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The Peregrine Falcon seen in downtown Chambersburg.

Photo credit: Dale Gearhart

Save the Date!

- Mar. 9, Monday MEETING**
7:00 p.m. *Conserving Land in Central Pennsylvania* by Central PA Conservancy.
- March 12, Thursday FILM**
7:30 p.m. *Return of the Clouded Leopards*
- April 13, Monday MEETING**
7:00 p.m. *Open Forum: Field Guide & App Comparison*

President's Notes – Debby Hook

Four Members Honored at Potluck

We dined heartily at the January 13 potluck dinner-meeting, then watched talent unfold as our local photographers shared colorful, close-up bird photos in a slide show that brought oohs and aahs.

Following the meal, Immediate Past President Valerie Barnes recognized four individuals for their recent service to Conococheague Audubon:

- ◆ **Jane Bussard**, Newsletter Editor, for producing, organizing and editing “while reminding us of deadlines.”
- ◆ **Eric Martin**, for dedication in leading birding field trips, leading bird walks at the Beginner Birding Workshops, for recent service as a board director, for representing Zone 4 as Team Captain in the annual CBC, and for hours and hours spent pulling weeds at our garden in Norlo Park.
- ◆ **Earl Nollenberger**, for his years of service as Bluebird Trail committee chair and his recent term as board director.
- ◆ And **Joan Bowen**, honored as a founding member, as past president, and as a compiler for bird counts. Joan asked us to publish her note of thanks: “It is with sincere appreciation that I thank Conococheague Audubon for the kind recognition of my activities with the chapter. Thank you also for the useful gifts, especially the lovely mug from The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. I always wanted to visit there and the famous Sapsucker Woods, and regret that I did not go. Birding has been a fulfilling hobby for me, fostered first by the Conococheague Naturalists. I have really enjoyed birdwatching and have listed more than 600 life bird species within North America. My 600th was the Bluethroat in Alaska. Lots of fellowship and fun!”

Bluebird Trail Renewed

With five nest boxes relocated to a fresh location and fence rows cleared of poison ivy, the Bluebird Trail near Upper Strasburg is prepped for a new year of nesting and propagation reporting. We are excited that 11 people have signed up to do the spring and summer legwork. To volunteer, contact **Jim Hook** at 717-262-5865 or jimhook@gmail.com.

Cleaning up streams

A local volunteer group, Creek Cleanup Project, is seeking help with its monthly stream cleanup activities. In 2017, Eric Grace founded the area nonprofit with a mission to keep Franklin County waterways free of trash and debris. The next cleanup day will be March 21 at the Papermill Dam in Chambersburg. Volunteers

Return of the Clouded Leopards

— Terri Kochert

Have you heard of a Clouded Leopard? I hadn't before I previewed this film we'll view on March 12, 2020. Show time is 7:30 P.M. at Chambersburg Area Middle School, 1151 E. McKinley Street.

Clouded Leopards live in the Himalayan region of India, Nepal, and into Burma, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. They're also found on the Malaysian Peninsula. About 10,000 of these animals remain in the wild. It is believed that the Clouded Leopard population has decreased by 30% in recent years. They are endangered due to being highly poached for their fur, plus bones, claws, feet and skull used in traditional Asian medicines. These cats are also poached and sold in the exotic pet trade.

Clouded Leopards do not belong to the "big cats" category with lions, tigers, leopards and jaguars. Big cats have a voice box permitting them to roar. "Small cats" can't roar, but they do purr. Clouded Leopards are more like the small cats, since they purr.

These Asian felines are named for the large, cloud-like patterns in their fur. Clouded Leopards tend to be tawny to orange-brown in color. Some are gray to brown in color too. They stand about 20"-22" high at the shoulder. Males weigh up to 35 pounds, and the mature females weigh about 28 pounds.

Clouded Leopards are primarily arboreal, preferring to roam about from tree to tree. Excellent climbers, they can climb down trees face downward with ease and they can hang while using only their hind legs. They prefer tropical evergreen trees, but have been found in dry deciduous trees too. Clouded Leopards use their very long tails—about a meter or a yard long—to help them balance in the trees.

This leopard's primary diet consists of rodents, monkeys, squirrels, and deer. If close enough to humans, they have been known to eat pigs, goats, or other domesticated animals. Their canine teeth are up to 4" in length. Some observers think they resemble the extinct saber-toothed tiger because of the length of their canines.

