

PSO Newsletter



March 2003

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Volume 14, Number 1

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK....

It's A Wonderful (Birding) Life

Jimmy Stewart, the All-American actor and star of many Frank Capra movies was born in Indiana, Pennsylvania, where we are holding our annual meeting. There's a museum in Indiana to prove it. Jimmy was known for starring in many cinematic classics. *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *The Philadelphia Story*, and *Harvey* are among the many that come to mind. If you want to be noticed, there's nothing like talking to an invisible six-foot rabbit. (For anyone too young to remember, that was *Harvey*).

One of our favorites and perhaps the ultimate yuletide movie is *It's a Wonderful Life*. That's the one where Jimmy Stewart played the small town hero, George Bailey of the good ol' Bailey Building and Loan, the only thing that keeps old man Potter from running everything in Bedford Falls. If you have not watched this movie umpteen times and don't have every line memorized, then you must not live in our house. We can turn down the sound and fill in the dialogue and the sound effects, especially for that crow that looks and sounds just a bit like a raven.

Bedford Falls could be in Pennsylvania. It's a small town where everybody knows everybody only too well. It is comforting, but suffocatingly familiar for a "bright young man" trying to get somewhere in life like our George Bailey. You hardly need to put on your turn signal because everyone knows where you're headed.

Yet, George Bailey discovered that when the chips were down he had a lot more friends than he ever dreamed he had. His neighbors knew what he was like in the worst of times, desperately dripping wet with a bleeding lip and mussed up hair, and accepted him for who he was. The

lesson our movie hero learned is that in a community you touch everyone's life. The little things that seemed trivial or annoyingly familiar one day become precious when your world is turned upside down.

Yes, *It's a Wonderful Life* is a little "Capra corny," but it touches on a truth about the value of communities and the little things in life that most of us take for granted, but these are the things that really count. In current crazy times, a lot of us have become more appreciative of the little things that make each day special. When planes start colliding with big buildings and war threatens to upend everything that we know, life tends to focus our attention. The little stuff counts. Our neighbors become important. We don't take things for granted anymore.

I hope all of you come to our meeting at Indiana, Pennsylvania, the home of Jimmy Stewart and the Todd Bird Club. The local committee has put together a terrific line-up of field trips. Todd Bird Club experts will share the local birding hotspots that will help us get to know Indiana County. There's nothing like getting a personal tour by the best guides! Each meeting we spend more time in the field than anywhere else. Our meeting will emphasize the upcoming Atlas — an exciting prospect for us, the state's birding community. It will be loads of fun.

All that said, the meeting highlight is always getting to see our friends again and sharing in our discoveries and enjoyments. Electronic mail and phones are convenient but no substitute for seeing good people with their boots wet and their hair mussed up.

We'll see a lot of birds and may even find Zuzu's petals. See you at Indiana!

— Doug Gross

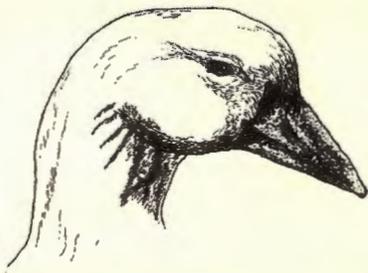
The Conservation Corner

Drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was rejected last year by a bipartisan vote in the U.S. Senate. The vote reflected public opinion that the Arctic Refuge should not be despoiled for the sake of a limited amount of petroleum.

However, now that the Republicans are in control of the U.S. Senate, there is a new scheme to allow drilling for oil in the Arctic Refuge. The scheme is to attach an amendment to the budget reconciliation measure that will allow for oil drilling. What makes this attack even more insidious is that the amendment won't be open to public debate and can't be stalled by a filibuster. Further, by putting this amendment on the budget reconciliation, the eight Republican Senators who voted against drilling last year will be under a lot of pressure to change their vote so that the budget measure will pass. This approach is a "sneak attack" on the Arctic Refuge and must be stopped.

As PSO members are aware, the Arctic Refuge is a pristine area where numerous species of wildlife breed, including many migratory birds. To despoil the Refuge and upset wildlife breeding areas for the sake of a limited amount of oil is, in the opinion of many, unconscionable and unwarranted. So, once again, PSO members are being asked to contact their federal legislators to voice their opposition to drilling in the Arctic Refuge. Letters to Senator Arlen Specter and Senator Rick Santorum can be sent to the Senators at the following addresses: U.S. Senate Washington, D.C. 20510. Senator Specter's telephone number is 202-224-4254 and Senator Santorum's number is 202-224-6324. Letters to your Representative can be sent to U.S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515. Please take the time to contact your legislators – the fate of the Arctic Refuge is up for grabs and we can make a difference.

– Mark Henry
Conservation Chairperson



The Raven Reporter



Tales of Discovery from the Special Areas Project

SAP Progress

The Special Areas Project continues to grow in quantity and quality of data. The SAP database now includes 6118 field trips taken in 127 locations throughout the Commonwealth. The newest SAP areas were listed in the last "Raven Reporter." Volunteers have contributed more than 17,000 party hours to the project. Since each SAP "party hour" represents at least 2 people, birders have spent at least 34,000 hours collecting bird data in Special Areas. This is a tremendous success because it represents a continued commitment to "birding with a purpose" by members of the society.

Gifford Pinchot State Park Has a New Coordinator

We would like to publicly thank and congratulate Pat Sabold for her contributions to the Special Areas Project. She has really taken the bull by the horns at Gifford Pinchot. Pat has replaced the redoubtable Grace Randolph as the SAP coordinator at this popular state park. Many of you know Pat as "Vireogirl" on the PA Birds list server.

