

PSO Newsletter



The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

November 1999

Volume 10, Number 3

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK...

Conservation is moving ahead on several fronts as I sit down to write in these mild, lingering days of late October. From the Pennsylvania Audubon Society came some not-very-surprising news a few days ago. The Trust for Public Land sponsored a public opinion poll in Pennsylvania which (gasp!) shows that a clear majority of Pennsylvanians support a vastly increased level of funding for conservation in our state.

The Trust, one of the partners in the swelling movement to enact the Heritage 21 proposal on conservation funding in Pennsylvania, notes that 73 percent of those polled favor adding \$345 million (new money) on top of the \$500 million in reshuffled funding which Gov. Ridge has put in his "Growing Greener" proposal.

That nearly three quarters of Pennsylvanians support a beefed-up plan speaks well for the present conservation climate in the state. I believe that there are now many, many people (our neighbors in the cities and towns of this state) who believe that it's time to draw the "line in the sand" and start reversing the ominous trends of habitat destruction and degradation so well espoused in the 21st Century Commission's report. The company that conducted the survey for the Trust talked to 600 registered voters. They found that most Pennsylvanians (88 percent or nearly 9 of every 10 individuals) also believe that a portion of the state's current \$1 billion budget surplus should be used to expand environmental programs.

In fact, "Increased environmental funding ranked in the top three most popular uses for the surplus, along with expanding prescription drug benefits for low-income seniors (89 percent) and providing additional state funding for education (87 percent). Earmarking part of

the surplus for the environment had significantly more popular support than using it to increase spending on highways (81 percent), or returning a portion of the surplus through a tax rebate (78 percent)," the Trust said in a news release announcing the poll's findings. We've traditionally spent a whole lot of big bucks on highways, but conservation has gotten chump change.

"This poll demonstrates that Pennsylvania voters want to do more to protect the state's environment, and that they are willing to pay for it," said Andy McLeod of the Trust for Public Land. "(The Trust) hopes that this overwhelming statement of public support for the Heritage 21 proposal will help create the political consensus to make Pennsylvania a leader in land conservation and environmental protection," McLeod said.

Please take time now to let your state senator and representative know that you support maximum funding for conservation in Pennsylvania. The Heritage 21 plan would jumpstart land acquisition in Pennsylvania, and would also increase the number of preserved acres of farmland (one of Pennsylvania's most endangered landscapes) while also aiding cultural institutions.

There are clear and convincing arguments for substantially increasing the amount of money that goes toward land acquisition and conservation in Pennsylvania. The threats are very real: suburban sprawl, pollution, and habitat fragmentation. The conservation goal for many of Pennsylvania's birds: preserve big chunks of unbroken habitat.

The society's annual meeting in late September was a great success despite several competing events of great interest to birders and conservationists. A big thank-you goes out again to everyone who had a hand in organizing this major event, particularly Frank and

Barb Haas and the other officers and directors of the society. Let's do it again! Look for news soon on the date and location for our Year 2000 meeting.

In the meantime, make sure you participate in at least one (or two!) of the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts. Help celebrate the 100th year of the CBC, the greatest long-term citizen-based birding/conservation project in North America.

– Alan Gregory, President



THE RAVEN REPORTER

News of the Special Areas Project

“Barrens” Are Not Barren of Breeding Birds

The “barrens” are probably the most underappreciated and disrespected native bird habitat in the state. Barrens suffer from their misnaming and from misconceptions about what they are and what birds they support. My own experiences collecting bird data for the Nature Conservancy’s Wings of the Americas project this summer have given me a better understanding of their value and problems, and the need to do much more bird inventory in barrens habitats. I often used SAP forms to collect bird community data and urge others to use the same technique to establish baseline data for birds at locations of conservation concern.

What are barrens? In a nutshell, they are areas that support a mix of vegetation including shrubs (often heaths), small trees, and small open grassy areas. The vegetational succession is inhibited by poor soil conditions or a history of fires. Conversion of barrens to farmland and residential areas, invasive exotic plants, and fire suppression are the main enemies of barrens ecosystems. Perhaps, ignorance and misunderstandings are even more detrimental to these important ecosystems.

