



From the President's Desk....

Beginners Welcome!

We all have to start somewhere. Perhaps the first flash of red that attracts your eye to a cardinal at a bird feeder. Maybe, the first glimpse of a Blackburnian Warbler on a summer walk in the woods. Immaculate waxwings gliding over your favorite trout stream. Maybe it was when a Pileated Woodpecker landed in a nearby tree or when a pair of Wood Ducks splashed down on a local pond. For more and more people, a Peregrine Falcon flashing through the concrete canyon is their introduction to exciting birds.

For each person a single crystalline moment planted a kernel of interest in birds. We need to make sure that it grows from there. It can grow on a guided nature walk at a local park or preserve. For each tyro, it seems amazing when the trip leader points out a Hermit Thrush hopping along the shady path or singing in the distance. How was that bird identified so quickly? It seems miraculous at first. It can be very intimidating to the uninitiated to see the trip leader's effortless expertise on display. It takes a few more moments to explain and teach, but it is worth the time.

The next steps are the critical. Can each beginner find others with the same interest? Is it easy to meet people who can teach a bit more than you know? Will they gently correct your mistakes? Will they patiently wait to get better looks at birds and hear them again? Will they take the time to teach you stuff that's not in the books but that all the good birders know? The answer to all those questions should be "Yes!"

Bird identification and nature study have a pretty steep learning curve. When you start out, everything seems to happen at once. Everything, that is, except an explanation of what everything is and why it is what it is and why it is where you found it. It is only too easy to get discouraged.

That is where we come in. The Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology provides many ways for beginners to learn and grow. Our annual meetings are full of such opportunities. We spend many hours in the field on trips led by the local bird experts. We get to see a lot of birds and get to learn a lot of birdy places. The meeting's afternoon talks and the banquet program are outright teaching experiences. All of us learn new things together. But, some of the best lessons are ones learned along the trail, behind the eyepiece of a scope, or in the hallway between planned events. Interaction with other birders and varied field experiences are the best teachers. PSO provides that in spades.

Our publications are packed with great information for birders. If you want to learn about the distribution and seasonal abundance of Pennsylvania birds, there is no better place to learn that than in the pages of *Pennsylvania Birds*. It includes county-by-county, blow-by-blow accounts of where birds were and when they were there. Rare bird reports tell you not only about that incident but also about the identification cues needed to confirm the identification. Our newsletter is crammed with news about birds and habitats. The Special Area Project gives many opportunities to learn in the field with experienced birders by having the experience of doing bird surveys through the entire year. We organize Christmas Counts. We do the North American Migration Count. Mentoring is a key aspect of both the county seasonal reports and SAP surveys.

PSO is expanding the opportunities for beginners at its meetings. The 2004 meeting will have a beginning birder workshop on the Friday before the meeting. We will have special beginning birder field trips all weekend. Members are welcome to help out with these field trips.

The sign on the door of PSO reads: **BEGINNERS WELCOME!** Please hold the door wide open so others can enter. Think Big, Be Bold!

– Douglas Gross, PSO President

2004 Winter Raptor Survey

by Greg Grove

The 2004 Pennsylvania Winter Raptor Survey (WRS) will be conducted from January 17 through February 8. This will be the fourth year for this survey. Participation and coverage have increased each year. During the winter of 2003, volunteers surveyed routes in 61 counties covering more than 6,000 miles and accumulated 391 hours of observer effort. Approximately 1,700 raptors of 12 species were tallied. In addition, vultures were counted, and owls (7 species) and shrikes were also noted.

All interested birders are invited to participate in 2004. Contact me via e-mail (gwg2@psu.edu). The surveys are done from a vehicle along a route designed by the participants in their own county (or potentially elsewhere).

In counties with previously established routes, new participants should either join an established route or coordinate with the other observer to ensure that new routes do not overlap established routes. *I encourage development of new but non-overlapping routes.* For new folks I will provide e-mail addresses of previous participants in your county so that all parties can cooperate.

Routes should be primarily in open country (not easy in north-central Pennsylvania!) and should be designed with safety as the top priority. In other words, routes should not be on busy roads or minimally so.

Detailed, but rather simple, guidelines for the WRS will be provided prior to January 17. Briefly, we are particularly interested in the four "open-country" raptors (Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, and American Kestrel) as well as the two vulture species. Other raptors, owls, and shrikes are the only other birds to be recorded so that attention can be focused on spotting raptors.

Beyond counting raptors, participants are asked also to record whenever possible age/sex/color-morph data as appropriate for harriers, red-tails, rough-legs, and kestrels (see forthcoming guidelines for details). In 2002 and 2003 such detailed data were collected for over 80% of recorded birds of these four species.

The 2003 WRS results were published in *Pennsylvania Birds* (Volume 17, No.1). The counts for Red-tailed Hawks and kestrels (as measured in birds/hour of observation) were substantially lower in 2003 than in 2001 and 2002. Was this the effect of the severe cold of last winter? In contrast, Rough-legged Hawks were present in much higher numbers than the previous two relatively mild winters. What will this winter bring?



I will close with a message especially to those folks who have contributed surveys from counties in the colder regions of the state. There are admittedly not that many wintering raptors in your counties compared to the milder areas in the Piedmont, the Southern Ridge and Valley, and the Southwest, but your data are every bit as valuable as that from counties where raptors are counted by the dozens. Surveys from all over the state are needed to create the

complete picture of wintering raptors in Pennsylvania and to provide a baseline against which we can compare future trends. I especially thank all of those "Big Woods" birders for their enthusiastic interest in the WRS. And, of course, thanks to all who have contributed their time to this effort throughout the state.

I look forward to hearing from you again this winter.

Send a Card!

Monica Gregory, the wife of former PSO President Alan Gregory, has recently undergone a lung transplant in Pittsburgh. She is slowly recovering in the rehab unit at UPMC Montefiore after transferring from the transition unit at UPMC Presbyterian. Alan writes, "She's doing well, and gets occupational and physical therapy sessions a couple of times a day. For those in the local area who can visit, her room number on the 11th floor of Montefiore is 1122. It's quite possible that she could be discharged to the apartment with me in the next few weeks, perhaps by Thanksgiving time. Right now, her chief goal is to eat more calories and regain strength and energy level. Just takes time -- more time, perhaps, than it took her to recover from the hospitalization she endured last spring."

Cards may be sent to:

Monica Gregory
Apt. 8J
The Schenley House
151 N. Craig St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

We wish you well, Monica!



Montour Preserve's Environmental Education Center –
Headquarters for PSO's 2004 Annual Meeting

PSO Annual Meeting 2004

Warblers, waterfowl, waders, woodland birds, and grassland species will be featured at the 2004 annual PSO Meeting to be held at PPL's Montour Preserve on Saturday, May 15, and Sunday, May 16. Located in the rolling Appalachian foothills of Montour County adjacent to the Susquehanna Valley, the preserve's 966 acres and surrounding lands offer various habitats for birding within easy access of I-80 at Danville. A variety of field trips will take advantage of unique habitats in the area.

Friday night registration and business meeting will be at the preserve, as will Saturday afternoon's technical sessions. Lodging has been arranged at the Days Inn, Danville, which will also host the Saturday night banquet dinner. This 2004 meeting will also offer a Friday workshop for beginning birders and a field trip each morning just for beginners. Rooms can be reserved at the Days Inn by calling 1-800-329-7466 and requesting the PPL rate. Or if you prefer, you can choose from these additional lodgings all at the I-80 Danville exit:

Quality Inn (570-275-5100) Red Roof Inn (570-275-7600)
Hampton Inn (570-271-2500) Key Motor Inn (570-275-4640)

PSO T-Shirts for Sale

These Fruit of the Loom T-shirts are 50 percent cotton and 50 percent polyester; the color is natural. On the front is the circular PSO emblem. The state with the Pileated Woodpecker flying across it adorns the back below the print "Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology." The pileated's red crest adds a bit of color to the shirt. All sizes are now available. Please contact Linda Wagner (724-657-0867 or lwagner342@aol.com) if you are interested in ordering one of these shirts. Total cost is \$19.50 which includes shipping.

Bird Quiz

How well do you know your Pennsylvania birds? To mark the second breeding bird atlas project, which is about to begin next year, this installment of the quiz is based on our state's nesters.

1. One of our smallest birds is typically found nesting in cool, damp ravines, often with a stream at the bottom, and usually at fairly high elevations. Which species?
2. One of the largest and most conspicuous birds in the sky was recorded in 3,920 blocks throughout the state in the last atlas, but it was confirmed as breeding in only 44 blocks. Which species?
3. The Pine Woods Sparrow was first discovered nesting in the southwestern corner of the state in 1909, and the last apparent nesting attempt was recorded there only 31 years later. What do we call this extirpated species now?
4. One of Pennsylvania's rarest breeders, confirmed in only two blocks in the last atlas, is often distinguishable from its closest look-alike relative by its yellowish instead of whitish throat. Can you guess which species is meant?
5. A great Pennsylvania ornithologist, known especially for his multi-volume *American Ornithology*, is commemorated in the English name of one species that nests in the state and in the Latin name of two species that nest here. Can you name the three?

(See Answers on page 19.)

Web Site Data Needed

The PSO web site, www.pabirds.org, is still looking for site guides for birding locations in Pennsylvania. If you write it, we will post it! The location does not have to be one of the well-known "hot spots." It can be any location that is good for birding.