The film begins with the discovery of two young cubs found alone in the wild in March 2009. The mother likely had been killed. Veterinarian Bhasan Ghoudry takes interest in not only keeping these cubs alive, but also training them for release into the wild once again. That means that, after weaning the cubs from formula, he must train them to hunt for themselves in the wild.



Clouded Leopard

Photo credit: Animal Sport.org

This documentary provides the world with scientific proof of a first-of-its-kind endeavor to hand-feed, wean, and then train wild animals to be released back into their home environment—made possible using some high-tech equipment, much intense labor, and even more patience. Before the film, enjoy accordion music provided by Marie Hershey and Company beginning at 7.

Come to Annual Meeting

- Valerie B. Barnes

Please remember to come to the Annual Business Meeting on Monday, April 13. The program will begin at 7 p.m. with a panel discussion about tools (field guides and phone apps) to help with bird identification. This is a chance to consult with members who use the apps on their phones or tablets.

We will also be voting on officers and new directors for Conococheague Audubon. The slate includes: Terri Kochert for President; Ken Higley for Vice President; Rhettta Martin for Recording Secretary; Valerie Barnes for Corresponding Secretary; Donna Hocker for Treasurer; Ron George and Eric Martin for Directors.

If you cannot attend the meeting, please vote by April 12 in one of these ways: email your vote to ConAudubon@outlook.com, call Valerie Barnes at 717-352-4397, or send a note to Conococheague Audubon at PO Box 20, Fayetteville, PA 17222. When you submit your vote, please indicate whether you are voting for the entire slate or just part of it. We need a quorum for the election to be valid, so your vote matters.

Thank you!

CONSERVATION: Can We Sustain the World's Coral Reefs?

— Russ Martz, former Conococheague Audubon president and conservation chairman.

Are you aware that the annual Christmas Bird Count was begun 120 years ago by an ornithologist, Frank Chapman? His actions started a whole new way of thinking among humans.

At the opening of the 20th century, Chapman realized that humans were freely shooting, actually over-harvesting, birds of many species. He recommended *counting* birds as a winter sport instead of *shooting* them. His idea eventually became a success! Chapman, with the help of average citizens, changed the way humans think about birds.

How might our thinking change about other fragile life systems?

Many scientists today are quite certain that human pollution is causing serious changes in weather. For example, the U.S. Energy Information Administration reports that about 391 million gallons of gasoline are burned daily in the U.S. That amounts to a gallon per day for each registered car, according to the 24/7 Wall St. Newsletter (Jan. 11, 2020).

Incidentally, to America's more than 8,000 barrels of gasoline used daily, China, the world's second-highest user, consumes less than 2,000 barrels daily. World gasoline use is charted on the data portal indexmundi.com.

Each gallon of gasoline, when completely burned, produces 20-plus pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂). We know that erupting volcanoes belch large amounts of this gas, as well.

Yes, it's true that green plants use carbon dioxide to produce sugar, but they are choking on this expansive amount. Much of the CO₂ that remains in the air combines with ocean water to form carbonic acid. This constant acid-building of sea water is killing millions of miles of coral reefs. Why are coral reefs important to us?

First, corals are the foundation of the ocean's food chain: Organisms living within and around coral reefs are eaten by smaller fish, which are eaten by larger fish – you see where this is going. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the world's coral reef ecosystems support about 4,000 species of fish!

Secondly, coral reef biodiversity is considered crucial to finding new medicines. Many drugs now being developed from coral reef animals and plants

may be future cures for cancer, arthritis, human bacterial infections, viruses, and other diseases.

Third, coral reefs prevent erosion by buffering coastal areas from wave action, and by protecting wetlands along the shoreline. Worldwide, about half a billion people live within 60 miles of a coral reef and benefit from its production and protection.

All is not lost! We people of the Earth can and must change this loss of ocean resources. Scientists know what needs to happen, but we need to change human thinking and behavior, just as Chapman did 120 years ago.



White-crowned Sparrow, February 8 on Wenger Rd., Franklin Co.
Photo credit: Dave Cooney, Jr.

Planning for BW 2020

— Janet Tice

Our twelfth **Beginning Birder Workshop** is scheduled to begin at 7:45 a.m. Saturday, June 6, at Caledonia State Park. Last June, once again, our volunteers made this event a great success. We thank them for their help and the expertise they bring to our organization.