Pennsylvania has a few different types of barrens that I will quickly summarize. Along the Mason-Dixon line,

serpentine shales inhibit plant growth and create a unique soil chemistry that results in a series of pine-oak barrens. These go by many local names like the Chrome Barrens, the Nottingham Barrens, and the Serpentine Barrens. Collectively, they are called the State Line Barrens by the Nature Conservancy. In the State College area, the Scotia Barrens are known for their pitch pine - scrub oak thickets that support good populations of American Woodcock and Whip-poor-will. The Poconos Till Barrens are unique for their mixture of scrub oak-pitch pine with boreal plant communities. The Poconos barrens have the highest concentration of rare plants in the state. They are a bit unusual that they might be considered moist or wet barrens. Underneath the multiple layers of trees, heaths, and grasses, there is usually a dense mat of mosses and ground herbs and sedges.

The most poorly studied barrens are the many ridge top barrens that perch on top Pennsylvania’s mountains. The scrub oak, pines, and stunted aspens and birches may support large populations of thicket and early successional birds, but we don’t have the inventories of these areas to know for sure. Some of these are parts of state game lands or state forests and beg for adoption as SAPs.

The Poconos Long Pond, Scotia Barrens, and the Stateline Barrens were all selected as Important Bird Areas for their important ecological communities. If we knew more about other barrens, they might also be selected as IBAs or get other conservation recognition.

Our barrens have lots of birds, especially in the summer. In the Poconos, I had a hard time avoiding Eastern Towhee, Gray Catbird, and Common Yellowthroat. They are omnipresent in the barrens. For those of you who yearn to hear “drink-your-tea!!!” all day long, go to Long Pond. Prairie, Black-and-white, Pine and Nashville warblers are common birds in good barrens habitat. In conifer groves, northern specialties like Yellow-rumped Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blackburnian Warbler, and Purple Finch add to the blend. In fact, Yellow-rumps are among the most common Poconos barrens birds. Many birders would be surprised to find that typical forest birds like Black-capped Chickadee, Hermit Thrush, and Ovenbird are common denizens of barrens. In wetter areas, there are dense rhododendron thickets that support populations of Canada Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, and White-throated Sparrow. Alder Flycatchers call

from shrubby areas near streams and ponds. The healthy moth population supports a local population of Whip-poor-will, a species many believe to have declined in the state.

The Poconos barrens are suffering from development pressure and fire suppression. Much of the old barrens are growing into secondary deciduous forest and losing early successional birds like Golden-winged Warbler, which is now uncommon around Long Pond.

The grassy openings and game roads of the barrens inadvertently provide feeding lanes for Northern Harriers. This Candidate-At Risk species nests in shrubby wetlands and cruises the barrens, pipelines, fire lanes, lakeshores, hayfields, and bogs of the Poconos. It is much more common than we formerly appreciated (as documented in the Atlas). The mosaic of scrub, grass, and wetland suits the harrier and many other species very well.

Barrens are, or were, the home to other "Pennsylvania Species of Special Concern." The Greater Prairie-chicken or Heath Hen was once found in our state's barrens. This large game bird was commonly found in the scrub along the Maryland border in Lancaster and York counties as well as the Poconos. Over-hunting and habitat destruction led to its extirpation from the state. The Northern Bobwhite is Pennsylvania's most unappreciated and neglected native gamebird. It is also designated a Candidate - At Risk by the PA Biological Survey (OTC). Our understanding of its population and productivity is clouded by the many introduction attempts by hunters and dog trainers. It may be rare enough to qualify as PA - Threatened. The State Line Barrens are one the few places where reproduction has been documented lately for this thicket and grassland bird. The Red Crossbill is one of North America's mystery birds that has the reputation of being an invasive bird from the north. Historically, Red Crossbills also nested in pine barrens and riparian pine forests of Pennsylvania (check the Atlas account by Ed Fingerhood). A Candidate - Undetermined species in PA, the Red Crossbill might qualify as an Endangered or Threatened species if we knew more about its breeding distribution, taxonomy, and nomadic habits. It was, and perhaps still is, an occasional breeding bird of the barrens, even near Philadelphia.

