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**Save the Date!**

**Sept 7 FALL MIGRANTS**

**Sept 9 Meeting: Photos of Michaux Flora & Fauna**

**Sept 14 HAWK MIGRATION**

**Sept 21 CVRT Chambersburg**

**Oct 5 FALL MIGRATION**

**Oct 14 Meeting: Birds of Southeast Asia**

**Nov 11 Meeting: American Chestnut & Forest Management**

**Nov 14: Nature Film: Counting on Birds**

**Dec 9 Meeting: Birds: Declining Populations and Diversity**

**Dec. 14 Christmas Bird Count**

**Ribbon Cutting**

— Debby Hook and Terri Kochert

Our C.A.S. interpretive sign is now a colorful feature of Chambersburg's Cumberland Valley Rail Trail. The June 7 ribbon-cutting ceremony featured Chambersburg Mayor Walt Bietsch, who shared the shears with Debby Hook to cut the ribbon.

Other officials who attended were Borough Council member Allen Coffman, PA Audubon representative Holly Smith, and Jim McCleaf, president of Hopewell Manufacturing Inc., which produced and installed the sign. Thanks to Audubon members who also came out on a lovely Friday afternoon! After the ceremony, we walked to the Franklin County Visitors' Bureau on the square to enjoy relaxing conversation and snacks at their second-floor community hall.



*New interpretive bird sign: Among those participating in the June 7 ribbon-cutting for Conococheague Audubon's interpretive sign in Chambersburg are, from left: Rhetta Martin, Bobbie Stewart (holding ribbon), Marguerite Fries, Holly Smith, Jim McCleaf, Terri Kochert, Helen Lehman, Larry Lehman, Allen Coffman, Mayor Bietsch (cutting ribbon), Debby Hook and Jennifer Wright (not visible).*

Again, we thank our sponsors: Audubon Pennsylvania, F & M Trust, Olympia Candy Kitchen, and The Historic Texas Lunch for making the sign possible. We thank the aforementioned borough officials, Holly Smith of Harrisburg, and Jim McCleaf from Waynesboro for their presence at our ceremony.

Terri Kochert would also like to thank the C.A.S. Sign Committee members for all their time and hard work in making this sign a reality: Jennifer Wright, our design artist; Jim and Debby Hook, publicity; and Bobbie Stewart and Bob Kochert for your helpful input.

C.A.S. birders have already enjoyed the trail on a summer field trip. We have two more scheduled field trips along the rail trail during our 2019-2020 season. Please join us.

If you haven't yet seen the sign nor visited the rail trail, park in the Historic Texas Lunch parking lot next to the Ice Cream Station along Lincoln Way West and check out our sign by the pedestrian bridge. After you've seen the sign and walked the trail, treat yourself to an ice cream cone at the Ice Cream Station. You'll be glad you did!

## Conservation

— Debby Hook

### **We Care About Birds**

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act will have its day in court.

On July 31, a federal judge gave the go-ahead for a joint lawsuit that defends the MBTA against the Department of Interior's decision to no longer enforce the MBTA in cases of incidental bird deaths.

In May 2018, National Audubon Society and other conservation groups sued the Department, challenging its opinion to not hold industries accountable for preventable bird deaths. Eight states filed a similar suit in September 2018, according to an Audubon press release last

### **THE MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT WILL HAVE ITS DAY IN COURT.**

month. The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York allows Audubon versus Department of the Interior to proceed, rejecting an effort by the government to dismiss the lawsuit.

The Interior Department's opinion undermines the MBTA's prohibition on the killing of migratory birds, which has long been understood to include the "incidental" killing of birds from industrial activities, such as birds flying into uncovered oil pits or other predictable, avoidable or negligent killing.

"Industries that kill birds have been held accountable for decades and we'll fight . . . in the courts to protect the birds Americans love," said Audubon president and CEO, David Yarnold.

Under the current revised interpretation of the MBTA, protections apply only to activities that purposefully kill birds. Any "incidental" take, no matter how inevitable, avoidable or devastating the impact on birds, becomes immune from enforcement under the law.

For decades, industry has worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to take sensible precautions such as covering oil waste pits so birds don't mistake them for ponds; insulating small sections of power lines so raptors don't get electrocuted; siting wind farms away from bird migration routes and habitats. The law has also provided accountability and recovery after oil spills.