Gifford Pinchot State Park bird data are valuable because this York County park serves as a recreational focus for the urbanites of the Harrisburg-York area. It is the place where many neophyte birdwatchers are introduced to a natural community of birds. With its woods and small lake, Gifford Pinchot offers a variety of habitats and bird species. It is a good place to start birding adventures and a nice place to escape the busy urban life.

Pat has collected a lot of bird data since 2001 when she accepted the role as SAP Coordinator at Gifford Pinchot. She recently sent in 41 field trips from 2001 and another 28 from 2002. That is a lot of bird data. Wisely, she is providing the park staff with her data. This simple act informs and educates the people who are responsible for managing its resources and educating the public about the nature found there.

Showing that birding is more than counting and listing birds, Pat has also been leading bird walks at the park. When she is not doing that, she is leading wildflower walks there, too. This really shows leadership and initiative. I am very grateful and appreciative of Pat's efforts, and I hope all of you recognize her for her fantastic contributions. We need more birders like the "vireogirl."

SAP as an Atlas Training Technique

Pennsylvania is going to begin its second Breeding Bird Atlas in 2004. The first Atlas, conducted from 1983 through 1989, was a tremendous success. It started tentatively with the first year as a "test year." In that first year, 45 individual birders collected data in 192 blocks. The Atlas grew each year after that in interest, data-gathering, and expertise of the volunteers. Back in those days, the Pennsylvania birding community was very fragmented and disjointed. There was no state bird society (that's PSO), no *Pennsylvania Birds*, no Audubon Important Bird Areas projects, no Cornell University projects, and there was no computer network of information flow that we all take for granted today. It was difficult to find local birding leaders to act as regional coordinators back then.

Atlas veterans know that the second round will have many advantages over the first but will pose its own challenges. For one, there are many more birders in the state, but they are still distributed unequally over the state. If you peruse the PA Birds network or our magazine, you will notice that many locations get an abundance of attention and reports while some counties go unreported. Birders converge on hot-spots with known rarities, but the remote forests, swamps, and barrens are rarely reported. In the next Atlas, all of these locations will need to be reported. Many birders are astute at identification, but have little experience with observing and recording breeding bird behavior. It might be a good idea to start early by mentoring newer birders by using the SAP techniques. SAP uses the standard breeding codes that are useful for recording breeding bird behavior. SAP also emphasizes searches for rare or hard-to-find birds. These will be very useful skills for the next Atlas.

The Pennsylvania birding community can get a jump on the next generation Atlas by teaching its members more about basic birding techniques now. Take more people on SAP trips and emphasize the breeding bird data gathering. Make special efforts to find those elusive night birds, marsh birds, and diurnal raptors. Get the gang primed up before we reach the starting gate. SAP just isn't a project, it is a mentoring and training ground for the next generation of successful Atlas volunteers.

Pennsylvania's Natural and Wild Areas

The Special Areas Project has focused on the state's natural and wild areas. Volunteers have gathered data in several locations throughout the state that have been designated as natural, wild, scenic, or wilderness areas by the DCNR Department of Forestry, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), local governments, private organizations, and private land-owners. Thanks to all of you for contributing this extremely valuable data to the Special Areas inventory. A summary of these locations is given on the following pages in tabular form. As you can see, some locations have been birded extremely well. I would especially like to recognize Greg Grove, Nick Bolgiano, Margaret Higbee, Edie Parnum, and Margaret Buckwalter for contributing more than 50 SAP trips to this cause. In future editions, I will review data collected in our natural area SAPs and give more credit to the birders who have collected bird data there.

In 2003, we would like to target natural and wild areas for SAP inventory. In the year before the Atlas, these locations could inspire us to give the next Atlas the complete coverage that it deserves. Inventories of natural and wild areas serve as benchmarks of healthy bird communities. When "natural communities" are under increased stress by development, fragmentation, and biological infestations (diseases, pests), our data collection may serve to remind Pennsylvanians of the value and importance of these best areas for breeding birds. With the hemlock wooly adelgid ravaging our state tree and the natural communities where it lives, bird inventories document how this tree provides habitat for many species.

Targeting these natural and wild areas will give the state's birders an excuse to explore the deepest part of the state's forests. That will give a head start at the Atlas's complete state coverage.

Please consider taking the Natural Area challenge and adopt a Natural or Wild Area for your birding away from home. If you are yearning for something different from the usual birding grind, grab your binoculars and a map and head for the mountains. Many of the most remote and wild locations of the state remain unexplored and undocumented by the state's birders. Since most natural areas are forested rather than a mosaic of habitats, the species lists may not be very long. However, they may have large number of many forest interior or area-sensitive birds not commonly found elsewhere—large populations of Cerulean Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Black-throated Blue Warbler, or Swainson's Thrush. City-bound birders would revel in some of our natural and wild areas where Hermit Thrush and Black-throated Green Warbler are among the most common breeding species.

SAP would very much appreciate more data from those locations that have ten or fewer field trips in its database (see the first table below) and any of the locations listed in the second table on the next page.

