

NATURALLY

THE CONOCOHEAGUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Naturally

NEWSLETTER OF THE CONOCOHEAGUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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A Pine Warbler on April 6 finds the bird feeder post near Shippensburg a little slick.

Photo credit: Jim Hook

President's Corner

by Valerie B. Barnes

Our annual business meeting took place on April 10. We elected two new Directors: Jim Hook and Linda Kaiser, and we signed up Cindy Thrasher as an intern for the Board of Directors. We also revised our Constitution/By-Laws. Changes update the text about when local-only memberships renew, allow all officers to be re-elected for multiple terms, and add clauses to clarify that officers and directors are immune from personal liability for actions taken on behalf of CAS.

We thank outgoing directors Eric Martin and Ron George as well as Conservation Chair Jim Hardy for their service, and we look forward to their continued participation in our activities. We also thank outgoing Recording Secretary Rheta Martin for her MANY years in that role and look forward to her future support in new capacities.

We welcome incoming Recording Secretary Debby Hook and Conservation Chair John Greer to their new roles.

Officers and Committee Chairs provided reports for this season. See the article later in this newsletter for highlights.

As part of our obligation to our members, the Executive Committee and Board of Directors are reviewing CAS policies, practices, and insurance to ensure our needs are met. If you are interested in participating in that process, please contact [me](#).

Effective immediately, Conococheague Audubon Society asks all participants in our activities to sign and submit a waiver form. We don't expect anyone to sue CAS, but this form makes that clear. You can find information and the [form](#) under Activities on our [website](#). It is also included in this newsletter on page 7. Please print and sign the form. Then mail it to CAS, PO Box 20, Fayetteville, PA 17222.

It's spring, and thoughts turn to our gardens and yards in addition to migrating birds. To see stellar photographs showing birds on native plants from National Audubon Society visit: [These 12 birds are thriving with native plants](#) And, from Cornell Lab of Ornithology: [Landscaping for Birds: 7 Important Plant Groups](#).

National Audubon announced that

President's Corner, continued on p. 7.

Year in Review

by Valerie B. Barnes

At our annual business meeting in April, CAS leaders presented a summary of accomplishments for the year. One accomplishment stands out: Josh Donaldson did the legwork that resulted in the Norlo Park Native Plant Garden being designated a **Pollinator-Friendly Garden** by the Penn State Extension. As always, the garden looks terrific thanks to the efforts of the garden committee.

Volunteers put in more than 2,300 hours for CAS activities. Awesome! Here are some more numbers:

- Sixty observers were in the field for the Christmas Bird Count and 25 folks watched birds at their feeders. We counted 69 species (38 of them at feeders) and 16,296 total birds.



Cedar Waxwing

Photo credit: Dale Gearhart

- Special thanks go to the dedicated volunteers who represented CAS at 9 outreach events that reached more than 260 people. We have several more events planned this spring, so you can still help.
- More than 400 community members enjoyed the two free nature films we showed at two venues.
- The newly relocated Bluebird Trail, operating under the guidance of Dorian Runt, Lynn Runt, and Ruth Barton, assisted by 19 volunteers, was very successful, with 67 bluebirds, 33 tree swallows, and 5 wrens fledged.
- The 10 attendees at the Beginning Birders' Workshop in June enjoyed a nice day and saw 46 species of birds, thanks to the 20 volunteers who served as leaders and birding buddies.

- Janet Tice arranged for 27 Audubon Adventures kits to be delivered to classrooms. The kits provided educational materials for 170 students.
- Thanks to Anne St John for re-starting our publicity efforts. She is using email and Facebook to reach local media and social media. Let her know if you have ideas about sharing news of our events.
- For the third year, we recognized winners in our two youth contests – Best Bird Photo and Longest Bird List of the year.
- At the end of February 2023 we had 326 members assigned to our chapter by the National Audubon Society. We also have 33 active “local-only” CAS members.
- Over our 10 field trips so far, 80 people saw lots of birds. Kudos to all who led, participated in, and reported results. Several more trips are planned this spring, so please join us.
- As an organization we donated to many worthy efforts including National and Mid-Atlantic Audubon, Central and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Conococheague Institute, TWEP, Conococheague Creek Cleanup, and the Community Cloud Forest Conservation in Guatemala.

We enjoyed holding our regular meetings for the second year at St Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church, A total of 227 people attended meetings in person and an additional 46 households attended via Zoom.

We at Conococheague Audubon enjoy the birds and each other. Thank you for being part of this terrific organization.

