

# NATURALLY

THE CONOCOHEAGUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Naturally

NEWSLETTER OF THE CONOCOHEAGUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Peregrine Falcon seen at Gettysburg  
Regional Airport  
Photo credit: Dave Cooney, Jr.

## Save the Date!

**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

**Dec. 16** CBC Dinner/Tally

**Jan. 13 Meeting:** *Covered Dish Dinner and Photos*

## President's Notes — Debby Hook

There's a change in the air. Leaves crisp underfoot. Wood smoke wafts on evening breezes. The sun is gentler on my shoulders. Autumn is here, and with it the changes I expect and anticipate. Although a line of geese crossing the sky is probably just heading to a different pond for the night, I can't help feeling the same awe as I did when, as a youngster, I'd leap out the door the minute I'd hear the tinny murmuring heading my way in an autumn sky. A large "V" of conversational Canada geese never ceases to thrill my memory cells.



First migrant to arrive on Heisey Road, a  
Winter Wren.  
Photo Credit: Bob Keener

### Tuning in to local conservation

Conococheague Audubon's board of directors has taken on a new kind of challenge this fall. After years of frugal spending, we are now able to provide additional financial support to birding efforts beyond our chapter's programs.

But where? And to whom? That's what we want to find out. We've created a committee to research the best way to use money entrusted to us by our faithful members and generous donors.

Local conservation is an important effort that we believe in. Committee members Valerie Barnes, Bob Kochert, Terri Kochert, and Janet Tice are compiling a list of worthwhile local and regional projects that help protect birds, educate people about birds, and maintain healthy habitats for the birds we love to watch. If you have ideas for their consideration, please contact a committee member (contact information is listed in our Activities brochure and on our website).

A report should be ready by our March 9, 2020, general meeting. Stay tuned!

### Hikes Around the Seasons

While our once-a-year field trips have ended for the fall season, remember that there are two year-round birding walks available locally:

**Renfrew Institute walks**, 7:30 AM first and third Saturdays, Renfrew Park, 1010 E. Main St., Waynesboro. Meet in lower parking lot off Welty Road. Led by Larry and Sharon Williams, 717-655-7414; or call Renfrew Institute, 717-762-0373.

**Big Spring Creek walks**, 7:30 AM first Saturdays, meet at parking lot 300 yards north of old fish hatchery near 844 Big Spring Rd., Newville. Plan on a 3-mile walk on paved road. Bring water and snack. No restrooms. Led by Linda and Bill Franz, 717-776-4463.

## **Conservation** — Debby Hook

### **Kirtland's Warbler no longer 'endangered'**

On Oct. 8, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officially announced the delisting of the Kirtland's Warbler from the agency's endangered species list. In 1967, this warbler was among the first 75 animal species to receive federal protection as endangered.

The bird's population is now estimated to be over 2,300 pairs, more than double the recovery goal, according to a Midwest Region FWS news release (viewed at [fws.gov](http://fws.gov)). In fact, the species' population has exceeded its numerical recovery goal for the past 16 years.

"But that doesn't mean we can walk away and let nature take its course," wrote *Audubon Magazine* associate editor, Andy McGlashen. "If we ever stop managing forests to meet the bird's particular habitat needs, it will again slide toward endangerment, or worse."

". . . this warbler is still among the rarest, most range-restricted migratory songbirds in North America," said Shawn Graff, Vice President of American Bird Conservancy's Great Lakes program. Like most other animal species that have also been delisted, the Kirtland's Warbler is *conservation-reliant*, meaning that humans must continue to manage its habitat and control other risk factors that allow the population to hold its ground and continue to expand.

### **Local birds still need protection**

A new, more detailed climate report from Audubon indicates that two-thirds of North American bird species are at risk of extinction from the worst scenario of climate change.

Released on Oct. 10, the report, "Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink," studied massive data sets covering 604 species of North American birds and considered nine weather-related conditions that affect birds – such as fires, heavy rain, sea level, and drought.

In Pennsylvania, species that are most threatened by climate-related threats include Brown Thrasher, Cerulean Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Fish Crow, Field Sparrow, Pine Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Scarlet Tanager, Worm-eating Warbler, Wood Thrush, Northern Goshawk, and American Black Duck.

Audubon reports that 76% of the species under threat will have greatly improved chances of population and range survival if our federal and state leaders begin taking action now.

### **Prison inmates practice streamside conservation**

Since July, 20 inmates at Huntingdon State Correctional Institution have been participants in a pilot Riparian Forest Buffer Vocational Training program that will help selected prison inmates re-enter the work force while they learn about conservation efforts in the state.