Pennsylvania's Natural and Wild Areas That Have Been Inventoried by Special Areas Project			
Name	Type	County	SAP Status
Adam's Swamp Natural Area	TNC/Private	Monroe	Fewer than 10 trips
Alan Seeger Natural Area	DCNR	Centre	Over 100 trips
Algerine Swamp Natural Area	DCNR	Lycoming	Fewer than 10 trips
Bear Meadows Natural Area	DCNR	Centre	More than 50 trips
Beaver Creek Natural Area	County	Clarion	More than 50 trips
Big Flat Laurel Natural Area	DCNR	Centre	More than 50 trips
Blacklick Valley Natural Area	County	Indiana	More than 10 trips
Bruce Lake Natural Area	DCNR	Pike	More than 50 trips
Detweiler's Run Natural Area	DCNR	Huntington	More than 100 trips
Forest Dutlinger Natural Area	DCNR	Clinton	Fewer than 10 trips
Frank Masland Natural Area	DCNR	Perry	Fewer than 10 trips
Hammersley Wild Area	DCNR	Clinton/Potter	Fewer than 10 trips
Hemlocks Natural Area	DCNR	Perry	Fewer than 10 trips
Hickory Creek Wilderness Area	ANF	Warren	More than 10 trips
Jakey Hollow Natural Area	DCNR	Columbia	Fewer than 10 trips
Kirby Park Natural Area	Municipal	Luzerne	10 trips
Long Pond Reserve	TNC/Municipal/County	Monroe	Fewer than 10 trips
Pine Creek Gorge Scenic Area	DCNR	Tioga	10 trips
Plummer's Hollow Sanctuary	Private	Blair	Fewer than 10 trips
Quebec Run Wild Area	DCNR	Fayette	Fewer than 10 trips
Reynolds Spring Natural Area	DCNR	Tioga	Fewer than 10 trips
Rosecrans Bog Natural Area	DCNR	Clinton	Fewer than 10 trips
Tamarack Swamp Natural Area	DCNR	Clinton	Fewer than 10 trips
Thickhead Wild Area	DCNR	Centre/Huntington	More than 50 trips
Tionesta Scenic Area	ANF	Warren/McKean	Fewer than 10 trips
Two Mile Run Preserve	TNC	Monroe	Fewer than 10 trips
White's Woods	Township	Indiana	Fewer than 10 trips
Wolf Run Wild Area	ANF	Lycoming	Fewer than 10 trips
Wykoff Run Natural Area	DCNR	Cameron	Fewer than 10 trips

Adopt a natural area and send in your data. Even a relatively small set of field trips could yield enough information to assemble a site checklist. There are no checklists for most natural areas in the state.

Natural and Wild Areas Especially Targeted for SAP in 2003			
Location	Type	County/Forest	Description
Asaph Natural Area	DCNR	Tioga/Tioga SF	Rugged, remote forest
Black Ash Swamp	DCNR	Tioga/Tioga SF	Old beaver meadow and swamp
Buckhorn Natural Area	DCNR	Pike/Delaware SF	Mountain swamp and headwaters, ledges
Bucktail Natural Area	DCNR	Clinton and Cameron/Sproul	Huge scenic preserve along West Branch Susquehanna River
Burn's Run Wild Area	DCNR	Clinton/Sproul SF	Remote forest crossed by Chuck Keiper Trail
Carbaugh Run Natural Area	DCNR	Adams/Caledonia SF	Pine-hemlock forest along good stream
Clear Shade Wild Area	DCNR	Somerset/Gallitzen SF	Large deciduous forest, trout stream
Cranberry Swamp Natural Area	DCNR	Clinton/Sproul SF	Mountain bog along Chuck Keiper Trail
Devil's Elbow Natural Area	DCNR	Lycoming/Tiadaghton SF	Headwater wetlands
East Branch Swamp Natural Area	DCNR	Clinton/Sproul SF	Old growth hemlock forest
Fish Dam Wild Area	DCNR	Clinton/Sproul SF	Large isolated forest
Goat Hill Serpentine Barrens Natural Area	DCNR	Chester/Valley Forge SF	Pitch pine and scrub oak barrens
The Hook Natural Area	DCNR	Union/Bald Eagle SF	Large, remote forest; complete watershed
Lebo Pine Natural Area	DCNR	Lycoming/Tiadaghton SF	Old growth red pine, white birch, oaks
Little Juniata Natural Area	DCNR	Huntington/Rothrock SF	Remote water gap forest
Lower Jerry Run Natural Area	DCNR	Cameron and Clinton/Elk SF	Old growth hemlock and pine
Martin Hill Wild Area	DCNR	Bedford/Buchanon SF	Rugged mountain forest in SE PA
Miller Run Natural Area	DCNR	Lycoming/Tiadaghton SF	Huge, rugged forest with many streams
Mount Davis Natural Area	DCNR	Somerset/Forbes SF	Highest point in PA, mixed oak forest
Pennel Run Natural Area	DCNR	Pike/Delaware SF	Poconos forest along Thunder Swamp Trail
Snyder-Middleswarth Natural Area	DCNR	Snyder/Bald Eagle SF	Virgin white pine and hemlock
Spruce Swamp Natural Area	DCNR	Lackawanna/Lackawanna SF	Spruce forest and glacial bog
Stillwater Natural Area	DCNR	Pike/Delaware SF	Regenerating hardwood, spruce and fir forest
Sweet Root Natural Area	DCNR	Bedford/Buchanon SF	Old growth hemlock and oak
Tall Timbers Natural Area	DCNR	Snyder/Bald Eagle SF	Large oaks, white pines, and hemlocks
Tannersville Cranberry Bog	TNC	Monroe/TNC	Boreal conifer bog
White Mountain Natural Area	DCNR	Union/Bald Eagle SF	Large forest along Penn's Creek

For more information about the PSO Special Areas Project, please contact:

Douglas A. Gross
PSO Special Areas Project Coordinator
Susquehanna SES Environmental Laboratory
804 Salem Boulevard
Berwick, PA 18603

Phone: 570-542-2191
e-mail: dougross@sunlink.net

Annual Meeting 2003

The 15th annual PSO meeting will be held May 16-18 in Indiana, PA, at the Holiday Inn, 1395 Wayne Avenue. Registration will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Friday. A social will be held at 7:00, followed by the business meeting at 8:00 p.m. Field trips will depart from the Holiday Inn at 6:30 a.m. on both Saturday and Sunday.

