



# Kingfisher Courier

Newsletter of Appalachian Audubon Society

April 2012

## April 19 “Our Breeding Warblers” Ramsay Koury

Do you have trouble telling a Pine Warbler from a Nashville Warbler? a Louisiana Waterthrush from an Ovenbird? any female warbler from every other female warbler? Does the thought of just looking for warblers intimidate you? Then come to our April program meeting! AAS Board member and lifelong birder Ramsay Koury will take the mystery out of identifying our breeding wood warblers by showing you how song, habitat, behavior, time of year, and sometimes subtle field marks can help you distinguish one beautiful species from another. Although they often can be difficult to see as they flit high in the treetops or hide deep in the bushes, Ramsay will explain how the best birders quickly locate and identify these tiny gems of the mountain ridges and field edges. Warbler season is right around the corner!



Do you know these warblers?  
Come to the program and find out!



## SPRING Native Plant Sale at Meadowood Nursery

Sat. April 28<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

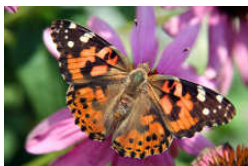
Cure your spring fever with a relaxing hour or two surrounded by the sights, smells and sounds of spring!



Bask in the sweet surroundings of Meadowood Nursery: blooming early spring wildflowers, buzzing bees, singing songbirds, and all the help you need to pick out the perfect native plants for your yard or patio planter.

Proceeds will help AAS send kids to ecology camps and support our conservation activities!

Painted Lady



### Directions to Meadowood Nursery

*Please use caution in this residential neighborhood!*

#### From the South —

At Hershey Park's Giant Center take PA-39 West for 3 miles. Turn Left on Red Top Road for 1.1 miles. Turn Right on Long Lane. Left onto Meadowood Drive to the end where two driveways split into a “Y”. Take the paved drive on left, up the hill to the nursery.

**From the North —** On Route 81 take Exit 77, follow PA-39 East for 3 miles. Turn Right on Red Top Rd for 1.1 miles and proceed as above.

[www.meadoodnursery.org](http://www.meadoodnursery.org)  
24 Meadowood Drive  
Hummelstown, PA 17036

## Silent Auction Items Needed

Need to downsize? Consider a donation to the AAS Silent Auction!

Once again, a silent auction will be part of the festivities at our annual banquet on May 17th. Auction proceeds support our various educational activities, such as camp scholarships and program speakers.

Previous auction items have included bird feeders and houses, binoculars, native plants, field guides, jewelry, artwork, books, gift certificates, and more!

If you would like to donate a new or gently used **nature related** item for the auction, please contact Jane Barnette at 657-2055 (east shore), Susan Miller at 697-6696 (west shore) or Sue Strassner at 243-5731 (Carlisle area) by May 12th. Please be sure to notify us ahead of time so that we can plan ahead for auction space.

Also, winning bidders may purchase auction items by cash or check only, so **come prepared to take home a few new (to you) treasures!**

## OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

**President:** Annette Mathes  
566-0149; amathes19@verizon.net

**Vice-President:** Susan Miller  
697-6696; millerscorner@msn.com

**Secretary:** Judy Bowman  
761-3815; bowma99@aol.com

**Treasurer:** Andy Groff  
350-9391; AndyGroff@comcast.net

## DIRECTORS

### Term Ending May 2012

**Kathy Kuchwara:** 319-0828;  
kathykatbird2@comcast.net

**Sue Strassner:** 243-5731;  
sue.strassner@exel.com

**Jane Barnette:** 657-2055;  
jbird558@aol.com

### Term Ending May 2013

**Ann Glasscock:** 695-2738;  
hglasscock07@comcast.net

**Arlene Buchholz:** 808-779-5200;  
abvetlab@aol.com

**Ramsay Koury:** 761-1871;  
rkoury123@aol.com

## COMMITTEES

(please join one!)

