

NATURALLY

THE CONOCOHEAGUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Naturally

NEWSLETTER OF THE CONOCOHEAGUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Save the Date!

Sept. 14 Mtg, *Icky Invasives, Insects in our Forests*, preceded by Garden Self Tour at 6:30

Oct. 12 Mtg, *Birds of Ecuador*, Contest entries due.

Nov. 9 Mtg. *Chesapeake Bay: Saving a National Treasure*, Contest awards

Dec. 19, Christmas Bird Count

Nature Film Schedule

January 21, 2021: *Last Stand of the Great Bear*

March 25, 2021: *Saving Songbirds*

April 8, 2021: *Return of the Clouded Leopards*

President's Corner

by Terri Kochert

As the world struggles to get back on its feet after the continuous, reeling effects of COVID-19 and its infringement on nearly every aspect of our personal lives and communities, we pause to give thanks that we have survived. We think of those touched by the virus and those who have lost loved ones due to this miniscule monster. Through it all, I thank you all for your tenacity and grit. Let us remain hopeful for the future ahead.

It is hard to believe that six months have passed since Conococheague Audubon Society members last met together at Norlo Park Community Center. Though most activities were shuttered—our March nature film, the April and May meetings, countless field trips during spring migration, the bluebird trail surveillance, etc.—life carried on. A new water pump was purchased and installed in the garden, allowing the birds to both quench their thirst and take an occasional bath. Faithful garden workers travailed, weeding arduously to make the Norlo Garden a gem to behold.

Some members took part in the May 9 Global Big Day. The CAS board met in May via Zoom, thanks to the technical help of Valerie Barnes, and then again, face to face, in July.

Valerie and Janet Tice, our CAS website content and maintenance chairs, a.k.a. technological gurus, updated our static website, bringing it to 2020 status. Please take a quick look at our new and improved CAS website (<https://conococheagueaudubon.org/>). Check out their article later in this newsletter. And, the next time you see either Val or Janet, take the time to thank them for their many hours of effort needed to accomplish this feat.

In addition to all these behind-the-scenes activities, members were actively birding, visiting various hotspots and some of our usual local birding field trip locations. Of course, with usual birders'



Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Mourning Dove and Red-bellied Woodpecker share the goodies.

Photo credit: Bob Keener

President's Notes, continued on page 2, column 1.



Dickcissel

Photo credit: Dave Cooney, Jr.

President’s Notes, continued from p. 1.

friendliness, unusual bird sightings were shared by reporting them via eBird. Anyone who subscribes to Franklin County, PA alerts on eBird was notified.



Clay-colored Sparrow

Photo credit: Dave Cooney Jr.

We are grateful to Bill Oyler, Carl Garner, Bob Koontz, Gavin Anderson, Bob Keener, and young Jefferson Shank for their many interesting finds. Because of them, many were able to enjoy such specialties as the Black-crowned Night Heron, Northern Waterthrush, Louisiana Waterthrush, Dickcissel, Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrow, Least Sandpiper, Willets, Common Tern, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Glossy Ibis. We thank each of you for your love of birds and your willingness to share your finds with us!

Conservation Issues in the Forefront based on outreach material by David Ringer, National Audubon Society

On July 1, 2020, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Moving Forward Act, which incorporated parts of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. Audubon is still working for full passage of the bill and will have a new opportunity to weigh in soon. Among the investments in the bill were key protections for birds and wildlife, including amendments that incorporated the Bird-Safe Building Act, establishing measures to construct buildings with bird safety in mind.

Also, Audubon requested that our U.S. congressmen consider protecting the eastern Gulf of Mexico (off the coast of Florida) from new oil drilling ventures. This is a most important migratory byway for birds. Exhausted from their Caribbean Sea crossing, birds stop over southern Florida, seeking refuge and refueling before venturing northward. The Florida coastline needs to be protected.

Audubon has also spent a good deal of time over the last year working on forage fish, with a focus on river herring and shad. Audubon is fighting to protect Atlantic menhaden,

another extremely important forage fish species for seabirds like Osprey and Bald Eagles. Atlantic Menhaden is found along the Atlantic coast from the estuarine areas of Nova Scotia south to Florida.



Atlantic Menhaden (Wikipedia)

These fish are the prey of larger fish, fin whales, dolphins, Humpback whales, Osprey and Eagles. These fish are commercially fished for fish oil, fish meal, and bait for recreational purposes. The concern is that menhaden is being overly fished, i.e., because of all the fish being consumed either naturally or commercially, the menhaden may not be able to naturally to replenish its numbers.



Grasshopper Sparrow

Photo credit: Jefferson Shank

Conservation

by Debby Hook

U.S. Forest Service must begin again: A federal court on June 24 overthrew the U.S. Forest Service's Prince of Wales project that attempted to begin building roads to log out centuries-old trees on the Prince of Wales Island in Alaska's Tongass National Forest.

The ruling stated that the Forest Service had failed to adhere to environmental laws that require public participation, according to a press release issued by Earthjustice, which represented National Audubon Society, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, Alaska Rainforest Defenders, Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, Alaska Wilderness League, and Natural Resources Defense Council in this case.