On the Record

by Sue Greer

Our only field trip this spring was to Heisey Orchard in March where 14 observers gathered to see the American Woodcock. One was clearly seen and heard peenting, while two others were seen flying over. Also seen were White-throated Sparrows, Northern Cardinals, Red-winged Blackbirds, Mourning Doves and House Sparrows.

Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Announces

Third Annual Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation

The Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO) proudly announces that its Third Annual Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation will occur in 2023 from June 9 to 19 and will support three projects across the Commonwealth.

Birders are invited to join the Blitz by forming a team, raising funds, and completing one or more “big days” to document birds during nesting season. Teams enlist their friends to support their efforts with a donation; all donations are evenly split among the three projects. Bird-lovers of all ages and skill levels are invited to visit www.breedingbirdblitz.org to learn more about the event, to form and register a team, or to make a donation. **Registration will open on April 1st.**

The 2023 Blitz aims to raise \$16,000 to support the following bird conservation projects: • **Foundation for Sustainable Forests (FSF)**, Erie County: Habitat management and public education at the Florarozze Forest, a preserve owned by FSF. Invasive understory shrubs will be removed from 25 acres as part of a forest management plan to enhance habitat for nesting songbirds. FSF will also create a video for other forest landowners to learn options for conservation of their lands.

• **South Middleton Township Parks and Recreation**, Cumberland County: Wetland and grassland enhancements along Yellow Breeches, to include planting of native reed species in wetlands, establishment of a native meadow, and installation of predator guards on dozens of nest boxes.

• **Hawk Mountain Sanctuary**, statewide: Support



Red-tailed Hawk

Photo credit: Dave Cooney, Jr.



This Osprey has been visiting the cell tower near our home for a week. It first showed up on 3-24-23 and this photo was taken on 3-31-23. Looks like he got a trout out of season by one day. Lol

Photo credit: Dave Cooney, Jr.

of the Third Pennsylvania Bird Atlas. Efforts are well underway for the kickoff of the state’s third atlas, a critical tool for conservation planning and action. Funds raised in the Blitz will support the development of educational and training materials for use by volunteers when the Atlas begins data collection in 2024.

In its first two years, the Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation has raised more than \$25,000 in support of six projects. The 2022 Blitz featured more than 100 birders competing on 20 teams. Those birders raised \$15,071 for conservation while documenting 170 species over four days in June. The expanded 11-day window in 2023 is designed to allow more birders to participate.

Visit www.breedingbirdblitz.org for updates on the event and all the details and stories from the event’s history.

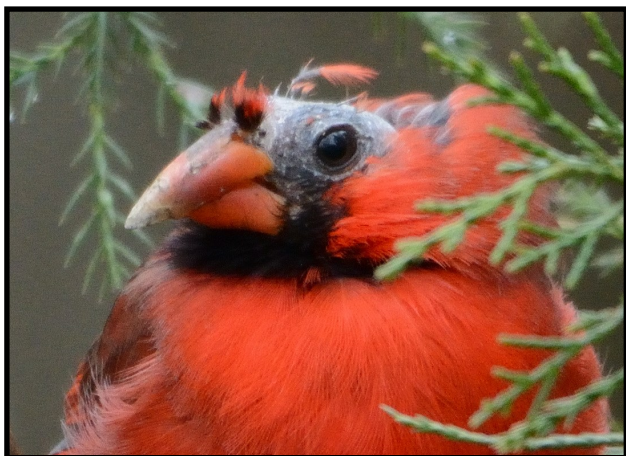
The Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization founded in 1990 to foster the study and appreciation of the wild birds of Pennsylvania and to promote the conservation of birds and their habitats. PSO organizes and supports several bird monitoring projects, hosts field trips, an annual meeting, and publishes the quarterly journal *Pennsylvania Birds*. More information about PSO can be found at www.pabirds.org.

Media inquiries about the Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation should be directed to Brian Byrnes, brianjbyrnes79@gmail.com, 610-420-2264. For more information, contact Vern Gauthier, (717) 385-9526.

The Case of the Bald Cardinal

by Jim Hook

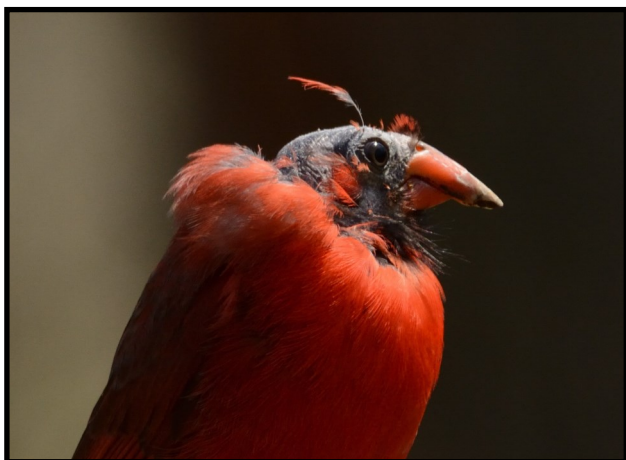
For all their bristling excitement, Northern Cardinals sometimes go without their crowning shock of red feathers.



