

THE PSO PILEATED



March 2004

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Volume 15, Number 1

From the President's Desk....

Why Montour Preserve? It's Birdy!

People ask me about Montour Preserve. "Why go there?" they ask. I say that this is just the kind of place PSO should have a meeting. Why? Because it is so very *birdy!*

From its very inception, Montour Preserve attracted bird-watchers of every ilk (yes, in the 70s that's what we were called). This was not by accident. Its first director and naturalist, Harry Barnes, was an avid birder with an infectious enthusiasm for anything pertaining to birds. He invited everyone. The visitors' center is a bird haven with raptors hanging from the ceiling and a big window from which to view feeders and a little pond. Harry's bold and creative ideas were way ahead of the curve for nature centers of the day.

Local college professor, Bob Sagar, brought students to the preserve from Bloomsburg State College. They came in droves. Bob did bird surveys in the park, logging his finds to produce the first site checklist. Some of his students did master's degree research at Montour. John Stahura studied Tree Swallows, and I studied Blue Jays there. Other students like Dave Unger visited Montour as often as possible, posting rare sightings of Short-eared Owls and other feathered visitors in the local papers.

Local bird clubs and Audubon Chapters scheduled outings here. The Seven Mountains Audubon group from Lewisburg staged many bird walks, often with Allen Schweinsberg in the lead. The Lycoming County Audubon came down from Williamsport to help with preserve bird events. Frank and Barb Haas were among the earliest loyal visitors to the Preserve and led a field trip here at the very first PSO meeting.

We just didn't watch birds there. We also banded them. Bob Sagar put up mist nets and set traps that captured many songbirds for handfuls of feathered education. Harry was well-known for losing birds with his gentle touch. We

muttered that someone "pulled a Harry" when a bird escaped. The Game Commission's Fred Hartman coordinated waterfowl banding, including volunteers to handle the Mallards and black ducks that blundered into his cages. With his trademark wild style, Fred led timberdoodle "walks" which turned into crawls through the muddy field for

close-up views. I remember diving into the duff just in time to see the woodcock land and strut in the fading light after "peenting" on the ground then spiraling overhead in a dance. The dance continues today.



Montour Preserve has been a pioneer in environmental education. This is where many have been inspired to study and conserve nature. Montour had one of the first environmental interpretive trails in the area. The sugar bush events in late winter attract thousands of visitors, often giving children their first experiences outdoors. Traditions started by Harry are continued ably and imaginatively by Jon Beam today. The planned Birding Basics Workshop conducted by the PA Institute for Conservation Education continues the traditions started more than 25 years ago. Teach the teachers!

Montour is also a model for wildlife habitat. There are wildlife trails that demonstrate good wildlife habitat creation. Cooperating with the Game Commission, the Preserve was one of the first places where warm season grasses were incorporated into the wildlife plantings. These trails and fields also are readily accessible places for birding, especially for beginners.

Birders converge at hotspots like this. Join us and enjoy one of the state's birdiest places at the May PSO meeting. You will carry home many memories and make many friends here.

— Douglas Gross, President

Conservation Corner

"If we can make our cities and towns more livable, offer sportsmen clean streams and healthy game lands, respond to growing needs to preserve farmland and open space and to repair the environmental damage of our industrial past, Pennsylvania will be a more attractive place for families and employers to come and to stay."

— Governor Ed Rendell, February 2004

The Governor in his speech, part of which is quoted above, has proposed an \$800 million bond issue for conservation and environmental programs in Pennsylvania. Good news indeed.

The money, if approved, would be distributed among three areas over four years. The proposed distribution is as follows:

Parks, open space and farmland - \$330 million
Threatened open spaces - \$100 million
Farmland preservation - \$100 million
State parks rehab/improvements - \$80 million
Fish & Boat and Game Commissions - \$50 million

Environmental cleanup - \$300 million
Abandoned mines - \$100 million
Rivers and streams - \$80 million
Energy harvest - \$80 million
Brownfields - \$40 million

Revitalize older communities - \$170 million
Community parks - \$80 million
Community redevelopment & housing - \$90 million

This proposal would be funded by a voter-approved bond issue and pollution-reduction fees. Although there has been some opposition to the proposal due to the cost, I believe that the Governor's proposal is certainly a step in the right direction and deserves our support.

Conservation and environmental programs have consistently suffered from the lack of funding and with sprawl in the state "gobbling up" more than 300 acres a day and with 2500 to 3000 miles of acid streams, initiatives to preserve open space and reduce/eliminate pollution must be implemented. And, even though this initiative might not be exactly what we would like, it is a significant conservation proposal and one that I would urge PSO members to support.

More information on the proposal can be found on the Governor's website at www.governor.state.pa.us. Just click on Governor Rendell's open space preservation plan.

— Mark Henry

Ornithological Literature Notes

(Note: This is the eighth in a periodic series highlighting recent publications of special interest to Pennsylvania ornithologists and birders.)

How far away can you hear a Grasshopper Sparrow? A Savannah Sparrow? A Henslow's Sparrow? How does your hearing ability compare with that of others? Those are crucial questions for anyone conducting or analyzing a grassland bird survey. A team of researchers, including Pennsylvania's Dan Brauning, recently conducted a four-year series of experiments designed to find out how those distances vary among different listeners. Significant differences among observers' ability to hear birds at various distances would add serious biases to the accuracy of the surveys.

The results were published in the American Ornithologists' Union journal, *The Auk*, in 2003 (120:1168-1179): "Variability in grassland bird counts related to observer differences and species detection rates," by Duane R. Diefenbach, Daniel W. Brauning, and Jennifer A. Mattice. Diefenbach and Mattice were with the U.S. Geological Survey's Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Penn State University, and Brauning is a nongame wildlife biologist for the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Six observers conducted the grassland counts on reclaimed surface mines in western Pennsylvania. In 1998 the surveys were made at the vast area known famously to the region's birders as the Piney Tract in Clarion County, then in 1999 through 2001 at mine reclamation lands in Armstrong, Butler, Cambria, Clarion, Clearfield, Indiana, Jefferson, Somerset, and Venango counties. All of the observers were skilled and experienced in identifying grassland songbirds by sight and sound. Walking parallel line transects across patches of grassland, they counted only singing male Henslow's, Grasshopper, and Savannah sparrows that they could see. Visual detection of the birds was required so that the observers could measure how far away the singers were.

Using statistical modeling, the researchers estimated that observers could detect nearly all of the birds actually present less than 25 meters away, but beyond that distance the probability of detection declined significantly. For example, as many as 60 percent of birds beyond 50 meters were missed. (In general, the decline in detection occurred at closer distances for Savannah Sparrows than for Grasshopper and Henslow's.) More importantly, the ability to hear the birds at different distances varied greatly among observers and species – variations that were serious enough to prevent accurate monitoring of populations and to invalidate comparisons among surveys. Diefenbach, Brauning, and Mattice recommended that researchers use survey methods designed to account for differing probabilities of detection when estimating grassland birds' abundance.