Saturday's Field Trips

Yellow Creek State Park – led by Gloria Lamer and Georgette Syster. This will be an easy trip with minimal walking to explore the main recreational area of the park. Shorebirds and late waterfowl are possible as well as a good assortment of passerines. Target species include Willow Flycatcher, migrant warblers, and Orchard and Baltimore Orioles. Black Terns are fairly regular. More than 100 species have been listed on a mid-May Big Day at Yellow Creek.

Yellow Creek State Park – led by John Taylor. This is a trip for the avid hiker/birder. We'll climb hills and cover the interior of the park in search of vireos, warblers, and other passerines, but we will focus on warblers. One of our target species is Golden-winged Warbler which nests in the park.

Blue Spruce Co. Park – led by Ray Winstead and Steve Graff. Blue Spruce is one of the best places in the county for migrant passerines. We'll hike several of the best trails in the park. Nesting species include Yellow-throated Vireo, Kentucky and Hooded Warblers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Last year a "Brewster's" warbler was on territory here for several months.

Blacklick Valley Natural Area – led by Lee Carnahan and Dory Jacobs. This mostly wooded area located east of Dilltown involves a long, but mostly level, walk. Target species are Ruffed Grouse, Pileated Woodpecker, Black-throated Green Warbler, Prairie Warbler, and Purple Finches

as well as a plethora of migrants. Am. Woodcock is a possibility.

West Lebanon-Elders Ridge Strip Trip – led by Marcy Cunkelman. This will be a mostly driving tour of the reclaimed strip mines on the Indiana-Armstrong Co. line with target species including Bobolinks and Henslow's, Savannah, and Grasshopper Sparrows.

West Penn Trail – Led by Len and Linda Hess. This is an easy, flat walk that has the potential to produce a good species list including Osprey, Bald Eagle, Broad-winged Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Acadian Flycatcher, a variety of swallows, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Late waterfowl are possible.

Since Wild Turkeys are in season, please be sure to bring your fluorescent orange with you for our outings. There is no hunting at Blue Spruce or Blacklick Valley, but the remaining areas are all open to hunting.

Sunday's Trips

The following field trips will be repeated on Sunday:

Yellow Creek State Park
Blue Spruce Co. Park
Blacklick Valley Natural Area

SGL 273 – led by Carol Guba and Patrick Snickles. This Sunday morning walk will explore our most consistent spot in the county for Worm-eating Warbler and a myriad of other breeding warblers including Black-throated Green Warbler, Am. Redstart, Black-and-white and Cerulean Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Canada and Kentucky Warblers. This outing will follow a Game Commission Road, but half of the walking will be uphill on a moderately steep slope.

Conemaugh Floodlands – led by Lee Carnahan. This area is noted for its nesting N. Bobwhites, Black-billed Cuckoos, Willow Flycatchers, White-eyed Vireos, Gray Catbirds, Brown Thrashers, Yellow-breasted Chats, and Baltimore Orioles. This is a long but level walk.

Conemaugh Dam – led by Marcy Cunkelman. We'll start by hiking Woodchuck Trail then head to the river. Nesting species include Yellow-throated Vireo; Common Raven; N. Parula; Cerulean, Yellow-throated, and Hooded Warblers; and Louisiana Waterthrush.

Bow Ridge – led by Len and Linda Hess. This section of Conemaugh Dam boasts nesting Red-headed Woodpeckers

PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY
15th Annual Meeting
16-18 May 2003
Holiday Inn
Indiana, PA

Name(s) (include each person registering) _____

Mailing Address _____

	No. of Persons	X	Cost	=	Total \$
PSO Member	_____		\$25.00		_____
Member's spouse/guest	_____		\$20.00		_____
Non-Member	_____		\$30.00		_____
Non-Member's spouse/guest	_____		\$20.00		_____
Children under 18	_____		\$12.00		_____
After Deadline, April 30, 2003	_____		\$ 5.00		_____

Holiday Inn (724-463-3561): \$79 if reservations made before April 30. Please state Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology meeting.

For other lodging options:

Best Western University Inn 724-349-9620

Comfort Inn 724-465-7000

The Inn-Towner Motel 724-463-8726

Scotts Motel 724-465-5571

Super 8 724-349-4600

Twin Pines Motel 724-465-6161

Campgrounds are about 20-30 minutes away:

L&M Campground 724-479-3264

Wheel-In Campground 724-354-3693

Yellow Creek Campground 724-463-3860

Subtotal (from this side) _____

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology, Annual Meeting, 16-18 May, 2003,
 Indiana, PA

Name _____ No. of Persons _____

Amount received _____ Balance _____

Thank you. We look forward to seeing you. Shonah A. Hunter (570) 893-2062

shunter@lhup.edu

No. persons X Cost = Total

Friday Social (indicate if attending) _____ No Charge

MEALS

Breakfast **ON YOUR OWN**
 (several convenience stores & fast food nearby)

Lunch **ON YOUR OWN**

Banquet Buffet \$18.50 _____ X \$18.50 \$ _____
 [Italian Baked Cod, Honey Lager Chicken,
 Baked Stuffed Shells (vegetarian), or
 Sliced Roasted Sirloin]

