J. Weinberg and Roland R. Roth. *The Auk* 115:879-889 (1998).

Their aim was to test -- using direct measures of annual production and related demographics -- the "area" hypothesis that nest success declines with the area of the forest fragment where the nest is located. Conducted at the University of Delaware Woods, the study obtained new evidence linking quality of the breeding habitat to the area of the forest fragment.

* Finally, recent research in Ontario is worth spotlighting for its pioneering importance: Influence of food abundance, nest-site habitat, and forest fragmentation on breeding Ovenbirds, by Dawn M. Burke and Erica Nol. *The Auk* 115:96-104 (1998).

Study after study has identified nest predation and cowbird parasitism as the main effects of fragmented forests, but these authors added one more: lower food abundance in small fragments. Scott K. Robinson at the Illinois Natural History Survey (a Pittsburgh area native, incidentally), one of the most prominent investigators of fragmentation effects in recent decades, emphasized the significance of their finding in a commentary in the same issue of *The Auk* (pp.1-3):

"Thanks to Burke and Nol's study, we now have good evidence that fragmentation can reduce insect availability for some birds and indirect evidence of food-based habitat selection by females....Some of us may dread the prospect of sifting through insect samples, but it looks as if the effort may be more likely to pay off than I would have expected."

-- Paul Hess

THE CONSERVATION CORNER

Recently, Peter Stangel (1999), of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, published his top ten bird conservation strategies for the new millennium. After reading his strategies, I considered what my top ten would be and found them to be similar but slightly different. For this issue of Conservation Corner, I thought I would share my top ten strategies and encourage PSO members to think about and implement their own strategies. In this way, birders and birds will benefit as we enter the new millennium.

My number one strategy is to share your passion for birds with others. Recently, I participated in the 6th annual Ned Smith Wildlife Festival and was pleasantly surprised by the number of families attending. While there, I had the opportunity to talk with several parents/grandparents and more than once, I heard the comment about how great the festival was and how it was important to "pry" children away from the TV/VCR/computer and teach them about nature and the out-of-doors. I couldn't agree more and I believe that PSO members are in a unique position to help teach people about conservation/nature through birding. The future of birding and birds depends on all of us teaching others about our "passion" and I would encourage all of us to take the time and share our knowledge.

My next conservation strategy is to protect, preserve and restore habitat on both public lands and private. We must remember that over 70% of the land in this country is privately owned and we must be willing to encourage and assist private land managers whenever and wherever we can

for the benefit of all wildlife. Further, we must insist that our public lands be managed properly and that the destructive land practices of the past cease. All wildlife, including birds, requires quality habitat. Without it, wildlife cannot survive and all the money, speeches, articles and research can't change that basic fact. My third strategy is closely related to the issue of habitat protection and that is the control of urban sprawl through responsible land use. The Governor's 21st Century Environment Commission identified responsible land use as a critical issue in the next millennium and it is certainly critical when considering wildlife habitat.

Funding for wildlife programs is another strategy that will be critical in the next century. Past articles in the newsletter have mentioned some of these funding proposals and we need to keep the pressure on elected officials so critical funds don't disappear into a governmental "blackhole". This need to keep the pressure on elected officials is my next strategy. Birders represent a large block of voters and we can have a positive impact on what our elected officials do for wildlife - we just need to let them know and insist that they do the right thing.

My eighth strategy is economics. Birders spend millions of dollars every year on their hobby. Peter Stangel stated that "birding is a \$25 billion a year industry". What a "weapon" for birds! Let people know you are a birder when you travel and, more and more, businesses and industry will pay attention and we can help birds around the world through our money.

The next two conservation strategies are related and they are "build partnerships" and "think globally". Many of our birds migrate to other parts of the world. To help them survive, we must think globally and to do that effectively, it is important to build partnerships. In this way, we can accomplish much more than we can separately.

Ninth is the strategy to help monitor bird populations and volunteer. There are many opportunities to help, such as volunteer work for PSO, Breeding Bird Surveys, and Special Area Projects. This kind of citizen science/ volunteerism is a growing endeavor and will contribute greatly to our understanding of bird populations and will promote conservation. My last strategy is to have fun. Birding is and should always be fun. In this way, our passion will grow stronger and as a result, birds as well as all wildlife, will benefit. And when wildlife benefits, people and the environment benefit.

These are my conservation strategies. Yours may be similar or different, but whatever they are, it is important to remember, birds are dependent on what we do, so let's not

fail to carry out our conservation strategies in the new millennium.

-- Mark Henry, Conservation Chairperson

References:

Stangel, Peter. Soaring into the new millennium. *Bird Conservation*. Winter, 1999.

LWCF FUNDING - HELP NEEDED

For more than three decades, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been a cornerstone for conservation and outdoor recreation in the United States. Since its inception in 1964, Congress made a promise: Revenues from offshore oil and gas leases would be returned to the American people through conservation and recreation opportunities.

