

NATURALLY

THE CONOCOCHIEAGUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Naturally

NEWSLETTER OF THE CONOCOCHIEAGUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Above, *Two young Great Horned Owls*
Photo credit: Dale Gearhart

Below, *Bobolink*
Photo credit: Dave Cooney, Jr.



President's Corner

by Terri Kochert

I want to thank each of you who voted early for the Conococheague Audubon Society's election slate. Voting officially closed with the April 11, 2022, Annual Business meeting. The necessary quota to comply with voting requirements was met. It's official! Valerie Barnes is your new President, beginning with the May 2022 meeting until the May 2024 meeting. Lisa Coombs will be Vice President. The following remain in their current offices: Rhetta Martin, Recording Secretary; Donna Hocker, Treasurer; Valerie Barnes, Corresponding Secretary; and Terri Kochert now moves to Immediate Past President. Thank you to outgoing directors Bob Kochert and Janet Tice. The two new directors Dave Ebbitt and Anne St. John join Ron George, John Greer, Sue Greer, and Eric Martin. You are in capable hands with Valerie Barnes at the helm. Congratulations to all!

Spring is here; migratory birds are arriving daily. CAS has new and renewed activities on the schedule. On May 28 we will participate with Conococheague Institute, 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA 17236 in their History and Nature Celebration. We will set up a display table with appealing brochures, coloring pages and activities for children. We will also offer a nature scavenger hunt and, at 10:30 a.m., a short birding trip on two available nature trails. Bob Keener will display his bird photos and will be on hand with his camera and tripod to offer photography techniques and tips.

Once again, if anyone is interested in the May 16-18 field trip to Magee Marsh near Toledo, OH, please contact Bob and me at 717-263-3692 ASAP. You will need to make your own hotel reservations. We will give you those details.

There are five upcoming May field trips. Please check our website at <http://www.ConococheagueAudubon.org> for trip leader's contact information. For those who love gardening, contact Josh Donaldson, 717-264-6920, for details about working in the CAS Native Plant Garden at Norlo Park, 3050 Lincoln Way East, Fayetteville, PA 17222. You may work there at your convenience or attend the "work days" April 30 and May 14.

A reminder: if you are interested in supporting the Community Cloud Forest Conservation's capital campaign, send your check (made out to CAS) to Conococheague Audubon, PO Box 20, Fayetteville, PA 17222. CCFC plans to purchase and reforest land to help our wintering birds and species endemic to the Alta Verapaz, Guatemala area.

It has been my pleasure serving as your president these past two years. I thank everyone who helped me along the way. I wish you all excellent birding experiences this Spring!

Conservation Conversation: Spring is Here

by Jim Hardy

As I write this column, the first migrants of spring are well established in their nests and the first fledglings are hatching. The spring migration is in high gear with new birds arriving every day. Just this week, a pair of Tree Swallows arrived in the backyard of my in-laws' house, and they were eyeing up a bird house on the back fence. Let's hope the Northern Mockingbird allows it. My favorite spring migrants are the warblers and the Ospreys. I saw a couple of Ospreys last week, including one sitting on top of a telephone pole, eating a fish.

In our last article we learned about stormwater basins, and I haven't been able to look at one the same since. I hope you took the time to look at a stormwater basin. I've pointed out a few of them to my wife while driving, and I have actually stopped at a couple of locations and looked for birds. From my observations, it appears that the Mallard and the Canada Goose are the most prominent inhabitants and visitors to the stormwater basins. I have also observed other waterfowl and song birds, such as Northern Pintail, Northern Cardinals, and American Robins

While checking the stormwater basins for birds, I started to look around to see what else was in the immediate area. Of course there is almost always some type of commercial building or a housing development nearby. I noticed that there were only a few trees and small well-vegetated areas. Then there was one thing that really caught my eye—parking lots. Almost all buildings require a parking lot of some sort. They are either part of the business itself or a location for employee parking.

