



Upland Informer

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Official Newsletter of the Bartramian Audubon Society

Winter Spring 2011-12

Editor- Nancy Baker

Check us out online at www.bartramianaudubon.org



Upcoming BAS Membership Meetings

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.

March 12, 2012-Monday-The Pribilofs-Alaska's Puffin Paradise, with Jeffrey Hall We will explore Alaska from glaciers to grizzlies, from tundra to ptarmigan. After a survey of some of the mainland's highlights, we'll venture to a tiny island in the Bering Sea. Here, along with the world's largest breeding colony of fur seals, we'll find a wealth of nesting seabirds: fulmars, cormorants, kittiwakes, and alcids in abundance, including murrelets, three species of auklets, and both tufted and horned puffins. Jeffrey Hall's articles and photographs have appeared in *Living Bird*, *NJ Audubon*, *Underwater Naturalist*, and numerous other publications.

April 9, 2012-Monday-Marcellus Shale Natural Gas Extraction: Implications for Communities

This presentation will draw on multiple studies that have examined the effects of Marcellus Shale natural gas extraction on communities. Specific issues range from effects on housing, road and traffic, environment, health, and quality of life. Benefits and costs are distributed unevenly across communities and their members. The Marcellus Shale development reflects the pattern of 'boom and bust' cycles that have been found in other forms of natural resource extraction. The presentation will be given by Dr. Diane K. McLaughlin, Professor of Rural Sociology and Demography at the Pennsylvania State University.

May 14, 2012- Bartramian Audubon Society's Annual Awards Night The Bartramian Audubon Society will be honoring our new Bird and Butterfly and Wildlife Sanctuary owners. We will also be awarding scholarships to 2 local college students and present a Hog Island scholarship to a local educator. Join us for an evening of recognition and refreshments.



Upcoming Field Trips/Activities

April 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2012-Saturdays-Spring Sanctuary Tours The chapter is setting aside each Saturday in April for members and friends to visit a token number of our sanctuaries in Butler County. Contact Gene Wilhelm for details genewilhelm@aol.com or phone 724-794-2434 as soon as possible because spaces are limited.

May 6, 2012-Sunday-Bird Walk at PA Game Lands #39 Join us for a morning walk to look for some of the spring migrants. Meet at the Game Commission parking lot off of Old Route 8 at 8:30 A.M. Directions- from Franklin/Oil City area take Route 8 south to Old Route 8. Cross Sandy Creek. Continue uphill until a Game Commission sign on the right. Take the dirt lane to the right. From Grove City/ Slippery Rock area-take Route 8 north to Old Route 8. Continue to the Game Commission sign and dirt lane on the left. Follow the dirt lane to the parking area on the right. Bring your binoculars and a field guide. Beginners are very welcome. We will spend 2-3 hours. The walking will be easy.

May 18 and 19, 2012- Loving the Land through Working Forest, A Foundation for Sustainable Forest Conference At Allegheny College Special guest renowned author and sustainable communities advocate Wendell Berry will present. Also presenting will be Audubon PA Regional IBA Coordinator Sarah Sargent. For more information and updates visit info@FoundationForSustainableForests.org.

June 10, 2012-Sunday-BAS Annual Picnic

This year's annual picnic will be held in McConnell's Mill State Park at the pavilion on the main road. There will be a hike into the beautiful gorge at 3:30 P.M.; the picnic will follow at 5:30 P.M. BAS will provide hot dogs, buns, condiments, and drinks. Please bring a dish to share and your own place settings. Contact Gene Wilhelm at genewilhelm@aol.com or 724-794-2434 for details.



Activities in Review

Field Trips Report

...Gene Wilhelm

The Saturday 8 October BAS field trip to the Robert Macoskey Center of Slippery Rock University was just as the 10 participants had hoped: a starting temperature of 50 degrees F. at 0830 and above 65 degrees F. at the end of the stroll two hours later. The deep blue, cloudless sky with brilliant sunshine was the perfect setting for the autumn colors surrounding us: from the vivid crimson Staghorn Sumac leaves, to the orange Red Maple leaves, to the fields of Goldenrod, the natural show was spectacular. In fact, the balmy morning enticed vocalizations from an array of creatures: spring peepers would you believe, crickets and grass cicadas, White-throated, White-crowned, Chipping, and Song Sparrows still singing their breeding songs. Other highlights of this 'nature stroll' included: a low, fast-flying female Merlin that only a few participants saw in the blink of an eye, abundant wild fruit and nuts (especially Haw, Hickory, and Black Walnut), an adult male Pileated Woodpecker (one of four for the morning) leisurely posing atop a high electric pole just 50 feet away from our group, allowing everyone to see this crow-size woodpecker for several minutes, a gigantic, orange, gill-type mushroom protruding from a felled tree trunk, and an unidentified wildflower at the end of the stroll. As promised, here are the facts regarding the Pileated Woodpecker and the unidentified wildflower.