*On an August morning, two young hawks share space on a deck railing in a neighborhood south of Chambersburg. Bob Keener identified them as juvenile Cooper's Hawks.*

**Photo Credit: Kathy Leedy**

A recent news release from Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (written by Ryan Davis, Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Forests Program Manager) reports that the men spent the summer learning about water quality, the Chesapeake Bay, forest buffers, and how to turn a barren stream edge into a healthy ecosystem.

The training program is the outcome of an intervention started last year by Shea Swerve, Community Engagement Coordinator for the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Following a successful 2017 curriculum in arboriculture at Rockview State Correctional Institution in Centre County, the program is now called Correctional Conservation Collaborative.

Beyond acquiring technical skills, the men also were taught entrepreneurship, professionalism, and business development. When released, they should be well qualified for positions in "green industries," from landscaping to forest management, reported Davis, who helped create and coordinate the class, alongside Shea and Teddi Stark, DCNR's Riparian Forest Buffer Coordinator.

The pilot class was to end in mid-October with a forest buffer planting of 400 trees, designed by the class, on Huntingdon SCI property. The class also maintained local riparian forest buffers that were planted by other Chesapeake Bay partners.

### **Pennsylvania joins greenhouse gas initiative**

On Oct. 3, Gov. Wolf directed the state's Department of Environmental Protection to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a collaboration of nine Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states resolving to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while generating economic growth.

The six New England states plus Maryland, Delaware, and New York now participate in RGGI, which sets a cap on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from electric power generators. These electric plants must then purchase a credit for every ton of CO<sub>2</sub> they're allowed to release.

Since 2005, all nine states have reduced power sector CO<sub>2</sub> pollution by 45 percent.

## Bird Behavior

— Val Barnes

### Which Birds Feed their Young Outside of the Nest?

We've all noticed young birds fluttering their wings, begging an adult for food. But how long does this behavior last for different species? Let's start with a little terminology.

According to Cornell Lab of Ornithology's <https://www.allaboutbirds.org>, the newly hatched offspring (*hatchlings*) of *altricial* species "are relatively immobile, lack feathers or down, have closed eyes and are completely dependent on their parents for survival. Altricial birds include herons, hawks, woodpeckers, owls, and most passerine songbirds."<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, the young hatchlings of *precocial* species "are capable of a high degree of independent activity immediately after hatching. Precocial young typically can move about, have their eyes open and will be covered in down at hatching. They are generally able to walk away from the nest as soon as they have dried off."<sup>2</sup> Precocial birds include shorebirds, ducks, geese, gulls, quail, and turkeys.

The process of a baby bird leaving the nest is called *fledging*. Among passerines, these birds are called *fledglings*. Over half of our bird species are passerines, belonging to the order Passeriformes – small to medium-sized birds which perch; often called songbirds. Fledglings have some adult feathers, those necessary for flight. After the fledgling stage, birds are called *juveniles*. Juveniles have molted their original post-downy feathers and their flight feathers are nearly fully developed. Some birds with long lifespans, such as gulls and hawks, go through several years of *subadult* stages before reaching full maturity.

Many species of fledged birds, including essentially all passerines, are cared for by one or more parents. We see songbirds in our yards, so we see adult birds feeding their young. In some species this lasts for a few days; in others, a few months. Finches feed their fledged young for 15-30 days. Vireos may feed their young for 40-50 days. Most, but not all, species that care for their fledged young are altricial. Cranes, oystercatchers, loons, and grebes are precocial and are fed post-fledging. Some semi-precocial or semi-altricial birds, such as ibises, spoonbills, gulls, terns, nighthawks, nightjars, pigeons, and doves, are also fed for a time after fledging.

Even though most precocial species do not feed their young after they have left the nest, many do care for their young by teaching them how to find food. Ducks and geese are good examples.

The rule of thumb regarding feeding young birds outside the nest seems to hinge on likelihood of survival. To state the obvious, the more independent the young bird is, the less likely it will need its parents to feed it. To learn more about species behavior, see David Allen Sibley's [The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior](#).

<sup>1</sup><https://nestwatch.org/learn/general-bird-nest-info/words-about-birds/>

<sup>2</sup>Ibid



American Golden Plovers Bill Oyler found at  
Antrim Commons Road ponds

Photo credit: Dave Cooney Jr.

### **Opportunity Knocks: Have We Got a Job for You!**

We need someone to step into each of these three necessary roles in our chapter:

**The Conservation Chair** reads about and shares with members the news of local, state and national conservation efforts and issues. Much of the information is available through National Audubon's Action Alert emails of current environmental issues.

**The Membership Chair** maintains digital monthly records of current, new, and lapsed members and handles membership correspondence within the chapter and with National Audubon.