— Paul D. Hess

Update on the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas

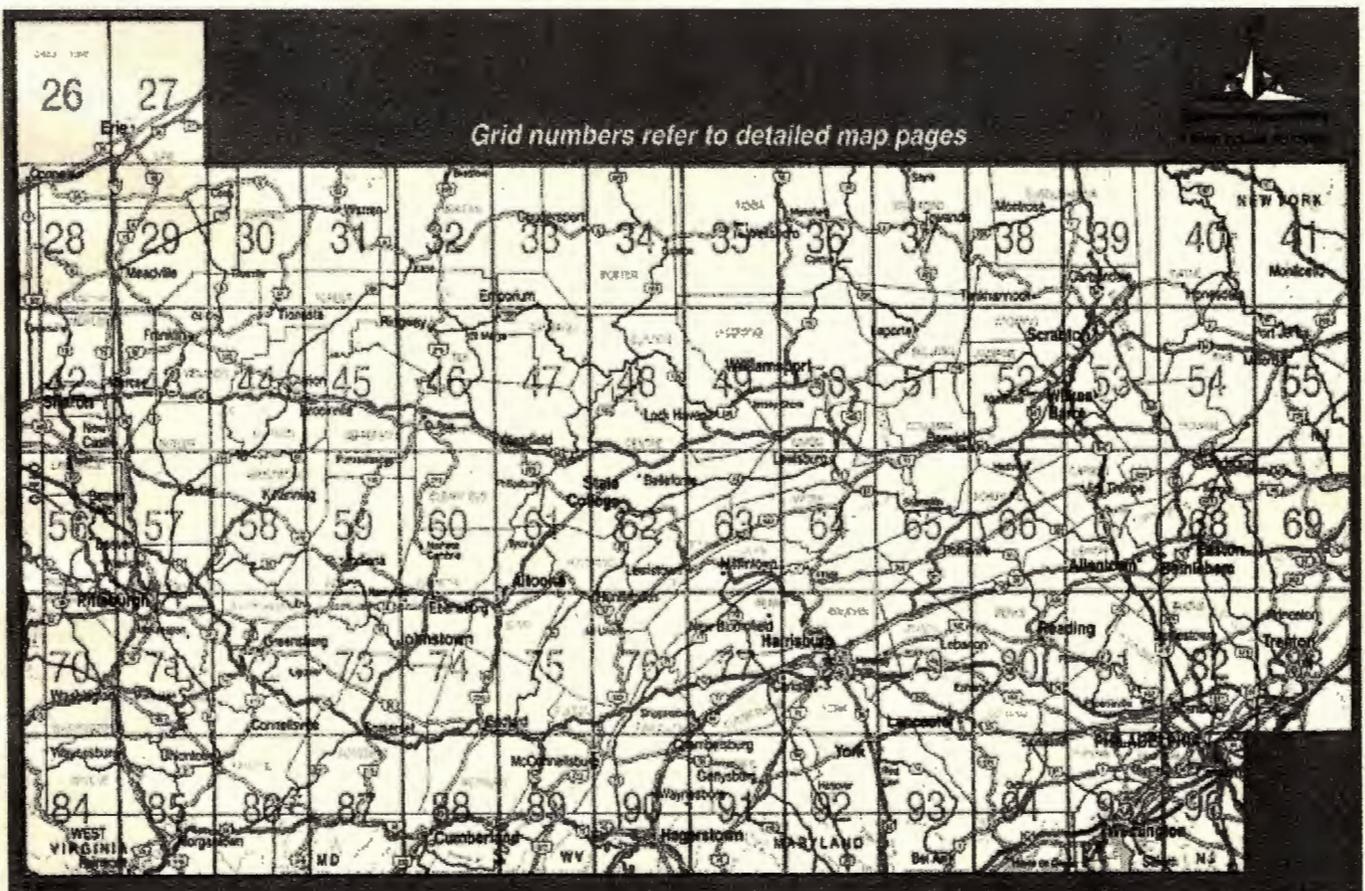
by Robert Mulvihill

As many PSO members know (in fact, thanks already to many of you!) the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas project officially got underway January 1, 2004. Although not every part of this very large project is completely finished and in place (we're getting there!), a great deal of progress has been made since my previous article about the Atlas was published in the last *PSO Pileated*. This is an update concerning the project's status now and what will develop during the coming months.

Most importantly, we are signally fortunate to have enlisted the aid of about 70 Pennsylvania birders to serve as Regional Coordinators and co-Regional Coordinators for the Atlas, providing solid leadership for all but two of our 57 designated regions. Recall that the 2nd PA Breeding Bird Atlas regions are based on the pages of the DeLorme Atlas & Gazetteer, with most regions comprising a single page of that map book and a few regions combining 2-3 adjacent pages (in those cases where much of the pages fall outside our PA border). Each region contains about 84 Breeding Bird Atlas survey blocks, and the Regional Coordinators will need help from as many PSO members and other birders as possible to achieve thorough coverage of the blocks in their region. With more than 4,900 blocks to be surveyed during the next five years, the need for lots of help from all of you is obvious!

The Regional Coordinators listed in the table on pages 4 and 5 form an exceptional (and essential) network that is the organizational infrastructure for running what we all know is a very ambitious statewide effort to document the current breeding distributions, abundances, and habitat use of nearly 200 species of nesting birds in the state during the next five years. The RCs and co-RCs are the principal contacts for those of you who are ready, willing, and able to help with this very important project! They will make and approve block assignments, strategize coverage, provide information and directions, review the data being collected in their regions for accuracy, and more. The preferred contact telephone number for some RCs was not known at the time of this writing, but all RCs can be reached via email at region##@pabirdatlas.org (simply replace the “##” with the number of the region of the RC you want to contact--e.g., for Region 59, write to region59@pabirdatlas.org). Also, if you call the main Atlas office at (724) 593-6022, we can give you additional or updated contact information as it becomes available. To determine which Regional Coordinator you may wish to contact about helping with the Atlas project, consult the numbered DeLorme Pennsylvania Atlas & Gazetteer map index below (reproduced with permission):

(continued on page 5)



List of Regional Coordinators and Co-Coordiators for the 2nd PA Breeding Bird Atlas

Region No.	Regional Coordinator	Phone Number	Co-Coordinator	Phone No.
26/28	John Tautin	814-763-6461		
27/29	Chuck Gehringer	814-796-6299		
30	Flo and Jim McGuire	814-755-3672		
31	Don Watts	814-723-9125	Ted Grisez	814-723-9464
32	John Fedak	570-362-1052		
33	David Hauber	814-274-8946		
34	Mary Hirst	814-435-2218		
35	Bob Ross	570-376-5394	Philip Krajewski	570-324-2492
36	Jeff Holbrook	607-936-5059		
37	Bob Fowles	814-238-1990		
38	Bob Daniels	570-836-2846		
39	Jerry Skinner	570-278-3384		
40	Barbara Leo	570-253-2364		
42	Randy Stringer	724-458-0446		
43	Gary Edwards	814-676-3011	Russ States	814-676-6320
44	Mike Leahy	814-797-2287		
45	Pat Conway	814-849-6315		
46	Coordinator needed!			
47	Bob Martin	814-486-1990		
48	Greg Grove	814-667-2305	Nick Bolgiano	814-234-2746
49	Wayne Laubscher	570-748-7511		
50	Dan Brauning	570-547-6938		
51	Doug Gross	570-458-4564		
52	Rick Koval	570-829-4381		
53	Jim Hoyson	570-696-4925	Mark Blauer	570-379-3201
54/55	Terry Master	570-422-3709		
56	Coordinator needed!			
57	JoAnn Albert		JoAnn Davis Brian Shema	412-466-0970 412-963-6100
58	Mark McConaughy	724-733-5299		
59	Roger and Margaret Higbee	724-354-3493		
60	Bob Mulvihill	724-593-6022		
61	Margaret Brittingham	814-863-8442		
62	Roana Fuller		Jim Dunn	814-238-2122
63	Mark Henry	814-349-5774		
64	Allen Schweinsberg	570-524-0432		
65	Deuane Hoffman	717-319-6359		
66	Mike Ward	570-628-5571	Dave Kruel	570-622-3704
67/68	Arlene Koch	610-253-6377	Bernie Morris	610-967-0257
70	Roy Ickes	724-228-3532		
71	Mike Fialkovich	412-731-3581		
72	Dick Byers	724-593-3543		
73	Janet and Tom Kuehl	724-325-1918		
74	Neil Woffinden	814-269-2910		
75	David Kyler	814-643-6030		
76	Mike Lanzone	724-593-6022	Dan Ombalski	814-466-9731
77	Ramsay Koury	717-761-1871		
78	Sandy Lockerman	717-657-0509		
79	Randy Miller	717-664-3778	Rosemary Spreha	717-657-0271
80	Steve and Sue Fordyce	610-682-1743		
81	Art Morris	610-664-2174		
82/83	Barbara McGlaughlin	215-822-0498		
84/85	Terry Dayton	724-627-9665		
86/87	Mark Bowers	724-872-5232	Jeff and Retta Payne	814-267-5718

Region No.	Regional Coordinator	Phone Number	Co-Coordinator	Phone No.
88/89	Dan Snell	717-530-8313		
90/91	Kim Van Fleet	717-243-4819		
92/93	Karen Lippy	717 637-9347		
94/95/96	Doris McGovern	610 565 8484		

Update on the 2nd PBBA *(continued from page 3)*

By April, locating, identifying, and printing maps of Atlas blocks should be accomplished simply from our website (see below). For now (and for times when you're not near a computer), to identify the specific block you'd like to request to own (or to identify the block or blocks in which you've recorded incidental breeding bird observations), you can use a DeLorme Atlas & Gazetteer in the following way:

On two facing pages of every DeLorme map book, there are exactly 28 USGS 7½-minute series topo quad map equivalents. Within each of these topo quadrangle maps, just like the first Atlas, there are six equal-sized breeding bird atlas blocks, giving 168 atlas blocks per two facing DeLorme pages. To draw the outlines of these bird survey blocks, carefully do the following:

Start by making marks at every 7½-minute grid mark along the sides, top, and bottom of two facing DeLorme pages. Draw the grid connecting these marks (look also for the three very thin crosshairs that your lines should intersect from top-to-bottom and side-to-side across each page of the map itself), and you will have 28 rectangles (these are the 7½-minute topo quad outlines). Notice that the alphanumeric coordinates along the top (1-7) and sides (A-D) of the DeLorme pages correspond to the topo quadrangles you have outlined. You will notice, too, that one column (column 4) of the topo quads is split evenly between the two facing DeLorme map pages.

To get to the individual Atlas blocks themselves, you will now have to divide each of the 28 topo quads (or, at least the ones containing the blocks in which you'd like to volunteer) into equal sixths: divide them exactly in half vertically (into two 3¾-minute sections) and into equal 2½-minute thirds horizontally. Once this is done for all 28 quads, you will have 168 blocks (six blocks per quad), each of which is about 1¼ inch on each side. All of the breeding bird atlas blocks on the two facing DeLorme map pages can now easily be

identified in the following way (for example, if you want to contact a regional coordinator about helping in the block in which your house or favorite birding spot is located): the first part of each Block I.D. is simply the page number of the DeLorme Atlas containing the block; this is followed by the coordinates (letter first, number second) identifying the topo quad in which your block is located; finally, the breeding bird atlas block number within the topo quad (numbered 1-6 from upper left to bottom right). For example, if you wanted to be an Atlas volunteer for the block containing the town of Franklin in Venango County, you would contact one of the Region 43 Coordinators, Gary Edwards or Russ States, and request block 43A75, because Franklin is on page 43, in the topo quad designated by the coordinates A7 on that page, and in block 5, the southwestern block, of that topo quad. All 4,937 blocks in the breeding bird atlas are uniquely and easily identified in this way.