Also, if the statistics (Big Day Record, total species, etc.) for your county are incorrect, let me know so that I can correct them.

Send any information to fchaas@pabirds.org.

– Frank Haas

Monitoring Pennsylvanian Birddiversity!

The Commonwealth's 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas is about to begin.

by Robert Mulvihill

Introduction

There probably are a lot of questions out there about the upcoming 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project. Dan Brauning and I gave talks and answered some questions at the annual PSO meeting in Indiana, PA, in May, but many of the details for the Atlas were simply not yet available. Since officially taking on the role of Project Coordinator in September, I have spoken with a few local bird groups about the Atlas, but even today, not every part and protocol of the 2nd Atlas has been fully worked out. Still, we have made a lot of progress since May, and I will try to summarize the state of the state's 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas Project for the members, friends, and family of Pennsylvania's core birding community, the PSO.

Some PSO members remember the 1st Atlas very well; others may never have had the chance to participate in a breeding bird atlas. Accordingly, some of what follows will fall into the category of "been there, done that!" for some readers. To keep it as interesting and informative as possible for both groups, in the article that follows, I have taken a comparison approach with respect to the goals and methods of the 1st and the upcoming 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas. As you might imagine, the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas will be similar to the first Atlas in many respects but quite different in a few others!

What and when was the 1st Atlas and who *did* it?

The first full-scale field season for Pennsylvania's 1st Breeding Bird Atlas Project, an effort sponsored by the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, occurred in 1984. The Project Director was Dr. Frank Gill, Curator of the Academy's Department of Ornithology. Dr. Gill hired Daniel Brauning to be the Project Coordinator. Dan enlisted the aid of some 43 Regional Coordinators who, in turn, enlisted the aid of more than 2,000 birders to collect data for (what turned out to be) some 180 bird species found nesting across 4,928 Atlas survey blocks.

The collective effort of all of these individual volunteers during five consecutive full field seasons (plus two partial seasons in 1983 and 1989) resulted in the best and most extensive database for Pennsylvania's breeding birds ever assembled. The results were attractively and extensively summarized for the public in what still stands as one of the best examples among the published state atlases—the *Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania*, edited by then Project Coordinator, Dan Brauning (with many species accounts written by individuals who had been Regional Coordinators for the project), and published by the University of Pittsburgh

Press in 1992. One of the other lasting and immensely valuable products of the 1st Atlas was the network of birders that grew from it, later formalized as the PSO, as well as Pennsylvania's first state bird journal, *Pennsylvania Birds*, created and edited by Frank and Barb Haas (Vol. 1, No. 1 covered the period Jan-Mar 1987, three years into the 1st Atlas project).

When is the 2nd Atlas and who will *do* it?

Just around the corner now, 2004 marks the beginning of the first full field season for Pennsylvania's 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas Project, twenty years after the beginning of the first. Data collection will continue through the fifth field season in 2008. In truth, the 2nd Atlas has been underway since early 2003, when a planning and design team headed by Dr. Tim O'Connell from Penn State's Cooperative Wetlands Center (now an Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Zoology at Oklahoma State University) began work researching survey protocols and developing contracts with The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology to create a customized (expressly for the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas) web-based data entry and data exploration program, built on the innovative eBird system for recording and organizing bird observations electronically. At Cornell, Steve Kelling, Paul Allen, Jeff Gerbracht, Roger Slothower, and others have been working very hard to make this new application fit the ambitious goals that the Pennsylvania Atlas team has set forth.

The Project's primary sponsor is Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, which, under the leadership of Dr. Bill DeWalt, has demonstrated a strong commitment to the study and preservation of biodiversity in Pennsylvania and around the world. Others from CMNH directly involved in the Atlas Project include Dr. David Smith, the new Director of Powdermill Nature Reserve, CMNH's field station in the Laurel Highlands of southwestern PA, Sylvia Keller, Deputy Director for Public Programs at CMNH (both Dr. Smith and Ms. Keller serve on the Atlas Advisory Committee), and Mr. Chris Bell, CMNH's Director of Development. CMNH views the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas as a highly important scientific study, a valuable conservation tool, and an exceptional educational opportunity. It is committed to providing necessary logistical and other support for helping to ensure that the planned five-year Atlas Project will meet its scientific, conservation, and educational potential.

The Project Director for the 2nd Atlas is Dan Brauning, now Chief Non-game Ornithologist for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. I find myself in the challenging position of

trying to fill the very big shoes vacated by the current Project Director (i.e., the Project Coordinator for the 1st Atlas)! In tackling this challenge, I am signally fortunate to have found an exceptional Assistant Project Coordinator in Mike Lanzone, a part-time Penn State University student, who brings a wealth of birding knowledge, field ornithology experience, and many other skills to the very big job at hand.

Working from an office created at Powdermill Nature Reserve especially for the Atlas project, I will, like Dan, ask a number of the state's most experienced, dynamic, and well-organized birders to serve as Regional Coordinators. Fortunately, more than a few of the persons whom we can thank for capably taking a leadership role in the first Atlas are still active Pennsylvania birders whose experience with the 1st Atlas prepares them especially well for assuming this important role once again. With the help of the project's Regional Coordinators, I hope to encourage the rest of the state's many enthusiastic and skilled birders to collect data on the rich diversity of nesting bird species across Pennsylvania. In the end, it is Pennsylvania's birders and birdwatchers, thousands of them, who actually will "do" the Atlas. Some additional targeted fieldwork each year from a small number of paid field assistants (funded in 2004 through grants from the Wild Resource Conservation Fund) will help ensure that some of the special features, discussed below, can be completed on a statewide scale.

How will the Atlas be organized, geographically?

The Atlas "block," the survey unit that is mapped in the Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania, is one-sixth of a standard USGS 7.5-minute series topographic map (also called a quadrangle map, or "topo" or "topo quad" for short). In the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas, the Atlas block will remain as the primary survey unit, enabling direct comparisons between the occurrence and distribution of birds between the two Atlas periods. It is this comparison that provides the long-term monitoring component of the Atlas. Differences in the occurrence and distribution of birds over time may result from many factors, including natural changes in habitat (loss of early successional habitats due to reforestation, perhaps resulting in localized decreases in species like Golden-winged Warbler and increases in Rose-breasted Grosbeak), changes in the behavioral ecology of species (e.g., increased tolerance of human activity in Common Raven and various "urban" raptors), population expansions, and loss of useful habitat for some native nesting birds due to urban sprawl.

One significant organizational change for the 2nd Atlas is the elimination of the use of county lines to delineate regional boundaries. Regions for the 1st Atlas largely were based on county boundaries, included from one to four counties, and ranged in size from 39 to 306 Atlas "blocks." Using counties for defining regional boundaries not only resulted in a wide size range for regions, but a large number of Atlas blocks fell

within two or more regions (requiring that decisions over block "ownership" be made on a case-by-case basis by Regional Coordinators in the overlapping zones). Rectangular regions defined by the borders of the blocks themselves will provide more efficient use of map resources and allow the establishment of more equally sized regions.

The DeLorme Atlas & Gazetteer, a significant advancement in map resources, is available this time around. Although the Atlas block (one-sixth of a USGS 7.5-minute series quad map) still is the primary sampling unit for the 2nd Atlas, we have decided to identify and name coverage regions based on the pages in the DeLorme Atlas. Each full map page in DeLorme contains the equivalent of 14 USGS topo maps (six Atlas blocks each), for a total of 84 Atlas blocks. Along the western border of the state, a small portion of each map page falls outside of Pennsylvania, so those regions (Regions/DeLorme pages 42, 56, and 70) are slightly smaller than 84 Atlas blocks. On the other hand, in the case of DeLorme pages that are only half or less within the state, adjacent map pages have been joined together to form one Breeding Bird Atlas region (e.g., 26/28, 27/29, 54/55, 67/68, 82/83, 84/85, 86/87, 88/89, 90/91, 92/93, 94-96). The smallest region, Region (and DeLorme page) 40 contains about 55 Atlas blocks, while the largest, Region 67/68 has about 125 blocks.

How do birders get involved, and what exactly will they be doing?

A recent USFWS survey places Pennsylvania as the state with the third largest number of birders, close behind New York. The survey estimates that 2.7 million Pennsylvanians travel a mile or more from home for the express purpose of viewing birds (i.e., not just wildlife, in general) and/or make a concerted effort to observe and identify birds seen around their homes. From this very large number of Pennsylvanians who may have more than a passing interest in birds, there are perhaps several hundred to a thousand or more who pursue birding avidly in and across the state. *It is this group of highly motivated, experienced, and skilled birders (you know who you are!) upon whom the success of the 2nd Atlas, like the first, largely will depend.* Atlasing is a great way to improve birding skills and to learn first hand about the breeding behavior of birds. Even those who may not feel they are expert birders now, can, by taking an active role in this project beginning next year and by working in one or more Atlas blocks throughout the five-year Atlas period, acquire better identification skills and a more thorough understanding, from their own firsthand experiences, of the breeding behavior of many of Pennsylvania's nesting birds.

