



December 11th Program - Awesome Africa



Carole Jones has traveled around the world. She and her late husband Cliff Jones spent most of the past ten years pursuing his lifelong hobby of bird watching. If given a choice and opportunity to return to any country, Africa is the one place that Carole would go. Carole would not claim to be a skilled "birder," but she was the one with the camera. Her presentation will include birds and mammals, as well as the people and the colorful cultures of Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, South Africa and Zambia.

As always, meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. with refreshments and social time followed by announcements, with the program starting at 7:30 p.m.

The programs are free and open to the public. See page 2 for directions.

The Program Meeting is one week sooner than it normally is, due to the holidays. See you on Thursday, December 11th!

Shade Grown Coffee for Sale

Audubon Shade Grown Coffee will be available for sale at the December meeting; it makes a great gift! We will have Decaf and Regular, whole bean and ground, in Breakfast Blend, French Roast, or Rainforest Blend. Shade grown coffee protects valuable habitat for tropical birds, and supports the people in the community in which it grows. More information about Audubon's shade grown coffee is available at www.auduboncoffeeclub.com.



*Happy Holidays to all AAS members,
family and friends.
Have a safe and enjoyable season!*



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**Can We Exceed Last Year’s
 “Coins for Conservation” Donations?**

For the second year in a row, AAS will be collecting loose change and donations of any size in our *Coins for Conservation* box for the benefit of Dauphin County Wildlife Rescue (DCWR). This organization, which helps to rescue and rehabilitate injured raptors and other wildlife species, exists on donations alone. Owners Beth and John Carricato provide food, housing, medical care, patience and respect to the many creatures that find their way to DCWR, and it takes money to keep the place running.



Last year, AAS members donated a total of \$239.32 in the *Coins for Conservation* box for this cause. Let’s make it a goal to exceed that number in 2008-2009! Please drop your spare change or a couple of dollars in the specially designated bird box located on the refreshment table at our monthly meetings. Thank you!

DON’T FORGET! You can recycle household batteries at monthly AAS meetings!

Appalachian Audubon monthly (Sept-May) programs normally take place on the 3rd Thursday of each month in Christ Presbyterian Church, 421 Deerfield Road, in the Allendale neighborhood of Camp Hill, at 7:30 p.m. Exceptions are announced in this newsletter, as are field trips and other activities.

PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Directions: Take New Cumberland exit off I-83; cross Carlisle Road. Turn left onto Allendale Way; take first left at Deerfield Road (from the south, take New Cumberland exit, turn left onto Carlisle Road, left onto Cedar Cliff Road, left on Allendale Way, then left onto Deerfield Road) to the church.

“So, What was the October Surprise?”



We've heard that question asked several times recently by AAS members that missed the October meeting and the surprises that were promised in that month's *Kingfisher Courier*. The surprises all centered around the chapter's 35th anniversary of being chartered by the National Audubon Society, back on October 18, 1973. We threw ourselves a party! A few balloons set a festive mood and we enjoyed a large sheet cake decorated with our chapter-bird, the Kingfisher. President Lorrie Preston got everyone's attention with a loud toot or two on a party horn when it was time for the festivities to begin.

Vice President Paul Zeph read a brief version of the early history of the chapter. We learned that the chapter was started by a small group of concerned individuals that felt the need for an organization that would provide programs on nature conservation, the environment, and wise use of natural resources. The group first met at the Cumberland-Perry County Vocational School in November 1971, but by the time the chapter was chartered in 1973, the group had grown and had moved to the Christ Presbyterian Church – our current meeting location. More about the chapter's history can be found on our website at www.appalachianaudubon.org/history.htm.

The next surprise of the evening involved a handful of people who were randomly sitting in the audience. As the names of past-presidents were read, along with the years they were nominated, these individuals stood up from among the seated guests and came forward. It was wonderful to have 10 presidents, out of 18 that have served, with us that night. Gene Wingert ('73-'75), Ed Maurer ('80-'81), Cindy Adams Dunn ('88-'89), Jane Earle ('90-'91), Wendy Plowman ('94-'95), Bob Schell ('96-'97), Dale Darkes ('99), Jan Getgood ('03-'04), Ramsay Koury ('05-'06), and Lorrie Preston ('07-current) were present. We were also pleased to have Bob Diethorn's wife, Kathy, with us that evening (Bob served '92-'93 and '98). We remembered those presidents that have passed away, as well as those that could not be with us for other reasons. Each president that was present shared a couple of minutes about their term in office – the hot environmental topic or chapter project of the day and other little snippets. It was a really fun evening of celebration, followed by an excellent program by Mike and Laura Jackson.

At the State Chapter Assembly, AAS received two awards in honor of our 35th anniversary, as well. One was signed by Phil Wallis, the new Executive Director of Audubon Pennsylvania and Joseph DeMarco, Board President of Audubon PA. The other award was signed by the National Audubon President himself, John Flicker. It was given, “In grateful appreciation of the outstanding contributions our chapter has made to National Audubon Society in helping to conserve birds, wildlife and their habitats through conservation and education.” Good job, AAS! We salute the visionaries that started our group, as well as the leaders that have carried the torch for all of these years.