We use parking lots regularly. It is hard to go anywhere in your motor vehicle and not use a parking lot. According to a 2005 article listed in the National Library of Medicine, "Paving Paradise: The Peril of Impervious Surfaces" by Lance Frazer, "In the United States alone, pavements and other impervious surfaces cover more than 43,000 square miles—an area nearly the size of Ohio." According to the nonprofit Center for Watershed Protection, as much as 65% of the total impervious cover over America's landscape consists of streets, parking lots, and driveways—what center staff refer to as "habitat for cars."

Parking lots are mostly made of asphalt and are often referred to as impervious surfaces. Dictionary.com defines impervious as not permitting penetration or passage; impenetrable. This means that rainwater can't be absorbed and has no choice other than to run off. That is where our rainwater

catch basins come in. As a side note, pollutants such as engine oil, antifreeze, transmission fluid, and brake dust do not penetrate the asphalt either, and they run off with the rainwater.

As I wondered about rainwater runoff, I remembered an organization that received a variance from a local municipality's stormwater basin requirement. The organization had planted a sufficient number of trees in and around the parking area to cool the surface so that in the summer, runoff would not be so hot entering a natural water resource such as a stream. That's it! Stormwater basins not only prevent erosion, they cool the stormwater runoff.

So how does heated rainwater runoff affect our natural water sources?

In Frazer's article, Bruce Wilson, a research scientist with the Minnesota Pollution Control Division says, "A sudden thunderstorm striking a parking lot that has been sitting in hot sunshine (where surface temperatures of 120°F are not unheard of) can easily yield a 10°F increase in rainfall temperature. Many aquatic organisms, at different stages of their lives, are vulnerable to even small increases in water temperature." Wilson continues, "Increased temperature also decreases the water's ability to hold oxygen, which has a further detrimental effect on the aquatic life."

For now, the stormwater basins are the solution for cooling summertime stormwater runoff. Researchers are looking at alternatives to the black asphalt surfaces of parking lots. Changing the color or using a porous material for parking are currently being researched as possible solutions. According to Bruce Ferguson, director of the University of Georgia School of Environmental Design and author of the 2005 book *Porous Pavements*, there are nine different families of porous pavement materials. Some of these materials are already well known in the United States; they include open-jointed pavers that can be filled with turf or aggregate, "soft" paving materials such as wood mulch and crushed shell, and traditional decking.

When you're out shopping on a hot summer day, and a rain shower or thunderstorm comes along, and you see the rain coming down in the parking lot, give some thought to the temperature of the storm water runoff and how it affects the our natural water resources.



Eastern Screech Owl

Photo credit: Jefferson Shank

Sharing Bird Stories is Part of the Job: Seeking a New Education – Outreach Chair

by Debby Hook

The mockingbird was not about to give up.

For three days, the black snake found refuge under a front porch. Each time it started across the lawn, the aggressive mockingbird would begin another assault, fluttering noisily above the snake and swooping down to peck its skin.

I watched the final attack on the screen of a woman's smartphone. She had taken pity on the black snake as she watched it retreat time and again under her porch. Finally, on the third day, she came to its aid as it started to leave its haven. Hoping to frighten the bird away, she ran outside – with her phone, of course. What we watched together was a video record of the bold bird nipping at the snake as it made a hasty advance to the safety of tall field grass.

Over the years as I have participated in local events as a Conococheague Audubon representative, I've heard many bird stories as exciting as the one above. People stop at our display table wanting to tell us about an owl in the barn, a wren dispute in the shrubbery, a crippled thrush that is getting along just fine. Children's eyes light up when they can name a bird pictured on our posters.

Being the Education – Outreach committee chair has resulted in abundant rewards, and as I retire from the position, I am hoping that someone will

be inspired, as I have been, to meet people who may not be birders but who love watching birds.

What you can do: As committee chair, you may attend events (we have been invited to outdoors festivals, farmers markets, youth programs), or you may line up volunteers to cover the hours of any event. We focus on one theme at each event, and there are folks willing to help create materials for presentation.

