



# Kingfisher Courier

Newsletter of Appalachian Audubon Society

October 2010

## October 21, 2010 Wild About Bluebirds!

Appalachian Audubon welcomes **John Rogers**, a recognized authority on bluebird conservation from Brewerton, New York.

His presentation will encompass the life history of the Eastern Bluebird, nest box management, other birds that will nest in bluebird boxes, and more!

Beautiful photographs, bird song audios, and creative graphics help John share his passion for the natural world, imparting to the audience broader and deeper messages about nature and life—all enhanced by his sincere, enthusiastic presentation style.

John has done slide programs and workshops for hundreds of groups in 10 states and two Canadian provinces. He was a co-founder of the New York State Bluebird Society in 1982, a recipient of the prestigious John and Nora Lane Bluebird Conservation Award from the North American Bluebird Society, and a past board member of that organization.

Also an experienced birder, John is a member of the Onondaga Audubon Society near Syracuse, and has a BA in Biology from SUNY, Oswego.



*For decades, John has maintained hundreds of bluebird nest boxes in the southern region of Tug Hill, north of Oneida Lake, and has fledged over 12,100 Eastern Bluebirds.*

AAS monthly programs (September—May) typically take place on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the **Christ Presbyterian Church, 421 Deerfield Road, in the Allendale neighborhood of Camp Hill**. Join us at 7:00 pm for refreshments and conversation. The program begins at 7:30. *Directions to church on back page.*

## AAS Annual Bird Seed Sale a Success!

Thank you to all who purchased seed and feeders at our annual fall sale. The proceeds will help the chapter support education and conservation programs, including sending young people and teachers to ecology camps next summer. We also thank the many volunteers who helped in many ways, from loading seed in cars to selling

feeders and answering “how-to” feeding questions. We even had a few wear a bluebird outfit to attract customers!

We particularly want to thank **Boscov’s Camp Hill** for allowing us to utilize their garden center area for the sale.

*Betty Smith (right) poses in all her splendor in a bird outfit that she and others wore in the mall parking lot to help lure in customers.*

*See more photos on p. 5.*



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## President's Perch

Paul Zeph

### Season of Change

As I write this column, Red-breasted Nuthatches and White-throated Sparrows have arrived at my feeders from Canada. Nesting is done, and migration is fully underway. Cold fronts are coming through with regularity now, and the change of seasons is definitely in the air.

It's not only the fall season in the natural world, it's the election season in the political world. A new Pennsylvania Governor will be elected, along with a U.S. Senator and several of our chapter-area's members of Congress. We've seen from recent state budget cuts that a governor's favor or disfavor of environmental agencies can make a huge difference on what gets the legislative axe.

As one example of elected officials setting environmental priorities, we all know now how our forests are under siege from Marcellus Shale gas drilling. This industry is rolling over important bird habitat, at the same time we saw important funds to promote and encourage alternative energy and home energy conservation slashed from Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's budget by the governor and state legislators last October, and neglected again in this year's budget.

Please get out and vote this November. Believe it or not, not all politicians are the same, and their core beliefs and subsequent actions regarding our environment can have lasting impacts – be it damaged ecosystems that we pass to our grandchildren for them to try to restore, or strong protection measures with a robust Growing Greener III that moves us forward to a healthier Penn's Woods for future generations.

-PZ-

*More than 30 people attended our chapter's first "Gardening for Life" workshop at Meadowood Nursery on August 28. Nursery intern and instructor Ian Gardner (standing in photo) gives tips on how to help people pick out appropriate native plants for their yards.*



*Thank you, also, to instructors Kristen Hand and Rachel Wagoner from DCNR, Mikey Wilke from Lebanon County Master Gardeners, and Jan Getgood of Meadowood Nursery. A special thanks to the Nursery for the use of their outstanding facility and learning laboratory!*

## Boots on the Ground

A message to chapters and members from National Audubon's new Executive Director, David Yarnold

"Look, up there, on that peak," our guide said. And through a borrowed spotting scope, I saw the pair of Gyrfalcons. Erect, watchful, the personification of "raptor." We'd just come from the Latrabjarg Bird Cliffs on the western-most point of Iceland – and Europe. The cliffs, as many of you know, are home to hundreds of thousands of Atlantic Puffins, Razorbills and Murres. I'd never seen an avian blanket on such a massive piece of landscape.



the job, learning in the field. I can't think of a better way to tap into your passion and to get to know your issues and your thinking.

While I'm a budding birder, I've run an environmental Non-Governmental Organization for almost 5 ½ years and I'm a life-long outdoorsman. I know that, like the people at Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Audubon's staff and its volunteers are there to help the planet thrive.

