



# Upland Informer

Volume 27 Issue 2

Official Newsletter of the Bartramian Audubon Society

Oct-Nov 08

Editors- Suzanne Butcher and Nancy Baker

Check us out online at <http://bartramianaudubon.org/>



## Upcoming BAS Membership Meetings

.....Kathie Goodblood, acting program chair

*Our membership meetings are held the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Jennings Environmental Education Center, 2961 Prospect Road, Slippery Rock, PA. The Education Center is located on Rt. 528 just west of its junction with Rt. 8- about five miles south of Slippery Rock. The meetings are free and open to the public.*

**November 10, 2008- Monday: Santa Ana NWR: A Naturalist's Paradise - Joanne and Gene Wilhelm.** Visit this 2,088-acre home of avian species, half of all butterfly species found in North America and such rarities as the indigo snake and endangered ocelot via slides taken on site in the past seven years. See why Santa Ana is called the "shining jewel" of the National Wildlife refuge system in the USA.

**December 8, 2008 Monday:** Celebrate the holidays with us. Bring a dish to share at our annual Holiday Potluck. Our 2008 Scholarship winners, Amanda Seibel, Brittanie Smith, and Nancy Lendyak will give brief presentations on their experiences while attending the Audubon Camp at Hog Island Maine.



*Amanda Seibel, Workshop for Education Scholarship Winner*



## Upcoming Field Trips/Activities

**December 20, 2008 – Saturday -Butler Christmas Bird Count.** See additional info this page.

**January 4, 2009 – Sunday- Pleasantville Christmas Bird Count.** See additional info this page.

**May 1, 2, & 3, 2009 – 3rd Annual Oil Region Birding and Nature Festival** Mark your calendar for this event. More information will be forthcoming.

**May 9, 2009 –Saturday:** The second Saturday of every May is the annual **North American Migration Count**. Count within the bounds of any county in the US. Just keep track of species and numbers of each. You are out in the field on that day anyway, so keep counting. Contact [Russ States](mailto:Russ.States@verizon.net) for more information.

**July 25, 2009, Saturday, 10:00 a.m.: Garden Tour at a BAS Wildlife Sanctuary** Buttermilk Hill Nature Sanctuary is a 462-acre privately owned sanctuary in Venango County. Tour and learn more about organic vegetable and fruit gardening. After viewing the vegetable garden we will turn our attention to the bird and butterfly garden. We will spend lunch time observing the birds & butterflies in the garden (please bring a bag lunch). Jerry and Kathie will share some of their methods of growing native plants for wildlife. For directions call Kathie at 814-432-4496 or email [bhns@sonline.net](mailto:bhns@sonline.net)

## Our Local Christmas Bird Counts

The **Butler County CBC** celebrating forty-three years of counting for the National Audubon Society will be held on **Saturday, December 20, 2008**. The center of the 15 mile diameter of the count circle is located approximately 1.5 miles east of the junction of Lindey Road and Rt. 528. Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park, McConnells Mill, Wolf Creek Narrows and the campus of Slippery Rock University are within the circle. If you are interested in participating, either by being a feeder watcher or field observer, contact Suzanne Butcher at 330-759-1945 (leave messages) or [sarbird@hotmail.com](mailto:sarbird@hotmail.com) as soon as possible so count assignments can be made.

The **Pleasantville CBC** also marking forty-three years of counting is scheduled on **Sunday, January 4, 2009** from dawn to dusk (or earlier or later if you are so inclined). The circle for this count encompasses the area approximately from Titusville in the northwest to Pleasantville to Tionesta in the northeast south to President east to Oleopolis and Rouseville and then north along the western edge of Oil Creek State Park. The count is centered on the historic ghost town of Pithole. Please feel welcome to participate in this count. Assignments can be made for an easy to get to area if you are unfamiliar with this count. Also needed are feeder watchers who live in the area. If you are unsure if you are in the count circle call and ask. This is a more northern count than the Butler count, so expect some more northern species. If you are interested in helping, please contact: Russ States 814-676-6320 (please talk to the machine) or [pabirder@verizon.net](mailto:pabirder@verizon.net)



## **BAS Activities in Review**

.....*Nancy Baker*

### **September Field Trip**

Kathie Goodblood, Jerry Stanley, and Nancy Baker participated in the September 27<sup>th</sup> field trip to the bird-banding station at Presque Isle State Park. Banders Desiree Narango and Sarah Sargent, with their volunteer helpers, explained every step of the banding process. We were fortunate to get up close and personal with a Gray-cheeked Thrush, Winter Wren, Gray Catbird, Black-capped Chickadees, and a very feisty Tufted Titmouse.