Our chapter has two folding tables on which we display and offer brochures about activities, films, membership, conservation topics and National Audubon promotions such as the Certified Backyard Habitats. Popular with children of all ages are pages of birds for them to color. Our station is identified by the CAS logo, the Northern Cardinal, printed on a grass-green table banner.

How you can begin: If you are interested in the above leadership position, call or text Debby Hook at 717-372-0228 or email debbyk@pa.net.

Bird Sound Quiz (a Little Tweet for You)

by Valerie Barnes

As spring migration heats up, we're hearing more bird sounds. See if you can identify which species makes each sound! One of my favorite websites for who says what is Cornell Lab of Ornithology's <https://www.allaboutbirds.org>.

- who cooks for you, who cooks for you all
- drink your tea
- quick, three beers
- teacher, teacher, teacher
- turry-turry-turry
- witchety-witchety-witchety
- weeta-weeta-wee-tee-o
- sweet, sweet, sweet, I'm so sweet
- pleased, pleased, pleased ta meet cha
- zee, zee, zee, zoo, zee
- zee, zee, zee (rising, strong)
- cheer, cheer, cheer, perty, perty, perty
- old sam peabody, peabody, peabody
- teakettle, teakettle, teakettle

The answers are nested on page 7, but please don't peek!

Win-Win-Win!

by John Greer

CAS is currently helping the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry to conduct birding surveys on selected sites in the Michaux State Forest. Forestry elicited our help to develop baselines of bird populations so they may determine whether their efforts at habitat restoration are successful.

Volunteers are needed.

The partnership is a win-win-win:

It's a win for Forestry because the more eyes on the sites, the more data to study.

It's a win for volunteers because they get exercise in the clean air and an opportunity to look for birds.

It's a win for the birds because our efforts will encourage Forestry to continue restoring habitats.

The partnership is a win-win-win!



Swiftrum Pipeline Intersection

Photo Credit: John Greer

The seven sites lie in the southern portion of the Michaux, falling between Mont Alto and South Mountain. Forestry has cleared them of invasive plants. All of the sites are accessible by easy walking. Some of them involve more walking than others, although persons in good health who wear sturdy shoes will have no problem.



South Mountain Golf Course is one of the seven selected sites.

Photo credit: John Greer

The club has developed protocols for recording sightings in eBird, and training is available.

Forestry has requested that the sites be monitored on an ongoing basis, once a week, if possible, throughout the year. This means multiple volunteers are needed to ensure coverage because some people may

Win-win-win— continued on p. 5.