Shortly, the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas will be easily accessible to anyone who has a computer and internet service or who has access to these in a public library or school. Currently, the renowned Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is putting the finishing touches on the registration pages for the PA Atlas website. Within a few weeks, you should be able to go online to register as an official Atlas volunteer, request block assignments from the appropriate regional coordinator, print Atlas block maps to use in the field, and see and print lists of birds recorded in every Atlas block during the first Atlas done 20 years ago. Within a few months, everyone who has registered as a volunteer will be able to enter their 2004 breeding bird observations online, and we all will be able to watch as the collective observations of hundreds, and eventually thousands, of birders in the state begin to accumulate into the clearest picture of PA breeding bird distributions we've ever seen!

Until such time as the web-based data entry is available, everyone will have to keep their Atlas observations of possible, probable, and confirmed nesting birds in notebooks or on the paper forms that will be available shortly. At an upcoming meeting of regional coordinators in State College on March 27, Assistant Atlas Project Coordinator, Mike Lanzone, and I will be distributing for the first time a variety of printed materials, including sturdy field cards for all of us to use in logging our Atlas observations. Many of you may have contacted, or have been contacted, by your regional coordinator about helping with the Atlas, but if you haven't



already done so, then be sure to contact him or her soon about helping in the block where you live or in blocks where you frequently bird. Provide your contact information so you may be added to the roles of potential block owners and other volunteers, and so they can send you field cards and other materials as these become available. These same materials also can be requested from us here at the main Atlas office at Powdermill: 1847 Route 381, Rector, PA 15677; 724-593-6022.

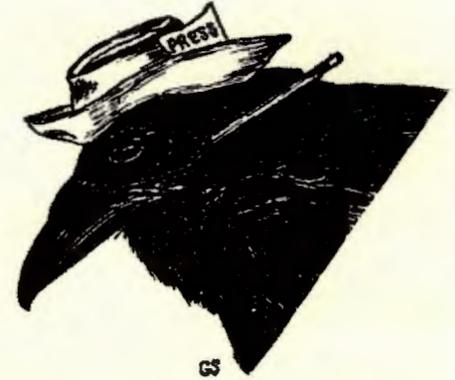
The informational portion of the website for the Atlas project, www.pabirdatlas.org, being developed by us here at Powdermill with help from the webmaster for Carnegie Museum of Natural History, is still very much under construction. We recently posted a few temporary web pages to provide the regional coordinators with easier access to some information on the Atlas breeding codes, safe dates, and special species efforts. Although this information must still be considered provisional, those of you who are or plan to become Atlas volunteers may want to look at these to get a little better idea of what's involved. Check www.pabirdatlas.org/paatlas.html. Once again, the paper forms, volunteer I.D. cards, the Atlas handbook and survey protocols, Cornell's online registration and data entry website, and our own informational website for the Atlas and more will be completed and accessible during the coming weeks and months.

Notwithstanding the inevitable delays in getting the many pieces of this gigantic project put together, I'll take this opportunity to remind everyone that the 2nd PA Breeding Bird Atlas is a five-year project and that we're definitely off to a great start! My sincere thanks to all the regional coordinators listed on pages 4 and 5 and to all of you who are and will be helping them with the important and fulfilling job of Monitoring *Pennsylvanian* Biodiversity! in 2004-2008. Truly, the 2nd PA Breeding Bird Atlas holds the promise of making us all especially proud to be birders because its many and far-reaching scientific, conservation, and education results undoubtedly will benefit birds and bird habitats in Pennsylvania for generations to come. Every last person having more than a passing interest in birds can contribute something of value to this project, and it is my hope that an unprecedented number of people will do so. I have no doubt that the members of the PSO will be true leaders in this effort, and that many of you will not only help with collecting data for the project yourselves, but also will try to bring as many people into the project as you possibly can during the next five years—this includes friends, family, neighbors, school teachers and students, scout groups, and more. Let's be sure to use this highly visible and engaging Atlas project as a way to swell the ranks of our bird and nature clubs and to create a growing awareness, concern, and sense of stewardship among Pennsylvania's citizens for birds and for important bird habitats in the state.



The Raven Reporter

Tales of Discovery from the Special Areas Project



One of the special things about the Special Areas Project is that we can delve into the SAP database to describe the birds and birding opportunities of interesting places. We will focus on a few good birding locations near Montour Preserve, the location of the 2004 Annual Meeting. The region features a mosaic of agriculture, forest, and thicket. The Preserve and most field trips lie in the Ridge and Valley section. But only a few miles to the north, we can go to something "completely different" on the Allegheny Plateau, locally known as North Mountain. Here are a few spots for which we have some SAP data. I wish we had data for some of the other great birding spots of the region.

If you think some of these descriptions sound a bit like a site guide, you are right. That is the idea. Enjoy our birds!

State Game Lands 226 near Millville and Jerseytown

Nestled in the Muncy Hills, the "Millville" game lands are a popular spot for hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and birding. It is one of the hot spots for the Bloomsburg Christmas Bird Count where Bob Sagar and friends have prowled the hills for many years.

These game lands lie in Columbia County's farm country. The vegetative cover reflects the previous agricultural history of the property and the expectations of the local hunting community. Many acres are planted in rows of shrubs sandwiching fields of grains and clovers. The hills are covered with a mixed forest, dominated mostly by oaks. Some white pines reach above the canopy, providing perches for hawks. The western part of the game land is drained by the East Branch of Chillisquaque Creek, and the east part is in the Spruce Run watershed. Spruce Run is a misnomer since hemlocks are the native conifer along its banks, but there are many planted exotic conifers there, too. Old logging roads crisscross the hills, usually following nameless hollows. These game lands are notorious for wintering flocks of robins and cardinals. While cross-county skiing in January, in its snowy woods I have seen more than 200 robins, feasting on dried grapes, sumac berries, and viburnum fruits. The oaks

can be prolifically productive of acorns, provisioning jays, squirrels, deer, and bear. In some autumns, acorns cover the ground along the many game land roads.

Wildlife food plots and shrub rows along Spruce Run and near the historic Katie's Church are magnets for field and edge species. With the mix of field, thicket, and forest, it is easy to accumulate a 50-species list while walking along Spruce Run Road on a May morning. Gray Catbird, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Indigo Bunting are particularly abundant. Some target species include Blue-winged Warbler and Willow Flycatcher. On the wooded hillsides, the most common species include Ovenbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Green Warbler, Wood Thrush, and Hooded Warbler. Hermit Thrush replaces Wood Thrush at the higher elevations. Where there is shrubby understory, Worm-eating Warblers can be found. In the hollows, Acadian Flycatcher is locally abundant; the upper part of Spruce Run hollow has the highest density in the county. Off the road, Louisiana Waterthrush sings along Spruce Run and some feeder streams. In the hemlocks, Blue-headed Vireo replaces the ubiquitous Red-eyed Vireo. Tall white pines emerge above the deciduous canopy, providing perches for raptors and song posts for Pine Warblers. In deeper woods, especially in the northern section, Brown Creeper and Pileated Woodpecker are easily found.

Fittingly, these game lands are good for game birds, too. Ruffed Grouse are easily found in the roadside cuttings and under low hemlocks. Wild Turkey can be seen almost anywhere at any time. And, American Woodcock perform their displays in the fields along Spruce Run Road and forage in seeps near Spruce Run. The warm season grass (WSG) plantings are great places for field birds, including pheasants which are a main focus of the plantings and food plots. There are a few WSG plots near White Hall, just down the road from Montour Preserve.

Evenings can be magical. The game land roads are wide and well kept, allowing easy walking on a moonlit night. My wife and I walk these trails each summer, sitting quietly on logs to listen to the night sounds. In the fading twilight you can hear the quick calls of Acadian Flycatchers and Eastern Wood-Pewees. Screech-Owl and Great Horned Owls are the prevalent owls, but I have heard saw-whets here in winter. We have flushed Whip-poor-wills along these trails and heard their relentless songs echo across the hills.

Ricketts Glen State Park and North Mountain

Ricketts Glen is justifiably famous as one of the state's most outstanding scenic parks and has been chosen as an Important Bird Area. Most of this vast tract of forest was once owned by Colonel Robert Bruce Ricketts, Civil War hero. The park is perched along the Allegheny Front on the south edge of the Allegheny Plateau facing the Ridge and Valley Province. Its highest point at Grand View near the fire tower reaches 2449

feet, rising 1200 feet above the valley below along Route 118. The drop in elevation provides the dramatic scenery and relief that allows so many waterfalls. Kitchen Creek gorge is a National Landmark known as the Glens Natural Area. The two branches of Kitchen Creek fall from the Allegheny Plateau to join at Water's Meet within the glen. Along these streams, there are 22 named waterfalls, a feature that draws thousands of visitors each year to the park which almost became a national park in the 1940s.