### **September 8<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting on Common Nighthawks**

Tim Hoppe, Wildlife Diversity Biologist for the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Northwest Region, presented the program at our September membership meeting. Approximately thirty people were in attendance.

The Common Nighthawk is not a hawk; it belongs to a group commonly known as nightjars. Nightjars are nocturnal insect eaters with large flat heads, small bills, and enormous gaping mouths. Historically these birds nested in burned areas, wood



*Bill Caputo with Speaker Tim Hoppe*

land clearings, farm fields, or on rocky outcrops. Their nest is a simple scrape on leafy or gravelly ground. The advent of cities provided a bonanza of flat, gravel-covered, relatively predator free rooftops for nesting. The nighthawks took advantage. Recently, however, their population has been declining. Several theories leading to this decline include; increased pesticide use, problems on wintering grounds, and/or non-gravel rooftop conversions. Starting in 2006, Tim built and installed gravel-nesting pads on non-gravel rooftops. In all 23

nesting pads were installed in four NW PA cities. He monitored nighthawk nesting efforts on rubber roofs, gravel roofs, and roofs with artificial gravel nest pads, in each city. The results were not encouraging. During 2008, four nest sites were discovered on existing gravel roofs. Unfortunately all nest sites appeared to have been predated several days after the nestlings hatched. Several sources have named American crows as probable predators of rooftop nesters. An infrared trail camera was used to monitor one of the nest sites. Unfortunately the sensitivity of the trigger mechanism prevented consistent photographs. But Tim did photograph a pair of crows on the roof one day following predation. Tim has been in contact with several researchers interested in artificial nesting pad use by common nighthawks. Tim fears that if crows can locate nestlings on large gravel roofs, then nests on small artificial nesting pads will be easy prey. Tim hopes to experiment with video equipment and crow deterrent techniques at nest sites during the 2009 season. Hopefully then we will be able to successfully document what is happening to Common Nighthawks in NW Pennsylvania.

### **October 13<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting**

Sarah Sargent, Audubon PA's Northwestern IBA Coordinator, presented the program on banding birds at Presque Isle State Park to about thirty members and guests at our October meeting. First she gave us a little of the history of banding. (John James Audubon tied silver threads around the legs of nestling phoebes to see if the same birds would come back the next year and they did.) Then she explained the banding process. First, birds are captured in an especially designed mist net. Then they are fitted with a band that has a unique number to connect that individual with all the data that is recorded. Each bird is identified, aged, checked for fat deposits, measured, weighed, and released. Sarah then shared her analysis of some of the data that has been collected at the Presque Isle State Park banding station, which has been in operation for over forty years. Thanks to Sarah for the program, and thanks to Nancy Lendyak, Gary Uber, and Bob Walczak for the refreshments following



## **Education News**

.....*Elizabeth Wilson, education chair*

### **Audubon Adventures**

Audubon Adventures is an environmental education program for children in grades 3-6. Developed by professional environmental educators, Audubon Adventures presents basic, scientifically accurate facts about birds, wildlife, and their habitats. It comes to you packaged as a Classroom Kit (serving 32 students) or Individual Kit (serving 1 student). The program is used by classroom teachers, after-school program coordinators, special education instructors, language arts teachers, and homeschoolers.

Audubon Adventures introduce young people, their families, and their teachers, to the fundamental principles by which the natural world functions. Our publications for students and



teachers give readers compelling examples and activities that show those principles at work.

### **2008-2009 School Year Edition**

The title of our newest kit is "Feats of Nature". Through the four new exciting topics this year students will explore amazing topics on the natural abilities of our world's plants and animals. Learn how animals defend themselves, migrate, build and how plants rule the earth! Each issue contains fun activities, high interest content, and insightful messages. We have continued our popular feature "Heroes of the Planet," which profiles people who are working to protect wild creatures and places.

Don't miss out on these awesome resources! Each Classroom Kit costs \$38.50 and the Individual Kit costs \$19.00. The Bartramian Audubon Society will sponsor a kit for your classroom or organization. Call to receive or renew your Audubon Adventures today. Together, we can make a difference!

### **Bartramian Audubon Scholarship Programs**

The Bartramian Audubon Society has traditionally offered scholarships for educators to attend the Maine Hog Island Audubon Camp Workshop for Educators and for teens ages 14-17 to attend the Teen Adventure Camp. More recently the BAS has also provided a scholarship to the Leadership Workshop, also at the Maine Audubon Camp at Hog Island.

However, the BAS has just recently learned that the Maine Audubon will not be offering programs at Hog Island for the 2009 summer camp season.