Baldy, taken on March 13, 2023
Photo credit: Jim Hook

When Baldy first checked out our feeders on Feb. 11, I willingly invented stories about the red bird who braved a scalping by the neighbor's white cat or who ducked the resident Cooper Hawk's guillotine. In a flight of fantasy, I wondered at the mating of a turkey vulture with a bite-sized cardinal.

Well, it turns out that a bald Northern Cardinal is not so rare. And neither is a bald Blue Jay.



Baldy, taken on April 5, 2023
Photo credit: Jim Hook

Each year the Cornell Lab's Project FeederWatch reports several cases of bald-headed birds. The molt pattern is considered normal for both Blue Jays and Northern Cardinals. The birds, especially juveniles in their first molt, are sometimes bald for about a week during late summer and fall when

they drop their head feathers all at once.

According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, lice, feather mites, an environmental factor, or poor nutrition may also have a hand in bird baldness. In such cases, scabs or growths are evident on the skin. A Northern Cardinal normally has black skin. A different color skin on the bald head of a cardinal could indicate an ailment.

In short, the bird authorities say they are not sure what causes bird baldness, but a bird's feathers typically grow back.

After two months this spring, the cardinal visiting my backyard hasn't regrown his headdress. Baldy's become a feeding fixture, sorting seeds on the ground at the edges of the bird feeders, never on the trays. He exchanges bluffs with the boys and tolerates squirrels at close quarters.

I'm waiting to see how the ladies react to my Knight of the Fallen Crest.



PA BIRD ATLAS

Third Pennsylvania Bird Atlas

by Vern Gauthier

If you are a long-time birder, you might remember the 2nd PA Breeding Bird Atlas that took place 2004-2009. If you are a real old-timer, you might even remember the first atlas that took place 1983-1989. Well get ready, as the 3rd PA Bird Atlas will begin January 2024, and this time it will in all likelihood be expanded to include a winter aspect as well. This would follow the lead of the state of Maine which included a winter component in the bird atlas that is currently wrapping up.

A diverse steering committee of 15 birders, biologists and ornithologists, moderated by Andy Wilson (Environmental Studies, Gettysburg College) has been meeting monthly for several months now to lay the groundwork for the 3rd Atlas. The committee hopes to have a state coordinator in place by

May. The coordinator will be an employee of Hawk Mountain. The bulk of the funding for this project will come from the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Data input will be via eBird, which has been contracted to create a portal for the atlas.

Of course, vital to the success of this 3rd Atlas will be everyday birders like you and me. Without a large army of volunteers, the 3rd PA Atlas may get off the ground, but it will never soar to the heights hoped for in gathering valuable data about breeding and, hopefully, wintering birds across the state.

The logo of the atlas will be a friendly Tufted Titmouse, which was chosen for a variety of reasons

including:

- Its presence both in summer and winter.
- Inclusivity, as both male and female are pretty much identical in plumage.
- Inviting; with this friendly little bird hopefully communicating that “atlasing” is not big and scary, but something birders of all experience levels can do.

More information will be coming out over the months ahead. Look for the friendly little Tufted Titmouse as your guide. Please feel free to contact me, Vern Gauthier, at (717) 385-9526, if you have any specific questions.

Free books from our Library

by Debby Hook

As we downsize the shelves of our CAS library, we are offering for loan or for keeps a number of books that may be of interest to our members.

Most books have been donated through the years by CAS members. Some books are ideal for new birders and, while most of the publishing dates are from the 20th century, these books contain content that is still of value to all birders. A few titles are brand new.

Below is a list of currently available titles:

1001 Questions Answered About Birds, by Allan D. Cruickshank and Helen G. Cruickshank (1958).

From bird anatomy and habits to migration and bird conservation, this book can help us understand the importance of protecting birds. A section on birds in history and mythology is especially informative.

Birds of Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia, by Bruce M. Beehler, photographs by Middleton Evans (2019; autographed by Evans). Gorgeous close-up photos and lavish landscapes enrich this coffee table book featuring waterfowl and land bird species. Includes descriptions, maps of hot spots, and lists of birding by season.

Dozen Birding Hot Spots, by Roger Tory Peterson (1976). Still considered some of the best birding sites in the U.S. and Canada (yes, I looked them up!), although drought in the western U.S. has wreaked havoc on some of the lakes that have historically attracted wild birds.