In March, the Court ruled that the Forest Service had illegally approved the timber sale.

The Forest Service must now prepare a completely new environmental impact statement before it can proceed with logging plans or roads on Prince of Wales Island. The agency is not, however, hindered in its ability to continue with recreation and restoration projects that were part of the EIS. (Audubon Advisory)

State forests as a public trust: The State Supreme Court has agreed to hear all four issues in a Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Foundation (PEDF) case against Governor Wolf regarding the use of the state forests as a commodity for commercial gain.

According to a July 1 online release by Pennsylvania Forest Coalition, the case is based on Article 1 Section 27 of our State Constitution and the understanding that natural resources managed by DCNR are a trust and the Governor is a steward, not the proprietor of the funds in that trust. (This understanding is based on a State Supreme Court decision on June 20, 2017.)

Article 1, Section 27 reads: "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come."

PEDF has posed these four questions for the case:

1. Are DCNR lease payments other than royalties part of the public trust under Article 1, Section 27?
2. If not payment for the purchase of State Forest oil and gas, can payments made under the State Forest oil and gas leases still be part of the corpus

of the public trust under Article 1, Section 27?

3. Did the Commonwealth Court err in concluding that one third of bonus and rental payments made under State Forest oil and gas leases can be transferred to the General Fund?

4. Are the sections of the Fiscal Code and Supplemental General Appropriations Act of 2009, which transferred \$383,000,000 from the Oil and Gas Lease Fund to the General Fund, fiscally unconstitutional? Arguments are expected to be heard in September or October.

State Scorecard: Would you like to know how your state senators and legislators have voted on environmental issues?

Conservation Voters of PA's website conservation-pa.org displays the voting "scores" of all current state senators and legislators for 2019 and 2020 at <https://bit.ly/30xGgdO>.

CAS Future Events

by Terri Kochert

As of today, we plan to meet at Norlo Park Community Center at 7 PM on the second Monday of the month beginning Sept. 14, 2020. We have scheduled field trips this fall, the Christmas Bird Count, the CBC dinner, and the Nov. 9 Youth Contest winners' awards.

Please note: Prior to coming to any scheduled event, it is vital to check our CAS website for current updates due to possible new COVID-19 protocols. Of course, masks are required for entry. The area will be sanitized in advance of your arrival and hand sanitizer will be made available for your use.

Due to CASD's COVID-19 policy, we must postpone our fall nature film presentation. Instead, we are hoping to show three nature films early next year. On our Activities List, we have the following dates and film titles:

- Jan. 21, *The Last Stand of the Great Bear* (National Geographic);
- March 25, *Saving Songbirds* (PBS); and
- April 8, *Return of the Clouded Leopards* (National Geographic).

I encourage young CAS Youth Contest participants to continue snapping bird photos and keeping up with your longest bird list. **All entries are due October 12, 2020** at our regular meeting. Please arrive by 6:45 PM with your entries. I invite you to stay for our program, *Birds of Ecuador*, by Bob Keener. We are truly looking forward to seeing your photos and lists!

BIRD BEHAVIOR: I Want To Know . . .

Why do I see a fledgling out of its nest before it can fly?

by Debby Hook

Around the middle of July, a small Tufted Titmouse was hopping around our front yard, aimlessly picking through a pile of sunflower seeds under the bird feeder. I noticed the titmouse was smaller than those I'm used to seeing. Fluffy white feathers peeked out from under its teeny wing.

Was this an injured adult or juvenile titmouse, or possibly a fledgling newly out of the nest?

It didn't appear to be in distress or have any external injury; on a couple occasions it seemed to try fluttering its wings as it raced around the rocks and mulch.

I spent much of the day watching after it – putting out water and scattering seed and dried mealworm on the ground. At dusk, I saw it for the last time as it scuttled away from me to a safe spot deep inside a woodpile.

Why would a young bird be on its own before it could even fly? I did not recall hearing an adult bird calling to it, even though the little guy had let out a few peeps in the afternoon. In his birding blog in April, Greg Gard observed a group of Tufted Titmouse chicks being navigated through the woods by their parents' frequent calls. The chicks "spent most of the time on the ground walking and only taking a short flight once they heard parent's call," he wrote. Did my presence deter the parents from keeping in contact?

In a search for answers, I discovered that as all bird nestlings get larger and louder in their demand for

food, they are at greater risk of being discovered by predators, as noted in the article "Why Some Songbirds Kick Their Chicks Out Before They Can Fly," at Audubon.org. To avoid losing their entire brood, songbird parents eventually force their young from the nest, sometimes even refusing to feed them so they will have to go. It's worth the tradeoff to bird parents to risk a youngster on its own out of the nest.

The article detailed a study revealing that birds raised in exposed cup nests are forced to leave earlier than those raised inside a cavity. The reason is that it's easier for predators to find open nests than those tucked inside a cavity in a tree or a post.