Banquet only \$20.50 _____ X \$20.50 \$ _____
 (no registration, sessions, or field trips)

Sunday Breakfast **ON YOUR OWN**

Subtotal \$ _____

Subtotal from other side \$ _____

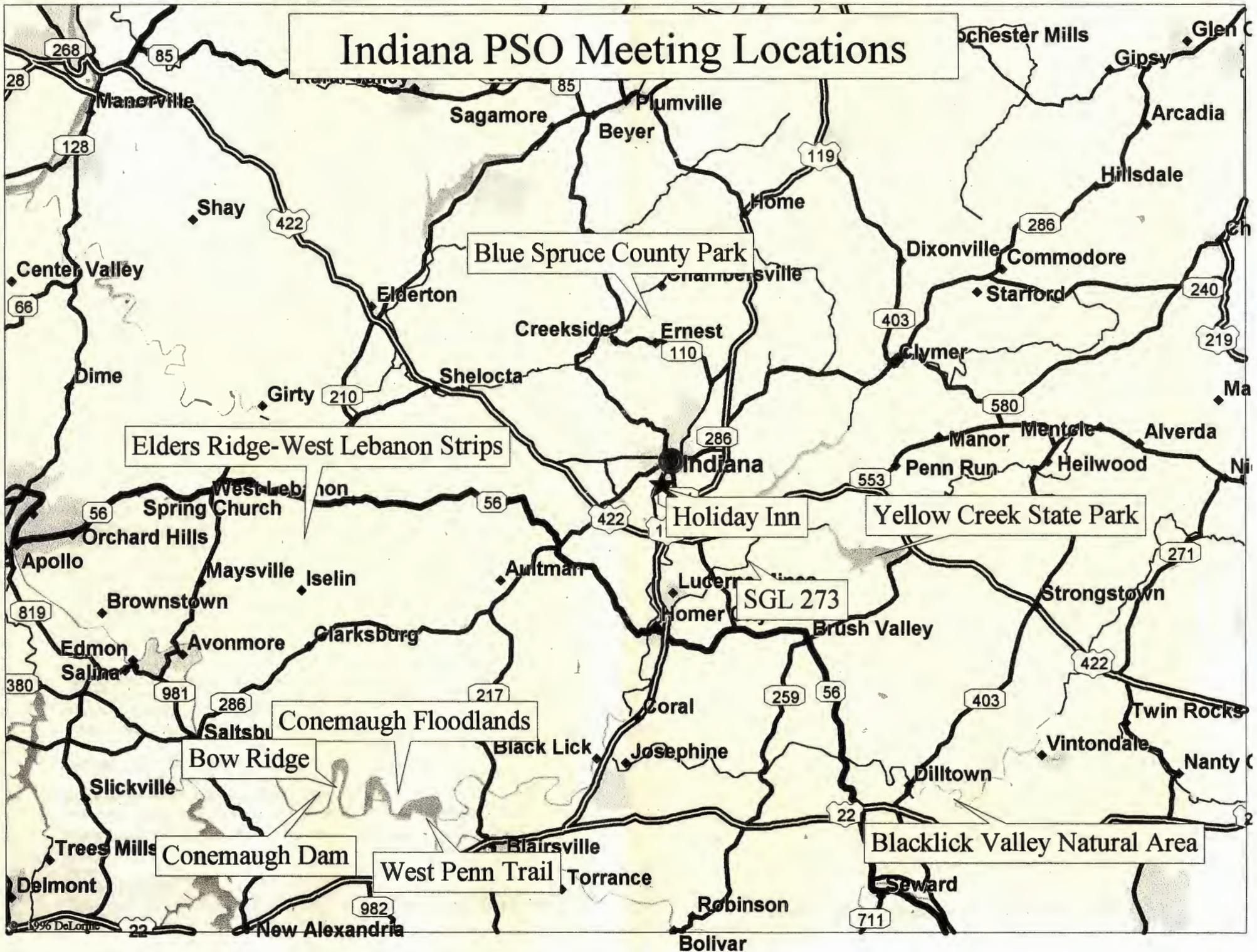
GRAND TOTAL \$ _____

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

Shonah A. Hunter
 Dept. of Biological Sciences
 Lock Haven University
 Lock Haven, PA 17745

Registration Deadline: April 30, 2003

Indiana PSO Meeting Locations



as well as all the species listed above under Conemaugh Dam. There will be some overlap in these two trips, but the Conemaugh Dam group will start at the other end of the park.

Prince Gallitzin State Park – led by John Salvetti. This state park, located in nearby Cambria County, is an excellent place to find Sora and Virginia Rail, Northern Waterthrush, and Swamp Sparrow besides numerous migrant warblers. Late waterfowl and shorebirds are possible.

In addition, we are planning to hold pre- and post-meeting Yellow Creek field trips on both Friday, the 16th, and Monday, the 19th. Anyone who is interested in participating in the Friday trip should contact the Higbees at bcoriole@twd.net or 724-354-3493. You may sign up for the Monday morning trip at the meeting.

Afternoon Sessions

Four afternoon programs have been planned beginning at 1:00 on Saturday:

- ▶ Learn how Pennsylvania's second Breeding Bird Atlas will differ from the first. Dan Brauning will give perspective in *Breeding Bird Atlasing – Past and Future in Pennsylvania and Surrounding Areas*.
- ▶ Tim O'Connell, who is designing the atlas methods for round two, will speak on *Sampling Design Considerations for Pennsylvania's Second Breeding Bird Atlas*.
- ▶ Bob Mulvihill, the coordinator for the second atlas project, will discuss his research at Powdermill Nature Reserve in *Powdermill's Top 40! Highlights from Four Decades of Bird Banding*.
- ▶ Michael Carey, of the University of Scranton, who has conducted research on avian behavioral ecology and sociobiology, will present *Fifteen Years in an Old Field: Field Sparrow Breeding Biology*.