Furthermore, a major goal of the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas will be to invite the participation, at any level and to whatever degree possible, of perhaps ten thousand or more people, drawn not only from among those 2.7 million Pennsylvania "birders," but even from the ranks of friends, family, and neighbors who have not previously professed or

demonstrated any interest in birds whatsoever! Simply put, whether it is an observation made by a grade school class and its teacher of a Killdeer nest next to the soccer field, of a family caught up in the drama of watching an American Robin pair raise its brood in a nest built on the porch post, or a traveler on the Pennsylvania Turnpike who happens to spot a Red-tailed Hawk flying onto its bulky nest in a large tree at the edge of a field, the more data that is contributed, the better. The more people who become interested in and knowledgeable about birds is also for the better. Data for existing projects in bird study around the state, including the Special Areas Project, Important Bird Areas, Breeding Bird Surveys, and more, will add directly into the Atlas results, and Atlas efforts, in turn, will supplement these important programs – all in the name of bird conservation.

What will be new and different in the 2nd Atlas?

In the 1st Atlas, the goal for each of the 4,928 Atlas blocks was to obtain as complete as possible a list of possible (i.e., bird heard or seen in appropriate habitat during the species-specific breeding season), probable (indirect behavioral evidence of breeding observed, e.g., courtship behavior seen), or confirmed breeding birds (direct evidence of breeding found, such as a nest or sighting of adult birds carrying food). Statewide, an average of 64 breeding species was recorded per block, with records about evenly divided among the possible, probable, and confirmed breeding categories. These records formed the basis of the distributional maps published in *the Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania*.

With emerging technologies since the first Atlas, including greatly increased data storage capabilities, global positioning systems (GPS), geographic information systems (GIS), Internet access, and more, the opportunities to build on the foundation laid by the 1st Atlas are fantastic! In addition to reassessing the presence and distribution of the state's breeding birds after twenty years, we can analyze any changes against remote, e.g. satellite, sensed changes in land cover transformed into digital layers and made available to this Atlas through the Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access (PASDA) program at Penn State University. In fact, the results of the first Atlas, geo-referenced and related to the available land cover data, formed the basis of a graduate study by Joseph Bishop at Penn State's Cooperative Wetlands Center, whose research led to the generation of sophisticated computer models showing where primary and secondary habitat occurs in Pennsylvania for all breeding birds and other vertebrates. Called "GAP models," these patterns of occurrence of species-specific habitat patches across the state will be used in the 2nd Atlas to help direct atlasers to specific locations within blocks where habitat for selected species that are difficult to detect and/or are of conservation concern might possibly exist.

For all its many successes, the 1st Atlas primarily maps presence, not presence-absence for many of our state's

breeding birds. This is especially true for species that may require special efforts to find in the first place (e.g., nocturnal birds, wetland birds); such efforts were not necessarily made in all blocks in the first Atlas. During the first Atlas, birders were simply asked nicely (Dan said, "please!") to make nighttime visits to their blocks to record nocturnal species. Some, but not all, regional coordinators and/or block owners were diligent about doing this, so the presence of records of nocturnal birds in those blocks and/or regions really reflects their special effort more than any true distribution limits for the species within Pennsylvania.

Recognizing this, the design team for the 2nd Atlas has worked to develop a set of standardized protocols that will be used in a large number of blocks across the state to insure that we will get a clearer picture of the true frequency of occurrence and distribution of these species. As an example, Doug Gross's "Toot Route" sampling protocol has vastly improved our knowledge of the occurrence and distribution of the Northern Saw-whet Owl since the first Atlas (which itself had showed the NSWOW to be more widespread than formerly thought), to the point that its official status as a species of special conservation concern (a status that was appropriate based on the species' having been recorded in fewer than 100 blocks during the first Atlas) recently has been removed. A protocol very much like the "Toot Route" protocol will be executed in all 800 "priority" blocks in the state during the 2nd Atlas. Priority blocks, as in the first Atlas, will be block #6 (the southeastern-most block) within each topo.

How do we get started?

Although a Great Horned Owl heard hooting just after midnight on January 1, 2004, technically could be listed for the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas (it is the only species whose "safe dates" bracket New Year's Day!), PSO members and other Atlas volunteers *should not* call to let their Regional Coordinators (or the Project Coordinator) know they have heard an owl at 12:01am! In fact, it is very unlikely that Cornell will have completed work on the web-based data entry system for our Atlas before April 2004, so it will not even be possible to log onto the website to enter the very first owl record for the project.

There are a number of other ways, however, to get ready for the Atlas as the 2004 nesting season approaches. The first is to get in touch with the person who is the Regional Coordinator for any blocks that you might like to "own" during the Atlas. Volunteers should sign up for only the blocks in which they can and will collect data *during the upcoming season*. Coverage for some blocks may be completed in just one year, while other blocks may take two or more years to complete. A few blocks always receive higher levels of coverage; for example, the block owner lives and/or works within the block and really does not want to travel from his or her home territory. For the sake of thorough and uniform coverage during the 2nd Atlas,

volunteers will be strongly encouraged to take another block(s) when coverage is completed for one they have been working, and volunteers who are willing to “adopt-a-block” in a region where volunteers are fewer and farther between (often the same regions where birds are anything but!) will be doing an especially great service to the project. It cannot be stressed enough, however, that volunteers should not ask for five years’ worth of blocks in the first season! As Project Coordinator, I will, along with the project’s 57 Regional Coordinators, be setting coverage goals for each year of the Atlas, and these will ensure that all of the necessary data are collected from all 4,928 blocks by the end of the last field season, at a pace that will be enjoyable and educational for all concerned!

Although Regional Coordinators will assign block “owners” to be those primarily responsible for completing the general Atlas coverage within a given block, any registered Atlas volunteer will be able (and encouraged) to contribute breeding bird observations for any block in Pennsylvania in any year of the Atlas.

The Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Website

The website for the 2nd Atlas will actually be at least three websites linked together—first, the so-called static pages for the website, including the “Home” page, general information and instructions, educational materials and contact information, will be created and maintained by us at the Atlas Main Offices at Powdermill. The website for the project, www.pabirdatlas.org, already exists but is still under construction. We hope to have it ready for the first visitors before the end of December. It will be expanded regularly until it is fully functional. As we develop the website, we will appreciate your ideas about what information to include and how to present it. The second part of the atlas website will be housed at Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. This will be the so-called “dynamic” or database side of the website, and this is where Atlas volunteers will register, request or modify block assignments, enter their data, etc.

Finally, the third part of the Atlas website will be housed at the Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access (PASDA) website (www.pasda.psu.edu), the state’s (and one of the nation’s) premiere geographic information systems clearinghouse. Using links to PASDA, visitors to the website will be able to view and compare the results of the 1st Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas at different scales and in different formats. For those who do not own or operate a computer that has Internet access, Regional Coordinators or other Atlas volunteers will be able to register you and enter your data, but we strongly encourage everyone who participates to try to take advantage of this project as an excellent motivation to develop computer/Internet skills, perhaps with the help of local public libraries and other volunteer Atlasers in your Region. We will try to develop very effective tutorials, workshops, and other means to help volunteers become fully computer-

capable during the 2nd Atlas project. In this and many other ways, the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas promises to set new standards for atlasing in North America.

To summarize, here are some of the main points about the 2nd PA Breeding Bird Atlas:

Timing and participation

- Planning for the project has been underway for more than a year.
- Fieldwork for the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project begins in 2004!
- Most important of all—we need the volunteer assistance of Pennsylvania’s birding community during the next five years.
- The 2nd Atlas project is a highly ambitious undertaking, but every birder will be able to contribute something, exactly according to his or her own interest, ability, time, and energy.
- Every bit of data and every person who becomes aware of and involved *in any way* with the 2nd Atlas will promote the achievement of the project goals and, in so doing, will promote birds, birding, and an awareness of the importance of habitat to maintaining **bird**diversity in Pennsylvania.

Geographic scope and scale

- The primary survey unit for the 2nd Atlas will be the same as for the 1st, the Atlas “block,” which is one-sixth of a USGS 7.5-minute series topographic map (also known as a quadrangle).
- Each Atlas block is about 5 km, or 3 mi, on each side (area of 25 km² or 10 mi²).
- There are about 4,930 Atlas blocks to be surveyed during the five-year Atlas, 2004-2008.
- As with the 1st Atlas, the southeastern most block in each quad, block 6, will be considered as a “priority block,” and will receive additional coverage.
- For organization and efficiency, the state will be divided into 57 Atlas “Regions,” but, unlike the 1st Atlas, these will not follow county lines.
- Atlas Regions will follow the page-numbering system of *DeLorme’s Pennsylvania Atlas & Gazetteer*. Pennsylvania may well be the first state to adopt this system for regional coverage in a breeding bird atlas, but Ohio’s ongoing winter bird atlas, is based on DeLorme.
- Each Region includes 14 USGS topo maps, and each quad contains six blocks, for a total of 84 blocks per Atlas Region. The coordinates (A to D and 1 to 7) along the margins of the DeLorme Atlas exactly correspond to the 7.5-minute series quadrangle maps, and will be used to identify Atlas blocks (i.e., page number, quad coordinates, block number).