#### **Corresponding Secretary**

A vacancy has opened for the executive position of **corresponding secretary**. This officer sends thank-you letters and letters of recognition to those who donate money, provide physical labor, or benefit our organization in other ways. The officer attends board meetings to report on correspondence activity and has a vote in board decisions.

If you would be willing to fill one of these positions, please contact Debby Hook at [debbyk@pa.net](mailto:debbyk@pa.net) or 717-372-0228.

## **On the Record — Donna Hocker**

The 2019-2020 season began with a trip to Heisey Orchard and Michaux State Forest led by Bill Oyler. The four observers recorded 62 species. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo was a new bird for the list. Total tally: 100 species.

The following week, Debby Hook led 5 observers to the Hawk Watch site on Tuscarora Summit for the second year. Due to heavy fog, no hawks were seen. However, observers did see eight species. New to the our list are Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, American Goldfinch and Yellow Warbler. Total tally: 27

The third trip in September was a walk on the Chambersburg section of the Cumberland Valley Rail Trail. Led by Ken Higley, the five observers saw 16 species. New to our list are Downy Woodpecker, Belted Kingfisher, American Crow and Chickadee. Total tally: 32 species.

## **Many Bricks Do a Patio Make — Debby Hook**

Commemorative bricks installed this summer at the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove (Montgomery County, PA) have made a grand patio that overlooks an adjoining meadow. Among those bricks is one purchased by Conococheague Audubon. Our brick is installed in the lower left quadrant of the patio, located to the right of the main entrance to the center's new museum.

All those interlocking bricks engraved with names of Audubon chapters, supporters, and members are a reminder of the strength of the PA Audubon community of birders. By itself, one brick makes a poor support, but mortared together, many bricks create a strong base on which to stand. I hope you find time to visit the Audubon center at 1201 Pawlings Road, Audubon, PA, and see the names of all the others with whom we stand.



*Dale challenges you to identify this leucistic bird.*  
Photo Credit: Dale Gearhart

## **C.A.S. T-shirts Now on Sale**

To show support for our local Audubon chapter, members and friends may now buy T-shirts imprinted with our cardinal logo. They are available in seven colors: Sport Gray, Sand, Light Blue, Orchid, Yellow Haze, Pistachio and Red. (Those receiving our hard copy newsletter may view the colors of T-shirts on the home page of our website <https://www.conococheagueaudubon.org/>).

The shirts are manufactured by Gildan, a company based in Montreal, Canada. Shirts are classic fit, 100% cotton pre-shrunk jersey knit with taped neck and shoulders; double-needle sleeve and bottom hem, 1/4 turned to eliminate center crease; and seamless double-needle 7/8" collar. The shirts are printed by the Gettysburg company that provides our baseball caps, and the logo is identical to the one on the caps.

8/29/19  
Conococheague Audubon T-Shirt Mock Ups  
Left Chest



The sizes and prices are:  
S, M, L, and XL -- \$8.00  
2X -- \$10.00    3X -- \$12.00

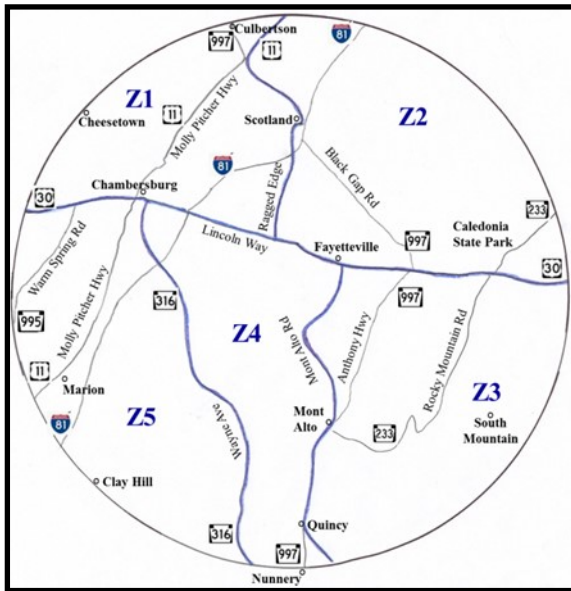
Payment is due when shirts are selected. Each order we submit must include purchase of at least 12 shirts. A first order has been received.

To order shirts, make your check payable to Conococheague Audubon and mail to P.O. Box 20, Fayetteville, PA 17222. Please give us your contact information so we can let you know when the order arrives.

**Caps still available:** We have a new stock of baseball caps, too, still just \$15 each, in soft gray and green tones. Caps are sold at each monthly meeting.

