



Kingfisher Courier

Newsletter of Appalachian Audubon Society

March 2011

Thursday, March 17

Energy Development and Fragmentation Effects; Are the Costs Worth the Energy gained?

The habitats upon which many birds and other wildlife depend are currently under siege by rapid pace energy development such as industrial scale wind, Marcellus shale gas extraction and associated infrastructures in Pennsylvania.

This month, **Kim Van Fleet**, Important Bird Area Coordinator for Audubon PA, reviews the “energy sprawl” that is occurring with little regard for the direct and more insidious indirect effects of habitat fragmentation and loss, especially along forested ridges and within large tracts of interior forest.

Kim will discuss the lack of attention towards the cumulative

impacts of project after project on terrestrial communities and ecosystems across a wider geographic range, including the impact to interior forest bird species that are dependent on contiguous tracts of healthy forest for their reproductive success.

The concerns are multi-fold as the clearing of forests for industrial scale wind and Marcellus shale continue to increase across the forests of Pennsylvania.

Join AAS members and friends as Kim reviews how this quest for energy sources impacts the future of Pennsylvania’s landscape, wildlife and residents.



The Marcellus Shale rock formation underlies approximately 67% of Pa (shaded), at a depth of 5,000-8,000 feet. It is believed to hold trillions of cubic feet of natural gas. From: Marcellus Shale Industry Snapshot Update; Executive Summary. 20100331 Marcellus Shale PA Statewide.pdf.

AAS monthly programs (September—May) typically take place 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.*

Jersey Shore Photo Gallery



Above: Short-eared Owl; Top Right: Long-tailed Duck; Below Right: Harlequin Ducks. Photos courtesy of Jon Dale.

An exciting variety of birds was seen on Ramsay Koury’s marathon field trip to the Jersey Shore on February 26. The three birds pictured here spend summers in northern Canada, and travel south to the rocky coast of New England for the winter.

The ducks, in particular, were very exciting to see as they nest up in the Arctic Circle!

We apologize to anyone who was turned away due to the trip’s popularity, and hope to accommodate more people next year.



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Citizen Science makes a difference

The **Annual Great Backyard Bird Count** took place February 18 – 21. I went online to see what people saw and entered into the national database, and was impressed how many people are participating from all over our chapter's region. I always find it interesting to see what people found, be it on the feeders in their yard or at a favorite birding location like the river or local woodlands.

Sighted were a smattering of some species, like Bald Eagles, Purple Finches and Red-tailed Hawks. There is a long list of species that were a little more numerous, such as Red-bellied Woodpeckers, White-throated Sparrows, Bluebirds, and Mockingbirds. The highest numbers of birds seen in our area included Red-winged Blackbirds, Starlings, American Crows, Mourning Doves and Snow Geese (passing through on their way back north).

It's also interesting to see where people live who participated. This year, a quick glance through the list of towns, entered by participants, showed the following places and the number of lists that were entered (one person or several family members could make one list): Boiling Springs 1, Camp Hill 15, Carlisle 23, Dauphin 6, Dillsburg 9, Elizabethtown 2, Harrisburg 47, Hummelstown 11, Middletown 8, New Cumberland 9, Shiremanstown 1.

Annual counts are used by researchers to identify trends in bird populations and geographic movement. This can give us insights on the planet's health, and impacts that humans are having on birds, habitats, and the climate.

The annual **Christmas Bird Count** (CBC) has been taking place since 1900, and was recently analyzed for trends that could be attributed to a warming of the planet. The study by Audubon scientists, released in February 2009, examined the CBC data for the last 40 years.

The researchers determined that a decisive shift to the north or inland has taken place for the majority and for nearly every kind of North American bird species. Audubon's analysis confirms the anecdotal evidence from bird enthusiasts who have frequently reported changing populations.

The report states: "Of the 305 species in the analysis, 177 showed a significant shift north and 79 showed a significant shift south. "... land birds showed the greatest change in their centers of abundance, with an average northern movement of approximately 50 miles."

A summary of the report states that: "Given the strong evidence that global warming is indeed a key factor in observed bird movements, shifts like these will continue for familiar species—for better or worse—as long as the climate continues to change." For more details on this report, go to www.audubon.org, click on "Conservation" then "Birds & Climate Change."

Migration counters, particularly at hawk watch sites, are also seeing birds from the northern reaches staying longer before they migrate, and

(Continued on page 3)

Citizen Science continued

(Continued from page 2)

returning sooner—indicating more hospitable conditions for survival longer into the fall and earlier in the late winter.