Ornithologists are wondering out loud whether the now extirpated (and nearly extinct) Appalachian race of the

Bewick's Wren lived extensively on ridge top barrens. The scrubby vegetation and rimrock may have provided excellent habitat for this wren that has retreated from the state and our memories. The loss of hilltop marginal farmland and competition with the surging population of House Wren are other possible explanations for its decline.

The high densities of shrub and early successional forest birds in barrens habitat are important for the continued maintenance of these bird populations. The Partners in Flight strategy for bird conservation is to "keep common birds common." Many thicket species have declined steadily in Pennsylvania (look at the Atlas BBS graphs for evidence). Some thicket species like Yellow-breasted Chat and Brown Thrasher may be "area-sensitive" and not productive or tenacious in areas below a critical size. Nest predators like cats, chipmunks, raccoons, opossums, field mice, jays, crows, and skunks, are common in the fragmented, linear roadside and wood-edges that attract many shrub birds. These areas become ecological traps for the birds they attract. Barrens may serve as "source areas" from which opportunistic thicket birds spread into marginal or new habitats. So, barrens can be important bird habitats even where they support birds we coin as "roadside" or brush birds.

If you would like to contribute bird data to the Poconos Long Pond inventory, please use SAP forms and submit your data to SAP Central and the Long Pond TNC Office. Birders are invited to adopt section of various barrens near their home.

Quebec Run Wild! Area

A tip of the field cap to Bill Hintze for his inventory of Quebec Run, one of the state's most interesting forests. Practically a stone's throw from the Mason-Dixon line in Fayette County, the extensive forest interior habitat supports populations of birds that we usually associate with our state's northern tier. The Wild Area's extensive trail system allow access to many hollows and ridges. Bill took advantage of that in his visits this summer to one of the state's most southerly public lands.

As is typical of good forest interior, Quebec Run supports good populations of thrushes. Wood, Hermit, and Veery are all fairly common. It is not surprising

that Red-eyed Vireo and Scarlet Tanager are among the most common species, but Blue-headed Vireo is also present in good numbers in the hemlock groves. The Wild Area hosts a wide variety of warblers including many that are usually associated with northern forests. Black-throated Green Warbler, American Redstart, and Ovenbird are among the most common breeding birds. Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-and-white, Hooded, and Canada warblers are all easily found here. Bill even found a couple Cerulean Warblers. Acadian Flycatcher is the most common breeding flycatcher, found along the many wooded streams, but Eastern Wood-Pewee and Least Flycatcher were also present. Other "northern" birds like Winter Wren and Brown Creeper round out a very impressive breeding bird community.

The Quebec Run Wild Area is part of the Forbes State Forest, so access is open to the general public. This is an exciting area for birders to experience some of the wildest woods in southern Pennsylvania and experience a suite of birds normally found further north. Thanks to Bill Hintze for collecting valuable bird data from this previously poorly inventoried location. Other Wild Areas and Natural Areas may provide more valuable information about the bird communities that our wildest, least disturbed habitats support.

Some Staff Shuffling At SAP

Sharon Harrell is now doing the data entry into the SAP database. She is currently dealing with a backlog of SAP data forms that accumulated over spring and summer when our data input person found a full time job. Sharon is now wading into the wonderful pile of bird data sent in by Linda Wagner for SGL 284 and Suzanne Butcher for SGL 95. These Bartramian Auduboners have made significant contributions to the SAP database and our knowledge of two of Pennsylvania's most important wetlands. Sharon is now learning first hand how much valuable bird data these birders have collected. Lots!!!

Wayne Laubach now has a role more consistent with his training in computer software. He is working part-time on our SAP database and converting SAP bird data into field checklist information.