Ricketts Glen State Park is covered primarily by forest. Comprising 13,050 acres, it is also one of the largest in the state park system. With the surrounding game lands, this park is part of a 150,000 acre block of nearly unbroken forest. As such, it is very important to many forest birds. Notorious for its wildness, it also is a hotbed for biodiversity. Although the park is sometimes crowded with campers, bears regularly roam through the campgrounds, and coyotes sing in the moonlight and in the early morning light. Bobcats stalk the woods at night, and otters gambol in the streams of North Mountain. Early birders marveled that they could experience the songs of all Pennsylvania's thrushes in this area, including the rare Swainson's Thrush.

Ravens preside over their dominion of North Mountain. I have led a New Year's Day walk on North Mountain for more than fifteen years. We never fail to find ravens, our good luck token for the New Year.

The park includes one of the few old growth conifer stands in the state. Many of the old trees in the glen age over 500 years old with some exceeding 900 years. (Unfortunately, hemlock woolly adelgid is attacking this grove of magnificent trees.) On top of the plateau, the park is dominated by a mixed northern forest of beeches, maples, birches, and cherries, with some pines and hemlocks. Some parts of the forest are dominated by oaks, especially near the fire tower and the Valley View. The boreal swamps and shrubby bogs on top of the plateau add many bird species to the park list.

Although many visitors are attracted to the glen, it is not the easiest place to bird. The stream is quite noisy especially around the falls. Visitor traffic can be steady and distracting. But, the glen is home to many conifer-loving birds like Blackburnian Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Magnolia Warbler. Brown Creepers sing from large trees in the glen and throughout the park. Winter Wrens flit among the tree roots. Along the gorge's brooks, Acadian Flycatchers call from perches above the streams, and Louisiana Waterthrushes nest along the banks. The tall trees attract Northern Parulas. Wood Thrush is the most common thrush at the bottom, but Hermit Thrush is the common forest thrush of the park, overall. Veeries are found where there is a good understory. Birding is easier along the Old Bulldozer Trail and a connecting trail between this road (trail) and the glen trail. Another way to enjoy the glen's birds with less water noise is to walk either the Highland Trail that connects

the trails at the top of the two glens or the Ganoga View Trail that connects with the Lake Rose parking lot access.

Ricketts Glen is blessed with a fine trail system that allows the naturalist to easily explore the deep woods and enjoy the wildness of the forest. Of the 26 miles of trails, one of the most profitable for birders is the Old Beaver Dam Road and Ganoga View trail loop. This is accessible from Route 487. The trail leads through deeply shaded hemlock groves into northern hardwood stands and oak forest along the Ganoga View Trail. Hairy Woodpeckers are a common feature of this trail, but the most common breeding woodpecker of the park is the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Starting in April, they seem to appear everywhere. Barred Owls hoot on almost any cloudy day along the Old Beaver Dam Road or the Bear Walk Trail. Northern species like Dark-eyed Junco are common throughout the park. Blueberry thickets are a feature of old beaver dam swamps, including the one along this trail. These are great spots for many northern specialties including Canada Warbler and White-throated Sparrow. Alder Flycatchers and Nashville Warblers are also found in open boggy areas.

Ricketts Glen is one of the most outstanding locations in the state for breeding warblers. At least 17 species nest in the park. Northern Waterthrushes nest in the boggy areas and swampy woods just upstream from their Louisiana cousins. Yellow-rumped Warblers are among the most common birds around Lake Jean's hemlocks. Black-throated Green Warblers are abundant along most trails. Black-throated Blues are locally common where there is a good vegetative stratification. They are quite common along Cherry Run Trail.

For a real treat, hike the most remote trails in the park. This is where you have a chance to observe some of the state's rarest breeding birds like Swainson's Thrush and Northern Goshawk. Porcupines are a common sight along the trails. If you ski here in winter, you can find tracks of fisher and bobcat. Snowshoe hares live in the blueberry swamps of North Mountain.

Lake Jean gives visitors an opportunity to look for mergansers and Wood Ducks from canoe or shore. White-throated Sparrows are common in the blueberry bushes along shore. Just north of the lake, there is an old field of goldenrods, asters, and blueberries. This is where the old loggers grew hay to feed their mules. Eastern Bluebirds, Field Sparrows, and other open field birds break the "monotony" of deep forest warblers and vireos. Our club has flushed American Bitterns from the wetlands here. Swamp Sparrows sing from the nearby marshy areas in the "hayfield" and at the edge of Lake Jean's headwater area.

Old Ricketts Village Area of SGL 13 and 57

Just north of Ricketts Glen State Park, the old Ricketts Village area is one of the best birding secrets of the state.

The old village of Ricketts is named after Colonel Robert Bruce Ricketts but was run by the lumber company of Trexler and Turrell. The walls of some of the old buildings can still be seen near the intersection of Route 487 with Mountain Springs Lake Road. Here, you can easily find old railroad grades leading into the woods, including one that goes to Splashdam Pond, one of the most beautiful places in this part of the state. This pond with its accompanying marsh is one of the few places where Green-winged Teal nest in our state.

The open character of the area makes it easy to experience the exceptional boreal bird community. Here Purple Finches and White-throated Sparrows are common. Alder Flycatchers frequent the brush close to the road. There are more Nashville Warblers along one road in SGL 57 than along all BBS routes in Pennsylvania combined.

At night, Whip-poor-wills sing from the scrub and sit on the game land roads while hunting for moths. This is one of the best places in the state to find nesting Northern Saw-whet Owls.

My own grandfather worked at the old village of Ricketts in the World War I era. He worked in the Lehigh Valley railroad station and remembered Ricketts as a very crude and uncomfortable place to be on a rainy day. Mud was king. The last time we visited, he told me again that when he took walks from Ricketts to Jamison City, the nearest village about 8 miles downhill, that there were hardly any trees along the old roads. The mountain was bare and covered with blackberries and mud. Now, the long-abandoned town of Ricketts sits in one of the largest blocks of forest in our Commonwealth. It is a testament to the ability of our native forest to recover if given the chance.

Roaring Creek Watershed, Wyoming State Forest

The acquisition of these 9000 acres was a real coup for the DCNR and all Pennsylvania outdoors people. This extensive property stretches ten miles along the upper stretches of the South Branch Roaring Creek in southern Columbia and Northumberland counties. The property lies just north of Shamokin, Mount Carmel, and Centralia — the heart of anthracite country. The South Branch Roaring Creek flows east to west between Little Mountain to the north and Big Mountain to the south. It is a wonder.

The Roaring Creek watershed was owned locally for many years by the Roaring Creek Water Company. It was purchased in 1985 by Consumers Water Company of Portland, Maine, which changed its name to Consumers Pennsylvania Water Company, Roaring Creek Division, in 1995. At that time, access to the large property was extremely limited. Hunting opportunities were particularly limited, and legends grew concerning the size and number of deer on the property. Also, there were rumors of nesting loons, eagles, ospreys, and just about anything else you can think of.

Fortunately for Pennsylvania's outdoor enthusiast, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources purchased the property in October 2003. The public dedication of the lands took place on Columbus Day. The property is still being used as a source of drinking water so the quality of the forest is being preserved. The use of anything powered by gasoline or oil is extremely limited.

The watershed is accessible from PA Routes 42 and 54. Between these highways are three reservoirs named Bear Gap, McWilliams, and Kline's. They are 61, 184, and 31 acres in size, respectively. Each looks pristine – like a postcard from a remote lake in Maine or Quebec. There are rumors of good fish populations in the stream and the reservoirs. If so, they might support some of the fish-eating raptors and ducks we would enjoy seeing in the valley.

Much of the forest along the access road and near the reservoirs is dominated by hardwoods, especially oaks, with a heath understory. The forest cover has been so complete for such a long period that the water company was capable of providing unfiltered drinking water to their customers in nearby cities. However, forest regeneration has been retarded by excessive deer browse. The watershed provides a classic example of how a healthy forest can be compromised by too many deer. Despite this, the forest is home to many Scarlet Tanagers, Red-eyed Vireos, and Black-throated Green Warblers along the slopes. Worm-eating Warblers can be found in the oaks, Pine Warblers in the red pine plantations, and Golden-crowned Kinglets in the Norway spruces planted around the reservoirs. There are reports of a large Whip-poor-will population here.

The section of the watershed property that includes the upper 2000 acres east of Route 42 is the real gem. The upper stretches of South Branch Roaring Creek are fed by numerous seeps and springs. Some bubble up from the ground like pots of watery porridge. Along the stream, sedge meadows delight the eye and provide a natural habitat for Eastern Bluebirds' nesting in snags. The deeply shaded hemlock swamp forest is cool even in the hot summer months. Dark-eyed Junco and Blue-headed Vireos are found below 1200 feet in this section. Amazingly, Canada Warbler is one of the most common birds of the upper water shed. The relative abundance of Acadian Flycatcher and Hermit Thrush attests to the high quality of this bird habitat. Blackburnian and Magnolia warblers are among the species found in the streamside hemlocks.

The headwaters of South Branch Roaring Creek, the real gem of this amazing land acquisition,



are considered one of the very highest quality natural areas of Columbia County.

State Game Lands 55 on Huntington Mountain

This is one of those small, relatively obscure game lands that are really good for birds. SGL 55 comprises only 2470 acres in northern Columbia County north of Berwick and south of Jonestown. So, many know it as the "Jonestown Mountain Game Lands" even though the mountains are named Huntington and Lee by U.S.G.S. Just to make things confusing, just west of the game lands, this ridge is known as Knob Mountain, and to the east it is called Shickshinny Mountain. It depends on your perspective, I guess.