Hawks Aloft: The Story of Hawk Mountain, by Maurice Broun (1948; autographed in 1976 to former CAS member Anne Trogler). The story of the persistent efforts by a wealthy New York City socialite to obtain a mountaintop property in Pennsylvania helped initiate an end to the annual decimation of migrating raptors along the Appalachian Mountains, and established the world's first sanctuary for birds of prey.

One More Warbler: A Life with Birds, by Victor Emanuel with S. Kirk Walsh (2017; autographed) A leading world birder and founder of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours shares his birding life story from his youthful beginning to his many adventures in rare bird sightings.

Viewpoints: On Nature and Other Things, by J. Kenneth Beaver (2003); the late Ken Beaver and his wife Elizabeth “Libby” enriched our chapter through the expression of their passion for nature. This book contains selections from 1975-1979 of Ken's eloquent “Viewpoints” column published in the local Public Opinion (Chambersburg) from 1975 to 1991.

If interested in any of these books, email Debby Hook at debbyk@pa.net or text 717-372-0228, and I will see that you receive that title (if not already taken at the meeting).

Conococheague Audubon Society Offers Free Beginning-Birder Workshop

By Dave Cooney, Jr.

Conococheague Audubon invites the public to a free birding workshop at Caledonia State Park on Saturday, June 3, 2023 from 7:45 AM - noon. The workshop is geared for beginners to come and



Two singers.
Above: Red-winged Blackbird
Below: Song Sparrow
Photo credit: Dave Cooney, Jr.



Photo credit: Jim Hook

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 and a

Kid's Corner with other activities. Anyone age 6 or older will be welcome with an adult.

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 of binoculars to lend. 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. Pre-registration is appreciated but not required, please contact:

Dave Cooney Jr. at (717) 264-2116 or slantlcm@yahoo.com or Janet Tice at (717) 372-0379 or jwtice1@comcast.net



Tree Swallow on Cider Creek Rd
Photo credit: Dave Cooney, Jr.

Calendar, continued from page 6.

May 15-17, Mon.-Wed.

FIELD TRIP

Trip to Magee Marsh, Ohio, for WARBLER MIGRANTS. Bring scopes, binoculars, and lunch. Make own hotel arrangements. Sign up by Mar. 13. **Bob and Terri Kochert**, 717-263-3692.

May 20, Saturday

FIELD TRIP

5:00 PM Edenville area for WHIP-POOR-WILLS and BOBOLINKS. Leave from Sunnyway Foods parking lot, 49 Warm Spring Road, Chambersburg. Bring scopes and binoculars. **Eric and Rhetta Martin**, 717-597-8675

June 3, Saturday

WORKSHOP

7:45 AM Beginning Birders' Workshop. Meet at Visitors' Center in Caledonia State Park, Fayetteville; park in first parking lot beyond Visitors' Center. Bring binoculars; a few pairs available for loan. Pre-register with **Dave Cooney**, 717-264-2116 or **Janet Tice**, 717-372-0379, jwtice1@comcast.net.

June 10, Saturday

FIELD TRIP

7:00 AM South Mountain/Caledonia/Michauch Important Birding Area (IBA) for RESIDENT SONGBIRDS. Leave from second parking lot beyond Visitors' Center in Caledonia State Park. Bring scopes and binoculars. **Eric and Rhetta Martin**, 717-597-8675.

June 16-19, Fri.-Mon.

CONSERVATION COUNT

All day for 1-4 days. Join a team for fundraising opportunities. Breeding Birding Blitz for Conservation by the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology. See www.breedingbirdblitz.org for info. **Vern Gauthier**, 717-385-9526, verngauthier14@gmail.com.

June 17, Saturday

FIELD TRIP

7:30 AM Especially for BEGINNING BIRDERS. Chambersburg section of Cumberland Valley Rail Trail. Meet at Big Lots, 184 Southgate Mall, parking lot next to Washington Street. Bring binoculars and field guide. **Debby Hook**, 717-372-0228.

President's Corner, continued from p. 1.

We have many **Volunteer Opportunities** coming up. Please help represent Conococheague Audubon at these community outreach events:

Monitor Bluebird Trail boxes. Contact Dorian/ Lynn Runt, adamsmail@centurylink.net or 717-352-4995.

Clean up and help maintain the native plants garden at Norlo Park. Contact Josh Donaldson, jd425@embarqmail.com or 717-264-6920.

We are looking for help at a new Bird Day event being planned by the Franklin County Visitors Bureau for 4 and 5 May. Contact Terri Kochert, bob-terri81@comcast.net or 717-263-3692.