It's too early to predict the consequences of birds shifting their historic ranges, but since many of them eat insects, any change in population is going to have an impact on the entire ecosystem. **If you would like to participate in the "citizen science"** by recording what you see around you and entering it online, there are a number of on-going projects that are conducted by Audubon, or the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, or both. Check out the options at: www.birds.cornell.edu, click on "What We Do" then click on "Citizen Science." **Your counting can count!**

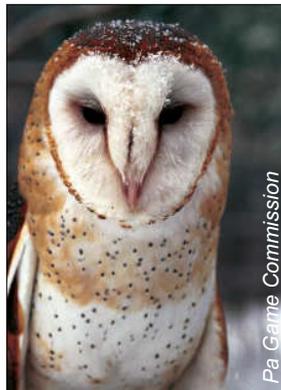
Pa Game Commission Seeking Reports of Dead Barn Owls

PGC wildlife biologists are seeking information about dead barn owls that may have succumbed to starvation during the long periods of snow and ice that covered much of Pa. this winter. Information can be submitted to the PGC Region Offices.

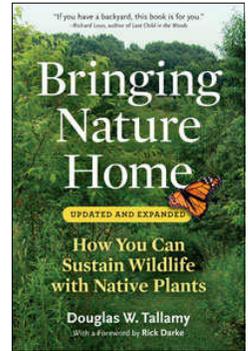
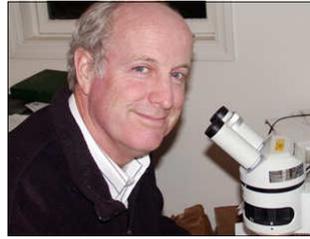
"... Barn owls have had an extremely difficult time attempting to catch meadow voles, which are their primary prey," said Dan Mummert, PGC Biologist and regional coordinator of the agency's Barn Owl Conservation Initiative. "Therefore, we currently are in what is likely the highest annual period of mortality for these owls. We need landowners [to report] any dead barn owls, especially those barn owls that have been banded, so we can learn more about such things as fledgling dispersal, habitat usage, causes of mortality and average lifespan."

"During the first Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas (PBBA), barn owls were found in 56 of the state's 67 counties," Mummert said. "By the Second PBBA, the barn owl distribution had steeply contracted...and they were found in only 30 counties."

This indicates a steep decline in barn owls in Pennsylvania in only 20 years. For more information, please visit www.pgc.state.pa.us and click on "News Releases."



Tallamy Lecture Update



As noted in in last month's *Kingfisher*, The Manada Conservancy and Wildwood Park will be hosting a lecture by Dr. Doug Tallamy, professor and chair of the Entomology and Wildlife Ecology department at the University of Delaware and author of *Bringing Nature Home: How Native plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*. He will speak at **Lower Dauphin High School on Thursday, April 14, 2011 at 7:00 pm.**

"Because our gardens and managed landscapes are part of the terrestrial ecosystems that sustain humans and the life around us, we must keep them in working order. To do that we can no longer view plants only as ornaments but must consider all of their roles when selecting them for our gardens." Dr. Tallamy will discuss the important ecological roles of the native plants in our landscapes, emphasize the benefits of designing gardens with these roles in mind, and explore the consequences of failing to do so. Gardening in this crowded world carries both moral and ecological responsibilities that we can no longer ignore.

Doors will open at 6:15 at which time, Dr. Tallamy will offer his book for sale. Also, area environmental groups will be displaying information regarding their work. The public is invited at no charge. Spread the word to municipal officials, parks and recreation boards, schools, garden clubs, and other conservation groups.

Mark your Calendars for April 26

AAS is co-sponsoring the 2nd Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival, on the evening of **April 26 at the Camp Hill United Methodist Church**. This film festival, which celebrates green lifestyles and explores environmental issues, is the largest environmental film festival in North America. To sample some of the film trailers, visit www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org. More information to follow next month!

Annual AAS Conservation Appeal

Help Save the PA Breeding Bird Atlas !

Every year we look for an important conservation project that our members can support. This year we found a project where many small donations will make a very large contribution to birds in Pennsylvania!

After more than 100,000 hours of volunteer time spanning the last several years, with considerable support from grant funds, the work producing the *2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas* has literally **ground to a halt.**

Many of our members — perhaps you — spent countless hours driving and tromping around our region and beyond to document the nests of our state’s feathered fauna.

Unfortunately, just near the finish line, the project has simply run out of money. Only \$15,000 is needed to complete the preparation, production and printing of our state’s next “bible” of bird nesting information.

If 600 people donate \$25, the atlas can be printed!

With the onslaught of Marcellus Shale drilling in the PA Wilds, and chains of industrial wind facilities fragmenting our ridge-tops, nesting information of our vulnerable bird species **needs to be published** and distributed to ecologists, ornithologists, birders, policy-makers, environmental engineers, and other decision-makers. The Board of Directors of Appalachian Audubon felt that this was a **vitaly-important undertaking**, and one for which our chapter could make an important contribution.

From past appeals, we know we can easily raise several thousand dollars if everyone gives a little. We are also challenging other Audubon chapters to do the same!! Together we can help the birds by showing where the nesting habitats are located so these areas can be protected.

2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas



The first Breeding Bird Atlas for Pennsylvania was completed nearly 20 years ago. This impressive partnership effort includes the PA Game Commission, The Carnegie Museum, Powdermill Nature Reserve, and birders throughout the Commonwealth.