Tarburner Springs SWMA

Photo credit: John Greer



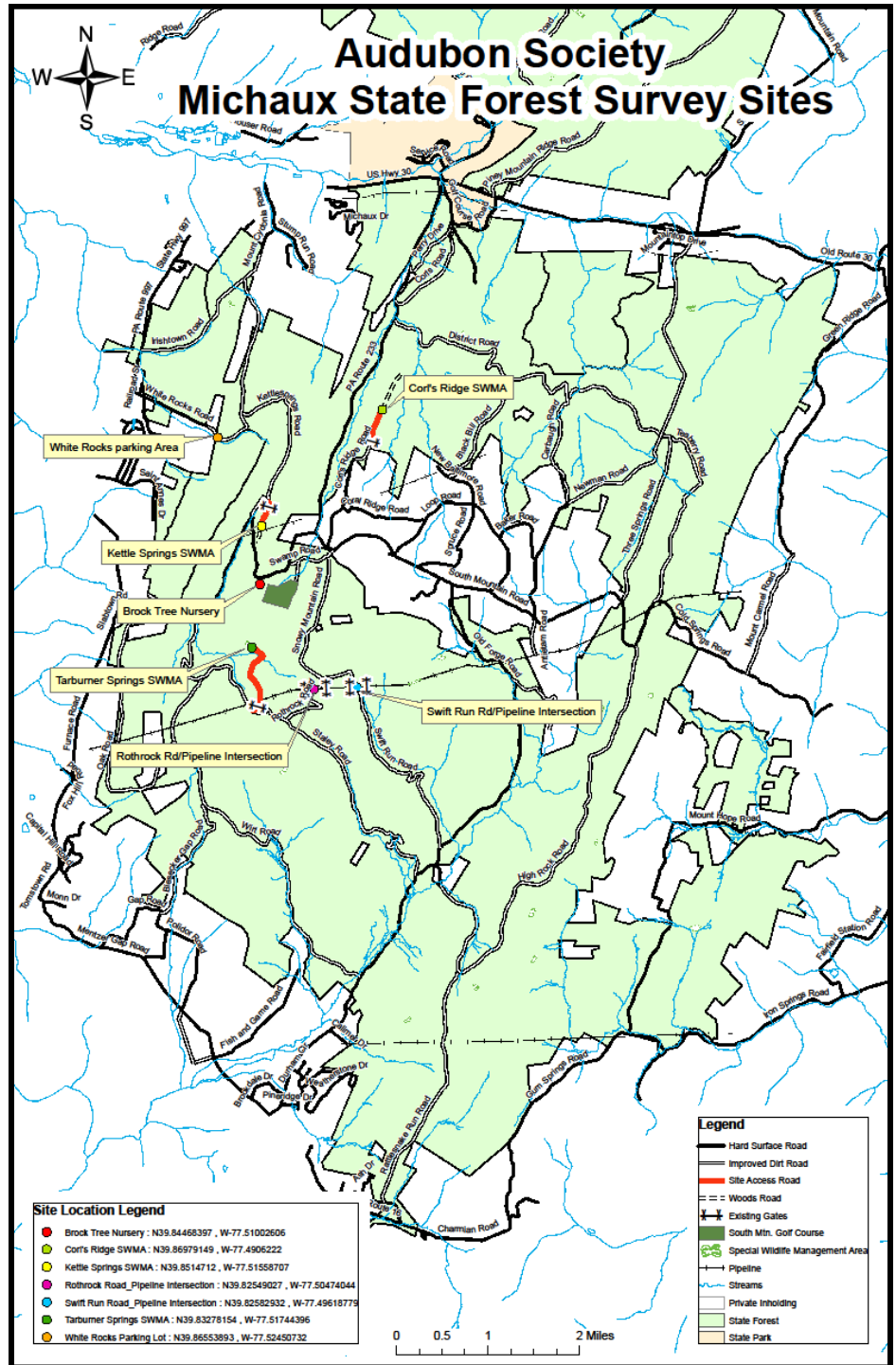
Brock Tree Nursery
Photo credit: John Greer



Kettle Springs SWMA
Photo credit: John Greer



Rothrock Pipeline Intersection
Photo credit: John Greer



Win-win-win- continued from page 4.

be able only to monitor some of the sites some of the time.

If you can monitor some of the sites or all of them, and if you can do so once in a while or on a regular basis, please contact John and Sue Greer at bird-plusmore@gmail.com or 443-255-8871.

This is a fantastic opportunity to get involved, get outdoors and help the birds!

Beginning Birder Workshop by Janet Tice

Conococheague Audubon invites the public to a free birding workshop at Caledonia State Park on Saturday, June 4, 2022, from 7:45 AM - noon.

Geared for beginners, this workshop is your opportunity to come and learn how to use binoculars and recognize birds. Audubon members will lead bird and nature walks. For children, there will also be a scavenger hunt, Birding Bingo game, and a Kid's Corner with other activities. Anyone age 6 or older will be welcome.

Audubon invites families, scouts, teachers, and singles. "Birding Buddies" will help participants identify birds. Bring binoculars and a field guide, if you have them; there will be a few pairs available to borrow. Wear good walking shoes, and dress comfortably for the out-of-doors.

The workshop will be held rain or shine. Meet at the first parking lot beyond the Visitors' Center at 7:45 AM. To pre-register, please contact: Dave Cooney Jr. at (717) 264-2116 or slantlcm@yahoo.com or Janet Tice at (717) 372-0379 or jwtice1@comcast.net

Penn National a Certified Wildlife Habitat

by Debby Hook

Beginning this spring, the Conococheague Audubon bluebird trail is officially closed in Upper Strasburg and monitoring has begun at the new bluebird nest box sites on the perimeter of the golf courses at Penn National Golf Course Community.