Members of Congress, 17 former Interior Department officials and more than 500 wildlife and environmental groups across the country have asked the administration to suspend the opinion.

Audubon is joined in the lawsuit by the Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, and the American Bird Conservancy.

## **Successful Children's 2019 Summer Camp Programs**

—Terri Kochert

On June 26, July 10 and 11, 2019, Debby Hook and I had the opportunity to share our passion for caring for nature and birds with youngsters 5-11 years old. We conducted classes at two different Wilson College SEEDS Day Camps and at Shippensburg University's Chemistry Camp. In total, we engaged 85 energetic students during these three sessions.

We started with a True and False game testing students' prior knowledge of bird facts and behavior. It was fun to "watch the wheels turning" as they took time to process the correct answers to the statements. We had two nests to show the students, one a robin's nest and the other an oriole's nest containing a real cowbird's egg! Larry and Helen Lehman contributed both abandoned nests from their property. The children loved seeing the egg.

Then we had students label bird features using an interactive bird poster with stick-on labels. On two days, we showed C.A.S.'s PowerPoint, "The Birds of Caledonia State Park," which included photos and sounds of many common birds. Students were most excited to tell which ones they had already seen. Then we took students outside for Bird Spy Bingo and/or a Scavenger Hunt, using Cornell Lab of Ornithology materials. The children enjoyed the outdoor excursion quite a bit. Debby measured each child's wingspan and then gave them a photograph with information about the bird they measured up against. With the younger ones, we played a rousing game of Freeze Tag, with one student at a time being the Peregrine Falcon in search of his prey.

If you are aware of any other local outreach possibilities with youngsters, please email Terri Kochert at [bob-terri81@comcast.net](mailto:bob-terri81@comcast.net) or call 717-860-4010.

### **Youth Contest Reminders**

—Terri Kochert

Youth participants in our "Best Photo Contest" should attend the September 9 Conococheague Audubon Society meeting with their bird photo(s) and signed permission slips, including name, address, and telephone number on the *reverse side*. We will use this contact information to inform the contest winners. There will be **three winners** in each of the *two categories* (ages 5-15 and ages 16-18). First prizes are \$50; second prizes, \$35; and third prizes, \$25. We'll announce winners' names at our November 11 meeting (see the Notice of Correction at the end of this article). We plan to post winners' names and photos in "Naturally," and also have them announced in area newspapers.

*Youth Contest Reminders, cont'd on p. 3, col. 2*



## Bird Behavior

— Val Barnes

*Continuing the column Debby Hook started.*

I want to know...

### **Q: Why Do Birds Molt?**

The simple answer is that feathers don't last forever, so birds need to replace them. Worn feathers don't insulate as well and don't support flight as capably as fresh ones.



*Goldfinch in prebasic molt, mid-August*

*Photo credit: Val Barnes*

Some of our North American birds molt once a year, usually in late summer or early fall. This is called the “prebasic molt” because it generates the “basic plumage.” Normally for small birds, this is a complete molt, where all feathers are replaced. Typically, the basic plumage is present during non-breeding months.



*Goldfinch after prealternate molt, ready for breeding.*

*Photo credit: David Cooney Jr.*

Some of our birds, like the American Goldfinch undergo a second molt called the “prealternate molt” that changes their winter feathers to brighter ones for the breeding season’s “alternate plumage.” For small birds, this is usually a partial molt, with only some feathers being replaced. For the American Goldfinch, the prealternate molt finds them replacing body feathers, but not wing and tail feathers. See David Sibley’s excellent slideshow that illustrates the Goldfinch’s plumage changes: <https://www.sibleyguides.com/2012/05/the-annual-plumage-cycle-of-a-male-american-goldfinch/>

The molting process can take weeks, months, or even years. Feather replacement is energy-consuming, so it tends to happen outside the migration or breeding seasons, unless a feather is lost or damaged. Large birds, such as eagles and gulls, take years to develop their adult basic plumage, probably because their feathers are so large. Wood Ducks undergo a fast molt (about 2 weeks) at the end of summer in which males develop an “eclipse” plumage when they look like females. During that period, they are unable to fly. Then they molt again and develop their alternate plumage so they can attract a mate over the winter.