SAP Forms Available in Abundance

We now have piles of SAP Daily Forms and Seasonal Field Trip Reports. The newer, yellow Daily Forms have been converted to the newer AOU names and order. Unfortunately, the Seasonal Forms still hold to the older AOU order (that most of us are only too used to). I'll change that the next time we have forms printed up. Meanwhile, if you would like SAP forms, please let me know. My various addresses are listed below. Please send SAP data to my home office at the Orangeville address where I invariably review the SAP raw data.

Send your wonderful Special Areas Project data to:
Douglas A. Gross
PSO Special Areas Project
R.R. 1, Box 147
Orangeville, PA 17859
daytime: 570-542-2191, evening: 570-458-4564
dougross@sunlink.net

CONSERVATION CORNER

For several years, PSO members have participated in bird conservation projects in Pennsylvania and contributed to such beneficial projects across North America. But, up until now, many of us have not had the opportunity to help with bird conservation programs in Latin America and/or the Caribbean. However, we now have such an opportunity with the help of the American Bird Conservancy's Conservation Counterparts program.

Conservation Counterparts was designed to allow interested people in North America help conservation groups in Latin America and the Caribbean. Projects and programs include "Developing Bird Conservation in Argentina", Bahamas Wetland Project", "River of Raptors in Veracruz, Mexico", El Chogoro Refuge, Panama" and "Save the Dickcissel, Venezuela".

The "Developing Bird Conservation in Argentina" is a project being operated by the Asociacion Ornitologica del Plata (AOP) that is promoting bird conservation and is developing a project to protect the country's threatened pampas grasslands. The same grasslands where the Swainson's Hawk winters. "Bahamas Wetland Project" is a project promoted by the Bahamas National Trust to establish a national reserve at a wetland complex which is an important stopover for neotropical migrants. A total of 101 bird species have

CBC Name	Compiler / Contact	Phone #	e-mail	CBC Date
Audubon (Valley Forge)	Tony Fernandes	610 647-7868	fernandes@suburbanwater.com	12/26/1999
Bald Eagle State Park	Eugene Zielinski Harry Henderson	814 353-8212 814 867-0733	eez55@juno.com	01/02/2000
Beaver	John Cruzan	724 847-6726	jcruzan@geneva.edu	12/18/1999
Bedford County	Janet Shaffer	814 356-3553	jgshaffer@juno.com	12/18/1999
Bernville	Ed Barrell	610 926-2962	ebarrell@early.com	01/02/2000
Bethlehem-Easton	Don & Elaine Mease	610 346-7754		01/02/2000
Bloomsburg	Bob Sager	570 925-6461		12/19/1999
Buffalo Creek Valley	George Reese	724 353-9649		12/18/1999
Bushy Run State Park	Dick Byers	724-593-3543	otusasio@tcsinternet.net	12/26/1999
Butler County	Ruth Crawford Suzanne Butcher	724 794-5688 330 759-1945		12/18/1999
Central Bucks County	Ken Kitson	610 847-2968		12/26/1999
Chambersburg	Edith Lindsell	717 263-4361		12/18/1999
Clarion	Margaret Buckwalter	814 782-3925	mbuckwalter@usachoice.net	12/18/1999
Clarksville	Ralph Bell	724 883-4505		12/31/1999
Culp (Blair County)	Debora Wentz	814 692-4224	dkw1952@aol.com	12/18/1999
Curtin (upper Dauphin Co)	Scott Bills (comp) Deuane Hoffman	717 896-8859 717 564-7475	srbills@paonline.com raven@paonline.com	12/28/1999
Dallas Area	Jim Hoyson	717 696-4925	birdder@aol.com	12/26/1999
Dingman's Ferry	Tom Shimalla	570 828-9281	shimalla@peec.org	01/02/2000
DuBois	?? (Wapiti Audubon)			??
Elverson	Bob Cook	610 286-9919	dunlin50@aol.com	12/26/1999
Emporium	Bob Martin	814 486-1990	fdl3.emporium@al.pader.gov	12/19/1999
Erie	Joan Howlett	814 734-1765	howlett@velocity.net	12/18/1999
Gettysburg (South Mtn)	Art Kennell	717 642-6995		12/18/1999
Glenolden (Del. CO.)	Skip Conant	610 544-0871		12/18/1999
Hamburg	Laurie Goodrich	610 756-6961 610 756-6000 ext230	goodrich@hawkmountain.org	12/26/1999
Harrisburg	Bill Tripp	717 737-8808	trippfw@juno.com	12/18/1999
Huntingdon	Dave Kyler		kylerdw@vicon.net	12/19/1999
Indiana	Roger & Marg Higbee	724 354-3493	bcorirole@twd.net	12/27/1999
Johnstown	?? (Allegheny Plateau Audubon)			??
Lake Raystown	Greg Grove	814 667-2305	gwq2@psu.edu	01/02/2000
Lancaster	Edward Pederson	717 284-4502		01/01/2000
Lebanon County	Fritz Heilman	717 273-0487		12/18/1999
Lehigh Valley	Dennis Miller	610 759-7514		12/18/1999
Lewisburg	Dick Nickelsen	570 524-9833	nickelsn@bucknell.edu	12/19/1999
Lewistown	Linda Whitesel	717 436-8048	lkwhitesel@jc-net.com	12/18/1999
Linesville	Ron Harrell	814 337-5445	rharrell@alleg.edu	12/19/1999