This is a birdy place no matter how you look at it. It is adjacent to Camp Louise which belongs to the Girl Scouts. Across from the scout camp entrance road, there is a game lands logging trail with some of the best birding in the county. This path leads into the headwaters of Little Shickshinny Creek. The vegetative profile makes it great for Black-throated Blue Warblers. Canada and Hooded warblers are present along this trail, too. Upslope in the big oaks, Scott Killam found the only known population of Cerulean Warblers in the county. The Ceruleans are found along the top ridge road, easily reached from the Summer Hill Road that bisects the game lands. A few Worm-eating Warblers also nest where there is a good shrub understory. Scarlet Tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are fairly common in this forest. Ravens haunt the upper ridge and raid the deer pit.

If you have lots of time, I would advise a walk into the east side of the game lands near the Scout Camp. There are hemlocks along the creek that provide habitat for Blackburnian and Magnolia warblers. In the creekside wetlands, I have found territorial Alder Flycatchers and Nashville Warblers (perhaps the only place in the county for the latter). Juncos are one of the camp's most common summer birds, much to the surprise of visitors.

Huntington Mountain can be a pretty good hawk watching spot in the fall. The north lookout gives spectacular views of Benton, the upper Fishing Creek valley, and Allegheny Front known locally as North Mountain.

Briar Creek Lake

Columbia County owns this small park near Evansville just Northwest of Berwick. You can reach it by turning North from Route 93 at the Stone Church between Berwick and Orangeville on Evansville Road. The impoundment serves as flood control of Briar Creek and is locally known as Evansville Lake. The park has sheltered picnic areas and a boat access to the lake, making it popular among local anglers and outdoor-oriented families. The local bird club has met here often as a respite from the summer heat. Local

birder, Karen Hiller, has birded this park more than anyone else.

This is a great spot to check on waterfowl and field birds in migration. The broad roads and grassy fields make it easy to see and watch birds; this is a great place to take beginners for migration visits. It is one of the first places to see blackbird flocks each spring. The locals swear that Ospreys follow Fish and Boat Commission trout tank trucks here each spring. Herons and egrets commonly stop here, too. The hedgerows host both Baltimore and Orchard orioles as well as Brown Thrashers and Gray Catbirds. The farmlands around Briar Creek Lake provide good habitat for field birds like Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark. The bluebird houses are good for bluebirds and Tree Swallows and convenient perches for wintering Northern Harriers.

Milton (Island) State Park

According to the DCNR website: "Milton State Park is an 82-acre island on the West Branch Susquehanna River, between the Boroughs of Milton and West Milton. The northern half of the park has day use facilities and the southern half remains in a wooded state for hiking and nature study." It is accessed from PA 642 off of PA 147 on the east end, from U.S. 15 at West Milton. The park is a quick stop from Route 80 going west from Montour Preserve or Danville. You are more likely to see family recreation like soccer or picnicking rather than nature study in this park, but it does have its advantages for birders.

One of the highlights of this park is the easy access it gives birders to the river. It is a good stop for canoe trips, including the Susquehanna Sojourn. You can view the river and its birds from several locations including a few along the trails. This is a good place for gulls, terns, shorebirds, and waterfowl. My secret spot is the extreme north end of the island where there are more unobstructed views. During low water conditions, you can easily wade to another island upstream which has better riparian forest.

The tall trees of the island provide habitat for Baltimore Orioles and Yellow-throated Vireos. Warbling Vireos and Northern Parulas are also possible. Gray Catbirds, Common Yellowthroats, Common Grackles, and Song Sparrows are the most common birds of the island's forest. Hummingbirds forage in the touch-me-nots along the trail.

However, the island's most notorious birds are here in greatest numbers in the winter. Milton Island is home to one of the state's largest crow roosts. Wars break out between our black feathered friends and humans living in the Borough of Milton when the roost grows into the residential areas of town, providing fodder for the local newspapers and television stations. The results are explosive! The large numbers of crows at Milton Island have been recorded diligently for many years by the Seven Mountains Audubon

Society's Christmas Bird Count for the Lewisburg circle. So, you can look it up even if you can't see it yourself this trip.

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

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SAP Coordinator
144 Winters Road, Orangeville, PA 17859
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dougross@sunlink.net

Bird Quiz

How well do you know your Pennsylvania birds? The answer to each question this time is a bird that joined the state's list of breeders since the first Atlas. Which species...

1. ...would probably be voted as the state's best dancer?
2. ...has been proposed as a separate species from its Eurasian counterparts?
3. ...might be mistaken for a chickadee by a beginning birder.
4. ...is especially fond of our reclaimed strip mines?
5. ...is related to the Shag?

Bonus Question: (on a lighter note)
Which species behaves like the name of a great American League pitcher?

[The answers to Questions 1-5 are found on page 20. If you can answer the Bonus Question, e-mail Paul Hess at phess@salsgiver.com. State the species and the reason. You will be recognized in the next edition of this newsletter!]

How Many of Our Members Are On Line?

This question was asked at the March meeting of our Board of Directors. If you have internet access, please e-mail Frank Haas at fchaas@pabirds.org with a note, "I'm on line."

Annual Meeting Schedule – Montour Preserve

Friday, May 14, 2004

- 6:00 p.m. Registration begins at Montour Preserve
- 7:00 p.m. Social at Montour Preserve
- 8:00 p.m. Business Meeting at Montour Preserve

Saturday, May 15, 2004

- 6:30 a.m. Outings depart from Days Inn in Danville.
- 12:00-1:00 p.m. Lunch at Montour Preserve (Please note this is a catered lunch; there is no other food at the Preserve.)
- 1:00-1:45 p.m. **The Second Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas** - Robert Mulvihill, Coordinator.
The exciting, all-consuming project has started, and we will Atlas during the meeting. Bob Mulvihill will discuss the who, what, how, and where of Atlas birding. The new Atlas will provide great excuses to bird all spring and summer for every kind of bird in the state. It is a tremendous amount of fun. Just remember, you will be on Gazetteer, page 51, at Montour Preserve.
- 1:45-2:45 p.m. **How to Be An Atlas Volunteer - A Workshop on Atlas Birding Skills**
Robert Mulvihill and Mike Lanzone of the Atlas Project team will present this workshop. When do I start and what do I look for? So, what do all of those breeding codes really mean? What is so safe about safe dates? What is the best way to attack a block? These and other questions will be addressed in a workshop forum.
- 2:45-3:15 p.m. Break. Visit the vendors and organizations represented in the Visitor Center and hallways. Check out the birds that are just outside the door.
- 3:15-4:00 p.m. **The Butterflies of Northeastern Pennsylvania** - Alan Gregory, Past PSO President and Lepidopterist. Many birders are getting hooked on butterflies. So, this presentation comes from popular demand. They look good and fly around when the sun is out. What's not to like? As one local birder says, "go birding until 10 and then go for the butterflies." Montour Preserve is a particularly good spot for butterflies, so this is a chance to get a jump-start on climbing the learning curve to lepidopteran expertise.
- 4:00-4:45 p.m. **Montour County Natural Area Inventory, Planning for the Future** - Nature Conservancy's PA Science Office, Rocky Gleason and Bud Sechler.
The NAI process is mysterious to most birders and naturalists, yet it is one of the most important ways that the state's birds and habitats are documented and conserved. Montour County is conducting its NAI in 2004, so this is an opportunity for birders to learn about the PA Natural History Program (formerly PNDI), element codes, the PA natural communities, and what happens to those rare breeding bird reports. You could be an NAI volunteer and love it.
- 4:45-5:00 p.m. Committee Presentations.
- 6:00 p.m. Social at Days Inn
- 6:30 p.m. Banquet at Days Inn
- Banquet Speaker:** Bill Evans of Old Bird, Inc. will present **Flight Calls of Migratory Birds**, a most apt program for this time of year. Montour Preserve is a quiet area at night, so we may want to return to the Preserve to hear some overflights after the program. Learning call notes is a great way to broaden identification skills and appreciation for the marvels of bird communication.

Sunday, May 16, 2004

- 6:30 a.m. Outings depart from Days Inn in Danville.

A Golden Spring

by Michael Lanzone, Dan Ombalski, and David Brandes

After days of bitter cold and biting winds, the fresh smell that accompanied the warm southerly breezes reminded us that spring was not too far away. Yet with snow still coating the ground and winter only temporarily relinquishing its hold, not many birds were moving north with the warm wind. And then, seemingly all at once, the sky, on an empty late winter's day, was filled with eagles. Golden after golden passed by, too quickly to even look down to add them to the day's tally. At one time 8 adult goldens were visible in the sky, and before too much time had passed, more than 25 eagles had streamed by the watch....

For three days I sat and watched, yet the thick fog defied the continuous southeasterly breeze and clung to the mountain. I began to wonder if the fog would ever clear. As I stared persistently into the fog, a dark buteo shape appeared, followed by another. Then the high calls of broad-wings filled the air as twenty or so called simultaneously from somewhere in the abyss. Then all at once a small hundred meter break in the fog appeared to the south, and with it a steady stream of broad-wings appeared. Behind them multiple kettles morphed from the fog, each containing well over a hundred birds. Less than half an hour later more than 1500 hundred broad-wings were to pass by, and with them a light morph Swainson's Hawk.