Upcoming AAS Field Trips



Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) – Various dates in December and January

AAS participates in four surveys in this century-old tradition. Teams of birders are given designated areas to conduct the counts. Details for each count may be obtained from the contacts listed below.

Harrisburg CBC - December 20, 2008

Deuane Hoffman – 564-7475 or corvuscorax@comcast.net

Curtin CBC – December 29, 2008

Scott Bills – 896-8859 or sbills@state.pa.us

New Bloomfield CBC - December 27, 2008

Ramsay Koury – 761-1871 or RKoury123@aol.com

Newville CBC – January 3, 2009

Bill and Linda Frantz – 776-4463

Nature Walk at Wildwood – January 3, 2009

Join Sandy Lockerman, naturalist at Wildwood Park, part of the Dauphin County Park System, to start the new year with a healthy and invigorating walk around the beautiful trails and lake at Wildwood. Please dress for the weather. Meet at the Olewine Nature Center. Contact Sandy at 221-0292 for more information and to check on pathway conditions.

Winter Birding Trip – February 2009 - Date to be announced

Past AAS President Ramsay Koury will lead us on a winter birding trip to chase away the winter blahs. Contact Ramsay at 761-1871 or RKoury123@aol.com for details.



AAS Board Members Attend State Chapter Assembly

Paul and Ellen Zeph, Marcia Wilson, Annette Mathes, and Lorrie Preston attended the 3rd annual Audubon Pennsylvania Chapter Assembly on Oct. 17-19th. The event was held in Harrisburg this year and was hosted and presented by the staff and Board members of Audubon PA. Special guest and author Scott Weidensaul gave a wonderful presentation on Saw-whet Owl and Hummingbird banding. Audubon’s South American Partner, Bennett Hennessey, of Bird Life International and Armonia-BirdLife Bolivia told us about work being done and affordable opportunities available to protect specific species of endangered neo-tropical birds and migrants from extinction. Chapter leaders from across the state were in attendance. It was inspiring to hear about the bigger Audubon picture, learn from each other, share success stories, and enjoy some excellent presentations. AAS leaders were brought up to date on issues such as wind-power and global warming, and were given education and outreach ideas to bring back to the chapter.

Be an Active Citizen Scientist with eBird

eBird, a premier birding database launched in 2002 by Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, has generated tremendous participation by citizen bird-watchers, both nationally and internationally. The PA Game Commission has joined with the PA Society for Ornithology and Audubon PA to bring about PA **eBird**. The website can be found at www.ebird.org/content/pa or at www.pgc.state.pa.us. Check out the site and join the many other birders who list their sightings on **eBird**.



AAS Member Survey Results



Last spring, a survey was mailed out to all 1,300 Appalachian Audubon Society members along with the donation appeal for Waggoner's Gap. We owe a special "thank you" to the 163 members who returned the survey, which is about a 12% return rate. That's actually considered a pretty good return for an unsolicited survey!

How do your interests compare to what 163 members told us?

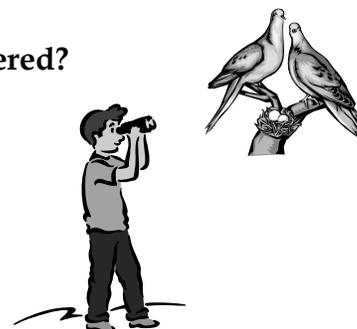
There is little surprise that Audubon members like birds: 98% said they feed birds; with 92% saying they watch birds outside of their home. Favorite birds listed (in order of popularity) were: cardinal, bluebird, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, and raptors.

When asked what first brought them to Audubon, "birds" again topped the list with a 77% response. Other items checked were: meeting people with similar interests (24%), field trips (20%), chapter programs (20%), Audubon magazine (19%), and environmental issues (18%) (*Respondents could check more than one reason for joining*).

When asked about attending the chapter's monthly program meetings at Christ Presbyterian Church in northwest New Cumberland, 28% of respondents said they attend some meetings each year. Of the 72% who said they don't attend, the number one reason was "too busy." Other common reasons cited were health, age or physical limitations. Five members wrote that the location was too far away for them (Our chapter region is roughly from Carlisle to Hershey, north to Halifax, and south to Dillsburg).

What meeting program topics would the respondents like to see offered?

- 88% bird education or bird identification
- 77% natural landscaping for wildlife
- 63% nature walks
- 59% natural history presentations
- 36% bird tourism trips to other countries
- 28% programs for children or families



When asked about receiving fewer issues of the *Kingfisher Courier* (currently we send out one per month from September through May), one-third said they would prefer fewer issues, and two-thirds liked receiving the nine issues per year. 27% said they would prefer to receive the newsletter electronically via e-mail.

We also received many great ideas for field trips and program speakers. Of the respondents who wrote down issues that our chapter should address, 50% were interested in local land and habitat protection.

Overall, we received some very helpful feedback that we will use in the months and years ahead as we plan activities to better meet your needs. As always, feel free to pass along suggestions or ideas to any of the officers and committee chairs listed inside the cover of this newsletter.