The Pileated Woodpecker's scientific name of *Dryocopus pileatus* describes it perfectly. The first genus name is from the Greek *drys* – a tree – and *kopis* – cleaver – or wood cutter. The species name *pileatus* meaning crested is in reference to the bird's large crest.

The unidentified wild flower is the Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), an introduced species now naturalized that blooms from June to October. Knap is from the Middle English 'knop' or knob in reference to the plant's abundant knob-by flower heads.

Thanks to all participants for their interest and enthusiasm in learning more about nature. Please note that BAS holds to a human carrying capacity for all of its field trips, thereby guaranteeing that each participant will have the maximum enjoyment possible for each outdoors experience. Please contact the field trip leader for details. Let's go natural!

The Saturday 5 November 2011 field trip to Lake Arthur in Moraine State Park was a shocker for minimum temperature hovering around 25 degrees F. accompanied by a cold wind chill that made the participants pleased that they wore their winter clothing.

Nevertheless, the day was clear and the lake void of fishermen and hunters, allowing participants to concentrate on water birds along the South Shore, the protected cove at the Waterfowl Observation Area, and the Route 528 bridge area. The Canada Goose population had a good breeding year as proven by some 449 individuals counted, mostly flying near the dam. Long studies of the 49 Gadwall, 2 American Wigeon, 1 Black Duck, 19 Mallard, 27 Shoveler, 4 Green-winged Teal, 5 Pied-billed Grebe, and a lone Great Blue Heron in the WOA cove

allowed all participants to get excellent and long views of the birds through our spotting scope. In the 528 Bridge area, 4 Bufflehead added to our waterfowl list but it was the immature Bald Eagle that made the group excited. However, the morning belonged to the gulls with four size differences easily displayed in proximity to each other flying over the lake: 1 Great Black-backed Gull (largest), 2 Herring Gull (slightly smaller), 101 Ring-billed Gull (even smaller), and 5 Bonaparte's Gull (smallest).

Again, the participants were fortunate because all these gulls came so close to us and even settled on the water at times so that all plumage varieties could be studied at length.

Other birds included for the day were 1 Turkey Vulture, 1 Red-tailed Hawk, 1 American Coot, 3 Killdeer, 1 Belted Kingfisher, 2 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2 Downy Woodpecker, 1 Pileated Woodpecker, 5 Blue Jay, 11 American Crow, 3 Tree Swallow, 2 Black-capped Chickadee, 2 Tufted Titmouse, 1 White-breasted Nuthatch, 7 Eastern Bluebird, 22 American Robin, 3 Song Sparrow, 9 American Goldfinch, and 22 House Sparrow. These birds added up to 34 species, not bad for just two hours in the cold.

Butler CBC Report - December 17, 2011

...Suzanne Butcher, compiler Butler CBC

The Butler CBC covering a 15 mile diameter circle and including parts of Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties was held on Saturday, December 17, 2011. After an unusually warm fall with little measurable snow, and precipitation mainly in the form of rain, early morning owls were greeted with a temperature hovering around the freezing mark and lightly blowing snow. The intermittent showers persisted throughout the cloudy day and by 4pm the temperature was slowing dropping into the 29° range. Most attention was directed to Lake Arthur where a couple of known birds were highly targeted. Gene Wilhelm and his group were able to locate the Northern Shrike but the two Black-headed Gulls which had been seen the day before eluded even these most diligent searchers. Here though a juvenile Trumpeter Swan was a new bird for the count. Another newbie was a Cackling Goose, heretofore classified as a small Canada Goose. It was well described by the field party of Linda Wagner and Margaret and Roger Higbee. However, in general the field participants all commented on the general lack of birds. The best bird of the count was reported by two of our Mercer County feeder watchers. Imagine my delight when reading their report of seeing a Varied Thrush here in Pennsylvania. Luckily a picture was provided to document this beautiful vagrant's short stay on our area.