Lititz	Bruce Carl	717 859-4179	carls@desupernet.net	12/26/1999
Lock-Haven-Jersey Shore (West Branch Bird Club)	Wayne Laubscher	570-748-7511		12/18/1999
Mansfield-Wellsboro	Bob Ross	570 376-5394 570 724-3322 ext239	rossr@epix.net	12/18/1999
Mayview Wetlands	Bill Judd	412 571-2057		12/26/1999
Mount Davis-Grantsville	Dale Jeffrey	814 662-4291	yughwtch@wpia.net	12/21/1999
Nescopink Mountain	Alan Gregory	570 788-1425	meg5@psu.edu	01/02/2000
New Bloomfield	Ramsay Koury	717 761-1871		12/26/1999
Newville	Bill Frantz			01/02/2000
Pennypack Valley	Pete Kurtz	215 342-3638 215 685-0470		12/18/1999
Pittsburgh	Jim Valimont	412 828-5338 412 820-8630 (w)	valimont@bellatlantic.net	01/01/2000
Pleasantville	Russ States	814 676 6320		01/02/2000
Pocono Mountain	Chris Turn	570 588-6850		12/19/1999
Potter County	Dave Hauber		Haubers3@penn.com	01/02/2000 (?)
Raccoon Creek State Park	Bill Smith	724 375-9613		12/28/1999
Reading	Bill Uhrich	610 373-8109	buhrich@readingeagle.com	12/19/1999
Rector	Bob Mulvihill		mulvipnr@westol.com	12/19/1999
Ryerson	Marjorie Howard	724 499-5624	birdwatcher@alltel.net	12/18/1999
Scranton	?? (Lackawanna Audubon)			??
Southern Bucks County	Bob Mercer	215 785-1177		12/18/1999
Southern Lancaster County	Bob Schutsky	717 548-3303	info@birdtreks.com	12/19/1999
Southeastern Bradford Co.	Bill Reid	570 836-2734 570 822-8433		12/27/1999
Susquehanna	Jerry Skinner	570 278-3384	jskinner@epix.net	12/18/1999
State College	Nick Bolgiano	814 234-2746	nbolgiano@minitab.com	12/19/1999
Thompson	Katherin Cameron	570 756-2429		
Tunkhannock	Rick Koval	570 829-4381	unibirder@aol.com	12/18/1999
Upper Bucks County	Hart Rufe	215 257-8677	wrufe@tradenet.net	12/19/1999
Warren	??			??
Washington	Roy Ickes	724 228-3552 724 223-6118(w)	rickes@washjeff.com	12/18/1999
West Chester	Barry Blust	610 458-5616	BarryBlust@icdc.com	12/18/1999
White Mills	Voni Strasser	570 226-1460		12/18/1999
Wild Creek-Little Gap	Joel & Brad Silfies	610 826-3817	bsilfies@aol.com	12/26/1999
Williamsport	Kathleen Marabella	570 323-4008		12/19/1999
Wyncote	Martin Selzer	215 233-9090	mselzer@prius.jnj.com	12/18/1999
York	Bill DelGrande	717 854-6728		12/18/1999

been identified here including Wilson's Plovers, American Avocets and Worm-eating Warblers.