It may seem odd to have bluebirds raising families alongside busy fairways, but some of the nest boxes have been established and monitored here for years, and with positive results.

With the expanded endeavor this year, I would like to share a portion of text from a July 7, 2020, communication by Patti Peck, Penn National's Event Coordinator, to Penn National residents. Her email was titled "Understanding Your Environment at Penn National." Here is a partial reprint of her comments (used with permission):

"Now is a good time to explain the relationship that the Iron Forge course has with its natural setting and how that impacts those of you who live beside it. The Iron Forge is a 'links-style' course that features a naturalized buffer between the homes and the fairways. The course is a Certified

Natural Habitat designated by the National Wildlife Federation.

"Key features of this designation include the following elements:

Food: Native plants provide food eaten by a variety of wildlife. Feeders can supplement natural food sources.

Water: All animals need water to survive, and some need it for bathing or breeding as well.



Mallard

Photo credit: Dave Cooney Jr.

Cover: Wildlife need places to take shelter from bad weather and places to hide from predators or hunt for prey.

Places to Raise Young: Wildlife need resources to reproduce, and to protect and nourish their young.

Sustainable Practices: Maintain your yard or garden in natural ways to ensure soil, air, and water stay healthy and clean.

"These properties can connect corridors of habitat necessary for migratory species between natural and larger protected areas of habitat on state, municipal and federal lands. They provide a continuum of resources if planted with a rich diversity of native plants and trees to supply the food chain for insects and the animals who depend on them. There are ground nesting birds that live here that have few places remaining to nest.

"The area is naturalized, and that means what grows natively is what is there in addition to the sedge grasses we planted when the course was built. This includes thistles and milk weed and a diverse number of plants growing there that support butterflies and other wildlife. It is not intended to be a pristine manicured space like the golf fairways. We do our best to balance the mowing of the edges to keep the thistle seed from spreading while we do our best to leave the stands of milkweed for the butterflies that many of you appreciate."

Wanted: Used Binoculars

by Debby Hook

Dozens of not-so-new binoculars sit on closet shelves and backseats of cars, still usable but no longer our favorites. They're too good to toss. I suggest a new life for old optics.

Conococheague Institute – located at the historic Rock Hill Farm beyond Mercersburg – has a new vision for its seasonal presentations. A collection of good binoculars is part of that vision.

Typically focused on frontier Pennsylvania life, C.I.'s public events now include bird walks, insect study, wetlands wildlife and conservation education, thanks to Matthew Wedd, the institute's nearly-new executive director.

"It is, after all, part of our mission statement," said Wedd, referring to the nature of things at the institute's home in Welsh Run. Indeed, the C.I.'s mission statement includes fostering "awareness and stewardship of the cultural *and natural* history of the Appalachian frontier . . . through education, research, and preservation." (Italics are mine.)

In his two years at C.I., Wedd has cleared trails, removed invasive shrubs and planted natives, added natural history interpretive signs on the premises and started educational nature programming for families and young children. He continues to accept guidance from Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Potomac Audubon.

"Until just recently, I did not know Conococheague Audubon existed," he said. "I have a frog person and a fish person, and now what I need is a bird person."

Wouldn't we all like to change that? With donations of good used binoculars, we can supply C.I. with binoculars for the bird walks and explorations Wedd is hoping will increase under his leadership.

First Opportunity

On May 28, Conococheague Institute will host its second History and Nature Celebration. Matt Wedd has invited organizations such as ours to present our own aspects of nature. Conococheague Audubon will highlight the photography of Bob Keener, who will have his camera and tripod as well as samples of his work. We will offer crafts and activities for children and, at 10:30 a.m., will have a bird walk, hopefully using some recently donated binoculars. Wedd is delighted with our offer.

In years prior, the Memorial Day weekend event highlighted historical presenters, with some reference to the nature around them. But last year,

Wedd chose to make a difference. "I don't want people in cocked hats talking about nature, I want it to be naturalists talking about nature."