The Birds:

Cackling Goose-1^{new for count}, Canada Goose-607, Tundra Swan-3, Trumpeter Swan-1 ^{juvenile, new for count}, Gadwall-55, Black Duck-5, Mallard-57, Redhead-2, Lesser Scaup-3, Bufflehead-51, Common Goldeneye-4, Hooded Merganser-44, Common Merganser-1, Red-breasted Merganser-1, Ruddy Duck- 83, Ring-necked Pheasant-1, Ruffed Grouse-2, Wild Turkey-116, Red-throated Loon-1, Common Loon-3, Horned Grebe-3, Great Blue Heron-4, Bald Eagle-3 ad, Northern Harrier-3, Sharp-shinned Hawk-4, Cooper's Hawk-5, Red-shouldered Hawk-2, Red-tailed Hawk-24, American Kestrel-13, American Coot- 555, Black-headed Gull ^{2cw}, Bonaparte's Gull-7, Ring-billed Gull-216, Herring Gull- 4, Rock Pigeon-

388, Mourning Dove-324, Eastern Screech-Owl-4, Great Horned Owl-1, Barred Owl-2, Belted Kingfisher-4, Red-headed Woodpecker-2, Red-bellied Woodpecker-58, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker-1, Downy Woodpecker-67, Hairy Woodpecker-23, Northern Flicker-2, Pileated Woodpecker-8, Blue Jay-129, American Crow-228, Common Raven-2, Horned Lark-12, Black-capped Chickadee-175, Tufted Titmouse-116, Red-breasted Nuthatch-2, White-breasted Nuthatch-70, Brown Creeper-7, Carolina Wren-11, Golden-crowned Kinglet-5, Ruby-crowned Kinglet-1, Eastern Bluebird-52, American Robin-134, Varied Thrush-*new for count*, Gray Catbird-1, Northern Mockingbird-3, Northern Shrike-1, European Starling-2940, Cedar Waxwing-29, Yellow-rumped Warbler-1, American Tree Sparrow-110, Song Sparrow-17, Swamp Sparrow-12, White-throated Sparrow-12, White-crowned Sparrow-1, Dark-eyed Junco-219, Northern Cardinal- 206, Red-winged Blackbird-39, Rusty Blackbird-4, Common Grackle-337, Brown-headed Cowbird-19, House Finch-76, Pine Siskin- 6, American Goldfinch- 216, House Sparrow-203. Total Species: 82 and Total Individuals: 816

The Observers:

33 in 10 field parties totaling 16.5 hours and 16.5 miles on foot and 45.5 hours and 386.5 miles by car plus 6.5 hours and 30 miles owling; 21 watchers at feeders for 74 hours. Total Party Hours: 62 and Total Party Miles: 403.

We are most grateful to the many dedicated volunteers who faithfully reserve the date, year after year, to offer their services in a most cooperative way to cover the circle and make the count a resounding success. Special recognition goes to other long time counters with twenty plus years- Ruth Crawford, Gene Wilhelm and Joan Wilver but we also extend a hearty welcome to the new participants - Helen Coyne, Bob and Deanna Clouse, Jay Dayen, Donald Eyth, Susan Race, and Ed Scurry. We also greatly appreciate the help offered by John Stehle and the members of the Butler Outdoor Club (BOC), and Cathy Setzer of the Birdwatchers Store (BWS). Our deepest thanks go out to all of you for year(s) of participation and to Nancy Baker, Jim and Jon Barcasky, Gene and Suzanne Butcher, The Butler Outdoor Club, Barb and George Dean, Donald Eyth, Melissa Little, Richard Nugent, Susan Race, Gary Uber, Robert Van Newkirk, Bob Walczak, and Gene and Joanne Wilhelm for their financial support as well.