Recently, there have been articles in birding magazines describing the "river of raptors" in Veracruz, Mexico. Hawks as well as other migrants passing through this area number in the hundreds of thousands and Veracruz has only recently been recognized as a critical migration corridor. The "River of Raptors" project is a long-term migrant monitoring program, a community outreach and education program and a habitat protection program.

"El Chogoro Refuge, Panama" is a proposal to establish a wildlife refuge in the most significant remaining lowland forest block along Panama's western Pacific slope. The area contains species such as Great Tinamou and Crested Guan and is an important stopover for migrants such as Golden-winged Warblers and Baltimore Orioles. And lastly, the "Save the Dickcissel, Venezuela" is a project establishing agreements with Venezuela's farmers to develop a management plan for the Dickcissel - a species suffering from population losses.

All these projects as well as several other ones, deserve our support and we now have the means to do so. PSO members, bird clubs and other organizations interested in helping can contact Mike Parr at the American Bird Conservancy by calling 1-888-BIRDMAG or E-mail him at mparr@abcbirds.org. Additional information can also be obtained by writing the American Bird Conservancy at 1250 24th St. NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20037.

— Mark Henry, Conservation Chairperson

A REPORT FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

Lub dub, lub dub...

raced my heart as I cruised west toward Morgantown, site of the 10th anniversary meeting of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology. I asked myself my eternal questions: "Why are you doing this?" and "What have you gotten yourself into now?" After all, I am merely a rank amateur backyard bird watcher. An ornithologist I am not. What delusions of grandeur! How dare I foist myself on a gathering meant for REAL birders?!

After spending the weekend of September 24 with the PSO group, only one word can sum up my trepidation: PSHAW! I haven't met a birder I didn't like, and the PSO meeting left that sentiment unchanged. A friendlier, more helpful flock of birders would be difficult to find. Imparting knowledge willingly to the less experienced comes naturally to them.

And gaining knowledge was, after all, a top priority for me. Having eschewed a college education in the '70s, I've since discovered that I have an unquenchable thirst for enlightenment. This budding birding passion has followed suit. I want to LEARN!

A brief PSO business meeting followed Friday evening's registration and social hour. Afterwards, the various leaders gave an overview of their scheduled birding trips. After the driest summer on record for over thirty years, we were forewarned that the recent Hurricane Floyd's deluge was threatening the likelihood of seeing the great numbers and varieties that had been present on the mudflats. Sunday's special field trip in search of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow was proclaimed a wash-out. Islands in the Susquehanna River were now submerged, negating any habitat for the targeted species.

Saturday dawned somewhat hazily, and I opted to do the on-your-own field trip to the Route 183 Hawk Watch along the Blue Mountains, giving this lazy birder some extra sleep time. (This was a vacation, after all.) Circumventing Blue Marsh Lake was no easy task, as birding with fellow Berks Countian Joan Silagy is always a delight. And passing up Lake Ontelaunee with eagle-eyed Katrina Knight was equally difficult.



Talk about an individualized education! I joined Gloria Bickel and Dave Brandes at the hawk watch. They took me under their wings, so to speak, and pulled out all the stops. True teachers, once they had pointed out field marks and flight idiosyncracies, they invited me to learn by having me call out approaching raptors. Admittedly, I was wrong most of the time, but isn't there an adage about "learning from your mistakes?" Ten species of raptors and two wind-dancing ravens later, plus some Monarch Butterflies for good measure, and I was sure I was in heaven! (They saw eleven species - I just missed the Peregrine...)