Banquet

The banquet will be held at the Holiday Inn at 7:00 on Saturday evening. The buffet will include a choice of:

- ▶ Italian Baked Cod
- ▶ Honey Lager Chicken
- ▶ Baked Stuffed Shells (vegetarian)
- ▶ Sliced Roasted Sirloin

Meals also include rolls, tossed salad, potato, vegetable, coffee, tea, iced tea, and dessert.

The banquet speaker will be Game Commission biologist John Dunn. John will take us on an Arctic expedition in *North to Nunavut - Investigating the Ecology of Pennsylvania's Migratory Geese and Swans*.

Attention: Non-Birding Spouses

Don't stay home and be bored! Come to Indiana, hometown of Jimmy Stewart, and visit the Jimmy Stewart Museum, located at the intersection of Philadelphia Street and North Ninth in Indiana. Stop by the life-sized statue of Jimmy in front of the courthouse next door. Travel east on Philadelphia Street, turn left onto Jimmy Stewart Boulevard, and proceed one block to the base of a long set of concrete steps that lead to Vinegar Hill. Jimmy's boyhood home stands at the top of the steps, on the left, and remains a private residence today.

Indiana County also boasts four covered bridges, so if you're a covered bridge fan, there is a tour route mapped out for you. Maps will be available.

Biking is popular on the Hoodlebug and Ghost Town Trails. Visit nearby Eliza Furnace, a historic site, one of Pennsylvania's best preserved iron furnaces dating back to 1846. The furnace is located near Dilltown along the Ghost Town Trail.

For the golfers, there are four golf courses in the nearby area.

Smicksburg, an Amish/English community located only one-half hour northwest of Indiana, offers shopping in a variety of small artisan and craft shops. Wingate Vineyard located near Smicksburg also offers tours.

For those non-birders with children who plan to stay at the Holiday Inn, the Holidome offers miniature golf, swimming, hot tubs, pool tables, a foose-ball table, and ping-pong.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania has two museums on campus, The Kipps Gallery in Sprowls Hall and the University Museum in John Sutton Hall. The latter is a nationally registered historic landmark. For more information, check www.arts.iup.edu/museum. Other information concerning the county is available at www.indiana-co-pa-tourism.org and at www.indiana-countyparks.org.

Notes from PORC

[Editor's note: In this regular feature of the Newsletter, the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee reports on its policies, procedures, and progress.]

This could be an unusually good year for the Official List of the Birds of Pennsylvania. PORC is reviewing or awaiting documentation on five potential new species: Curlew Sandpiper, California Gull, Calliope Hummingbird, Lewis's Woodpecker, and Cave Swallow. Another possible first, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, will receive a third round of voting at one member's request, after the committee failed to reach a consensus on the first two rounds.

Since the committee's 11th report in February 2002, one new species has already been added: Hammond's Flycatcher. Excellent written and photographic documentation was submitted for the famous bird at Monocacy Nature Center, Northampton County, in November-December 2000. Full details of its acceptance will be published in the committee's next report in *Pennsylvania Birds*. Hammond's previously had been considered hypothetical in the state because, as Jerry McWilliams and Dan Brauning explain in *The Birds of Pennsylvania*, "the only specimen collected in Pennsylvania was damaged, and the identity is in question."

Meanwhile, Pennsylvania birders have been asking the committee about two waterfowl species. Here is an update:

1. After years of discussion, the committee has not added Barnacle Goose to the list of wild birds, despite at least 35 appearances in Pennsylvania. Virtually all state and provincial records committees are reluctant to list it because Barnacle Geese are widely and commonly bred by waterfowl propagators, and many cases of intentional and accidental releases have been documented.

Three records committee members, one each from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Connecticut, are collaborating on a major analysis of this species' patterns of temporal and geographic occurrence in North America. They have compiled more than 300 records from the United States and Canada to date, and their hope is to offer a strong basis for informed judgments by committees across the continent—especially in the Northeastern and mid-Atlantic regions.

2. Trumpeter Swans are raising a brand new question for committees in a growing number of states in the East, Midwest, and South. Birds released from government-sponsored introduction projects during the last decade in Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Ontario have begun to travel far from "home." In addition, increasing

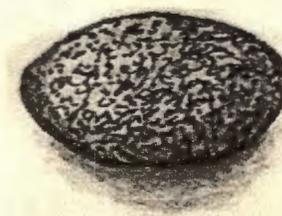
numbers of Trumpeters have been released and have escaped from private waterfowl breeders in New York and other states, and these birds are probably among the interstate wanderers as well.

Trumpeters are becoming frequent visitors in Pennsylvania, with more than 40 records in 17 counties since 1995. The reports have numbered one to six birds, and the overall total is about 80 individuals including some known repeats. Some have been unmarked young birds, which were possibly offspring of released or escaped swans that paired and bred in the wild. PORC will soon be discussing the species' status.

For a dozen of the published records in Pennsylvania, neck collars or wing tags showed that the birds were released in Ohio or Ontario. In another half-dozen cases, the observers stated explicitly that there were no collars or tags (though of course this does not necessarily mean the birds were "wild"). Unfortunately the vast majority of reports offered no indication of whether the swans were collared, tagged, leg-banded, or not. If you see a Trumpeter, please report the presence or absence of markers to your county compiler.