Organization and Implementation

- Each Region will have one or more Regional Coordinator who will assign blocks and oversee coverage and data collection in the Region. Many, but not all of the Regional Coordinators for the 2nd Atlas already have been selected.
- Regional Coordinators will assign “ownership” of a block to individuals or to a small group of individuals who will, at a minimum, spend enough time in the block visiting enough habitats at the right time of year to generate a nearly complete list of the breeding bird species for that block.
- General surveys for breeding birds could be completed for some blocks in a single season, while, for various reasons, other blocks may require two or more of the five field seasons for complete coverage (e.g., more remote blocks, blocks with limited access, blocks with especially diverse habitats).
- Topographic maps of each block in Pennsylvania will be available for downloading and printing on the project website through the services of Pennsylvania’s Spatial Data Access (PASDA) program at Penn State University, one of the premiere geographic information system data clearinghouses anywhere. We are extremely fortunate in Pennsylvania to have such a tremendous resource and we are grateful to PASDA (and its Coordinator, Maurie Kelly, IT Coordinator, Ryan Baxter, and Watershed and Conservation Resources Coordinator, James Spayd), for partnering with us in the 2nd Atlas. Although conventional USGS topographic maps certainly can still be purchased and used by atlasers, we anticipate that the combined use of a DeLorme Atlas (which we will provide to all Regional Coordinators and try to make available at a reduced rate to all atlasers) and the printed individual block maps from PASDA will be all that are needed.

Differences between the 1st and 2nd Atlases

- Not everyone in PSO was actively birding when the 1st PA Atlas was done, but for those who were, there will be some obvious differences.
- In the 1st PA Atlas, the final data for each block was a list of bird species with the highest observed breeding code for each (i.e., one record per species).
- In the 2nd PA Atlas, data can be collected and will be analyzed for multiple records of any species recorded in an Atlas block. In this way, much more data on the timing of breeding for Pennsylvania’s nesting birds can be gathered (and patterns of variation in the timing of nesting across habitats, regions, and years examined); more importantly, everyone can contribute data based on their observations when they’re out in the field, whether or not a species has

already been confirmed in that block. ***In short, if you saw it, and you’re willing to enter it, we want it!***

- In the 1st Atlas, breeding bird data were collected at the block level, with no finer geographic distinction, except in the case of a few “special species” for which more precise breeding locations were requested (but not always received).
- In the 2nd Atlas, precise geo-referencing of every observation theoretically is possible (and ***will be required*** for selected “special species”).
- Atlasers can mark exact locations of breeding birds on a good field topo map or, the more technically savvy Atlasers can store precise lat-long locations for their field observations on a handheld GPS unit. These data can be entered and/or uploaded to the database being developed by Cornell.
- Precise geo-referencing of a number of records within many blocks in the state over the course of the five field seasons 2nd Atlas will enable unprecedented analysis of habitat and other ecological attributes associated with the occurrence, distribution, and nesting phenology of the state’s breeding birds.
- In addition, there will be several special survey efforts in the 2nd Atlas that were not part of the 1st Atlas.

Special Surveys and Internet Data Entry

- First, Pennsylvania’s 2nd Atlas will attempt the most extensive and rigorous “abundance sampling” ever tried. Mini-routes comprised of eight stops within each of the state’s non-border blocks (4,700 blocks) will be run once in each block; roughly 1,000 routes will be run each year of the Atlas. To keep observer variation to a minimum, these routes will be run by a comparatively small number of volunteers and a few paid field technicians each year, all of whom will be trained in this new protocol and all of whom will be asked to complete 20 or more mini-routes in a season.
- At each of the eight stops along a mini-route in a block, the observer will count singing males of each species heard within 75 meters within an initial 3-minute time band (same length of time used for a breeding bird survey stop) and, in addition, in each of two successive 1-minute time bands. Done in this way, the point counts can later be statistically analyzed to adjust for different detection probabilities across species, habitats, and/or observers, and the resulting data can then be used to express true abundance estimates for many of Pennsylvania’s breeding birds, estimates currently available for only a handful of species.
- To ensure that we do not get a biased impression of the occurrence and distribution of difficult to detect species such as nocturnal and wetland birds, at least

two standardized protocols will be run, minimally in every "priority block" in the state during the Atlas. Virtually all of the data collected for the Atlas will be entered online directly into an eBird-like database designed and developed by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Volunteers who do not have access to computer or the Internet, or who do not wish to enter their data in this way, certainly will be able to submit data on paper field cards and summary sheets, but these data will then have to be entered online by a Regional Coordinator or other volunteer. The more data that is entered online, the better, because the results of all our work will be displayed directly to what we hope will be a very large and very interested public.

In conclusion

- Recent surveys indicate that there are as many as 2.7 million birders in the state of Pennsylvania (including, of course, many casual backyard bird watchers). While we probably won't succeed in getting them all signed up as Atlas volunteers, it would be great for birds and birders, and for the habitats and places that birds and birders depend upon and enjoy in Pennsylvania, if many of them become aware of our efforts to monitor **Pennsylvanian birddiversity**, in the process educating themselves and their children about our state's uncommon wealth of bird life!



For more information about the upcoming 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas, check frequently the official website, www.pabirdatlas.org, which currently is under construction. In addition, you can contact the Project Coordinator (mulvihill@pabirdatlas.org), or Assistant Project Coordinator (lanzone@pabirdatlas.org) at any time for more information. The phone number for the Breeding Bird Atlas office is (724) 593-6022.

The Raven Reporter



Tales of Discovery from the Special Areas Project

SAP Update:
Nearly 6500 Field Trips

The Special Areas Project database now includes 6,448 field trips from 133 locations across the state. Volunteers have added field trip data from several new SAP locations. Here are some of our new SAPs listed with the local coordinator: State Game Lands 205 (Lehigh), Jon Levin; Grass Lake barrens (City of Bethlehem watershed area, Monroe Co.), Edie Parnum; East Branch Swamp Natural Area (Clinton Co.), Nick Bolgiano; Cranberry Swamp Natural Area (Clinton Co.), Nick Pulcinella; Akeley Swamp, SGL 282 (Warren Co.), John Fedak; and Roaring Creek Watershed (Columbia and Northumberland Co.), Doug Gross.

In addition, Jo Ann Bower and Carol Hildebrand have restarted efforts at Little Pine State Park in Lycoming County. I have restarted surveys of Jakey's Hollow Natural Area and SGL 58 and 226 in Columbia County.

SGL 205 is only a few miles outside Allentown, providing outdoors people of all kinds an ability to recreate near a metropolitan area. Edie Parnum answered the call for more Poconos data by collecting more data around Long Pond macrosite, a Pennsylvania IBA and globally important bioreserve. Nick Bolgiano answered the call for more natural area data by starting inventories of East Branch Swamp and Cranberry Swamp. These are DCNR Natural Areas in southern Sproul State Forest. John Fedak moved to Warren County and adopted the rarely visited but important Akeley Swamp. (More of his SAP adoptions will be discussed in future columns.) I began exploring the new land acquisition by DCNR of the Roaring Creek watershed in southern Columbia and Northumberland counties. This 9000-acre site includes two picturesque reservoirs and large areas of unbroken forest and wetlands. I will report more details about this exciting site in the next Raven Reporter column. It will be one of our PSO field trips for the 2004 meeting.

Thanks to all of our many volunteers for the continued success of the Special Areas Project. Your contributions have been very special indeed.

Call for SAP Data

Please send your SAP data as soon as possible. Our project will be refocusing in 2004 on producing products with the large data set collected by volunteers. We will be producing draft checklists for several SAP locations, concentrating on places where volunteers have conducted more than 100 field trips. This will take a lot of our time and energy in the coming year, so we will have less time for data input. So, if you have SAP data, please send it in very soon so we can include it in our project.

The Special Areas Project has been sharing its data with conservation organizations and state agencies. During the last few months, we have sent SAP data reports to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Bartramian Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, the Ornithological Technical Committee, DCNR, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission to support their efforts to protect bird habitat.

Boreal Birds

A flurry of public announcements and programs has drawn attention to the beleaguered and underappreciated boreal forests of North America. Canada's boreal forest is vast and largely unknown. Each fall, about five billion land birds migrate south from Canada's boreal forest into or through the United States. It is ironic that many birds that largely nest in Canada have names indicating their more southern stopping off points: Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Palm Warbler, Philadelphia Vireo, Connecticut Warbler, and "Myrtle" Warbler as examples. As much attention is focused on the Amazonian rainforest, we often neglect to consider the importance of the Canadian boreal forest which is 50% larger in size. Without it, we would not be able to enjoy the White-throated Sparrows, Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Rusty Blackbirds, Red-breasted Mergansers, and Golden Eagles that fly through our state each year. It has been said that one in three North American birds owes its existence to Canada's boreal forest. Many species that reach the southern edge of their breeding grounds are much more abundant up north. As such, these large coniferous forests are vital to the future of these species.

Canada's boreal forest is threatened on many fronts, but mostly by greed and ignorance. We know so little, so we save even less than we do elsewhere. Forestry has been an important factor in boreal habitats for centuries, but it has never affected the boreal forest at the scale and speed it now does. Slash-and-burn tactics have altered the forests on a grand scale for many years, but that has been a more gradual process than presently. Demand for wood products has hastened the removal of hundreds of square miles of Canadian timber in recent years. Much of that demand comes from this country. This has greater effect on forest composition in cold weather climates like Canada where

spruces and firs take much longer to recover than deciduous trees more common farther south. Large-scale hydroelectric projects also threaten to flood thousands of acres of forest and wetlands where birds live. The climax communities of wood and water are the ones most threatened by human activities because recovery is so agonizingly slow in the boreal zone.

One of the frustrating problems with monitoring the effects of these changes has been the lack of bird data collected on this wet and frozen landscape. There are few BBS routes or bird study plots in the Canadian boreal forest that can monitor bird populations. As a result, we may not be able to detect changes in bird populations like we can on our own landscape. Banding stations monitor these populations but in a more indirect and incomplete way.