Our return to the afternoon programs was timed to the minute, as we couldn't abide missing a single bird.

Gloria's young grandson, Matt, was presented with a hat. It's always a pleasure to welcome a newcomer into the birding fraternity, and kids like Matt are our birding future.

Information-gathering continued into the late afternoon. In his talk about the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee, Frank Haas reminded us of our fallibility when identifying birds. Whether having birded less than five years or more than fifty-five, we all make mistakes! The importance of careful documentation was stressed.

Nature writer Scott Weidensaul entranced the audience with his description of Saw-whet Owl banding. If head lamps and mist nets had been readily available, I do believe all of us would have willingly followed him into the dark woods for a sleep-deprivation exercise. The Pied Piper of Pennsylvania cast a magical spell.

After Dave Brandes' report on the spring migration of Golden Eagles, I was ready to pack my bags and head for the hills to witness this awesome spectacle. Guess I'll have to give it a few months! Simultaneously, I may finally get the opportunity to identify on my own some of those tricky migrating warblers who, according to Paul Rodewald, are most inclined to stop over in suburban forest habitat.

Habitat is the key for the object of our affection, the birds, and Scott Klinger of the Pennsylvania Game Commission promotes the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program as the way to go to restore grassland birds in the farmland habitat. His message? Something needs to be done before it's too late.



After Saturday's banquet (no cooking and no clean up required!), Ed Fingerhood was recognized posthumously for his efforts with the 1999 Earl Poole Award.

PSOers were then treated to an evening of spishing with Pete Dunne. What a character! He made us laugh at ourselves, as we perfected all possible techniques of spishing. Maybe spishing is a substitute for patience, but I've been practicing diligently in the car, with Windex and paper towels close at hand, as advised.

A breakfast buffet on Sunday fueled the fires for an early morning bird walk. Birders again went in all directions. As a substitute for the Susquehanna trip, Deuane Hoffman led a merry band to the Conejohela

Flats, where they scoped ten species of shorebirds. I had signed up for the Glen Morgan Lake trip, and we enjoyed the lovely weather in our walk around the park. A nice variety of waterfowl and a few migrant passerines did cooperate.

A sign of a successful outing is when the participants don't want it to end. I don't think any of us were in a hurry to head home. I met some wonderful new friends, we saw a good number of birds, and I learned enough to keep me very busy until the NEXT PSO meeting. Best of all, it was FUN!

-- Amy Francisco

PSO NEWS

Elections were held at the annual meeting.

Officers:

Alan Gregory — President
Doug Gross — Vice-president
Roger Higbee — Secretary
Eugene Zielinski — Treasurer

Other Board Members:

Dan Brauning
Frank Haas (Pennsylvania Birds)
Margaret Higbee
Shonah Hunter (re-elected)
Rudy Keller
Katrina Knight (Newsletter Editor)
Arlene Koch
John Salvetti
Mary Jane Seipler (newly elected)

Tentative plans call for the next annual meeting to take place in the spring.

Members are welcome to submit articles, information, suggestions and ideas for this newsletter. Contact Katrina Knight at PO Box 6802, Wyomissing, PA 19610 or (610) 372-3671 or kknight@epix.net.