As I've talked to friends about Audubon in recent weeks, I've told them this: "In journalism, we learned to 'follow the money.' In conservation, it's 'follow the birds.' I'm thrilled to represent an organization that believes that by focusing on birds and IBAs, we get a clear view of the health of nature's ecosystems – the systems that benefit humankind and birds alike.

I've learned a couple of things in the process of becoming your new President and CEO. First, I've come to understand that Audubon doesn't belong to the New York home office. And while the state offices do tremendous work, they represent something larger. The chapters and their volunteer leaders do Audubon's grassroots work. But the fact is – and I will keep this thought at the center of my work as your new President – **we are all Audubon.**



Here's the other thing I've learned. While I've always associated birds with special moments (I'll tell you about the Blue Herons at the Merwin Lake – in search of the legendary D.B. Cooper sometime), I'm just beginning to see and appreciate them. I was going on last week with a friend about "heroic migratory songbirds that shed ¾ of their body mass during their migration," and he said, "Wow, they really do have you, don't they?" From the canopied running trail where I put in five miles each morning to a peak overlooking Hong Kong to the Brown Pelicans in Louisiana's Barataria Bay, birds have moved to the front of my awareness in the past three months – and are no longer part of nature's background imagery. I'm guessing that's an early stage of a birder's evolution, so rather than being shy about admitting it, I'm proud to be on the road to discovery.

-D.Y.-

"Set me on a birding path worthy of Audubon. After an initial week in New York in September, I want to go birding with you."

## Items for Sale at Program Meetings

Bring your checkbooks, the holidays are coming fast!

- ◆ 2011 Audubon Calendars – Beautiful and less expensive than in stores or mall calendar kiosks
- ◆ Coffee that is organic, shade-grown, and bird-friendly (not to mention very tasty!)
- ◆ Audubon caps – tan, summer-weight, and sporty
- ◆ Giant grocery cards – helps AAS raise money, and costs you nothing extra!

We appreciate your presence, and support at our programs!

## Audubon At Home Naturalizing Municipal Parks

One of the goals of our Audubon At Home initiative is to go beyond our backyards and have a positive influence on our region’s larger public spaces, including local, county and state parks. One effort currently underway is the naturalizing of a slope in Upper Allen Township’s Simpson Park (in Cumberland County along the Yellow Breeches Creek, just northeast of Messiah College).

A long slope next to the parking lot was being mowed and scalped, but originally had been planted with some prairie grasses before the township acquired the property. Appalachian Audubon Society teamed up with the Upper Allen Women’s Club and developed a plan. A presentation was made to the township’s Park and Recreation Board, who gave their approval with some modifications to the plan. They agreed to stop mowing the slope to let the grasses and few existing flowers grow, and our organizations pledged to obtain plants and volunteers to enhance the habitat for butterflies, other insects, and birds.

This past September was the first planting event, and 16 volunteers showed up to dig in more than 100 flowers with varying blooming times to provide color from spring through fall. A second planting event in mid-October will complete the first phase of the project, and will be an exciting demonstration and education area for township residents who are used to municipal parks being mowed short, looking “neat and clean” – not the wild and wooly appearance of an ecologically-healthy meadow.



The two photos above show a before and after view of the slope at Simpson Park in Upper Allen Township that is being planted with native perennial plants to enhance its value for native Lepidoptera and other insects.

**Waggoner’s Gap Hawk Watch Update** As Broad-Winged season drew to a close, Waggoner’s Gap hawkwatchers reported an impressive 5,880 BWs this season, just barely surpassing last year’s 5,866. September 14th was a stellar day with 1,158 BWs counted. Also on record at Waggoner’s Gap as of October 2: 425 Osprey; 338 Bald Eagles; 2,732 Sharp-Shinned Hawks; 262 American Kestrels; 33 Peregrine Falcons; and 1 Golden Eagle! The total so far is 10,581, nearly 50% of the 21,216 recorded during the 2009 season. **Join AAS at Waggoner’s Gap on October 23rd!** See back page for details.

## What's the story with Shade Grown Coffee?

The next time you pick up that steaming mug, think about this...

### Shade Grown is Better for Birds and Birders

Birders and travelers in the tropics quickly see the connection between wildlife and coffee. In many tropical countries, coffee farming occupies much of the land, especially in the highland hills and valleys that were once cloaked in wildly diverse forests. Unfortunately, many of these coffee farms are monotonous rows and rows of intensely managed shrubs - monocultures - that are devastating to wildlife. But others are a mix of coffee bushes and trees - agro forestry - so wonderfully "jungly" that they are barely recognizable as farms at all. Birders often mistake them at first sight for wildlife refuges. These are shade-grown coffee farms.