Pennsylvania has its own bits of boreal forest, sampled by SAP volunteers. It may not be on the grand scale seen in Canada, but our boreal habitats contribute substantially to the state's biodiversity. Almost all of Pennsylvania has been timbered, so the boreal forests are recovering from the removal of mature trees and subsequent burning and dessication of the ecosystem. The hydrology and ground cover of conifer forests and swamps have been altered substantially by diverting streams, exposing the ground to the hot sun, and bulldozing acres of soil. Our relics of boreal habitat are still recovering from the timber era of the 1800s.

Rightfully so, Pennsylvania's boreal forest has the reputation as being wild and largely unbroken habitat. Many of the rare boreal birds are strongly associated with large tracts of forest and wetland. Northern Goshawk is found almost exclusively in larger tracts of forest. The Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Blackpoll Warbler are found in one of the state's largest natural tracts, the Dutch Mountain region of the eastern Allegheny Plateau where red spruce can be locally dominant in conifer swamps. These spruce tracts are recovering from extensive timbering and burning in the 1890s through the 1930s on this high mountain. Young spruce saplings populate the edges of Coalbed Swamp and the many smaller wetlands in SGL 57 and Ricketts Glen State Park. So there is visible evidence for the expansion and recovery of this precious habitat.

One of the state's rarest breeding birds is the Swainson's Thrush. It has been found in only five SAP locations out of the 133 reported. Most Swainson's Thrushes have been reported from North Mountain or Allegheny National Forest locations, but reports from Promised Land State Park are intriguing. In Pennsylvania, Swainson's Thrushes are generally found nesting in dense hemlock groves at high elevations. These secretive spots are often near headwater streams, or where seeps and springs are common. Paradoxically, the Swainson's Thrushes forage in sunny blueberry thickets near the darkly shaded hemlock stands where they normally nest. At one time, it was common to

hear Swainson's, Hermit, and Wood Thrushes and Veery sing on North Mountain in and around Ricketts Glen, but the song of the Swainson's Thrush has been rarely heard there for many years. Its largest population in the state is in the Tionesta Scenic Area. Some Swainson's Thrushes reside in other Allegheny National Forest locations as well as high quality forests in the north-central counties.

Many of the rarest forest species have their largest and most persistent populations in areas with few roads. With the exception of narrow forest and game roads, there is very little road fragmentation where Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Blackpoll Warblers and Swainson's Thrushes thrive in Pennsylvania. They are quiet places that require walking to observe and appreciate. Populations of other rare birds can be a pleasant surprise in such landscapes. The Nashville Warbler is one of the rarest breeding birds in the state. There are more Nashvilles along narrow game land and fire roads on North Mountain or Pocono Mountain than along all Pennsylvania BBS routes combined. They tolerate and thrive in small-scale disturbances but only in a large-scale block of habitat.

In the northern tier of Pennsylvania, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker can be the most common breeding woodpecker. The distinctive drumming of the sapsucker, a few fast taps followed by a series of slower taps, is one of the characteristic sounds of the northern woods. You can hear it often in the forests of Lycoming, Sullivan, Wyoming, and Luzerne counties. Volunteers have registered this species in 22 SAPs, but most have been found across the top of the state. They are most common in Wyoming State Forest, SGL 13 and 57, and Ricketts Glen State Park, but they're also found in places like Hammersley Fork Wild Area, Pine Creek Gorge, Sizerville State Park, and Forest Duttlinger Natural Area.

Not all boreal birds are denizens of the deep, mature forest. After all, there are plenty of natural disturbances in any forest especially where the soil is thin and there is a lot of moisture. Blowdowns, beaver dams, and fires honeycomb boreal forests, making a mosaic of bright and often brushy openings intermixed with dark forests.

No sound is more strongly associated with the boreal forest than the high-pitched mournful whistle "Old Sam Peabody Peabody Peabody" of the White-throated Sparrow. SAP volunteers have reported breeding White-throated Sparrows from 16 locations, mostly in the northeastern counties. They are scattered across the northern tier in such obscure locations as Algerine Swamp Natural Area to Bruce Lake Natural Area. White-throats can be found in brushy glens in northern woods but are more common in scrub-shrub wetlands. They can be locally abundant in blueberry thickets of the Poconos and on North Mountain in places like Two Mile Run (Tom Darling), Long Pond Preserve, Ricketts Glen State Park, and Coalbed Swamp. This species is a bit tricky

because it is a late migrant. Many birds are still migrating in mid-May so they can be incorrectly designated as nesting birds when they are still in transition.

One of the most widespread boreal birds in Pennsylvania is the Alder Flycatcher. Volunteers have reported it from 33 SAP locations. These range from the Poconos where it is fairly common and widespread to western Pennsylvania locations like Yellow Creek State Park and Ohiopyle State Park. It seems less common in the west and south than in the north and east. Formerly considered a part of "Traill's Flycatcher" it is still often confused with its close sibling species, the Willow Flycatcher. Generally speaking, Alder Flycatchers are found in cooler, higher elevation, moist situations with an extensive shrub community.

One of the state's Watch List species, the Canada Warbler, has been widely reported from SAPs. Like the Alder Flycatcher, it has been found in 33 locations. The habitat of the Canada Warbler is more forested than the Alder Flycatcher, although they can be found in the same brushy locations. Although it has been reported in the Ridge and Valley province, it is more common and widespread on the Plateaus. The exception to this is the amazing population at Bear Meadows Natural Area in Rothrock State Forest. The high density of Canada Warblers here has been noted by visiting ornithologists for many decades. They are also found in the nearby Alan Seeger and Detweiler's Run Natural Areas and down the ridge in SGL 166 near Canoe Creek. Most Canada Warblers are found in dense heath of moist forests and conifer swamps. Visitors to Hickory Run State Park in Carbon County can find this attractive bird in the dense rhododendron thickets along streams at a fairly low elevation. I found it to be fairly common in the upper stretches of Roaring Creek Watershed in southern Columbia County. They can be very common in wetlands like Adam Swamp of Monroe County and Coalbed Swamp of Wyoming County.

One of the rarest boreal species in Pennsylvania is the dark-cowled Mourning Warbler. As much as boreal species are associated with deep, dark, mature forests, this one likes bright, sunny, brushy areas in the big woods. One of the best spots for finding this species has been High Knob in Wyoming State Forest. Skip Conant and I have been documenting this population for many years. It has been in the Wyoming State Forest and nearby areas since the Atlas period when we found it along brushy right-of-ways, and in recent clearcuts where blackberries and saplings dominated. In the case of High Knob, a series of disturbances lead to a mountaintop blackberry thicket ideal for this species. Elm spanworm, beech blight disease, and maple leaf anthracnose riddled the scene with weak, dead, and dying trees that fell victim to wind storms. Mourning Warblers moved in with a vengeance with over ten males defending territories in a concentrated area for several years. They have been found in nearby forest along Dry Run and McCarthy Roads for many years. I also have recorded this species at Algerine

Swamp Natural Area and at Tionesta Scenic Area where hundreds of acres of habitat were created by a tornado that cut a swath through that forest. I suspect it exists in more locations and would be found more often if people looked in the high plateau forests.

Conifers are a key component of the boreal forest. Many conifer bird species are fairly widespread because of their adoption of native hemlocks or planted spruces, pines, and firs. Golden-crowned Kinglets and Red-breasted Nuthatches are notorious for adopting conifer stands at lower elevations. They have been reported in 22 and 21 SAP locations, respectively. Both species have been documented at places like Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center in Berks County and Greenwood Furnace State Park in Huntington County. However, if you really want to experience these species in higher densities, you must explore the dense red spruce stands in the Poconos and North Mountain. Kinglets can have very high densities in these native spruce stands and are more regularly breeding at these locations than in the outlying spots.

The Purple Finch has been reported widely in Pennsylvania with 30 SAP locations. It also benefits from conifer plantings, but is not very common anywhere in the state. This species may be undergoing declines. Fortunately, it does not demand deep forests and seems to relish a mix of open areas, including lawns, with the dense conifers it nests and feeds in. It seems at home in conifer swamps and around beaver dams. The Red Crossbill is much rarer and has been reported from only two SAP locations during the breeding season. This nomadic species is listed as Candidate - Undetermined because of its enigmatic status but may be increasingly endangered throughout its range. In big cone crop years, birders are enthralled with huge flocks of crossbills at Cook Forest State Park and other places where large conifers provide food for the hungry travelers.

Pennsylvania has its share of fascinating and beautiful boreal forests and wetlands. Fortunately, much of it is protected by the DCNR and PGC as part of their land holdings. Fairly recent increases in populations of some conifer and boreal species may indicate a gradual recovery of that habitat, but we need to be diligent in protecting the habitat and its various components. These "increases" are certainly long-term rebounds from low points in the population experienced during the big timber era. A row of Norway spruces along the road is no substitute for a real boreal forest. Islands of a few trees are too small and short-term to sustain significant breeding populations of forest birds. For sustaining bird populations, we need large blocks of healthy habitat. Some disturbances, whether natural or manmade, are tolerable and perhaps even desirable, but only if we have a large enough block of habitat to sustain viable populations of local representatives of the northern biome. Perhaps some day we will be able to again enjoy the loud calls of the Olive-sided Flycatcher in our state.