ANNUAL MEETING BIRD LIST

1. Pied-billed Grebe
2. Double-crested Cormorant
3. Great Blue Heron
4. Great Egret
5. Green Heron
6. Black-crowned Night-heron
7. Black Vulture
8. Turkey Vulture
9. Canada Goose
10. Mute Swan
11. Wood Duck
12. Gadwall
13. American Wigeon
14. American Black Duck
15. Mallard
16. Blue-winged Teal
17. Northern Shoveler
18. Green-winged Teal
19. Ruddy Duck
20. Osprey
21. Bald Eagle
22. Northern Harrier
23. Sharp-shinned Hawk
24. Cooper's Hawk
25. Red-shouldered Hawk
26. Broad-winged Hawk
27. Red-tailed Hawk
28. American Kestrel
29. Merlin
30. Peregrine Falcon
31. Ring-necked Pheasant
32. Ruffed Grouse
33. American Coot
34. American Golden-Plover
35. Killdeer
36. Greater Yellowlegs
37. Solitary Sandpiper
38. Spotted Sandpiper
39. White-rumped Sandpiper
40. Long-billed Dowitcher
41. Ring-billed Gull
42. Rock Dove
43. Mourning Dove
44. Common Nighthawk
45. Chimney Swift
46. Belted Kingfisher
47. Red-bellied Woodpecker
48. Downy Woodpecker
49. Hairy Woodpecker
50. Northern Flicker
51. Eastern Wood-pewee
52. empidonax species
53. Eastern Phoebe
54. Blue-headed Vireo
55. Red-eyed Vireo
56. Blue Jay
57. American Crow
58. Fish Crow
59. Common Raven
60. Tree Swallow
61. Bank Swallow
62. Barn Swallow
63. Carolina Chickadee
64. Black-capped Chickadee
65. Tufted Titmouse
66. Red-breasted Nuthatch
67. White-breasted Nuthatch
68. Carolina Wren
69. House Wren
70. Ruby-crowned Kinglet
71. Eastern Bluebird
72. Veery
73. Swainson's Thrush
74. Wood Thrush
75. American Robin
76. Gray Catbird
77. Northern Mockingbird
78. Brown Thrasher
79. European Starling
80. Cedar Waxwing
81. Tennessee Warbler
82. Nashville Warbler
83. Northern Parula
84. Magnolia Warbler
85. Cape May Warbler
86. Black-throated Blue Warbler
87. Black-throated Green Warbler
88. Blackburnian Warbler
89. Palm Warbler
90. Bay-breasted Warbler
91. Blackpoll Warbler
92. American Redstart
93. Common Yellowthroat
94. Yellow-breasted Chat
95. Scarlet Tanager
96. Eastern Towhee
97. Chipping Sparrow
98. Field Sparrow
99. Song Sparrow
100. Lincoln's Sparrow
101. Swamp Sparrow
102. White-throated Sparrow
103. White-crowned Sparrow
104. Northern Cardinal
105. Rose-breasted Grosbeak
106. Blue Grosbeak
107. Indigo Bunting
108. Red-winged Blackbird
109. Eastern Meadowlark
110. Common Grackle
111. Brown-headed Cowbird
112. Baltimore Oriole
113. House Finch
114. American Goldfinch
115. House Sparrow

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

This is a listing of events in Pennsylvania that might be of interest to birders. All events submitted to the editor will be considered for publication, limited by available space and other considerations at the whim of the editor.

Various - The Erie Outing Club sponsors a variety of non-motorized outdoor activities - walks, biking, canoe trips, etc. which might be of interest to birders in the area. For more information see www.erie.net/~treks/outing.htm or call Keith Born at 814-868-9403

January 29 & February 27, 2000 - Eagle Foray - Delaware Water Gap, Bushkill Access 8:30 AM - contact Chris Turn at 570-588-6850 or birder@ptdprolog.net for more information.

March 4, 2000, 9AM - 5PM - Pennsylvania Wetlands Workshop, Levitz Park (near Swatara State Park) - Hosted by the Pennsylvania Audubon Society, National Audubon Wetlands Campaign, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Sierra Club and local conservation groups. This event will feature updates on the status of Pennsylvania's wetlands and the laws and policies intended to protect them, a strategy session for participants to address some of the threats to the state's wetlands, a hands-on media & communications workshop where participants will learn about and practice getting a message out in the media and weather permitting, a tour of the local wetlands. Registration is \$10 and participation is limited. Contact the Wetlands Campaign at (360) 709-9695 or send email to lmitchell@audubon.org for additional information.

Memorial Day Weekend - Mt. Davis Bioblitz - Contact Dale Jeffrey at 814 662-4291 or yughwtch@wpia.net

Weekly - "Birds and Nature" (radio program) - Monday through Friday, 4-6PM - WPIT-AM 730, Pittsburgh, hosted by Scott Shalaway.

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