The Counters with their years() of participation:

Dave Adams (3- **BOC**), Nancy Baker (10), Jim Barcasky (8), Jon Barcasky (3), Beverly Barnett (4), Tom Baumgardner (3- **BOC**), Steve Bickel (6- **BOC**), Larry Brown (2), Marcia Brown (2), Gene Butcher (19), Suzanne Butcher (27), Bob Clouse (1), Deanna Clouse (1), Helen Coyne (1- **BOC**), Ruth Crawford (29), Dave Darney (16), Debbie Darney (17), Barbara Davis (13), Charles Davis (11), Sharon Davis (11), Cindy Dayen (2), Jay Dayen (1), Barb Dean (16), George Dean (12), Donald Eyth (1), Margaret Higbee (7), Roger Higbee (7), Robert Jamison (6), Sally Jamison (12), Henry Lenz (4), Linda Lenz (4), Melissa Little (3), Robert Madjaric(9), Reenie Merlina (2- **BWS**), Richard Nugent (6), Bob Pietz (8), Judy Pietz (8), Susan Race (1), Ed Scurry (1- **BOC**), Cathy Setzer (5 - **BWS**), Becky Sheeler(6), Chuck Smith (2), John Stehle (11- **BOC**), Mark Swansiger (15), Christy Tichy(3), Gary Uber(2), Robert Van Newkirk (4), Linda Wagner (11), Robert Walczak

(16), Dorothy Weisberg (4- **BOC**), Gene Wilhelm (31), Joanne Wilhelm (19), Joan Wilver (26), Joe Young(3).

46th Pleasantville CBC, Jan. 1, 2012

The Birds

Pied-billed Grebe-1, Great Blue Heron-1, Canada Goose-179, Mallard-5, Common Merganser-57, Bald Eagle-11, Red-tailed Hawk-20, Ruffed Grouse-14, Wild Turkey-36, **Ring-billed Gull**-27, Rock Pigeon-41, Mourning Dove-99, Eastern Screech Owl-6, Great Horned Owl-1, Barred Owl-1, Belted Kingfisher-7, Downy Woodpecker-38, Hairy Woodpecker-6, Pileated Woodpecker-4, Red-bellied Woodpecker-22, Blue Jay-130, American Crow-159, Common Raven-1, Black-capped Chickadee-251, Tufted Titmouse-51, Red-breasted Nuthatch-1, White-breasted Nuthatch-72, Brown Creeper-2, Carolina wren-9, Golden-crowned Kinglet-46, Eastern Bluebird-14, Hermit Thrush-4, American Robin-4, Cedar Waxwing-115, **Northern Shrike-2**, European Starling-266, Northern Cardinal-64, American Tree Sparrow-90, Song Sparrow-2, White throated Sparrow-17, Dark-eyed Junco-343, **Common Grackle-3**, Purple finch-41, House Finch-21, Pine Siskin-3, American Goldfinch-83, House Sparrow-147.

Total 47 species –

2517 Individuals

Bold number indicates High count for that species.

Bold Species indicates new or unusual species for the count.

Notable species – Ring-billed Gull, Common Grackle.

Highest numbers for: N. Shrike, Common Grackle

2nd highest numbers for: Ring-billed Gull, Purple Finch

3rd highest numbers for: Bald Eagle, Ruffed Grouse

Jan. 1, 2012: 3:15am to 5:00pm. Temp. 33-48F; Snow cover – 0, Still waters partly frozen, moving waters open; wind 0-10mph; sunny in early am; clouding up late am, periods of showers sometimes heavy for rest of day..

Observers: 17 in field in 7 parties.

Time/distance: 45.5 total party hours; 238.25 total party miles; including 7.75 hours & 8.25 miles on foot and 37.75 hours & 230 miles by car. Plus 7.25 hrs and 21.75 miles owling.

Compiler: Russ States

Circle includes area within 15 mile diameter circle, center 4 miles SSE of Pleasantville. Count area boundary includes Enterprise to the north, Tionesta to the East, Eagle Rock to the south, and Pa. Route 8 to the west.

*** Thanks to all who participated in the count this year. Hope to see you again next year***

Russ



Odds And Ends

A belated ‘thank you’ to Deanna Clouse for the wonderful photograph of the American Robin on the nest above our BAS B&B sign in the last *Upland Informer*.

**BARTRAMIAN AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 315
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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 by the sanctuary chair in June each year. The \$15.00 or more per sanctuary checks should be made payable to BAS but mailed to Gene Wilhelm, 513 Kelly Blvd., Slippery Rock, PA 16057-1145.

**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, address, and e-mail** with payment to the:

Bartramian Audubon Society
PO Box 315
Slippery Rock, PA 16057

**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

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