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

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Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are Important Biodiversity Areas too.

by Rob Blye

A recent paper by Brooks et al 2001 indicates that IBAs provide habitat for other wildlife in addition to birds. The network of 228 IBAs in East Africa captures 97% of the region's 97 endemic mammals, 90% of its 80 threatened mammals, and 92% of its 131 endemic snakes and amphibians. Only 11 more sites are needed to cover the additional non-bird species.

The IBA network as a whole captures a very high proportion of other animal and plant species, including globally threatened species. IBAs are good indicators of important biodiversity areas, and thus a practical way to set priorities for wider biodiversity conservation, especially when there are few other data on groups other than birds.

For more information on this study visit the BirdLife International website at: http://www.birdlife.net/datazone/case_studies/ibas3.html.

In Pennsylvania we now have 81 IBAs, encompassing more than 2.6 million acres of land (9.3% of PA's land area). Two new sites were identified by the Pennsylvania Ornithological Technical Committee at its fall 2003 meeting: IBA # 80 - Buffalo Creek Watershed in Washington County and #81 - Greater Tussey Mountain.

For more information about IBAs in Pennsylvania please visit <http://pa.audubon.org/Ibainmain.htm> or contact Rob Blye (rblye@audubon.org) or Steve Hoffman (shoffman@audubon.org).

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Discovery of Pennsylvania's First Cliff-Nesting Peregrine Falcons in over 40 years

by Dan Brauning

It was the call I had been waiting 10 years to receive. Peregrine Falcons, seen at a cliff? This was the fulfillment of a recovery goal, a personal hope since I worked a hack site in 1981, but something I had no power to bring about. My anticipation was heightened by the birds sighted in the Delaware Water Gap last winter. That was a dramatic historic Peregrine nest site – one of the last occupied by falcons in the 1950s. The call I received was something less expected!

It was from Michael Kuriga, licensed falconer in Lycoming County. His report was closer to home than the Delaware River; it was classic third-hand information. A turkey hunter neighbor of Michael's falconer friend saw a big falcon along the cliff. Peregrines, seen on the cliff at ~~xxx~~ (sorry, location deleted). Actually, he had seen them in previous years! That seemed unlikely. Sure it wasn't a Coopers' Hawk? You know the story: Once Peregrines are released or nest in an urban area, every bird of prey (and quite a few pigeons) are misidentified as peregrines. We have the potential to generate general peregrine hysteria. No wonder. They are birds of superlatives.

From Michael, however, this report had to be followed up. Michael went to the river-edge cliff on April 5 and saw a Peregrine Falcon! Could this be a migrant? Since this site was close to my home, I planned to follow up on it personally. After an unsuccessful visit or two, finally on April 17 I saw an adult Peregrine Falcon – no – two falcons flying along the cliff. They were Peregrines for sure, on a cliff, near Williamsport.

Meanwhile, the pair on the Delaware Water Gap apparently had not settled in to domestic life. One was immature, reducing the chance of nesting this year. But here, close to home, was the fulfillment of many years' recovery efforts with falcons nesting (or we believed them to be) at a natural site. Ed and Tink Reish stepped in to assist with the monitoring. The birds seemed oblivious to our visits. The location of a nest site was narrowed by the behavior of the birds, and all indications were that this nest was successful. Food was brought to a ledge, the pair exchanged duties – classic nesting behaviors were displayed.

Not until May 20 did I discover that, with a good scope, we could look directly into the nest ledge from across the river. A small, downy-white young nestling was evident on a small point of rock. Nesting was confirmed, and we moved into gear to approach the nest to band the youngster.

In the meantime, the idea germinated that the birds nesting here in central Pennsylvania are in fact the same birds that frequent the Williamsport Genettii Hotel during winter, site of the 1990s-era reintroductions. Observations have been, in fact, more than just winter sightings. As early as late August, and just until February, the birds frequented this Williamsport landmark for several years. This was tantalizing behavior that suggests the pair nested nearby. With the discovery of this site we immediately wondered: Is it the same pair? To make a long story short, I eventually identified the band on the cliff-nesting male as one of the young released from the Genettii Hotel in 1996! Donated to the reintroduction cause and identified as "Zoo-1" because he was the offspring of the ZooAmerica's captive Peregrines, he had been sighted in 1997 back at the Genetti! The plot thickened.

The nestling developed, and the banding date arrived. With most Peregrines adopting domestic duties in early April, most young approach the narrow window of suitable banding age at the end of May or early June. We targeted May 28, and arranged with local Game Commission personnel, a skilled rock climber under the Game Commission's employ (John Chenger), and various local enthusiasts including Chuck Gordner, the falconer who passed along the report to Michael Kuriga. May 28 approached with a forecast of rain, and rather than risk climbers and birds in the wet rain, we postponed to May 30.

On the designated day, a small team equipped with climbing gear, bands, cameras, and even Jack Hubley (host of nationally syndicated television program, *Wild Moments*), descended the steep slope above the nest. Our first surprise was the hiss of two young turkey vultures tucked under a rocky overhang nearby. When we reached the top of the ledge, the falcons resounded in protest but did not approach closely.

After rigging line and ladder, I was given the honor of climbing down to the nest for the first close-up look at this historic little bird. The cliff ledge surprised me. It was narrow, a mere point of rock along a lengthy cliff-face, but with a precipitous drop of more than 150 feet from the lip. Technical climbing was necessary, and the chain ladder greatly facilitated my return up the cliff. The young appeared healthy and, with new identification jewelry, was returned to the nest. The adult pair was back to the site within an hour.

The details of this, Pennsylvania's first cliff-nesting Peregrine Falcons in 45 years are personally rewarding. I banded the

nesting male as a youngster in 1996, which was raised by a Pennsylvania organization, released in Williamsport, and now was nesting within 10 miles of my home. However, it is also a little embarrassing. Anecdotes suggested that this pair was present, even nesting successfully, for several years almost "under my nose." The age of the male and my own observations of two juvenile Peregrines in June 2000, just two miles from this site convince me that this isn't actually their first year! Blame paperwork that keeps me in the office instead of in the field, my doubts that falcons will return to cliffs, the unlikely cliff now occupied, or other distractions. The credit goes to an anonymous turkey hunter who noted an unusual bird and passed the information along, two falconers who followed up, and a number of local birders who walked the tracks and watched the birds. The reward is for us all.

Peregrines have returned to cliffs here in Pennsylvania, as they have in New England and along the Appalachians to our south. Now the task falls to you, Pennsylvania's birders, to find additional cliffs with Peregrines. I'll be checking my cliff next spring and hope to band more young on that precarious precipice, young that may well move to new cliffs.

Wanted: New PSO Members

by Rob Blye

At our November board meeting, we learned that PSO's membership now stands at 405 members as compared to 454 in 2002. There are 303 individual, 50 family, and 24 sustaining memberships as well as 33 reciprocal subscriptions to PA Birds. The board appointed me to chair a committee to increase membership. We came up with a long list of suggestions for increasing membership.

Among them were to:

- Send letters to Audubon chapter leaders for their newsletters.
- Contact non-Audubon bird clubs throughout PA.
- Sponsor more beginning birder events.
- Provide a beginning birder page in *PA Birds*.
- Write a newsletter article – PSO wants anyone interested in birds.
- Teach beginners how to use *PA Birds*.
- Use the list serve to advertise on a quarterly basis.
- Produce a series of articles on birding.
- Post the newsletter on the web site.
- Hand out free newsletters once a year; preferably the issue after the annual meeting.

We have already solicited new members on the PA Birds list serve. This article is a reminder to our current members that we want and need new members. When presenting the benefits of membership in PSO, please remember:

The most important benefit of PSO membership is the regular opportunity to meet and bird with other birders. Some are the most knowledgeable birders and ornithologists in Pennsylvania; others are beginners. We welcome beginners and experts alike.

PSO produces eight great publications per year: *Pennsylvania Birds* – 4 issues a years, one of the best state birding journals in the country. We fell behind in publication for a while, but are now back on schedule. The most recent issue is 68 pages long that includes the annual CBC report, quarterly reports from most counties, a summary of the season with unusual birds discussed, book review, photos, winter raptor survey, and others articles. An eight-page (or longer) newsletter comes out 4 times each year. This is almost a journal itself at times with even more important and interesting info.

PSO offers a chance to add your voice to other birders on conservation issues. PSO officers are sometimes asked to weigh in on conservation concerns; obviously we do so in favor of birds and saving bird habitat! (See page 15.)

PSO will be a lead organization in the second PA Breeding Bird Atlas which will begin in 2004. (See article beginning on page 4.)

Lastly, there is the annual PSO meeting. This meeting features interesting talks and an evening banquet speaker, but attendees spend just as much time in the field birding on organized field trips as they do listening to speakers. Usually between 75 and 100 birders attend. These meetings are held at various places around the state. Next May 15-17 the annual meeting will be held at Montour Preserve in Montour County. (See article on page 3.)

The more members we have, the more resources we have to advance birding, bird study, and bird conservation in our state. Please consider asking your birding friends to join PSO. Anyone who would like to serve on the membership committee should contact Rob Blye at rblye@audubon.org or 610-327-2502.

Carbon County Birding Fest

2004

April 23-25, 2004

Jim Thorpe, PA

Cost-\$25/per person for all three days

(Accommodations can be arranged through the historic Jim Thorpe Inn by calling 1-800-329-2599.)