## Christmas Bird Count December 14, 2019 — Valerie B. Barnes

We've scheduled this year's Christmas Bird Count for Saturday, December 14, 2019. The more people who participate, the more birds we'll find. You don't have to be an expert at identification to help; spotting birds and recording what the team sees are important to the effort. This long-running citizen-science project helps Audubon to assess the health of bird populations and guide conservation action. CBC records were used in the recent scientific report that found 2.9 billion adult birds have been lost in the past 4 decades. The one-day annual event is an opportunity to meet other local birders, hone your birding skills, take part in a seasonal tradition, and contribute to conservation. If you have never participated, will you give it a try?



You can start counting just after midnight on the 14<sup>th</sup>; owls sometimes sound off in the wee hours of the morning. We need teams of volunteers to count every bird in this 60<sup>th</sup> count in our designated 15-mile diameter circle. Our count area center is at a point just off Spring Road near the headwaters of the Falling Spring. Zone captains organize volunteers in different sections of the circle.

Zone 1 Bill Oyler 717-360-5191

Zone 2 Earl Nollenberger 717-352-2996 to sign up;  
Bob Keener to report results 717-658-8765

Zone 3 Bill Franz 717-776-4463

Zone 4 Eric and Rhetta Martin 717-597-8675

Zone 5 Dale Gearhart 717-597-3979

If you participated before, your zone captain should contact you, but if he/she doesn't call you, please contact him/her to sign up again. If you are new to the count this year, have a new phone number or email address, or don't remember who your captain is, please contact Valerie Barnes (717-352-4397). **If watching your feeders is your style, and you live inside the circle, call Joan Bowen (717-261-4019)** so she can send you a recording form.

**Please help!**

Please help! You don't need to be an experienced birder to participate. The length of time you count is up to you. The Christmas Bird Count is fun; you never know what you might see. Make it a family affair! Note that if the weather forecast calls for really bad weather, we may try to reschedule the count; your zone captain will contact you if that happens.

**We'll gather to tally results at the lovely and inviting Fleck Center at Luther Ridge on Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM.** Dinner will be Chicken Marsala, house salad, rice pilaf, California blend (broccoli, cauliflower, carrots), and a hot fudge sundae for dessert. The cost per person will be only **\$12 payable to SpiriTrust Lutheran**. Kathryn Lauver (717-264-0435; 2624 Sarah Place, Chambersburg, PA 17202) has graciously agreed to collect the checks; she'll collect at the November meeting, or you may mail your check to her. Please sign up and make sure Kathryn has your check no later than December 9<sup>th</sup> if you plan to attend the tally dinner. To get to the Fleck Center, go to Luther Ridge at 2998 Luther Drive, Chambersburg 17202. Luther Ridge Drive makes a loop with two entrances from Route 997/Black Gap Road. Enter the community at the easternmost entrance and follow the sign for the "Community Center." That will take you straight across at the St. Paul/St. Joseph intersection and stop sign. Once you are through the intersection, look for the Fleck Community Center on your right. There's a flag pole next to the parking lot. Use the main entrance for the building. We'll be in the Dining Room on the left. You are welcome to come to the tally dinner even if you don't participate in the count itself. But, counting is fun, so please try to join us!

National Audubon asks for donations to support the CBC. If you would like to donate toward the expense of the count, donations may be given to any zone captain or the treasurer. Please make your check out to CAS and note that it is a donation for the CBC; mail to CAS, PO Box 20, Fayetteville, PA 17222. Audubon appreciates your support.

**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.

**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

**Dec. 9, Monday** **MEETING**  
7:00 PM *Birds: Declining Populations and Diversity* by aquatic and environmental scientist Eugene P. Macri Jr. Arranged by Jim Hook.

**Winter** **FIELD TRIP**  
Sign up by Dec. 13, for **possible visit** to Gettysburg Battlefield for **SHORT-EARED OWLS** (name, contact information). **Bob Kochert**, 717-263-3692, will advise as to sightings. Meet at Norlo Park Community Center.

**Dec. 14, Saturday** **CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**  
All day, Chambersburg area. Dinner and tally at 6:00 PM Monday, Dec. 16, in Fleck Center, Luther Ridge, 2998

Luther Drive, Chambersburg, PA. **Valerie Barnes**, 717-352-4397.

**Dec. 30, Mon.** **CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**  
All day, York Springs area. For information, **Vern Gauthier**, 717-385-9526 or [verngauthier14@gmail.com](mailto:verngauthier14@gmail.com)

**Jan. 4, 2020, Sat.** **CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**  
All day, Newville area. **Vern Gauthier**, 717-385-9526 or [verngauthier14@gmail.com](mailto:verngauthier14@gmail.com)

**Jan. 13, Monday** **MEETING**  
6:00 PM. Covered dish dinner and members' photo show. All are welcome.

**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 DECEMBER 15 FOR JAN. 2020 NEWSLETTER.

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