Black-capped Chickadee

Photo credit: Bob Keener

Wedd invites folks to bring a picnic and plan to spend the entire day, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Rock Hill Farm, 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA. There will be food vendors, as well as historical and natural activities throughout the day.

How You Can Help

To donate binoculars or to volunteer help at our Audubon display on May 28, call or text Debby Hook at 717-372-0228; or email debbyk@pa.net. For more information about History and Nature Celebration, visit <https://cimlg.org/>.

On the Record

by Sue Greer

On a chilly early March evening, Terri Kochert led nine birders (including a couple from Black Log Valley in Juniata County) to Heisey Road orchard to see American Woodcocks. The group was fortunate to both hear them peenting and see eight of them flying overhead, doing their mating display.



TWEET!

No Peeking!



- Answers:
- a. Barred Owl
 - b. Eastern Towhee
 - c. Olive-sided Flycatcher
 - d. Ovenbird
 - e. Kentucky Warbler
 - f. Common Yellowthroat
 - g. Hooded Warbler
 - h. Yellow Warbler
 - i. Chestnut-sided Warbler
 - j. Black-throated Green Warbler
 - k. Black-throated Blue Warbler
 - l. Northern Cardinal
 - m. White-throated Sparrow
 - n. Carolina Wren

MEETINGS – Free, held at Fellowship Hall, St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2695 Luther Drive, Scotland, PA 17254

FIELD TRIPS – Free, most take place on Saturdays. Contact the leader; arrive early.

May 5, Thursday **FIELD TRIP**
6:30 AM Path Valley for SPRING MIGRANTS. Leave from Keener’s home, 5207 Heisey Road. Bring scopes, binoculars, and lunch. **Bob Keener**, 717-532-9723 or 717-658-8765.

May 6, Friday **FIELD TRIP**
6:00 PM Lehman property for SPRING MIGRANTS. Meet at 750 Tallow Hill Road, Chambersburg, to walk around a pond, meadows and woods. **Larry Lehman**, 717-263-7203.

May 9, Monday **MEETING**
7:00 PM *Is Sustainability Impossible or Inevitable?* by James P. Hamilton. Arranged by Ron George.

May 14, Saturday **FIELD TRIP**
7:00 AM Little Cove for SPRING MIGRANTS. Meet at the entrance of Buchanan’s Birthplace State Park. Bring lunch and binoculars. **Valerie Barnes**, 717-352-4397 or **Donna Hocker**, 717-491-2171.

May 14, Saturday **WORK DAY**
9:30 AM Work at NORLO PARK native garden. Bring garden tools and gloves. **Josh Donaldson**, 717-264-6920.

May 16-18, Mon.-Wed. **FIELD TRIP**
Trip to Magee Marsh, Ohio, for WARBLER MIGRANTS. Bring scopes, binoculars, and lunch. Make own hotel arrangements. Sign up by Feb. 27. **Bob and Terri Kochert**, 717-263-3692.

May 21, Saturday **FIELD TRIP**
5:30 PM Edenville area for WHIP-POOR-WILLS and BOBO-LINKS. Leave from Sunnyway Foods parking lot, 49 Warm Spring Road, Chambersburg. Bring scopes and binoculars. **Eric and Rhetta Martin**, 717-597-8675.

June 4, Saturday **WORKSHOP**
7:45 AM Beginning Birders’ Workshop. See news article for details. Pre-register with **Dave Cooney**, 717-264-2116 or **Janet Tice** jwtice1@comcast.net, 717-372-0379.

CAS WEBSITE: <https://conococheagueaudubon.org/>

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Send all newsletter articles and photos to the editor.
Send all mailing changes to conaudubon@outlook.com.

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Vice President	Lisa Coombs
Recording Secretary	Rhetta Martin
Corresponding Secretary	Valerie Barnes
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Immediate Past President	Terri Kochert

Directors: Dave Ebbitt, Ron George, Sue Greer and John Greer, Eric Martin, Anne St. John

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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