For further information, contact Rob Bergstresser robear1@ptd.net or 570-778-2385 (If no answer, please leave a message with contact information)

Conservation Corner

PSO members, do you think wildlife is safe from habitat fragmentation and development in our state parks? If you do, then you might want to think again. The state, from the Governor's office to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), along with a private developer (Cambria County Industrial Development Corporation is part of this "development"), is planning to "raid" one of our state parks, Prince Gallitzin State Park in Cambria County.

The current proposal or should I say "boondoggle," that is currently being discussed calls for the construction of a resort, golf course, marina, new roads and other "amenities," all of which would be developed by private interests and would take many acres of park land.

Of course this is a contradiction of the *Pennsylvania State Parks 2000: Directions for the Next Century* plan adopted by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (the predecessor to DCNR) after much public input over an 18-month period and published in February 1992. This document is still policy for DCNR and implies that commercial development in state parks is inconsistent with the State Parks 2000 Mission Statement. The Mission states, "The primary purpose of state parks is to provide opportunities for enjoying healthful outdoor recreation and to serve as outdoor classrooms for environmental education. In meeting these purposes, the conservation of the natural, scenic, aesthetic and historical values of the parks should be given first consideration. Stewardship responsibilities should be carried out in a way that protects the natural outdoor experience for the enjoyment of current and future generations."

This "development" also violates Prince Gallitzin State Park's Resource Management Plan. In particular, the Management Plan describes part of the area slated for conversion to golf course and marina as follows: "Two small streams flow through this management unit – Beaverdam Run and Mudlick Run. Several beaver dams are present in both streams. The streams are surrounded by a shrub/brush wetland. Management unit objectives are 1) to provide wildlife habitat and vegetative diversity, 2) to protect and conserve the natural resources located in this management unit, and 3) to provide an area for passive recreational opportunities."

And finally, in an ironic twist, this proposed development "flies in the face" of a state publication recently issued jointly by the Governor's Sportsmen's Advisory Council, PA Game Commission, and of course DCNR! The publication, entitled *Pennsylvania's Wildlife and Wild Places: Our Outdoor Heritage in Peril*, reviews our outdoor heritage, the value of wildlife, wildlife population declines and the causes of declines such as development and roads. Recommendation #5 in this report states: "Promote environmentally responsible

land use, incorporate open space and habitat needs into planning codes, concentrate development away from sensitive areas, and foster productive use of cities and towns."

So why is the development proposal even being considered. Money – but money for a private developer. And although they claim certain economic benefits, it has been my experience that such "boosters" exaggerate the economic benefits and totally ignore the negative impacts of such projects.

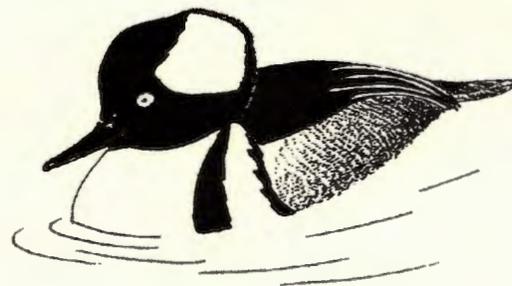
In addition, the desires of Pennsylvania's citizens are also being ignored because the vast majority have indicated that they want to keep the rustic nature of state parks (64% supported this in the *State Parks 2000* Questionnaire Summary published 11/89).

And if you think that this proposal is the end of such projects for state parks, well once again, think again. If this project is successful, the "boosters" of such projects have already set their sights on Moraine State Park, and I have even heard the rumor that the Presque Isle area might be considered.

Where will this all end? And where will wildlife be safe? If not in our state parks, then probably no where.

In my opinion, it is time to end this kind of nonsense right now. PSO members who agree are urged to contact the Governor's office, the Secretary of DCNR and their state legislators and let them know they object to this proposal and all proposals like it. You can email the Governor by going to www.governor.state.pa.us and click on "contact the Governor" and then click on "Email the Governor." Or write the Governor at the following address: 225 Main Capitol Building Harrisburg, PA 17120 or call 717-787-2500. The Secretary of DCNR can be contacted by calling 717-772-9084 or write Secretary DeBerardinis at this address: 7th Floor Rachel Carson State Office Building PO Box 8767 Harrisburg, PA 17105-8767. Please let them know right away that you object to this kind of development; if we fail to stop this boondoggle, then we are only going to be faced with more and more of it.

– Mark Henry, Conservation Chairperson



Notes from PORC

(Note: This article is a regular feature of the Newsletter in which the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee reports on its policies, procedures, and progress. Sincere thanks to Paul Hess as the originator of *Notes from PORC*. The pen has now been passed to our new PORC chairperson, Matt Sharp.)

I am honored to have been elected the new chairperson of the PA Records Committee and am somewhat daunted to be filling Paul Hess's shoes as he leaves the committee. As a birder growing up in Philadelphia with family in South Jersey, it was along the shore of the Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay that I became hooked on birds. After three years on the records committee, I now realize how much I have missed by rarely going west of the Schuylkill River. Pennsylvania has an immensely rich and surprising avifauna with many excellent field observers making startling discoveries. It is a pleasure and a privilege to play a role in maintaining part of the record of Pennsylvania's birds.

I would like to share some of what was discussed at the committee's annual meeting held this past October. As of the meeting, voting on 102 reports from 2002 was nearly completed. In addition, 76 reports from 2003 were being circulated, and in a hopefully portentous step for the committee 6 of these 2003 reports were circulated via e-mail. The turnaround time for these e-mail reports was a record setting three days! Watch out 21st century, here we come! Along the same lines, the possibility of having photographs and written reports submitted for evaluation via a password protected web site was discussed. The increasing availability of digital recording devices facilitating the submission of documentation in electronic form is an important technological advancement for the committee. This may also solve two other problems. With documentation in digital form, the storage of hard-copies becomes less of an issue. As it stands now, the record committees' archive is stored so that it is accessible if and when needed. In electronic form, access could be achieved through a computer, and hard copies could be stored in a less accessible but more available location. The prospect of converting all records to electronic form is formidable, however, and would take considerable time and some money, two things just about everyone is lacking. We recognize that hard copies of all records submitted to the committee are essential, and no one is suggesting that we ever eschew paper, ink, and photographs altogether. Nonetheless, the committee would be remiss were it to ignore the potential that digital media offer.

And just so you don't think we got stuck on the more prosaic aspect of the records committee, we also discussed birds. The process of adding or removing species to the review list was kicked around a bit. How many years of records should be looked at? At what frequency does a species need to occur to be removed from the list? How many records are enough?

What other considerations are there besides just the numbers? If you are going to regionalize a species with county exemptions, how do you draw the line? All of these were questions to which no firm answers were found, and I invite feedback from anyone interested, to sharp@acnatsci.org.

We did effect some more concrete decisions by making some changes in the review list. The following changes were made: Add Yellow-crowned Night-Heron to the list with no exemptions. Remove: Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Least Tern, and Brewer's Blackbird from the review list completely. The following changes in county exemptions were also made: Little Gull – add Lancaster Co. as an exempt county; Blue Grosbeak – add Berks Co. as exempt; Summer Tanager – remove Greene Co. as exempt; Eurasian Wigeon – remove the male only exemption.

Some potential changes requiring further study and collection of data were also suggested. Greater White-fronted Goose and Ross' Goose were recommended for removal from the list altogether. Whimbrel was nominated for being exempt in Lancaster Co. and Franklin's Gull as potentially exempt in Erie Co.

We also decided that in cases where a bird can be identified as belonging to a complex of extremely similar species, all of which are either on the review list or have never occurred in the state, committee members can vote to accept them as belonging to the group but not to species. For example, a distantly seen Frigatebird reported as a Magnificent could be accepted as Frigatebird sp. Even though the details needed to separate between Magnificent and any other species were not seen. There are numerous other possible examples of this so the names given to each group would have to be applied as each case presented itself.

On the other end of this spectrum is the problem of subspecies. Only very rarely can a bird actually be identified to subspecies in the field. It usually requires in hand measurements and often then, it can still be ambiguous. In discussion during and after the October meeting, it was decided that committee members would comment on sub-specific identification if possible even though the actual identification is only rarely going to be made. Further, even when sub-specific identification based on photos or written descriptions is possible, it is still somewhat presumptive given the amount of gene-flow between sub-specific popula-

(continued on page 19)