That being said, it's not too early to start planning this year's event. Again, we need your help. As new chair of this function, I hope that you who have helped in the past will consider volunteering again this year. And of course, we welcome all volunteers. Some of the activities planned include Bird Walks, Kid's Corner, Nature Walk, Scavenger Hunt. Help is also needed with refreshments, parking visitors, registering participants and assisting with setting up the visitor center for the day's events.

If you have any questions or want to volunteer, please contact Janet Tice at (717) 372-0379 or at jwtice1@comcast.net.

May 9, 2020: Global Big Day! - Valerie B Barnes

For many years, Conococheague Audubon has participated in the Pennsylvania Migration Count (PAMC) and reported our observations to the state-wide PAMC compiler at the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO). According to Vern Gauthier, starting this year, PSO will no longer be sponsoring the PAMC. When the PAMC started in 1992, there was limited technology to compile the results. County compilers have been using Excel spreadsheet software. Compiling PAMC data in Excel has been a bit cumbersome, involving copying each team's results from a paper report into the county's spreadsheet. Then, all the county compilers sent their results to the state-wide compiler, who combined all the files. Any record of exactly where a particular species was seen has been hit and miss, because it's difficult to collect and report that kind of information using Excel.

Now there is [eBird](#), which makes it possible for anyone who birds to share their results with everyone. You can use the free eBird mobile app to record where you are and enter numbers of each species while you are in the field. Or, you can take notes in the field and enter the data at home using the free online eBird website: <https://ebird.org/home>

Participation in the PAMC has declined in recent years. Reporting observations (not just for the migration count day) via eBird has increased. For the past few years, either the county PAMC compiler or the state-wide PAMC compiler has entered each team's observations into eBird if the team's leader didn't do it. It's a difficult task because the compiler doesn't know exactly where the team went and what they saw at each spot where they birded.

At our regular February meeting, we had a brief discussion about what CAS should do relative to the PAMC this year. Our conclusion was the same as PSO's: encourage birders to use eBird to report their own observations. It just so happens that the date originally scheduled for the PAMC is the date for Global Big Day – May 9, 2020. So, get out there and bird on May 9! Report your observations via eBird, or just enjoy being out and seeing good birds. If the eBird site offers it again this year, check out the map that shows a little spot of light each time someone submits a checklist. It's cool to see little spots popping up all over the world. Last year, 35,090 participants submitted 92,083 checklists recording 6,964 species worldwide. Join the fun and be part of the citizen science brigade! Good birding to all!

Environmental Impact of Disposable Diapers

– Terri Kochert

Our son and his wife, Vidha, refuse to use typical gel-based disposable diapers. Instead, they chose to use a cloth diaper service, which is cheaper for them than using disposable diapers. When they travel, using cloth diapers is not the most viable option. So, after some research, Vidha found a bamboo-based disposable diaper to use when away from home. I confirmed her claims through my own research, and share the following with you.

Most current brands of disposable diapers are gel-based; they take 350 to 500 years to disintegrate! The Environmental Protection Agency reports that Americans deposit roughly 20 billion disposable diapers into landfills each year, a practice which contributes to soil and groundwater pollution and helps produce highly flammable methane gas, presenting real health hazards. Also, these diapers contain harmful chemicals and dyes, some of them carcinogenic, according to the website oureverydaylife.com.

According to The Good Human website, dedicated to discussing issues related to environmentalism, in the U.S, more than 200,000 trees are lost each year to the manufacture of disposable diapers. In addition, it takes 3.4 billion gallons of fuel oil every year to make diapers. Disposable diapers use 20 times more raw materials, two times more water and three times more energy to make than cloth diapers. Besides depleting natural resources, manufacturing disposable diapers also utilizes non-renewable energy sources. (1)



Photo credit: Jefferson Shank, cropped

Today, there are several eco-friendly disposable diapers on the market. Yes, they may be a little more costly. They are made from bamboo or other sustainable plants and, reportedly, disintegrate in 75 days, not years.

Not all bamboo diapers are created equal, nor are they equally eco-friendly. According to the January 11, 2020 post on babyadvisor.org, there are nine possibly healthy brands, each with its pros and cons. Learn about these choices in an article at <https://www.babyadvisor.org/best-biodegradable-diapers/>.