These would be great flights along the lakeshore or coast, but the fact that these flights occurred in central Pennsylvania, in the spring, makes them among the best of any. These flights occurred at Tussey Mountain, a long linear ridge in central Pennsylvania that begins near the Maryland-Pennsylvania border and extends over 70 miles north-northeast into Centre County (recently designated an IBA). It is the second most western ridge of Pennsylvania's Valley and Ridge Physiographic Province. The count site is situated on the ridge just south of State College near the northern terminus of Tussey Mountain. Tussey Mountain has long been recognized as a raptor migration pathway (see Merrill Wood's *Birds of Pennsylvania*, 1967), but it wasn't until Dave Brandes' discovery in the spring 1995 when he counted 94 northbound raptors, including 50 Red-tailed Hawks, 4 Bald Eagles and 15 Golden Eagles, that it became apparent that large numbers of raptors, including Golden Eagles could be counted each spring at Tussey.

Between 1995 and 2000 Tussey Mountain was staffed by part-time volunteers. Since 2001 it has been staffed by a full-time paid counter. The results have been astounding; considering that until 2001, the highest spring Golden Eagle

count away from Tussey was 75 at the Allegheny Front in 2000. The first year of full-time coverage yielded 166 Golden Eagles and 6,534 total raptors. Last year a record 199 goldens were counted, more than any spring hawkwatch site east of the Rocky Mountains, and among the top counts for spring or fall.

With these high seasonal counts, many record daily flights have occurred since 1995. Among them are 8 days with more than 20 Golden Eagles, and one day, March 16, 2003, an all time eastern record spring flight of 32. On April 12, 2001, one of the biggest flights ever recorded in this region occurred when 2,609 raptors were counted, including 2,173 Broad-winged Hawks, 187 Red-tailed Hawks, 90 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 32 Cooper's Hawks, 25 Northern Harriers, 7 Golden Eagles, and 1 Swainson's Hawk. A total of 2 Swainson's Hawks have been observed at Tussey, one on April 12, 2001, and the other, April 20, 2003.

In spite of these notable days, Tussey's real fame lies in the number of adult Golden Eagles that pass each spring. In a typical year, Golden Eagles outnumber red-tails through the middle of March. And interestingly, Tussey's spring flight consists largely of adult or sub-adult birds. The count data has documented that the spring Golden Eagle flight on Tussey Mountain is the largest of any spring hawkwatch east of the Rocky Mountains. Further, the data show that the ridge is used by all of the common eastern United States migratory raptors and also provides a glimpse at the waterfowl (particularly Common Loons, Canada Geese, and Tundra Swans) migration through the central part of the state.

Regional count data hint that Tussey is near the center of the relatively narrow eastern Golden Eagle flyway. To Tussey's south and west the Allegheny Front Hawkwatch appears to lie at the western edge of this concentration, and on easterly winds the Front hosts large counts of Golden Eagles during the spring. To Tussey's east the number of counted goldens drops quickly. Jacks Mountain, two ridges to the east, covered some weekends in the spring, only counts a small portion of what Tussey counts on the same covered days. Continuing east, Tuscarora Mountain has averaged 5 goldens, while the



easternmost count – a full time spring count at Hawk Mountain – has averaged only 1 golden per year for the last five years.

In light of these facts, it appears that the ridges of central Pennsylvania provide an important migration pathway for spring migrant raptors and Golden Eagles in particular. Tussey and Pennsylvania's other spring count sites are in good positions to monitor a significant portion of the eastern Canadian population of Golden Eagles. Studying the migration here will not only provide a basis for protecting important habitat along the migration corridor, but through systematic counts and future efforts, we hope to begin to understand the movement of Golden Eagles in the spring. Hopefully, through continued efforts we will reach these goals as well as raise the public awareness of the eastern Golden Eagle thereby increasing individual understanding of conservation issues pertinent to the preservation of this species and its habitat.

So, the next time winter gives way to a warm south breeze in late February or March, head for central Pennsylvania's western ridges – the eagles will be flying. If you are planning to visit Tussey, the best conditions are generally days with moderate southeast winds. Although, northwest winds can also produce sizable flights. To get to the hawkwatch, take Route 26 south from State College. Bear left at the flashing light in Pine Grove Mills, and continue on Route 26 to the top of Tussey Mountain (locally called "Pine Grove Mountain"). Park in the large gravel lot on the right at Jo Hays Vista. Walk about 2/3 mile on the Mid-State Trail to the southwest along the ridgetop until you get to the powerline. Pick a comfortable rock, be patient, and enjoy the view. If it's early in the season, be sure to dress appropriately. We are currently working with Penn State, Shaver's Creek, and the Bureau of Forestry to construct a platform at the site. We would like to thank the continued support of Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, The State College Bird Club, The Baillie Fund, Centre County Community Foundation, as well as all of our private donors. We hope to see you at the watch!

For more information feel free to contact Dan Ombalski ombalski@juno.com, Mike Lanzone lanzone@pabirdatlas.org or David Brandes brandesd@lafayette.edu, or visit the Tussey Mountain website:

<http://www.user.fast.net/~aquilac/tussey/>.



Annual Meeting Field Trips Planned

A nice variety of outings has been planned for the annual PSO meeting May 14-16 which will be headquartered at Montour Preserve in Montour County near Danville. Leaders are indicated in parentheses. This meeting features our first canoe trip. The following field trips will be offered on Saturday, Sunday, or both days:

Montour Preserve for Beginners (Jon Beam) – both days
Montour County (Wayne Laubscher) – both days
Rose Valley and Rider Park (Joe Lipar) – Saturday
Ricketts Glen and State Game Lands (Doug Gross) – both days
Dale's Ridge Trail (Allen Schweinsberg) – Saturday
R.B. Winter State Park (Mark Larson) – Saturday
West Branch Susquehanna Canoe Trip (Deuane Hoffman on Saturday; leader undetermined for Sunday) – both days
Millville State Gamelands 226 (Kristen Vitkauskas) – Sunday
Susquehanna Riverlands (Nancy Dennis) – Sunday
Pine Creek Valley (Joe Lipar) – Sunday
State Game Lands at White Deer (Mark Larson) – Sunday
Roaring Creek Watershed (Deuane Hoffman) – Sunday
Tall Timbers (Allen Schweinsberg) – Sunday
Nescopeck State Park (Alan Gregory) – Sunday

Many of these field trip destinations are stops along the Susquehanna River Birding and Wildlife Trail. A few are parts of Important Bird Areas. Some of these trips are outlined below. More information will be available on our website.

Montour Preserve for Beginners

Led by Jon Beam

A field trip designed for beginners, this walk will take us to a variety of habitats. We'll explore woods, pond, field, and wetlands to look for common summer residents, migrating warblers, and water birds. We will identify birds by both sight and sound and spend a little time discussing the natural history of what we see.

We'll walk at a leisurely pace on relatively flat trails. At the most, we will cover about 1½ miles near the preserve's Environmental Education Center. If time permits, we might visit another site on the preserve. Targeted birds include Black-capped Chickadee; Tufted Titmouse; Pileated, Downy, Hairy, and Red-bellied woodpeckers; Northern Oriole; Great-crested Flycatcher; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; a variety of warblers; Green Heron; Osprey; American Coot; Double-crested Cormorant; and more.

Montour County and Northumberland Grasslands

Led by Wayne Laubscher

A field trip touring the agricultural and grassland areas of Montour and Northumberland counties will highlight primarily open country and grassland species. Some farm ponds and small wetlands will be visited as well as small woodlots along the route. Target species will include Field, Grasshopper, Savannah, and Vesper sparrows; Eastern Meadowlark; Bobolink; Killdeer; Horned Lark; Eastern Kingbird; Indigo Bunting; American Kestrel; Red-tailed Hawk; and Northern Harrier. Red-headed Woodpeckers have recently been found in two locations, and breeding confirmed at one of them. Efforts will be made to find them. Other possible species include Orchard and Baltimore orioles, Willow Flycatcher, and Yellow Warbler.

Rose Valley Lake and Ryder Park

Led by Joe Lipar

This trip will tour some of the better birding areas north of Williamsport. Rose Valley Lake is a PA Fish and Boat Commission property surrounded by forest and agricultural land. Although not typically good for migrating shorebirds, the lake may harbor some late waterfowl or other water birds, and the vegetation at the edge of the lake has proven to be good for migrating land birds. Adjacent areas in the Tiadaghton State Forest contain hemlock-lined ravines and drier upland forests. A variety of species nest in these areas, and we can tailor our search for species based on the desires of the group and the weather conditions.

Ryder Park is a property owned by Susquehanna Health Systems and administered by an advisory board. It is located at a higher elevation and contains large open grassy and old field habitats as well as a variety of forest habitats. Prairie Warblers and Field Sparrows nest in the open areas while the forests are full of breeding birds typical of northern Pennsylvania. If time permits, we will also search for migrants and residents in the riparian forests along the Susquehanna River and/or at the Williamsport Regional Airport.