Christmas Bird Counts Held in Pennsylvania

Name of Count	County	Compiler	Phone Number	E-mail Address	Date
Audubon	Montgomery Delaware, Chester	Edie Parnum	610-964-8331	Eparnum@comcast.com	12/27/03
Bald Eagle	Centre	Eugene Zielinski	814-353-8212	eez55@earthlink.net	12/28/03?
Beaver	Beaver	John Cruzan	724-846-5342 (h) 724-847-6726 (o)	jcruzan@geneva.edu	12/20/03
Bedford	Bedford	Janet Shaffer	814-356-3553	jgshaffer@yellowbananas.com	12/27/03
Bernville	Berks	Ed Barrell	610-926-2962	hawkman501@yahoo.com	01/04/04
Bethlehem-Easton	Northampton	Elaine and Donald Mease	610-346-7754	measede@enter.net	12/27/03
Bloomsburg	Columbia	Hugh McFadden		hmcfadde@bloomu.edu	12/14/03
Buffalo Creek Valley	Butler Armstrong	George Reese	724-353-9649	gtreese@msn.com	12/20/03
Bushy Run S.P.	Westmoreland	Dick Byers	724-593-3543	otusasio@lhrc.net	12/21/03
Butler	Butler Lawrence Mercer	Suzanne Butcher	330-759-1945 724-794-3534	sarbird@hotmail.com	12/28/03
Central Bucks	Bucks	Diane Allison	610-847-2085	dalliso@postoffice.ptd.net	12/28/03
Chambersburg	Franklin	Joan Bowen	717-264-9493		12/20/03
Clarion	Clarion	Margaret Buckwalter Walter Fye	814-782-3925 814-797-1800	mbuckwalter@usachoice.net waltfye@usachoice.net	12/27/03
Clarksville	Greene	Ralph Bell	724-883-4505		12/27/03
Culp	Blair	Debbie Wentz	814-692-4224	dtw1999@adelphia.net	12/20/03
Curtin	Dauphin	Scott Bills	717-896-8859	sbills@state.pa.us	12/29/03
Dallas Area	Luzerne	Jim Hoyson	570-696-4925 (h) 570-696-4483 (o)	birdder@aol.com	12/20/03
Dingman's Ferry	Pike	Tom Shimalla Patrick Scheuer	570-828-9281 570-828-2319	quantumhop@hotmail.com	
DuBois	Clearfield	Harold Webster	814-375-0709	webs@adelphia.net	1/03/03
Elverson	Chester	Robert Cook	610-286-9919	dunlin50@mymailstation.com	12/21/03
Emporium	Cameron	Bob Martin	814-486-1990		
Erie	Erie	Chuck Gehringer Louise Chambers	814-734-4420 (o) 814-398-2772 (h)	chuckg58@hotmail.com louise@purplemartin.org	12/20/03
Gettysburg	Adams	Arthur Kennell	717-642-6995		12/20/03
Glenolden	Delaware	Nick Pulcinella	610-696-0687	nickpul@bellatlantic.net	12/20/03
Hamburg	Berks Schuylkill	Laurie Goodrich	610-756-6961 570-943-3411 x106	goodrich@hawkmtn.org	12/28/03
Harrisburg	Dauphin	Deuane Hoffman	717-564-7475	corvuscorax@comcast.net	12/20/03
Huntingdon	Huntingdon	Dave Kyler	814-643-6030	davidkyler@pennswoods.net	12/14/03

Indiana	Indiana	Roger & Margaret Higbee	724-354-3493	bcoriole@twd.net	12/26/03
Johnstown	Cambria Somerset	Sally Dick Rosemary McGlynn	814-266-7912 814-255-5734	watchbirds@compuserve.com	12/14/03
Lake Raystown	Huntingdon Blair	Greg Grove Dave Kyler	814-667-2305 814-643-6030	gwg2@psu.edu davidkyler@pennswoods.net	12/27/03
Lancaster	Lancaster	Chris Pederson	717-295-2607		01/03/04
Lebanon	Lebanon	Frederick Heilman	717-273-0487	fh1vw@aol.com	12/14/03
Lehigh Valley	Lehigh	Mark Boyd	610-432-0170	mrboyd@rcn.com	12/20/03
Lewisburg	Union, Snyder, Northumberland	Richard Nickelsen	570-524-9833	nickelsn@bucknell.edu	12/14/03
Lewistown	Juniata	Linda Whitesel	717-436-8048	lkwhitesel@acsworld.net	12/20/03
Linesville	Crawford	Ronald Harrell	814-337-5445	rharrell@allegheny.edu	12/14/03
Lititz	Lancaster	Bruce Carl	717-859-4179	carls@desupernet.net	12/28/03
Lock Haven- Jersey Shore	Clinton Lycoming	Wayne Laubscher	570-748-7511	wlausch@cub.kcnet.org	12/28/03
Mansfield	Tioga	Robert Ross	570-376-5394 570-724-3322 x239	rossr@usgs.gov	12/20/03
Mount Davis	Somerset	Dale Jeffrey Chuck Tague	814-662-2904 412-488-8760	mtdavidj@pennswoods.net bluejay@city-net.com	
New Bloomfield	Perry	Ramsay Koury	717-761-1871	rkoury123@aol.com	12/27/03
Newville	Cumberland	Bill and Linda Franz	717-776-4463	wlf Franz@earthlink.net	01/04/04
Pennypack Valley	Montgomery Philadelphia	JoAnn Raine	215-659-3921	joannr36@aol.com	12/20/03
Pittsburgh	Allegheny	Jim Valimont	412-828-5338	valimont@bellatlantic.net	12/27/03
Pittsburgh South Hills	Allegheny Washington	Bill Judd	412-571-2057	wmrjudd@earthlink.net	12/20/03
Pleasantville	Venango	Russ States	814-676-6320	russ@csonline.net	12/28/03
Pocono Mt.	Monroe	Chris Turn		birder@ptd.net	12/14/03
Potter County	Potter	Dave Hauber	814-274-8946	haubers3@penn.com	12/28/03
Raccoon Creek	Beaver	William B. Smith Chuck Tague	724-375-9613 412-488-8760	bersmith@tristate.pgh.net bluejay@city-net.com	12/30/03
Reading	Berks	Bill Uhrich	610-373-8109	buhrich@readingeagle.com	12/14/03
Rector	Westmoreland	Robert Mulvihill	724-593-7521 (o) 724-238-2716 (h)	multipnr@westol.com	12/28/03
Ryerson	Greene	Marjorie Howard	724-852-3155	birdwatcher@alltel.net	12/20/03
Scranton	Lackawanna	William Speare			
Southeastern Bradford	Bradford	Bill Reid	570-836-2734 570-822-8433		12/27/03
Southern Bucks	Bucks	Robert Mercer	215-785-1177	ramercer@co.bucks.pa.us	12/13/03
Southern Lancaster County	Lancaster	Bob Schutsky	717-548-3303 (9 a.m. to 9 p.m.)	info@birdtreks.com	12/14/03

State College	Centre	James Dunn Bob Fowles	814-238-2122 814-238-1990	jwd6@psu.edu rbf@psu.edu	12/14/03
Tunkhannock	Wyoming	Rick Koval	570-829-4381	unibirder@aol.com	12/14/03
Upper Bucks	Bucks Montgomery	Hart Rufe	215-257-8677	wrufe@starband.net	12/14/03
Warren	Warren	Michael Toole Don Watts (Organizer)	814-723-4714 814-723-9125	toole@kinzua.net watts@penn.com	12/13/03
Washington	Washington	Roy Ickes	724-228-3532	rickes@washjeff.edu	12/20/03
West Chester	Chester	Barry Blust	610-458-5616	BarryBlust@comcast.net	12/20/03
Western Chester	Chester	Larry Lewis	610-518-7242	Earlybirdtours@aol.com	12/14/03
White Mills	Wayne	Voni Strasser	570-226-8847	sawwhet@ptd.net	12/20/03
Wild Creek- Little Gap	Carbon Monroe	Joel Silfies Brad Silfies	610-826-3817	jss48@cornell.edu bsilfies@aol.com	12/21/03
Williamsport	Lycoming	Dave Ferry	570-323-1590	lycohawk@aol.com dferry@wasd.org	01/03/04
Wyncote	Montgomery	Martin Selzer	215-233-9090	mseizer@janus.inj.com	12/20/03
York	York	Bill Del Grande	717-854-6728	yorkies17403@yahoo.com	12/20/03

Answers to Bird Quiz (page 3)

1. Winter Wren
2. Turkey Vulture
3. Bachman's Sparrow
4. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (The Acadian Flycatcher frequently has a yellowish belly, especially hatching-year birds in fall, but it has a whitish throat.)
5. Wilson's Snipe, Canada Warbler (*Wilsonia canadensis*), and Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*)



Notes from PORC (continued from page 16)

tions and the possibility of intergradation. Considering this, we decided that the sub-specific trinomial not be given on the review list but rather just the common name for the group. For example, rather than "Oregon Junco," *Junco hyemalis thurberi*, the list read simply "Oregon Junco." This would encompass any member of the "Oregon" group including *oreganus*, *simillimus*, *thurberi*, *pinosus*, *shufeldti*, or any intergrade between any of these populations. Observers are encouraged to look closely at all birds and to think about subspecies and sub-specific identification and to include any notes to that end in documentation even though decisions on such notes will rarely be made.

So as committees are prone to do, we did a lot of talking. The challenge, of course, is to turn words into action. This is especially true in regard to making progress by taking advantage of the internet, e-mail, and digital forms of documentation. This is one arena where the seemingly endless possibilities can be overwhelming. Any advice, or ideas on this are again welcomed to sharp@acnatsci.org.

– Matthew Sharp, PORC Chairperson
VIREO/Academy of Natural Sciences
1900 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy
Philadelphia PA 19103



Youth Scholarship Offered

At our PSO board meeting, held on 8 November in Boalsburg, we decided to grant a scholarship to a student 18 years of age or younger so that this young person can have the opportunity to attend our annual meeting. PSO will pay for the student's food and lodging, but the person nominating the youth will be responsible for transporting him or her to the meeting and be responsible for him or her during the meeting. A nomination form will appear in the March Newsletter.

For more information, contact Shonah Hunter at shunter@lhup.edu.

Special Thanks!

Thanks to Stan Kotala for donating his artwork for use in the PSO Newsletter! You'll be seeing more of his wonderfully realistic artwork in future issues. Thank you, Stan!!!

PSO Newsletter

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