From parks to playgrounds, wilderness to wetlands, open trails to open space, LWCF has been responsible for the acquisition of nearly seven million acres of parkland, water resources, open space and the development of more than 37,000 state and local park and recreation projects - including open space projects in hundreds of Pennsylvania communities.

Unfortunately, starting in the 1980s, the majority of LWCF funds were diverted to the general treasury and programs unrelated to parks, conservation and recreation benefitted from the money that was supposed to go toward LWCF goals.

And the struggle continues. In this year's Interior appropriations bill, 75 to 80 percent of LWCF has been sent elsewhere and vital stateside money has been zeroed out completely. At a time when we are losing open space at the fastest rate in history there is no excuse to divert this critical source of open space protection funding any longer.

Congress is currently considering fully and permanently funding LWCF. That's the good news. But some members of Congress want to tie increased offshore drilling to their LWCF legislation.

Under the current formula, the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states would not be provided with the funds adequate enough to meet the land protection challenges of the region. Large-scale conservation needed in our region could greatly benefit from a flexible grants program that would make funds available for the preservation of important natural areas.

A fully, permanently and flexibly funded LWCF will bring us and our children new playgrounds, new fishing access areas, will preserve wildlands, will protect more open space and will make more money available for future land acquisitions. Now is the time when together we can assure this essential funding for improving Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation system and network of natural areas.

We need the LWCF to continue preserving our natural heritage and outdoor recreation areas.

We need the LWCF to be fully and permanently funded and with a flexible grants program to help local municipalities and our state.

We need the LWCF to provide funding for state-level nongame wildlife programs but Congress should avoid stimulating more offshore oil drilling.

You can help ensure the LWCF is restored to what Congress initially intended it to be - a nonpartisan source of funding for open space and wildlife habitat protection and recreation projects.

Write to your member of Congress today. The address for members of the House of Representatives is: Rep. So and So, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515. The address for senators Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum is: U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510.

-- Alan Gregory

DEER CONFERENCE

The Pennsylvania Audubon Society, in conjunction with several other sponsors, will be having a conference on the impact of deer on biodiversity and the economy in Pennsylvania. They have kindly provided the following information on the conference.

Date & Location:

September 24-26
Radisson Hotel, Harrisburg, PA

The Problem:

White-tailed deer overabundance is one of the biggest ecological challenges facing Pennsylvania today. Deer are implicated in all sorts of looming economic tragedies such as the failure of re-generation of many species of trees. The timber industry, on both public and private lands, is under a major threat. Environmentalists are concerned because wild flowers and migratory song bird habitats are being destroyed. Suburban gardeners are outraged because their shrubs and bulbs are being ruined. Farmers are seeing major

portions of their crops destroyed. The automobile insurance industry is taking a major hit. And at this point, no one in the State Government has the overall responsibility to deal with all of these areas.

The answer:

Collaboration between concerned organizations and individuals is the first step to finding the answer to this question. That's why the sponsors of this innovative conference have joined forces to bring awareness to this issue, and hopefully to inspire a resolution to the problem.

Our intent is to promote the adoption of a new way of looking at "the problem" and at hunters. Today hunters view themselves as embattled, their opportunities to hunt being progressively limited by an increasingly urban society. The Game Commission has viewed its job from within an "agricultural production paradigm," in which their role was to provide a crop of deer to be harvested by the hunters

The sponsors of the event hope to bring about a new way of thinking about deer management. It is being called "the ecological balance paradigm," in which hunters have a vital role in restoring ecological balance by controlling the numbers and distribution of the deer herd. Hunters and the Game Commission will work together to restore the ecological balance of Pennsylvania's natural areas. Through this paradigm, the Game Commission will have much wider perspective - focusing on the entire natural system, of which deer are an important part - but certainly not the only part.

The registration fee for the conference is \$55. Pro-rated rates are available for those people attending only part of the conference. For more information, contact the Pennsylvania Audubon Society at 717 763-4985.

BIRDING IN PA GOES ELECTRONIC

If you are interested in up-to-the minute bird information on PA birds and have access to email and the Internet, you should consider joining PABIRDS, an electronic list for PA birders. An electronic listserver is like a giant bulletin board, except it is electronic and the information is communicated to you instantly. The PABIRDS list is hosted by the National Audubon Society and the list moderator is Carmen T. Santasania. To join the list, send an email to: listserv@list.audubon.org, leave the subject blank (or if your email program does not permit this, you can put anything in the subject as the listserv software ignores the subject). In the message type subscribe PABIRDS YourFirstName YourLastName. Then, just follow the instructions. If you have any problems or questions, please contact the list moderator at 71634.41@compuserve.com.

10th Annual PSO Meeting



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