The next time you buy a baby's gift or donate diapers to a charity, consider investing in one of the bamboo or plant-based diapers. Also take time to teach other parents of the need to protect the environment for their children's futures.

(1)<https://oureverydalife.com/environmental-impact-of-disposable-diapers-5088905.html>



New Conococheague Audubon member Jefferson Shank built and put up some terrific [Purple Martin houses](#) on his family's Chambersburg farm. He also wrote about the experience. Follow his full story at the link above or go to https://drive.google.com/file/d/11ed_cqunEnxCryRXH2es4VPmotQC0wgy/view?s=jwznavetdqpdm2dukp

Photo credit: Jefferson Shank

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will meet at 9 a.m. at Thaddeus Stevens Elementary School, 800 Hollywell Ave., Chambersburg. To learn how to dress for this watery project, call Grace at 717-552-4599. More information and a calendar of events are available at <https://www.facebook.com/ccpfcpa/>. Let's keep our waters healthy and clean!

Memorial service in May

A service in memory of Corinne Anderson, who envisioned and worked to create our Norlo Park Native Plant Garden, is planned for May 16, at 10 a.m. in St. John's Episcopal Church, 101 S. Prospect St., Hagerstown, Md. Light refreshments will be offered after the service. Her children request that in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Conococheague Audubon Norlo Garden.

To honor Corinne's love of gardening, Conococheague Audubon in January presented a resource book, *Pennsylvania Naturally: A Gardener's Guide to Sustainable Landscaping*, to Franklin County Master Gardeners.

An FYI regarding National Audubon Society Membership

— Valerie B. Barnes

- The minimum cost for annual membership in National Audubon Society is \$20.
- If you donate more than that amount, the extra amount is considered a donation to NAS, which only has "annual" membership. There is no way to pay for a membership term longer than one year.
- If you make a contribution more than six months before your membership expires, the entire amount is considered a donation. Only if you donate within six months of your membership expiration is the first \$20 applied toward the next year's annual membership cost.

If you would like to renew your National Audubon membership online, visit <https://act.audubon.org/onlineactions/rj36VdXrA0ye6u9uztBuRw2>. You may choose to pay any amount, starting at \$20 (minimum for membership). If you would like to make an additional donation, choose an amount higher than \$20.

If you have a question about your membership, feel free to contact our acting membership chair (Valerie Barnes) at 717-352-4397 or ConAudubon@outlook.com, or call National Audubon Customer Service toll-free at 1-844-428-3826, or send an email to audubon@emailcustomerservice.com.

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 p.m. in Chambersburg Area Middle School South, 1151 E. McKinley St., Chambersburg, PA. Pre-show musical entertainment begins at 7 p.m.

March 7, Saturday FIELD TRIP

6:30 a.m. Middle Creek WMA, Lancaster County auto tour for WATERFOWL. Meet at the Park & Ride, Scotland, Exit 20, I-81 northbound. Bring scopes, binoculars, CBs, and lunch. **Eric and Rhetta Martin**, 717-597-8675.

March 9, Monday MEETING

7:00 p.m. *Conserving Land in Central Pennsylvania* by Central PA Conservancy.

March 10, Tuesday FIELD TRIP

6:00 p.m. Tentative outing for WOODCOCKS at Heisey Road orchard. Meet at the Park & Ride, Scotland, Exit 20, I-81 northbound. Bring flashlights. **Bob Kochert**, 717-263-3692.

March 12, Thursday FILM

7:30 p.m. *Return of the Clouded Leopards*. A pair of rare leopard cubs are rescued from poachers and raised to learn how to live in the wild. (National Geographic) Special music starts at 7:00 p.m., door prizes.

April 13, Monday MEETING

7:00 p.m. *Open Forum: Field Guide & App Comparison*. Moderated by Val Barnes. Annual business meeting and elections. All chapter members welcome.

April 18, Saturday WORK DAY

9:30 a.m. Work in the native garden at NORLO PARK. Bring garden tools and gloves. **Josh Donaldson**, 717-264-6920.

May 2, Saturday FIELD TRIP

6:30 a.m. Horse Valley for SPRING MIGRANTS. **Valerie Barnes**, 717-352-4397; or **Donna Hocker**, 717-401-0604.

CAS WEBSITE: www.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.

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CONOCOCHIEAGUE AUDUBON OFFICERS:

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Conococheague Audubon
P.O. Box 20
Fayetteville, PA 17222