We sell Audubon shade-grown, organic, bird-friendly coffee at our monthly program meetings throughout the fall and spring. Three varieties are available at \$10 per bag in whole bean or ground: Breakfast Blend, Rainforest blend, or Shade Song French Roast.

The coffee plant evolved in Africa under the rainforest canopy and grows best in the shade. A traditional coffee farm can provide habitat to exuberantly varied birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, insects, trees and flowering plants. The amazing thing about coffee farming is that it can be done in harmony with tropical forest conservation - and for many centuries, it was. Unfortunately, many coffee farms were converted to tree-free and bird-barren monocultures in recent years in a misguided attempt to increase production.

### Consumers and Coffee

How can we coffee lovers know if the beans we drink come from farms that are environmentally friendly and socially responsible? How can we reward farmers that are trying to grow a great tasting coffee while protecting wildlife and the environment? The only way to know for sure is to seek out credible labels such as Rainforest Alliance Certified, which guarantees that farms are on the path toward true sustainability, and qualified organic labels, which guarantee that farms are not using harmful pesticides and fertilizers.

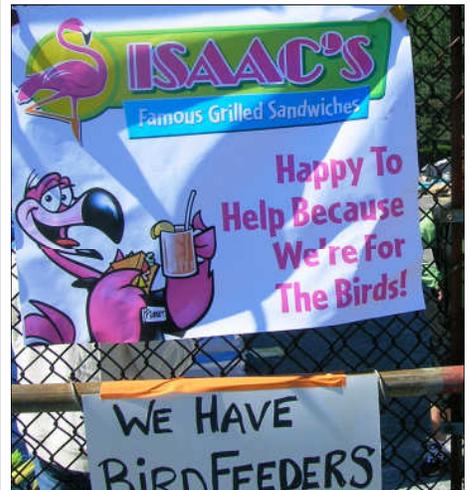
Savoring a cup of certified sustainable coffee can improve livelihoods for farm families and conserve wildlife and tropical ecosystems - a rare "win-win" opportunity. So the next time you see a Baltimore Oriole, Sharp-shinned Hawk or other Neotropical migrant, raise a mug of shade-grown joe and celebrate the at-home contribution you've made to their survival.

- Excerpted from National Audubon Society's website.

## Bird Seed Sale continued



One of many volunteers helping to make the sale a success, Chris Atwood loads yet another bag of seed.



Thank you to Isaac's Deli for supplying dinner on Friday and lunch on Saturday for the volunteers. Also, thank you to Equipment Depot for donating the use of a forklift to move the seed around.



Cashiers Annette Mathes and Marcia Wilson cheerily took customers' money while catching up on their sunbathing!



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**Directions to Christ Presbyterian Church,**  
421 Deerfield Road in the Allendale  
development in Lower Allen Township:

**I-83 Southbound,** take exit 40B towards New  
Cumberland. Stay straight, cross Carlisle  
Road to Cedar Cliff Drive. Turn left onto  
Allendale Way and turn left onto Deerfield  
Road. The Church is on the left. Park in  
second lot.

**I-83 Northbound,** take exit 40B, turn left onto  
Carlisle Road/Simpson Ferry Road under I-  
83. Turn left again at the light onto Cedar Cliff  
Drive. Turn left onto Allendale Way and turn  
left onto Deerfield Road. The Church is on the  
left. Park in second lot.

Appalachian Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 15123  
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## Inside: Thursday, October 21st



Photo: Ed Kendall

Public program featuring  
**John Rogers** with  
*Wild About Bluebirds!*

Read message to chapters from National  
Audubon's new Executive Director,  
David Yarnold — Page 4

Next Month, watch for a combined  
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER  
issue of the *Kingfisher Courier!*

## Upcoming Field Trips

**Saturday, October 23**  
**Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch**  
John AAS President Paul Zeph in  
watching for raptors and other  
species in their fall migration.  
Paul will also give an overview of  
the Cliff Jones Field Station and  
other projects at Waggoner's  
Gap. Meet at 11am at the Hawk  
Watch parking lot. *Contact Paul*  
*at 717- 691-0288 or*  
*[pzeph1@verizon.net](mailto:pzeph1@verizon.net)*

**Saturday, November 20**  
**Eagles at Conowingo Dam**  
Watch dozens of Bald Eagles and  
other birds at the Conowingo  
Dam and lower Susquehanna  
River in MD. To sign up, call  
Ed Smith at 717-960-9441 or  
[esmith@navarrowright.com](mailto:esmith@navarrowright.com) and  
details will be provided.

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