To learn more about molting, check out David Allen Sibley’s [The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior](#) and these web sites:

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/the-basics-feather-molt/>

<https://www.audubon.org/news/understanding-basics-bird-molts>

<https://www.thespruce.com/importance-of-molting-386470>

### *Youth Contest Reminders, cont'd from p. 2*

**\*\*NOTICE OF CORRECTION:** The 2019-2020 Activities brochure **incorrectly records** that we are accepting “Biggest Bird List” entries on Sept. 9 and “Best Bird Photos” on Oct. 14. The correct submission date for “Biggest Bird List” is October 14. Due to our published errors, we will give an extension to any Biggest Bird List participants who arrive in September. The same grace will be extended to Best Bird Photo participants who may adhere to the incorrect photo submission date of Oct. 14.

#### **Bird Species List**

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In an effort to correct our error, we will **announce all winners of both contests at our Nov. 11 meeting.** We apologize for any inconvenience.

## President's Notes

— Debby Hook

As I compose my notes for the September newsletter, it's a balmy August afternoon with lusty, cool breezes to accompany locusts "whirring" in the treetops. The wilting heat of summer seems long past; autumn is in the air.

A highlight of the season for me was my first look at the Summer 2019 edition of *Audubon* magazine. How about that cover shot of a Red-winged Blackbird's breath in the chilly air? Just one of many stunning photos pictured inside. Not only the art, but also the articles were especially intriguing this month.

### **Youth Contests**

We have our own photo treat in store this fall as entrants in our Youth Best Bird Photo contest share their photo magic at the September 9 meeting (see Youth Contest Reminders article on Page 2). Please note that an incorrect date of October 14 is shown in our Activities brochure.

At our October 14 meeting, youth participants in the Biggest Birding List contest, which also began last fall, should arrive by 7 PM at the Community Center at Norlo Park, bringing with them their signed parental permission slips and the birding lists they have compiled in the past year. Prizes are \$50 for first-place winners in the two categories (ages 5-15 and ages 16-18); \$35 for each second-place winner; and \$25 for each third-place winner. Both the photos and the birding lists will be judged prior to the November meeting, when winners of both contests will be announced.

### **Early Start in September**

The September 9 meeting will begin at 6:30 PM for anyone would like to self-tour the native plants garden in full autumn grandeur or visit the CAS office on the first floor of the farmhouse. There we keep a library of books about birds for loan to members.

Thanks to Josh and Susan Donaldson, along with a handful of volunteers, for keeping the trees, grasses and flowers in top form. Refreshments will be served from the patio behind the Community Center.

### **Memorial Gifts**

Three long-time Conococheague Audubon members who died this year will be remembered

through memorial gifts to local libraries:

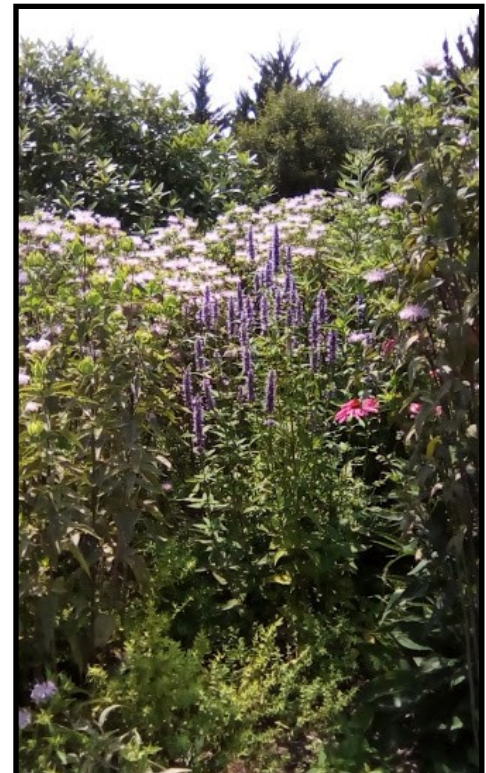
- A hardbound book, "The Bluebird Effect: Uncommon Bonds with Common Birds," by artist Julie Zickefoose was presented to Coyle Free Library, Chambersburg, in memory of Dorothy Thomas, who was involved for years with our bluebird trail.
- We plan to offer a book about woodpeckers in memory of Edgar Mouer, who enjoyed feeding and watching the woodpeckers in his backyard. Edgar regularly attended our monthly meetings. He and his wife both died following an auto accident in June.
- An audio CD, "Bird Song Ear Training Guide," by John Feith, will be presented to Shippensburg's public library (now called Jeffrey W. & Jo Anne R. Coy Public Library) in memory of Joan Applegate, formerly a music professor at Shippensburg University. The CD recognizes 189 bird songs from the Northeast and Midwest U.S.