### **Bird Seed Sale**

Annette Mathes: 566-0149

### **Conservation**

Paul Zeph: 691-0288

### **Education**

Arlene Buchholz: 808-779-5200

### **Field Trips**

Judy Bowman: 761-3815

### **Hospitality**

Lorrie Preston: 732-5615

### **Membership**

Marcia Wilson: 215-0633

### **Newsletter**

Susan Miller: 697-6696  
millerscorner@msn.com

Paul Zeph: 691-0288  
pzeph1@verizon.net

### **Programs**

Annette Mathes: 566-0149

### **Publicity**

Susan Miller: 697-6696

### **Trout Run**

Jon Dale: 432-0335

## President's Perch

Annette Mathes

### Creating Habitat

I'm sitting under a large Silver Maple in my suburban Harrisburg backyard on one of those sweltering 100 degree afternoons of July 2011. I'm glad that the previous owner of my house planted the three native maples that almost completely shade the yard and make it tolerable to sit outside. It's one of the quietest times of year to find birds, since territorial singing has long stopped and the birds are lying low, secretly tending their young and remaining relatively inactive in the summer heat. But the native plants that I've been adding to the landscape over the last few years bring my yard to life.

There's a Gray Catbird tugging at a berry on the "McKenzie" Black Chokeberry that I bought at the May 2011 AAS auction (after a friendly but serious bidding war!). The literature says that birds avoid the juicy berries of this cultivar until winter because of their astringent flavor, but apparently no one told this to the catbirds, and they pick the bush clean in just a few days. Unlike the Blue Jays, who have been feeding their insatiable fledglings from the peanut feeder, catbirds don't eat any of my store-bought offerings, so it's especially rewarding to see that my yard can provide native food to this pretty gray bird whose face is as sweet as its voice.

In the corner of the yard, a Song Sparrow seems especially attracted to the small American Elder bush that is just getting established. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds buzz back and forth on the Trumpet Honeysuckle, which has



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

been continually blooming since early spring. A juvenile Brown Thrasher is making its daily appearance, thrashing (of course) for insects in the leaf litter that I've let accumulate at the edges of the yard, and tiny American Goldfinches are in the front yard, perched on top of the tall purple coneflowers, eating the seeds.

Birds are not the only visitors to the natives today. My neighbor's honey bees, along with five other species of bees (that I can distinguish) crowd the Anise Hyssop and Gayfeather. Several species of butterflies—buckeyes, swallowtails, skippers, and sulphurs—join the bees, and two huge (and kind of scary) praying mantises spend most of the afternoon lying in wait for some unfortunate creature to get too close.

I love the beautiful, natural look that the native plants give my yard. And while I can't exactly recommend Silver Maples, with their massive, dense, spreading roots and brittle branches that fill the yard after big storms, my maples have attracted Blue-headed Vireos, a pair of resident Hairy Woodpeckers, a Great-crested Flycatcher, and small flocks of warblers that have included Cape May, Black-throated Green, and Magnolia Warblers. The summer after the ice storm of 2008 brought down large sections of the maples, a pair of Downy Woodpeckers nested in one of the broken trunks, and I enjoyed watching not



One or more "anchor" trees in your yard can be the foundation of a diverse and marvelous native habitat in your neighborhood.

only their tender mating ritual, but the progress of the nest every day for several weeks.

If you would like to bring life to your yard with native habitat, come to Appalachian Audubon's Annual Native Plant Sale at the Meadowood Nursery in Hummelstown on April 28. You don't have to tear out all your non-natives. My plan is to slowly but surely reduce the lawn and non-natives, but the peonies, daffodils, lavender, and Japanese holly hedge are staying. Perhaps you might consider buying only natives from now on, or convert just one sterile garden to a native oasis. You can just do a little at a time—but I warn you—it's addicting!



Downy woodpecker peering out from its nest cavity.

## Jersey Shore Field Trip Report by Kathy Kuchwara

At 6am on Saturday, February 25th, 11 enthusiastic birders met at J.C. Penney's in the Swatara Plaza for the annual winter trip to the Jersey Shore. Leader Ramsay Koury expressed concern that the weather might be less than ideal for good bird watching and asked the group if they would like to cancel or reschedule. The consensus was, since we were already up, to start out and reevaluate later in the day.

We arrived at the Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in Brigantine at about 9 am. After a short break we started out on the drive around the refuge. Our first stop, at the observation tower, afforded us some good looks at several American Coots and excellent views of Northern Harriers hunting over the marsh. Indeed, it was windy!

We continued onward, following the drive and stopping at several places early on. The group observed various species of waterfowl that were busy feeding and swimming about, seemingly oblivious to the wind. Especially notable were the Northern Pintails, which were out in force. Unfortunately, the high winds were not conducive to standing outside with scopes or binoculars so we covered most of the route inside our cars.



The white spot at the base of its tail and long wings makes it easy to identify a Northern Harrier hunting at a distance.