Since the BAS is committed to its scholarship program, we will be looking for other opportunities not only for the coming season but for the future as well. Details will be presented in the next newsletter and for more current information please contact Elizabeth Wilson, Education Committee Chairperson of the Bartramian Audubon Society, at (724) 924-2045 or email: [ewtracker@zoominternet.net](mailto:ewtracker@zoominternet.net)

### **Native Garden Planting a Success**

....Erin Jolly

Audubon Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Bartramian Audubon Society hosted a very successful native species garden planting on October 4, 2008. The rain subsided and was followed by sunshine, willing workers, and an important opportunity to educate the public on native plant species and Audubon's bird conservation efforts. The planting was the first project in Pennsylvania as part of the National Audubon Society and Toyota's Together Green volunteer-based conservation program. Located at the Moraine State Park South Shore office lawn, the educational demonstration garden features 17 different species of trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses that are native to western Pennsylvania and present beneficial attributes to birds and butterflies. Over 16 volunteers assisted in the

planting of the garden, which will soon be complete with plant species placards and an information kiosk for use by Moraine Park patrons. Be sure to check on the garden in full bloom this

spring, and pick up some plant species recommendations for your own garden while you are there!



*Planting a Native Garden*

*Note-* Our thanks go to Erin Jolly for her work on the Native Garden project. Erin, based in Slippery Rock this summer and fall, has been a part of an internship project through the Student Conservation Association and the Richard King Mellon Foundation. Sarah has been here under the supervision of Sarah Sargent, Audubon PA's Northwestern IBA Coordinator and Brain Shema, Director of Conservation for the ASWP. The internship program is an integral part of Audubon PA's conservation and public outreach goals in Western PA.

### **Paper-Free Newsletter**

Starting with September 2008 the *Upland Informer* will be available online. It can be viewed at our website

[www.bartramianaudubon.org](http://www.bartramianaudubon.org) by clicking on the newsletter link and then clicking on the issue you wish to view. The newsletter is in the PDF format, so you must have a PDF program on your computer. Read only programs are available free at Adobe.com and other sites.

The Bartramian Audubon Society would like to encourage its members to begin to receive the *Upland Informer* online. As each newsletter is published, members who have elected to do this will receive an email informing them that the next issue is now available online, and they can then view it at their leisure.

For the Bartramian Audubon Society, this will mean a savings both in paper costs and postage costs. For our environment it will mean less paper and less fuel usage in delivery.

To enroll in this program, please email our Membership Chair, Russ States at [pabirder@verizon.net](mailto:pabirder@verizon.net).

**BARTRAMIAN AUDUBON SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 315  
SLIPPERY ROCK, PA 16057**

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### **Membership Reminder**

*.....Russ States, Membership Chair*

We welcome the many of you who have recently joined Bartramian Audubon Society.

As a reminder, the expiration date of your membership with the BAS should be on your address label. Please renew in a timely fashion as to not miss future newsletters. If you have any questions about your membership status, feel free to contact the membership chair, Russ States - pabirder@verizon.net.

**B&B and Wildlife Sanctuary renewals should be handled through the sanctuary chair in June or July each year. The \$15.00 dollar checks should be made payable to BAS and mailed to Gene Wilhelm, 513 Kelly Blvd., Slippery Rock, PA 16057-1145.**

**FYI- Subscribers to National Audubon Magazine will note some changes: The magazine will be published bimonthly starting in 2005 - Jan./Feb. March/April etc. There is also a new format in which the expiration date will be given as the last bimonthly issue and use J/F or M/A 200\_. All membership expiration dates have been adjusted to insure that you get your full subscription. THIS DOES NOT affect those who only have Sanctuary, BAS Associate, AA School or Upland Informer subscriptions.**

### **National Audubon Society Membership Application**

**Please enroll me as a NEW member in the National Audubon Society. This membership will include membership in the National Audubon Society and *Audubon* magazine and the local Bartramian Audubon Society and the local chapter newsletter, the *Upland Informer*, but excludes the BAS Sanctuary Program.**

Current introductory membership offer \$20.00  
Student/Senior (62 and above) membership \$15.00

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

Please send this form with payment to  
**National Audubon Society  
Membership Data Center  
PO Box 52529  
Boulder CO 80322-2529**

**Renewing members should use the coupon mailed to them  
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### **Bartramian Audubon Society Associate and Newsletter Application**

Please check below

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15.00 BAS associate fee- includes newsletter

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5.00 newsletter only

Please send this form along with your **name and address** with payment to the:

**Bartramian Audubon Society  
PO Box 315  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057**