Many of the introduced swans have stayed close to their release points, but others apparently have begun to show regular migration patterns. For example, one bird was collared and released in Ohio, then it paired with another Trumpeter in Ontario, migrated through western Pennsylvania, wintered in Virginia, and traveled back through western Pennsylvania to Ontario where it nested the next year. Cases like this may portend a time when descendants of released or escaped birds establish permanent, self-sustaining, wild populations in a number of states. Then at some unpredictable point in the future, the Trumpeter Swan could eventually join official lists of many eastern states including Pennsylvania where records committees are watching the situation closely.

— Paul Hess, PORC Chair



The Birder's Workshop

Develop Your Bird ID & Monitoring Skills

March 8, 2003	April 5, 2003
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	
Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve Pittsburgh, PA	PP&L's Montour Preserve Montour County, PA

Fee: \$25.00 (includes snacks and handouts). Lunch will be provided.

Sponsored by: Audubon Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Game Commission, DCNR, and Wild Resources Conservation Fund

Why Have a Birder's Workshop?

Interest in birds continues to grow and as it does, so comes a need for greater information about bird populations. Many projects require the use of point counts and other methods that call for highly skilled birders, both as volunteers and as paid technicians. To address this growing need, Audubon Pennsylvania, DCNR, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission are teaming up to offer training on survey methods and bird identification. This training is geared to birders who already have solid abilities in bird identification,

particularly visual ID. The workshop will focus on how to do point counts, strategies on counting & estimating bird numbers, challenging bird ID topics (such as flycatchers, raptors, etc.), and especially improving birding by ear skills. Anyone is welcome! We will attempt to match the training to your needs.

Program Overview

8:30 a.m. Registration begins

9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Why Count Birds?

- ▶ Setting Up Point Counts
- ▶ Computer Data Entry and eBird
- ▶ IBAs and SAPs
- ▶ Bird ID Challenges — warblers, thrushes, vireos, flycatchers, sparrows, cuckoos, raptors, etc.— especially birding by ear

Included will be an outdoor field practice session

Instructors: Rob Blye, Doug Gross, Steve Hoffman, Jerry McWilliams

Any questions? Contact: Beth Sanders 717-213-6880 ext. 10; bsanders@audubon.org.

PSO Bird Quiz

How well do you know your Pennsylvania birds?

1. What familiar bird has a pinkish bill except in a limited area of its breeding range where its bill is bluish?
2. What rare winter visitors did Arthur Cleveland Bent call “birds of mystery; we never know when or where we may see these roving bands of gypsies”?
3. In *The Birds of Pennsylvania*, Jerry McWilliams and Dan Brauning said of one species, “Until a safe method of field identification is discovered ... [they] are likely to migrate through the state unidentified.” Which species?
4. What bird did Audubon think might just as well be called the “Pennsylvanian or Virginian rail”? (Don't jump to a conclusion.)
5. Trying for humor in his *Report on the Birds of Pennsylvania* in 1890, B. H. Warren described the birds of one family as “notorious for their scolding propensity, and in this particular they are not unlike some females of the human race, whose chief object in life it would appear is to always annoy those about them.” Which family?
6. In 1812 Alexander Wilson described, painted, and named a bird for a mountain in Pennsylvania -- a bird that has never been identified later with certainty. What was its name?

See Answers on page 12

Where Should Development Go?

by Alan Gregory

The borough Monica and I live in, Conyngham, is going through the the process right now of putting together its comprehensive plan. And like some other municipalities in the state, we decided to go into it jointly – with a neighboring township. This joint comprehensive plan is the document that will decide the future of the remaining wildlife habitat in our communities.

Where should new development go? Hopefully on lands of low conservation value.

What would you say when asked this question? Do you get involved in the decision-making process in your community?

Development is going to continue – growth is with us for the foreseeable future, even if there are finite limits. Decisions are made every day – every hour – regarding the future of wild areas within your neighborhood, your community.

Here are some of the notes I passed on to our planning commission. Look them over. Decide for yourself what you would say to your planning and development officials. Where do you think development should and should not go?

Of one thing we are certain, we must all get involved on the local level if just a percentage of the wildlife habitat that's still out there will be there tomorrow and the next day and 10, 20, 50 years from now.

Where to put what

New development should be clustered and natural lands left – permanently – between the clusters. Wildlife should be given wide space in the form of forested corridors that link protected areas.

There should be no development within 300 feet of any permanent stream, seep, or spring, or other type of wetland. I heard an aquatic biologist say at a conference last year that only an entire hillside is adequate buffer for a trout stream. He's right. In any case, all existing riparian forests should be left in place. And those streams whose riparian forests have been removed, in whole or in part, should be rehabilitated through aggressive reforestation efforts with native plants.

Keep the woodlots in place. While they provide little

long-term protection for natural diversity on a large scale, such places are the links that keep many people in touch with nature. Thus, all remaining woodlots should be preserved, both for practical and aesthetic reasons. These places also serve as natural sponges, sucking up in their leaf litter and understory the water of melting snow and rainfall. Already heavy runoff, would increase exponentially should forested cover be lost.

The flooding that almost regularly occurs on lands above the floodplains of local streams – exacerbated by recent road-building and housing development – can be remedied, at least to some extent, by reforesting riparian zones. Not only do riparian forests serve as filters, removing contaminants from the runoff of nearby impervious surfaces such as roads, driveways, and rooftops, they also serve as wildlife corridors, allowing critters to move from one area to another with at least a minimum of blockages, such as roads.

In the township, keep the forested land as it is today. Air quality, whether most people know it or not, is declining in the valley. And this trend can be expected to continue – and worsen – with each house, with each new development, with each new road.