After completing the loop we spent

some time in the newly refurbished visitor center, looking at the exhibits and talking with the staff. Ramsay again called the group together for a vote as to whether or not we should proceed to Barnegat Lighthouse State Park for our second stop. His concern was that the high winds would make the walk out onto the jetty hazardous. However the group wanted to forge on. We were not disappointed with our decision.



Ramsay Koury (in front) with the group on the jetty by the Barnegat Lighthouse.

Photo by Arlene Buchholz

Upon arriving at Barnegat we were pleased to find that, while windy, the air was not cold and partly sunny skies added to the warmth. Ramsay wisely encouraged the group to use the beach rather than the rocks as we ventured out to the point. We had some great birds there, including Surf and Black Scoters as well as Long-tailed and Harlequin Ducks. But to this birder, the views of the Northern Gannets flying overhead were spectacular and the trip highlight. It is unusual for them to fly in so close to shore and we could really see their field marks well.

We reluctantly called it a day at about 2:30pm and began our drive back into PA. We were glad we had braved the elements and felt that the trip was definitely worth it.



Northern Gannets flying close overhead were a trip favorite!

Thanks again, Ramsay, for a great trip.

Thank you to our sponsor:

### LOST CREEK SHOE SHOP

QUALITY OPTICAL EQUIPMENT



Aden Troyer  
David Troyer



# Please Join Us for the Annual AAS Banquet

(this replaces our May meeting at the Church)

## RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MAY 11!

**When:** Thursday, May 17

**Where:** Radisson Penn Harris Hotel  
Governor's Ballroom

1150 Camp Hill Bypass, Camp Hill, PA 17011

### Program:

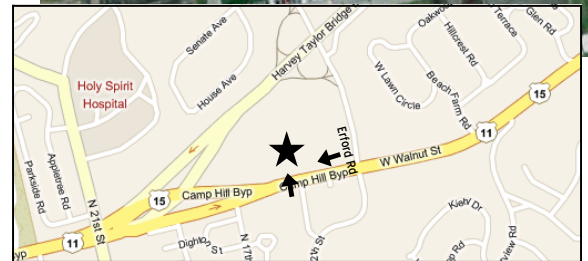
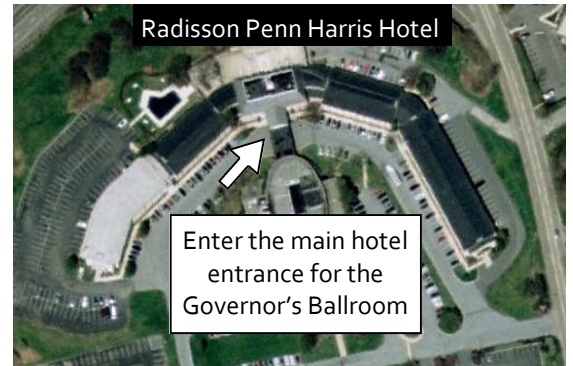
6:00 p.m. Silent Auction, Cash Bar

6:45 p.m. Reception, followed by speaker

### Banquet Reception Menu Details

*Served "hors d'oeuvre style" with table seating.*

Chef-attended **Pasta Station** with Choice of Sauces and Toppings, Garlic Bread and Bread Sticks; Chef-attended **Stir Fry Station** with Sesame Marinated Chicken Breast and Mongolian Beef Strips Tossed with a Bounty of Stir-fried Vegetables and served with Fried Rice; **Salad Bar**; Assorted Pies and Cakes; Hot Coffee; and Iced Tea



## Birds and Birding at Cape May

(with book signing) **Clay and Pat Sutton**

Cape May is a major migratory bottleneck and one of the most famous bird watching destinations in all of North America, where over 444 species of birds have been found. **Clay and Pat Sutton** are veteran naturalists and noted authors who have lived and worked at Cape May their entire careers. Their program, based on the landmark book of the same name, will detail major phenomena such as the autumn raptor migration, the internationally-know spring shorebird gatherings, and the seasonal concentrations of waterfowl, seabirds, waders, owls, and songbirds. Hear all that makes Cape May great from the insiders' point of view!



## AAS Banquet Reservation Form — May 17, 2012

Please mail reservations by May 9 -- must be received by the 11th!

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make reservations for \_\_\_\_\_ Adults or Youth (12 years and up) @ **\$32 each**

I also want to donate to the AAS Camp Scholarship Program \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total included \$** \_\_\_\_\_

*Mail this form along with your check payable to AAS or Appalachian Audubon Society to:  
Andy Groff (AAS Treasurer), 1508 Carlisle Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011*

Note: If you are also sending in a donation for the appeal, both can be in the same check.