### **Activities Galore**

The 2019-2020 season of activities is now in full swing. If you have not received a copy of the Activities brochure (ivory colored paper this year) or if you would like a few copies for distribution, please call Debby Hook at 717-372-0228. See also Page 6 for a partial schedule.

*Conococheague Audubon's native plant garden at Norlo Park explodes in July with colorful splendor.*

Photo Credit:  
Susan Donaldson



## “Counting on Birds” —Terri Kochert

This film tells some history of how the Christmas Bird Count began. The host, Willem Lange, travels from snowy Errol, New Hampshire, and Bar Harbor, Maine, to a cloud forest area in Mindo, Ecuador. He ends up in sunny Havana, Cuba, to introduce us to the purpose and future of the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and to four interesting birders:

◆ **Bob Quinn**, a world birder who eagerly volunteers each year to count the birds of Errol.



*Counting the birds*  
Photo credit: PIXNIO

◆ **Paul Greenfield**, originally from Queens, New York, who has become involved with the Milpe Bird Sanctuary near Mindo, Ecuador. He not only conducts CBCs at the Milpe Refuge, but he also engages the local people, teaching them the importance of birds and the necessity of protecting them. The first ever CBC in Milpe Refuge was conducted by five foreigners; now there are over 100 counters, 90 percent of them native counters.

◆ **Michael Good**, a birder who’s been counting birds for over 20 years in both his local Bar Harbor area and in Cuba. Although entering Cuba and securing a visiting visa is still a challenge, Good has been conducting bird counts in Cuba for years, along with Gary Markowski. The two have made headway in the past years by collaborating with Cuban ornithologists and recording 370 bird species, 30 of them endangered.

◆ **Geoff LeBaron**, National Audubon’s Director of the Christmas Bird Count since 2011.

Viewers will also meet younger birders who have embraced the challenges and thrills of counting. While there is still disagreement about using “playback bird sounds” to count birds, these young birders count an amazing number of species by using playback. A few of them also discuss the benefits of bird watching: connecting with nature, de-stressing from life’s pressures, and contributing to a collection of data that reveals a world picture of the status of many bird species today.

We hope you enjoy watching people’s zeal and tenacity in all kinds of weather as they contribute to the CBC “citizen science” data collection. Perhaps you, too, will be stirred to help this year in our local efforts in December. Of course, you will see many bird species clips as they are being counted.

After the film, enjoy a brief presentation from our local Christmas Bird Count coordinator, Valerie Barnes. She will introduce this year’s selected local CBC date, the different area captains, and announce their assigned locations. You will have the opportunity to sign up in advance for this year’s Christmas Bird Count. As always, we look forward to welcoming you at our first free nature film at Chambersburg Area Middle School on November 14, 2019, at 7:30 PM. Special music by “Psalm 23 String Ensemble” will begin at 7:00 PM.

## ON THE RECORD

— Donna Hocker

In May, 10 birders went to **Horse Valley**. Led by Kathy Lauver and Donna Hocker, we saw 73 species. The highlight was a Red-breasted Nuthatch, not seen by us since the early ‘90s. Total tally: 164 species.

Two days later, 12 club members traveled to **Magee Marsh** in Ohio for three days of birding. A total of 113 species were seen on this trip led by Terri and Bob Kochert. Here at home, five people went to **Path Valley** under the leadership of Bob Keener and saw 81 species. The Veery was added to the record, for a total tally of 141.

The following evening, nine birders were given a guided tour by Larry and Helen **Lehman** on their **property**. Four new birds were added to the record: Hooded Merganser, Eastern Kingbird, Cape May Warbler and the Warbling Vireo. They saw 36 species; the tally now totals 72 species.