Subsidizing new development

Local officials rarely think beyond the taxes new development brings. But nearly all such growth is subsidized by existing taxpayers. In some cases, communities would be better off by buying and preserving all remaining natural lands, particularly forests, rather than continue subsidizing new growth.

Stop development on the slopes or tops of ridges surrounding the valley. Prohibit more development on the slopes or peak of the surrounding ridges. These forests are far too valuable, both aesthetically and functionally, to give up to development.

Mining

All valley municipalities must agree on where mining – particularly quarrying – will be allowed. Stringent controls on where it's not appropriate should be enacted and enforced. The state Legislature should amend the Township Code to stop requiring that each and every township zone for all possible land uses.

Traffic

Traffic on Route 93 has quadrupled in the 13 years we've lived in Conyngham. Accident rates are rising. Noise rates are rising. Pollution is assuredly on the upswing. These

are all negatives that impact the quality of life of existing residents. While local government leaders see “growth” as desirable or even as a life or death struggle, it is, in fact, just the opposite. The search for additional tax revenue – usually accomplished through the subdividing of open space – carries great risks, both immediate and long-term. Tax revenue is one thing, but existing residents subsidize new growth. Study after study has documented this hidden cost – a cost (subsidy) to which local government leaders pay little or no heed. Existing property owners pay to support the new and/or expanded public services needed to accommodate new growth. Who’s paying for state troopers to respond to emergencies and crime scenes in Hazle Township and even here in the valley?

Roads

Build no new roads, especially in forested areas. Roads fragment habitat, making it less useful for a wide range of species, particularly forest-interior songbirds. Already, it is increasingly hard to find species such as the Wood Thrush, nesting in the shrinking woodlots of the valley. Many species are in decline. While a lot of folks don’t give a squat, this is a matter of preserving our natural heritage. Most folks, while they may not admit it or even be conscious of it, like to hear songbirds singing in the spring months. But there will come a time when only a few species hang on in the face of overwhelming development: starlings, crows, House Sparrows, house mice, rats.

Those are some of the points I made when asked for input.

What would you say?

Ornithological Literature Notes

[Editor’s note: This is the sixth in an occasional series highlighting recent publications of interest to Pennsylvania ornithologists and birders.]

Amanda and Paul Rodewald were well known to PSO members during their years of research in ecology and ornithology at Penn State, and they now have teaching and research positions at the Ohio State University. Each of them coauthored papers published in 2000 in *The Wilson Bulletin*:

- ★ Influence of landscape and habitat characteristics on Ovenbird pairing success. Amanda D. Rodewald and Richard H. Yahner (Vol. 112, No. 2, pp. 238-242).

This study in central Pennsylvania during May and June 1998 took a different approach from the many studies that have focused on the impact on birds of highly altered landscapes and extensive forest fragmentation. In this case the study area was heavily forested and had relatively limited disturbance by agriculture and clearcutting within a radius of one kilometer from the sites.

The data suggested that in landscapes with extensive and contiguous forest, Ovenbirds’ pairing success is not reduced by limited amounts of habitat loss in the surrounding landscape, but is primarily a function of local habitat characteristics. A particularly important characteristic appears to be depth of leaf litter (where Ovenbirds typically forage), which the authors found to be strongly associated with the ability of males to acquire mates.

The authors commented that in addition to studies of pairing and nesting success in highly modified landscapes, “Examination of these phenomena in relatively forested landscapes is essential to understand patterns and thresholds of habitat alteration that can be tolerated by sensitive forest birds.”

- ★ Use of successional habitat and fruit resources by songbirds during autumn migration in central New Jersey. Hannah B. Suthers, Jean M. Bickal, and Paul G. Rodewald (Vol. 112, No. 2, pp. 249-260).

Results of this long-term investigation showed that migrants’ habitat use differed according to the successional state and vegetative composition of the habitat. The abundance and/or quality of fruits, rather than the successional stage and vegetation structure alone, appeared to be the main attraction for migrants. Birds left successional habitats as fruit-bearing shrubs became overgrown by trees, and they increased their use of habitats as fruit resources increased.

Migrants favored shrubland dominated by panicked dogwood over shrubland dominated by red cedar or multiflora rose. The most favored fruiting vines overall were Japanese honeysuckle, Virginia creeper, poison ivy, and grape – though different species favored different fruits.

The authors emphasized that successional old fields with a diversity of fruiting shrubs and vines are an important resource for migratory birds that need to refuel for their journeys. They concluded, “Land managers should consider maintaining and enhancing existing native fruiting shrublands and edge habitats to insure that these resources remain available.”

– Paul Hess

PSO Newsletter

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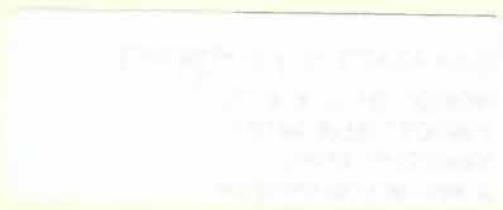
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Answers to Bird Quiz on page 9:

1. Dark-eyed Junco. A bluish-billed Appalachian subspecies known as the Carolina Junco (*Junco hyemalis carolinensis*) reaches its northern breeding limit in the mountains of southwestern Pennsylvania.
2. Bohemian Waxwing.
3. Bicknell's Thrush.
4. Sora.
5. The wrens. ☺
6. Blue Mountain Warbler. This mysterious bird is known only from Wilson's descriptions and paintings in his great classic, American Ornithology. He gave it the scientific name *Sylvia montana*.



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