Christmas Bird Counts

by Ramsay Koury

Many years ago there was a tradition called the Christmas Side Hunt. Teams would go out into the field on Christmas Day and see who could SHOOT the most birds! In 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an officer in the new Audubon Society, began an alternate tradition. He encouraged friends from across the country to go out on Christmas to find out how many birds they could SEE. Twenty-seven birders in 25 locations across the country recorded 90 species of birds that day and the Christmas Bird Census or Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was born. This early effort by Chapman has now blossomed into a major effort by birders throughout the Western Hemisphere. Last year 59,918 observers recorded 57,704,250 individual birds of 2,267 species on 2,113 CBCs!! 665 of those counts were held in the U.S. Counts are also held in Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands and many Latin American countries.

Most counts are not held on Christmas Day, but can be done anytime between December 14 and January 5. The compiler sends teams out into the CBC area and the fun begins! Many teams begin before dawn looking for owls and continue until dark in effort to find as many birds as possible. Many people count birds in their own backyards. These feeder watchers have many interesting sightings over the years. I participated in my first CBC at the age of 9 as a feeder watcher in 1970.



The results of the CBC are then compiled, usually at a gathering after the count. This data has been very useful in determining changes in bird numbers and distribution. While it is not a true winter count – many birds are actually still migrating in December – this snapshot of bird distribution is very interesting when compared over time. Many birds that were fairly uncommon in the Harrisburg area in 1970 are now quite easily found and some that were more common then are very difficult to find now in this area.

Here are comparisons of certain species; the first number is how many were found in on the Harrisburg CBC in 1970, the second is how many were found in 2007:



Pheasant 240 vs. 2
Bobwhite 6 vs. 0
Bald Eagle 0 vs. 9
Red-tailed Hawk 7 vs. 129
Red-bellied Woodpecker 8 vs. 288

Carolina Wren 4 vs. 173
Carolina Chickadee 3 vs. 624
Eastern Bluebird 2 vs. 512
Robin 3 vs. 3,595
Evening Grosbeak 12 vs. 0



It will be interesting to see what changes occur over the next 35 years or so.

There are four local Christmas counts that are held each year. See the field trips listed on page 4 in the newsletter for contact information. If you want to learn more about Christmas Bird Counts, go to www.audubon.org/Bird/cbc.

Giant Gift Cards for Groceries, Gasoline, or Gift Giving

Don't forget to purchase your Giant gift cards at the monthly AAS program meetings. Please see Judy Bowman, Carl Juris, or Lorrie Preston to purchase or for more info. AAS receives 5 percent of the face value of your purchase, and gift cards make paying at the store or at the pump a breeze. FYI— We are no longer selling Weis gift cards.

Hog Island Audubon Camps Closed for 2009

Shock and disappointment are two words that could be used to describe our reaction upon learning that summer environmental camps and programs will not be held at Hog Island, Maine during the summer of 2009. Our chapter has sent youth and educators to Hog Island for many years and it has been a highlight of our educational mission. Those that have attended camp on Hog Island can tell you about the magic and beauty of the place and the love and respect of nature that grows deeper as a result of the experience.

Officially, we are told that "To ensure a sustainable future for this historic and beloved property, Maine Audubon and the National Audubon Society are undertaking a joint evaluation and planning process. The process will support thorough discussion that underscores our shared goal that this unique property be used in the best way possible to serve the Audubon mission of conservation and education." They are seeking input from a wide variety of people that have been involved in Hog Island in some capacity over the years. You can submit comments and receive updates at: <http://engage.maineaudubon.org/site/PageNavigator/HogIslandSurvey>

The Board of AAS will be exploring other options for summer environmental camps or mission opportunities and will keep the membership updated.

Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, January 16-19, 2009

Come to where the birds are and join Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) for their 13th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is an important stop on the Pacific Flyway and one of the country's pre-eminent birding spots. The area is recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds, and at last year's festival, over 200 species of birds were identified!

For more information about the Festival, check out our website at www.morrobaybirdfestival.org, or call (805) 772-4677. You can request that your name be added to the mailing list for our 2009 brochure, or register online. Both the brochure and online registration will be available in October 2008. The registration deadline is January 5, 2009 but the most popular events fill up quickly.

Join Appalachian Audubon Society AND National Audubon Society

AT THE SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY RATE OF \$20 (\$15 FOR SENIORS AND STUDENTS)

This application is for **NEW** members joining Appalachian and National Audubon for the **FIRST** time (for members renewing, *renewal information will come to you directly from National Audubon*). This introductory offer includes membership in both National and Appalachian Audubon societies, the beautiful *Audubon* magazine, and our own *Kingfisher Courier* newsletter. Please send the form below, with **check** payable to **National Audubon Society**, to: Appalachian Audubon, PO Box 15123, Harrisburg, PA 17105-5123.

New Member's Name: _____ Today's Date: _____
Address: _____ E-mail Address: _____
Phone: _____ Senior Membership? (age 62 and up) _____ Student? _____
Is any of this contact information new? If so, place an X here: _____ **U07 7XCH**



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REMINDER:

The December Program is taking place one week early because of the holidays. It will take place on Thursday, December 11th. See you there!

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