KCE

## Help Save Tundra Swan Habitat at Middle Creek

**T**his year we're asking our members to help preserve the farmland in and around the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. The Lebanon Valley Conservancy, along with partners such as the Pennsylvania Game Commission, created the "Middle Creek Initiative" to insure that adequate farmland is retained in southeastern Lebanon County to protect the habitat of Middle Creek's migratory waterfowl, especially the Tundra Swan.

**The dollars we raise will help to protect the area farmland by buying easements from the landowners. These easements will ensure that the properties are protected in perpetuity from development.**

Tundra swans — identified as a "species of greatest conservation need" in the Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan — are attracted to Middle Creek annually because it has and continues to provide a secure resting and water-roosting area for them from late February through early March. The large birds converge on Middle Creek as a migratory stopover and staging area before they continue north to the arctic region to breed.

Their stay at Middle Creek ranges from a few days for some to a few weeks for others. The birds are attracted to local privately-owned farmlands that yield winter wheat and waste grain in harvested cornfields. (Fortunately, winter wheat is a hearty crop that can recover from some grazing.) *Their dependency on Middle Creek in spring migrations led to the wildlife management area being identified as a "globally significant important bird area" in 2010.*

The problem that is beginning to surface around Middle Creek is that some of the fields tundra swans

depend upon for feeding are being consumed by housing subdivisions and other development. The Middle Creek Initiative partnership was formed to protect vital and historic tundra swan feeding and roosting areas.



*If lands cannot be preserved, substantial numbers of swans may no longer be able to use Middle Creek. (The highest recorded number in one year is 14,700.)*

That would open the door for tundra swans to encounter new threats in their quest for food and sanctuary on their annual journey north. It also would increase their risk of arriving at breeding grounds in poor condition, which would jeopardize their reproductivity and overall health.

The continent's eastern population of tundra swans is better off without these dangers encroaching further on their already complicated relationship with and dependency on humans.

*That's why the Middle Creek Initiative was organized, to protect tundra swans through the preservation of farmland and open space through conservation easements.*

*Every \$5,000 raised will help protect one acre of farmland from development.*

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**Yes, I'll help protect Tundra Swan Habitat at Middle Creek!**

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**\*100% of your dollars will be used to preserve the farmland in and around Middle Creek.**

I also want to donate to the AAS Camp Scholarship Program \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**



Mail this form along with your check payable to Appalachian Audubon Society to:  
**Andy Groff (AAS Treasurer)**  
1508 Carlisle Road  
Camp Hill, PA 17011

KCE



# Kingfisher Courier

April 2012

AAS monthly programs 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 socializing and refreshments. **The program begins at 7:30.**

### Directions to Christ Presbyterian Church:

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

**I-83 Northbound**, take exit 40B, turn left onto Carlisle Road/Simpson Ferry Road and go 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 the second lot.

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and click the **Like** button!

Appalachian Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 234  
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## Annual Election of Officers

During the annual banquet on May 17th AAS will hold an election of officers for upcoming terms. The nominees are some of the officers who are currently on the board:

**Treasurer** for a second 1-year term: Andy Groff

**Secretary** for a second 1-year term: Judy Bowman

**Director** for a second 2-year term: Sue Strassner, Jane Barnette, Kathy Kuchwara

We are always looking for volunteers to help with many projects throughout the year. If you would like to become more involved with chapter activities, please contact any of the officers or committee chairs listed on page 2 of this newsletter.

Save valuable resources and receive your full-color **Kingfisher Courier** via email instead of paper!

Just send an email to:  
[amathes19@verizon.net](mailto:amathes19@verizon.net)

Thanks!

## APRIL FIELD TRIPS



### April 14, 2012 Sandy Point State Park

Jane Barnette guides us on a day of birding by the Chesapeake.

Meet at Lowe's on Union Deposit Road at 6:45 AM. Contact Jane at 657-2055 or [jbird558@aol.com](mailto:jbird558@aol.com).

### April 21, 2012 Gifford Pinchot State Park Spring Wildflower Walk



Search for wildflowers with Dan Welte in this popular locale. Meet at noon at the parking lot near the Conewago Day Use Area and Nature Center. Contact Dan at 728-0421 or [dcmawelte@paonline.com](mailto:dcmawelte@paonline.com).