



Kingfisher Courier

Newsletter of Appalachian Audubon Society

September 2011

September 15 "Big Trees of Pennsylvania"

Did you know that the tallest documented tree in the northeastern United States is a 182.5 foot Longfellow Pine in Cook Forest State Park? Or that one of the biggest American Sycamores in the state is at Fort Hunter Park in Harrisburg?

Scott Wade, the state coordinator for the Champion Tree Program for Pennsylvania, has organized a list of over one thousand Pennsylvania trees that are noted for their height, girth, and spread. A certified arborist who works at Longwood Gardens in Chester County, Scott will share his extensive knowledge of the biggest trees in the state, show us some amazing photos, and talk about some of his favorites.

We'll learn about how he measures these giants, his ongoing search for new specimens, and even the birds that they support. Join us for this first meeting of our new season!

Program time, location and driving directions are on back page.



*Co-champion White Oak,
London Grove, Chester County*

Native Plant Sale at Meadowood Nursery

September 17th 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Once again we invite you to visit Meadowood, a native plant nursery, for this annual AAS event.

Why native plants? Well, many are host plants or provide food for native wildlife, like the birds and butterflies we love to see in our neighborhoods.

They are also well suited to the local soil and climate, and once established generally do not need special watering, fertilizer, or pesticides.

Fall, in fact, is a great time to plant natives. Survival rate is high as the plants won't have to endure

the rigors of a hot summer while trying to grow new roots.

Take a leisurely stroll to browse through the wide assortment of plants that Meadowood offers. Volunteers will be available to help you make choices for special areas in your yard and a percentage of sale proceeds will benefit various chapter projects.

During the sale be sure to meet Tashya Dalen, local landscape designer and friend of Meadowood. She will present in the pavilion from 12:00 to 12:30 on "Resilient Ones: Native Plants in Cooler Seasons."

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
24 Meadowood Drive
Hummelstown, PA 17036

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Annette Mathes

Welcome to the 2011/12 season of the Appalachian Audubon Society! We start off the year with trees. BIG trees. *Champion* trees! Our September 15 program on Pennsylvania's ancient and magnificent green giants will leave you in awe. We follow on September 17 with our annual Fall Native Plant Sale at the beautiful and quaint Meadowood Native Plant Nursery in Hummelstown. It's exciting to see that "going native" is becoming quite the trend these days! You'll find more and more people abandoning sterile lawns, Asian and European ornamental plants, pesticides, and fertilizers; and discovering, instead, the ease and classic beauty of native, natural habitat.

September 30 - October 1 is our annual *Birdseed Sale*, our most important fundraiser. We're adding activities that we hope will be fun and educational and attract more customers as well. Check out the order form for details, and be sure to stock up with plenty of seed for the winter so you can enjoy the pleasure of helping our resident birds survive the long, frozen months, while supporting AAS at the same time.

We have a great line-up of uplifting and educational speakers and programs this year, with a new twist in December — a holiday social with lots of food, socializing, and fun. And we have your favorite field trips again, plus a few more. If you've never been on an AAS field trip, maybe this is the year to try one.

None of these activities can happen without the efforts of our all-volunteer Board and members. The planning for this year truly has been a group effort of enthusiastic and caring people who think AAS is pretty special. We hope you think so, too.

Members Donate Over \$2,000 for Annual Appeal

The AAS 2011 Annual Appeal raised \$2,150 from our generous members to help complete the *2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas*, a compilation of five years of precise observations that tells birders, ornithologists, and environmental decision makers what birds breed when and where in Pennsylvania.

The information was gathered from citizen scientists (birders like you!) all over the state, who painstakingly documented within specified areas their observations of birds carrying nesting materials, building nests, carrying food, and feeding young.

The *Breeding Bird Atlas* is scheduled to be published by fall 2012, complete with full-color photos and multi-colored maps.

Like us on Facebook!
Go to www.appalachianaudubon.org
and click the **Like** button!

Seasonal Sightings Ramsay Koury

[editor's note: With this issue we begin a new column by Ramsay to introduce AAS members to seasonal goings-on in the world of birds, and to provide suggestions for good places to go birding.]

September is fall birding at its best! It is arguably the best birding month, second only to May. Birds are on the move! The vast majority of neotropical migrants, (warblers, vireos, thrushes, flycatchers, orioles and others) move through Pennsylvania during this month. They are not always easy to see, however. Unlike the spring, when birds are singing beautiful songs, fall migrants are usually very quiet. With the trees still covered in leaves many birds may be present, but hard to find.

The best way to find fall migrants is to go out into the woods and listen. While the migrants will not normally be singing, they do associate with some of our resident birds such as chickadees, titmice, nuthatches and wrens, who will call during the fall. Go out to a good birding spot and listen for one of these resident birds. When you find one, look and listen and you may be surprised to find a small or even a large flock of birds.



Juvenile male Orchard Oriole in fall plumage

Finding such a flock can be a double-edged sword as the flock will often be moving quickly through an area looking for food. It may be impossible to identify all of the birds and they may soon be gone in a whirlwind of excitement. Then, of course, you look for another flock! These groups of migrants can often be composed of 10 or more warbler species, a few vireos, a thrush or two, flycatchers, gnatcatchers or other surprises.

Good places to look are any of the local parks and game lands. Look for areas with a variety of habitats, or where a couple of habitats meet. The edge of a forest, along a field edge, an overgrown field with a stream, or even a power-line cut through a wooded area can be a good spot.

Small birds are not the only attraction in Septem-

ber. Birds of prey are moving through the area in large numbers. Most Broad-winged Hawks travel south through the state during the third week of September. By the end of the month, good numbers of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, along with the falcons, (Kestrels, Merlins, and Peregrine Falcons) will also be on the move. Pennsylvania, of course, has one of the most famous hawk-watching sites, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. This globally-renowned spot attracts thousands of human visitors each year to observe the thousands of raptors which pass by.



Migrating Broad-winged Hawk

Our area is home to two other excellent raptor viewing spots: Waggoner's Gap, located on the top of Blue Mountain north of Carlisle on Route 74, and Second Mountain Hawk Watch, located at Indiantown Gap on the top of Second Mountain. Both locations have dedicated, friendly observers who count raptors from August 1 through December 31. Each spot has something to offer. Waggoner's Gap gets more birds, but you can drive right to the viewing spot at Second Mountain. On a good migrant day either spot can very interesting.

For more information, check out:

www.waggap.com

www.hawkmountain.org

www.2ndmtn.org

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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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Appalachian Audubon Society
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Thanks!

May Banquet & Auction a Success!

On May 19, 2011, AAS members gathered at the Radisson Penn Harris in Camp Hill to enjoy an informal cocktail reception, dinner, and entertaining program, *Global Adventures of a Young Ornithologist*, by Tom Johnson, son of members Jan Getgood and Ernie Johnson.

We had fun with the silent auction competing for the winning bids on some very interesting nature items donated by members and business friends of AAS, and raised \$1,640 in the process! The auction proceeds will be used to support AAS initiatives such as the monthly newsletters and programs, scholarships, and Trout Run. Special thanks to Meadowood Native Plant Nursery for donating the centerpieces (as well as growing a great evening speaker!).

We hope to see you next year—if you've never been to the annual banquet, it's casual, fun, and a great way to get to know your fellow members—everyone is very welcome.