Ricketts Glen State Park and Ricketts Village

Led by Doug Gross and other Ridgerunners

Ricketts Glen and the adjacent State Game Lands 13 and 57 are part of the North Mountain Important Bird Area, one of the largest forest blocks in the state. This area is on the Allegheny Front where Columbia, Luzerne, Sullivan, and Wyoming counties meet. Ricketts Glen is one of the largest

and most scenic PA parks with many waterfalls, an old growth forest, beautiful swamps, and picturesque Lake Jean. The old ruins of Ricketts Village add a historical dimension and an easy-to-bird boreal area. The area is chock-full of forest birds. Among the many target species are Barred Owl; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (common breeder); Hairy Woodpecker; Olive-sided (migrant), Acadian, and Least flycatchers; Blue-headed Vireo; Red-breasted Nuthatch; Brown Creeper; Winter Wren; Golden-crowned Kinglet; Hermit Thrush; Veery; Nashville, Black-throated Blue, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Yellow-rumped, and Canada warblers; Louisiana and Northern water-thrushes; White-throated Sparrow; and Purple Finch. For more information, see the Raven Reporter.

Dale's Ridge Trail

Led by Allen Schweinsberg

Owned by the Union County Historical Society and protected by a conservation easement held by the Merrill Linn Conservancy, this two-mile trail winds along Buffalo Creek before a steep switchback rises to the uplands of Dale's Ridge. The trail passes through a large number of habitats, including riparian forest, pond, white pine grove, second-growth hardwood forest, farm fields, meadows, and mature hardwood forest. Warbling Vireos and Orchard Orioles sing at the trailhead. Other regulars include Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and American Redstart. Yellow-throated Warbler made its first county debut here last year.

R. B. Winter State Park

Led by Mark Larson

Hemlock groves and deep hardwoods make this Union County park a good place to hear and see Pennsylvania's nesting forest species: owls, vireos, warblers, thrushes, kinglets, creepers, nuthatches, tanagers.

Susquehanna Canoe Trip

Cost \$25

This is a unique opportunity for a leisurely canoe and birding trip along a four-mile section of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River from Allenwood to Milton Island in two big canoes. Paddling experience is not necessary. These large canoes are quite stable and basic paddling instructions and personal flotation devices (PFDs) will be provided. Each canoe will have an experienced paddling leader, and there will be a birding leader for both trips. Water birds and birds of field and forest will be the focus along with the possibility of some migrant species. Target birds include Common

Merganser, Fish Crow, Yellow-throated and Warbling vireos, Carolina Wren, Northern Parula, Baltimore Oriole. Migrants might include gulls, terns, shorebirds and possibly Osprey. This is a great opportunity to bird by ear as well as by sight.

Time at the end of the canoe trip will allow for birding at a site or two before returning. Due to the nature of this trip, there will be an additional fee charged to cover the cost. This trip is limited to 20 participants each day on a first come, first served basis. To participate, you must sign up on the registration form and pay the \$25 with your registration fee.

Millville Game Lands

Led by Kristen Vitkauskas and the North Branch Bird Club

SGL 226 is in a triangle of hill country between Millville, Jerseytown, and White Hall in western Columbia County. The gamelands feature a nice blend of fields, thickets, wildlife plantings, and forest. Some target birds include Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Ruffed Grouse, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Louisiana Water-thrush, Hooded Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Bobolink. For more information, see the *Raven Reporter*.

Pine Creek Valley

Led by Joe Lipar

The Pine Creek Valley is perhaps one of the more scenic areas of Pennsylvania. This beautiful valley is lined with mountains that are part of the Tiadaghton State Forest. There are at least two, and maybe three, active Bald Eagle nests in the valley. Due to the change in elevation from the creek up these mountains, many breeding species can be found. For example, Cerulean Warblers can be found on the steeper hillsides. We will visit Reynolds Spring Swamp, which harbors Alder Flycatchers and other species, and Algerine Swamp, a typical northern-type bog with black spruce, balsam fir, Northern Saw-whet Owls, White-throated Sparrows, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and other species. Many breeding warblers and other species can be found in this area. We will also visit Little Pine State Park, where Yellow-throated Warblers have bred in the past. The shallow areas at the northern end of the lake often have exposed mudflats where shorebirds may be found.



Susquehanna Riverlands

Led by Nancy Dennis and Members of the North Branch Bird Club and Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon

PPL's Susquehanna Riverlands is one of the best birding spots in northeastern Pennsylvania. It comprises more than 1200 acres that straddle the North Branch Susquehanna River in eastern Luzerne County. Numerous Yellow-throated and Warbling vireos occupy a one-mile stretch of mature, riparian forest on both sides of the river. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Wood Thrushes, and American Redstarts are also fairly common.

A reconstructed section of the North Branch canal provides good habitat for Wood Ducks and Baltimore Orioles. Eastern Kingbirds and Orchard Orioles can be found easily in the picnic areas near the canal in the recreational area. The Wetlands Nature Area includes swamps where bluebirds nest in natural cavities and marshes where Red-winged Blackbirds and Swamp Sparrows are the most common species. Thickets are home to Prairie Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Brown Thrasher. Hillside forest offers food and shelter to many species including Worm-eating and Hooded warblers. Savannah Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and Bobolink inhabit fields along the way. The Riverlands are an IBA.

Roaring Creek Watershed

Led by Deuane Hoffman

DCNR now owns a watershed headwater area and three reservoirs with their accompanying 9000 acres of forest and wetland in southern Columbia and eastern Northumberland counties. What was formerly a privately-owned exclusive property is now part of Wyoming State Forest. It is a wonderment!

The small reservoirs are good for Belted Kingfishers and Wood Ducks with occasional sightings of Bald Eagle and Osprey. The hillside forests are alive with Ovenbirds, Scarlet Tanagers, and Wood Thrushes. The right spots will yield Worm-eating Warblers and Pine Warblers. The upper watershed has many Acadian Flycatchers, Black-throated Green Warblers, Canada Warblers, and Dark-eyed Juncos at relatively low elevations. Hermit Thrushes and Veeries replace Wood Thrushes in the upper stretches, especially in the hemlocks.

The meadows and hemlock swamp will make you feel as if you are on the high plateau rather than in a low valley. The sand springs alone are worth the price of admission. See the *Raven Reporter* for more details.

Tall Timbers

Led by Allen Schweinsberg

The Snyder-Middleswarth State Park Natural Area, also known as "Tall Timbers," is an old growth birch-hemlock forest in Bald Eagle State Forest in western Snyder County. A trail follows Swift Run upstream through what may be the finest Winter Wren habitat in Pennsylvania, or at least the most dramatic.

Other regular birds of Tall Timbers and adjacent forests include Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Common Raven, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, Blue-headed Vireo, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, American Redstart, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Hooded Warbler, Canada Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and Dark-eyed Junco.

Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education Offers Birding Basics

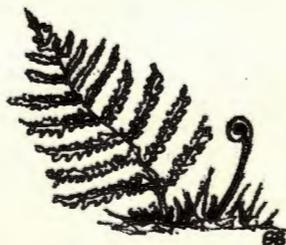
Friday, May 14, 2004

Just prior to our PSO Annual Meeting, PICE has scheduled "Birding Basics" at Montour Preserve. Taught by Chuck Yohn, Ph. D., this field-oriented, hands-on natural history and conservation education program is open to all interested adults and will provide information on instructional materials and/or activities appropriate for classroom teachers and non-formal educators. As an ACT 48 provider, continuing education credit hours may be offered.

Using binoculars, field guides, and your senses, learn the basics of birding while exploring natural habitats in search of the melody and color of early spring avian life. With an experienced ornithologist, we'll investigate bird habitats and identify a broad range of species and their birdsong. We'll discuss adaptations, identification, and behaviors of migratory and resident birds.

Tuition: \$45; includes light bagel breakfast and instruction. Participants should bring their own lunches.

To register, e-mail naturecorp@enter.net.



Two Birder Workshops Scheduled

Develop your bird ID and monitoring skills at either of the two workshops scheduled this spring.

April 3 – Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area

April 24 – Pymatuning Wildlife Learning Center
Crawford County

Time – 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Cost – \$30 (includes snacks and handouts)
Lunch will be provided

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 adult birders who already have solid abilities in bird identification, particularly visual ID.

These workshops will focus on how to do point counts, strategies on counting and estimating bird numbers, challenging bird ID topics (such as flycatchers, raptors, etc.), and especially improving birding by ear skills.

Program Overview:

8:00 a.m. Registration begins

8:30 – 4:00 p.m.

- Why Count Birds?
- Marsh Bird Monitoring
- Forest Bird Monitoring
- Computer Data Entry and eBird
- Breeding Bird Atlas Project
- Bird ID Challenges
 - warblers, flycatchers, sparrows, raptors, etc., especially birding by ear

Included will be an outdoor field practice session.