Yes, I'll help complete the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas!

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Enclosed is my check for : \$100 \$75 \$50 \$25 \$10 \$ _____ other

I'd like to give an additional donation for camp scholarships (see page 5) \$ _____

Make check payable to: **AAS or Appalachian Audubon Society**

Return this form and check to our treasurer:

Annette Mathes, 661 South 80th Street, Harrisburg, PA 17111

Tidbits

Camp Scholarship Funds Needed!

Due to rising printing and postage costs for the newsletter, we have fewer funds for summer ecology camp scholarships for youth and educators. As a result, AAS is reducing the number of newsletter issues produced each year to cut costs, but donations are still needed to support the scholarship program.

If you value the scholarship program, please consider sending an additional amount along with your tax deductible gift for the Annual Appeal on page 4.

PSCE's New Website Is a Valuable Resource For Wildlife Information

Penn State Cooperative Extension wildlife specialists have launched a new website that provides wildlife information for landowners, homeowners, natural resource professionals, teachers and students alike.

The **Wildlife Outreach Web-center**, or WOW, offers in-depth information on a variety of wildlife topics ranging from habitat enhancement to controlling nuisance and problems that occasionally occur between people and wildlife. Visitors also can find the names of agencies and individuals across the state that can help resolve issues ranging from the skunk under the deck to the injured bird in the backyard. Downloadable fact sheets are included for most topics.

"The website gathers together in one place information we have been providing through Extension over the years...", said Margaret Brittingham, professor of wildlife resources who helped develop the Web-center.

Website visitors can also watch or listen to Webinars, web-based seminars created by different professionals. Webinar topics range from identifying songbirds to rabbit-proofing gardens.

A page aimed at youth education is a resource for teachers, youth leaders or parents who are interested in teaching children more about the diverse wildlife of Pennsylvania. Topics include the differences between amphibians and reptiles, or tips for writing their own nature journals.

A wildlife news section highlights emerging issues both nationally and in Pennsylvania.

Visit the Wildlife Outreach Webcenter online at <http://extension.psu.edu/wildlife>.

Call for Silent Auction Items

Spring is just around the corner and plans are being made for the silent auction that takes place at our annual banquet on **May 19th**. We are seeking new or gently used nature-related items for the auction.

Past donations have included nature books and field guides, binoculars, artwork, jewelry, outdoor gear and clothing, bird feeders and houses, and a few surprises. If you have items to contribute, please contact Susan Miller (697-6696), Sue Strassner (243-5731) or Annette Mathes (566-0149).

Share your Time and Talents with AAS!

Appalachian Audubon is seeking individuals to help starting next fall. Contact Paul Zeph at 691-0288 if you would like to:

- ◆ Drive forklift for birdseed sale (Sept. 30 and/or Oct. 1)
- ◆ Exercise your desktop publishing, layout and editing skills for the *Kingfisher Courier*
- ◆ Assist with publicity by promoting our programs and fundraisers in the media
- ◆ Provide refreshments for a program meeting

Photo Caption Contest Winner



"Wait for me!"

Thanks to Bruce Bishoff for his astute interpretation of this photograph of Steve Hoffman, former Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Pa and founder of HawkWatch International, as he releases a rehabilitated Golden Eagle. Thanks Bruce!



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Appalachian Audubon Society
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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.

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Inside: Public Program

Thursday, March 17
Energy Development and
Fragmentation Effects
with Kim Van Fleet



<http://www.marcellus-shale.us/>

PA DCNR July 2010
Loyalsock State Forest

Annual Appeal: **Atlas in Trouble!**

YOU can help
complete and publish the
2nd Pennsylvania
Breeding Bird Atlas!
See page 4 to learn how to help!

Upcoming Field Trips

Sunday, March 13, 2011 **Ned Smith Waterfowl Watch**

8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. This annual event
along the Susquehanna River in Millersburg
is hosted by the Ned Smith Center for
Nature and Art. Birding experts will be on
hand. Dress warmly and bring binoculars
and spotting scopes. Contact Beth Sanders at
692-3699 or Judy Bowman at 761-3815.

Saturday, March 19, 2011 **Middle Creek Wildlife Mgmt. Area** **Snow Geese, Swans and More!**

At this time of year, Snow Geese and
Tundra Swans stop at Middle Creek for
several weeks during migration. Join veteran
leader Pete Fox and look for waterfowl,
eagles, and more! Contact Pete at 583-2639
(before 9 PM) or pfox@raiderweb.org.

Saturday, April 16, 2011 **Bombay Hook NWF**

Join Jane Barnette for an excited trip to
Delaware searching for waterfowl, shore
birds and early warblers. Meet at 7 AM at
Lowe's on Union Deposit Rd. Contact Jane
at 657-2055 or jbird558@aol.com

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Recognizing a national trend of
organizations converting from
paper newsletters to e-versions,
AAS would like to offer you an
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