The month ended with an evening trip to **Edenville** guided by Rhetta and Eric Martin. Five observers saw 49 species including four new birds: Willow Flycatcher, Common Raven, Warbling Vireo, and White-breasted Nuthatch. Total tally: 91 species.

In June, the 22 participants and 14 volunteers at the **Beginning Birders Workshop** saw 44 species including a Bald Eagle, a new bird on the workshop list. In the 11 years we’ve sponsored the workshop, we’ve tallied 77 species in Caledonia State Park.

We held a new field trip on the **Chambersburg section of Cumberland Valley Rail Trail** as a follow-up to the Beginning Birders Workshop. Five adults and two youth saw 28 species on the walk led by Terri Kochert and Debby Hook.

The final field trip for this season was to the **South Mountain/Caledonia/Michaux IBA** (Important Birding Area). Rhetta and Eric Martin saw 51 species. New to the record is the Bay-breasted Warbler, and the tally count is 95 species.



**MEETINGS – Free**, held in the Community Center at Norlo Park, 3050 Lincoln Way East, Fayetteville.

**FIELD TRIPS – Free**, most take place on Saturdays. Contact the leader in advance if you plan to go. Times listed are departure times; please arrive early. If you cannot go on a scheduled trip, contact leader for a potential mid-week option on his/her scouting trip.

**FILMS – Free**, all begin at 7:30 PM in Chambersburg Area Middle School South, 1151 E. McKinley St., Chambersburg, PA. Pre-show musical entertainment begins at 7 PM.

**Sept. 9, Monday** **MEETING**  
**6:30 PM**, Garden self-tour and office open house.  
**7:00 PM**, *Photos of Michaux Flora & Fauna* by Andy Wolfe. Arranged by Terri Kochert. **Youth Best Bird Photo Contest entries due.**

**Sept. 14, Saturday** **FIELD TRIP**  
**11:00 AM**. For HAWK MIGRATION. Leave from Sunnyway Foods parking lot, 49 Warm Spring Road, Chambersburg, to “The Pulpit.” Beginning hawk watchers are welcome. Bring binoculars. **Debby Hook**, 717-372-0228.

**Sept. 21, Saturday **\*\*NEW**** **FIELD TRIP**  
**9:00 AM**, Chambersburg section of Cumberland Valley Rail Trail. Meet at Big Lots, 184 Southgate Mall, parking lot next to Washington Street. Contact **Terri Kochert** 717-263-3692.

**Oct. 5, Saturday** **FIELD TRIP**  
**7:30 AM**. End of FALL MIGRATION along Big Spring in Cumberland County. Meet at parking lot about 300 yards north of old fish hatchery near 844 Big Spring Rd.,

Newville. Plan on a 3-mile walk. Bring water and snack. *No restrooms.*

**Linda & Bill Franz lead this trip every first Saturday of the month.** 717-776-4463.

**Oct. 14, Monday** **MEETING**  
**7:00 PM**. *Birds of Southeast Asia* by Bob Keener. **Youth Biggest Birding List Contest entries due.**

**Nov. 11, Monday** **MEETING**  
**7:00 PM**. *American Chestnut & Forest Management* by Corry Shaffer. Arranged by Rhetta Martin.

**Nov. 14, Thursday** **FILM**  
**7:30 PM**. *Counting on Birds* free nature film

**CAS WEBSITE:** [www.conococheagueaudubon.org](http://www.conococheagueaudubon.org)

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Send all newsletter articles and photos to the editor.  
Send all mailing changes to [conaudubon@outlook.com](mailto:conaudubon@outlook.com).

COPY DEADLINE OCTOBER 15 FOR NOV. 2019 NEWSLETTER.

**CONOCOCHAEAGUE AUDUBON OFFICERS:**

|                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| President                | Debby Hook        |
| Vice President           | Terri Kochert     |
| Recording Secretary      | Rhetta Martin     |
| Corresponding Secretary  | Bobbie Stewart    |
| Treasurer                | Donna Hocker      |
| Immediate Past President | Valerie B. Barnes |

**DIRECTORS:** Conway Bushey, Margaret Fries, Jim Hook, Bob Kochert, Ken Higley, Janet Tice

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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