Instructors

Rob Blye, Audubon IBA Coordinator

Doug Gross, P.S.O. President

Steve Hoffman, Audubon Bird Conservation Director

Bob Mulvihill, Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator

Terry McClelland, Pennsylvania Game Commission

Bert Myers, PA Game Commission Environmental
Education Specialist

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

PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY

16th Annual Meeting
 14-16 May 2004
 PPL Montour Preserve
 Danville, PA



REGISTRATION DEADLINE: April 30, 2004
 Name(s) for name tag (include each person registering) _____

Your email for an electronic registration receipt: _____

Mailing Address _____

	No. of Persons	x	Cost =	Total \$
PSO Member	_____		x \$25.00 =	_____
Member's spouse/guest	_____		x \$20.00 =	_____
Non-Member	_____		x \$30.00 =	_____
Non-Member's spouse/guest	_____		x \$20.00 =	_____
Children under 18	_____		x \$12.00 =	_____
After Deadline, April 30, 2004	_____		x \$5.00 =	_____
Subtotal (from this side)				_____

Lodging : Days Inn, Danville \$65 per night with continental breakfast. – 800-329-7426
 Must reserve before April 30, 2004. Please state PPL meeting to receive discount rate.

Other Lodging options at the I-80 Danville exit: Quality Inn – 570-275-5100;
 Hampton Inn – 570-271-2500; Red Roof Inn – 570-275-7600; Key Motor Inn – 570-275-4640

Campgrounds: Diehls Camping Resort(Bloomsburg) – 570-683-5212; Shady Rest Camp-
 ground (Millville) – 570-458-6327; Turner's High View (Bloomsburg) – 570-784-6940

Check out the Introduction to Birding workshop on Friday, May 14, from 7:00 a.m. to
 4:00 p.m. at PPL Montour Preserve. This workshop will be conducted by Pennsylvania
 Institute for Conservation Education (PICE). The cost is \$45 and teachers can receive
 ACT 48 credit hours for it. See the information and registration information at:

<http://services.juniata.edu/station/pice.html>.

Friday Social (indicate if attending) _____ **No. persons** x **Cost = Total**
 No Charge

MEALS

Breakfast *ON YOUR OWN*

Lunch – soup & sandwich at Montour Preserve	_____	x \$7.00 =	\$ _____
[catered – no other food available at Montour Preserve]			
Banquet Buffet w/ sundae bar (children 10 and under is \$8.50)	_____	x \$17.00 =	\$ _____
Banquet only \$20.50 (no registration, sessions or field trips)	_____	x \$ 8.50 =	\$ _____
	_____	x \$20.50 =	\$ _____

Sunday Breakfast *ON YOUR OWN*

Special Canoe Birding Trip \$25 per person

Allenwood to Milton Island (Must reserve now. Space limited. Filled on a first-come, first
 served basis. Minimum of 12 and maximum of 20 each day. PSO reserves the right to
 cancel either trip if the minimum is not met. Fees will be refunded if that occurs.
 Cancellation by you must occur before May7, and \$15 will be refunded).

Saturday Canoe trip	_____	x \$25.00 =	\$ _____
OR			
Sunday Canoe trip	_____	x \$25.00 =	\$ _____
Check here if you will take whichever trip has space available	_____		
Subtotal of meals + canoe trip (this column)			\$ _____

Subtotal from registration (other column) \$ _____

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 IS: APRIL 30, 2004

Cancellations by you must occur before May 7, 2004. After this date, registration fees
 will be refunded, but meal costs cannot be because of catering concerns.

PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY
Membership Form

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ COUNTY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

NEW MEMBERSHIP for (circle one year) 2004 2005 (*See below)

RENEWAL CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please check ONE of the following:

Individual membership in PA SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY (PSO) \$28.50

Family Membership in PSO \$32.50

Sustaining Membership in PSO \$42.50

Library and Institutional Rates

(These rates are for *Pennsylvania Birds* only—do not include newsletter)

Library/Institution (United States) \$30.00

Library/Institution (Canada) \$40.00

Library/Institution (Other Foreign Country) \$45.00

Additional contribution to PA SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY _____

Please mark the appropriate box below:

- Publish my name and address in the PSO membership list
- Publish my name, but no address in the PSO membership list
- DO NOT publish my name or address in the PSO membership list
- DO NOT distribute my name to other bird-oriented organizations

PLEASE NOTE!

*One year's membership runs from May 1 to April 30 and includes 4 issues of *Pennsylvania Birds* covering bird sightings from December to November. The first issue (containing reports for Dec-Feb) is mailed in May and the last issue (containing reports from Aug-Nov) is mailed in Feb. of the following year. New subscriptions received during the publishing year (late May through April) receive all back issues for that year plus any remaining issues for the current publishing year unless another year is specified above.

RENEWALS DUE NO LATER THAN MAY 15!

03/2004

Quantity Price AMOUN

Tee Shirts and Pins

PSO Tee Shirt - Small _____ X \$19.50 = _____

PSO Tee Shirt - Medium _____ X \$19.50 = _____

PSO Tee Shirt - Large _____ X \$19.50 = _____

PSO Tee Shirt - X Large _____ X \$19.50 = _____

PSO Tenth Anniversary Pin _____ X \$ 2.50 = _____

Pennsylvania Birds Field Checklists:

Packs

Pack of 10 Checklists _____ X \$3.00 = _____

Pack of 50 Checklists _____ X \$12.00 = _____

Pack of 100 Checklists _____ X \$18.00 = _____

Binder _____ X \$7.00 = _____

Binder/30 Checklist Combo _____ X \$11.50 = _____

Back Issues of PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS:

ISSUE	QUANTITY/PRICE	AMOUNT
1988 Volume 2	(\$3.00 ea. inquire on availability)	_____
1989 Volume 3	All four issues \$16.00	_____
1990 Volume 4	All four issues \$16.00	_____
1991 Volume 5	All four issues \$16.00	_____
1992 Volume 6	All four issues \$18.00	_____
1993 Volume 7	All four issues \$18.00	_____
1994/97 Volumes 8-11	(\$4.50 ea. inquire on availability)	_____
1998/02 Volume 12-16	(\$5.50 ea. Inquire on availability)	_____
2003 Volume 17	(\$7.50 ea. Inquire on availability)	_____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

Make check payable to PSO and send to:

PSO
 2469 Hammertown Road
 Narvon, PA 17555-9730

Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology Annual Meeting Youth Scholarship Program

In order to foster an interest in and appreciation for birding and ornithology in Pennsylvania, each year the PSO will provide a scholarship for a person 18 years of age or younger who wishes to attend the PSO annual meeting. (You may not nominate someone without his/her knowledge or permission)

The person must be nominated by a current PSO member who will be attending the meeting and who will be responsible for transporting him or her to the meeting and be responsible for him or her during the meeting (see below). A copy of a signed parental consent form (see attached) must accompany the nomination/application form.

PSO will pay for the meeting registration, food (banquet, lunch, 2 breakfasts) and lodging (up to 2 nights).

You may nominate the student of your choice by sending this form to Shonah A. Hunter (shunter@lhup.edu), or by land mail to: Dr. Shonah A. Hunter, Department of Biological Sciences, Lock Haven University, Lock Haven, PA 17745 by April 10, 2004. Selection will be conducted by a committee.

Name of Student Being Nominated: _____

Address: _____

Age _____ Birth Date _____ Student's Phone No. _____

Youth's Involvement with Birding (Please describe, providing as many details as possible. Attach a page, if necessary)

Name of Person Nominating Youth _____ Phone No. _____

Relationship (if any) to Youth _____

In nominating this youth, I understand that I will be responsible for the youth at the annual meeting and for his/her transportation to and from the meeting.

(Signature)

(Date)

In allowing my child to be nominated, I understand that PSO is providing the scholarship for my child to attend the annual meeting. The person nominating my child has my permission to transport him/her to and from the meeting and to be responsible for her/him during the annual meeting.

(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

(Date)

PSO Newsletter

This newsletter is published four times a year by the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology.

PSO Officers and Directors

Doug Gross – President dougross@sunlink.net
Greg Grove – Vice President gwg2@psu.edu
Roger Higbee – Secretary rvhigbee@twd.net
Frank Haas – Treasurer fchaas@pabirds.org

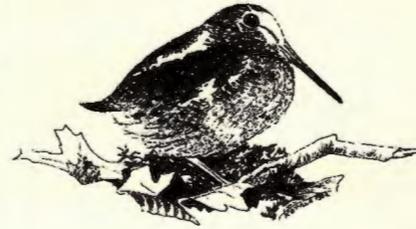
Nick Pulcinella – PSO Editor nickpul@bellatlantic.net
Margaret Higbee – Newsletter Editor bcoriole@twd.net
Alan Gregory – Past President meg5@psu.edu
Rob Blye – rblye@audubon.org
Nick Bolgiano – Nbolgiano@minitab.com
Deuane Hoffman – corvuxcorax@comcast.net
Shonah Hunter – shunter@lhup.edu
Mark McConaughy – TimeTraveler@email.msn.com
Flo McGuire – mcguires@usachoice.net
Carmen Santasania – ctsantasania@es.com
Linda Wagner – lwagner342@aol.com

2004 Annual PSO Meeting

Friday, May 14, to Sunday, May 16

Montour Preserve

in Montour County



See
information
concerning
Field Trips,
Afternoon

Sessions, and Banquet on pages 11 and 13-16
and Registration Form on page 17.

Answers to Bird Quiz (page 4)

1. Sandhill Crane
2. Herring Gull
3. Blackpoll Warbler
4. Clay-colored Sparrow
5. Double-crested Cormorant

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Creekside, PA 15732
PERMIT NO. 2

Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology
c/o R. V. Higbee
3119 Creekside Road
Indiana, PA 15701-7934