Monitor birds on Michaux State Forest. Contact John Greer, jngreer@aol.com or 443-255-8871 or Sue Greer, sgreer412@gmail.com or 443-255-9559.

Beginning Birders' Workshop is scheduled for Saturday, June 3, at Caledonia SP. Volunteers needed! A planning session will occur at 6:15 PM prior to our May 8 regular meetings at St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church. Contact Dave Cooney Jr. at (717) 264-2116 or slant1cm@yahoo.com, or Janet Tice at (717) 372-0379 or jwtice1@comcast.net.

Coming on 4th Saturdays this summer, June - Sep-

tember: display table at Chambersburg Farmers' Market. Details TBD. Contact Terri Kochert, bob-terri81@comcast.net or 717-263-3692.

We are planning next season's activities. If you have an idea for a program let us know.

Thanks to all who have made a donation to keep Conococheague Audubon alive. It's never too late to mail a check to CAS at PO Box 20, Fayetteville, PA 17222. Good birding and have a great summer!

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

From Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, PICK UP PENNSYLVANIA is a year-long, community-improvement initiative that includes cleanups, beautification, and greening (like painting murals or planting flowers), recycling collections, and litter-prevention education.

FREE CLEANUP SUPPLIES: Bags, gloves, and safety vests are provided to registered participants from March 1 through May 31 through a partnership with the PA Department of Environmental Protection, PennDOT, Ocean Conservancy and Keep America Beautiful, as supplies last. HOW TO REGISTER an event: Visit keepabeautiful.org/programs/pick-up-pa/ or contact Michelle Dunn at 877-772-3673 x113 or mdunn@keepabeautiful.org.

WAIVER OF LIABILITY

This agreement releases the Conococheague Audubon Society, Inc. (CAS) and its officers, directors, members, and volunteers (the "Releasee") from all liability relating to injuries that may occur on an activity sponsored by CAS. By signing this agreement, I agree to hold Releasee entirely free from any liability, including financial responsibility, for injuries incurred during the course of an activity, regardless of whether injuries are caused by negligence.

I also acknowledge and assume the risks involved in a sponsored activity. These include, but are not limited to, walking on rough terrain, standing for periods of time, driving to and from activity sites, and being harmed by wildlife or other natural hazards. I swear or affirm that I am participating voluntarily. Additionally, I do not have any conditions that will increase my likelihood of experiencing injury while participating in this activity.

By signing below, I waive all right to sue the Releasee for any reason. I also agree to indemnify Releasee against any and all claims, actions, lawsuits, damages, and judgments, including attorney's fees, arising out of or relating to my participation in this activity.

I, _____, fully understand and agree to the above terms.

[Print name]

Participant signature

Date

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 4, Thursday **FIELD TRIP**
6:30 AM Fort McCord area for SPRING ARRIVALS/
MIGRANTS. Meet at North Pointe Center, US 11 north of Cham-
bersburg. Some walking. Bring lunch and binoculars. **Bill**
Oyler, 717-360-5191.

May 5, Friday **FIELD TRIP**
6:00 PM Lehman property for SPRING MIGRANTS. Meet at 750
Tallow Hill Road, Chambersburg, to walk around a pond, mead-
ows and woods. **Larry Lehman**, 717-263-7203.

May 6, Saturday **FIELD TRIP**
7:00 AM Horse Valley for SPRING MIGRANTS. Meet at North
Pointe Center, US 11 north of Chambersburg. Bring lunch and
binoculars. **Valerie Barnes**,
717-352-4397 or **Donna Hocker**, 717-491-2171.

May 8, Monday **MEETING**
7:00 PM *Bird Banding* by Paul Engman. No Zoom. Arranged by
Dave Ebbitt.

May 11, Thursday **FIELD TRIP**

6:30 AM Stillhouse Hollow, Heisey Road Orchard, and some local
farms 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 13, Saturday **WORK DAY**
9:30 AM Work at NORLO PARK native garden. Bring garden
tools and gloves. **Josh Donaldson**, 717-264-6920.

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

Newsletter Editor - Jane Bussard (717-401-3210)
janenbussard47@gmail.com

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

COPY DEADLINE : AUGUST 15 FOR SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

CONOCOCHIEGUE AUDUBON OFFICERS:

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Vice President	Lisa Coombs
Recording Secretary	Debby Hook
Corresponding Secretary	Valerie Barnes
Treasurer	Donna Hocker
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Dave Ebbitt, Sue Greer, John Greer, Jim Hook, Linda Kaiser,
Anne St. John, intern Cindy Thrasher

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Conococheague Audubon
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