As cavity nesters, Tufted Titmice should be among those birds who keep their young "at home" until they're more developed for flight. This information did not bode well for my little titmouse.

I also wondered why I would see such a young bird as late as July. Most of my sources stated that titmice will often raise a second brood, mostly in the southern part of their range (this does not include Pennsylvania, and Cornell Lab indicates one nesting only).

It was difficult to imagine that this was an injured or mal-developed juvenile that had managed to survive for a month or more: with at least three night-stalking cats in my neighborhood, the possibility was slim.

The following day, I did not see the chick on the ground but as I worked in the woods I heard an adult titmouse softly calling "peto, peto, peto" from among the tree branches; instantly a teeny "peep, peep" replied directly above me.

What are the chances it was my little grounded fledgling? For peace of mind, I prefer to think it was a very good chance!

Sources:

"Why Some Songbirds Kick Their Chicks Out Before They Can Fly," by Jillian Monk, Audubon.org

The Cornell Lab, allaboutbirds.org, Tufted Titmouse

Sialis.org

"Stokes Guide to Bird Behavior Volume II," Don and Lilian Stokes

"Life Histories of North American Jays, Crows and Titmice," Arthur Cleveland Bent

www.greggard.com, Greg Gard blog, April 24, 2020: Tufted Titmouse Chick – New Jersey



Tufted Titmouse

Photo credit: Dave Cooney, Jr.

New Website by Valerie Barnes and Janet Tice

You may have noticed that our website <https://ConococheagueAudubon.org> looks a little (well, actually a lot) different. During the lockdown this spring and into the summer, we revamped the site completely to make it look more modern and to make it easier to maintain.



The President's monthly note appears as a "post" and will be near the top of the Home page as long as it is the most recent posting. Other categories of postings might include information about a new outreach opportunity, some special bird in the area, or how you can help Conococheague Audubon Society. You can see older posts as well as the most recent one.

At the top of the page on the right, you'll see the next few upcoming events. The entire calendar is available toward the middle of the Home page and on its own Calendar page. We will update the calendar if something changes about an event/activity, so check the site before you head out the door. You can find contact information for all our leaders and maps for locations where we meet (for meetings, films, field trips, etc.).

There is a slider at the top of the Home page where we'll put some of the excellent photographs our members take. Send high-quality images you want to share to Valerie Barnes and Janet Tice; identify when and where you took the photo. The Norlo Park Native Plants Garden page shows photos of the garden. Check out the For Youth area to read about contests, scholarship opportunities, and other items of interest. The CAS Publications and Data section gives you access to the Naturally newsletter

and records from field trips.

So, poke around and see what CAS is up to. If you see anything that looks wrong, let us know. When you find something that interests you, get more involved and join us!

National Audubon Membership Types by Valerie Barnes

National Audubon Society has implemented a few changes regarding membership. Here's the scoop from information they supplied to chapter leaders. Visit our website for further details.

Contributing Membership A one-time contribution of \$20.00 or more entitles the donor to a membership for the period of 12 months and at least four issues of the Audubon magazine. If a donor does not renew within the 12 months of the membership term, they have an additional 3-month grace period in which it is still possible to renew. Most of us are Contributing Members.

Gift Membership. A donor has the option to give the gift of membership to another individual. If the gift member decides to donate at any time during their gift membership, their membership is immediately transitioned from a Gift membership to a Contributing membership and the 12-month term of the Contributing membership would extend from the date of their donation.

Sustainer Membership. Donors have the ability to enter into a more sustained and regular engagement with Audubon by signing up to be a monthly donor at a rate of \$5.00 monthly or more. These Sustainer members receive issues of the Quarterly magazine for as long as they remain active in the program.

Grinnel Membership. If an individual designates National Audubon Society as a beneficiary in their estate planning, that individual is entitled to a lifetime membership with National Audubon Society through the Grinnell member program.

Complimentary Membership. This type of membership is designated at the discretion of National Audubon Society. Typically, it is designated for the Great Egret Society supporters (annual donation of \$500 or more, or monthly donation of \$45 or more) or other VIPs.

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.

Sept. 5, Saturday FIELD TRIP

7:30 AM for FALL MIGRANTS. Meet at the Park and Ride, Scotland Exit 20, I-81 northbound. Half-mile walk in wet grass at Heisey Orchard. Then by car on Michaux SF roads with additional walking, with trip ending between 12 and 1 PM. Bring binoculars and snack. **Bill Oyler**, oylerbill@gmail.com or 717-360-5191.

Sept. 14, Monday MEETING

6:30 PM Norlo Park Garden self-tour.

7:00 PM *Icky Invasives: Insects in our Forests* by Brittany Clark, Penn State Extension Office. Arranged by Bob Kochert.

Sept. 19, Saturday 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.

Sept. 26, Saturday FIELD TRIP

11:00 AM for HAWK MIGRATION. Leave from Sunnyway Foods parking lot, 49 Warm Spring Road, Chambers-

burg, to “The Pulpit.” Beginning hawk watchers are welcome. Bring binoculars. **Bob & Marion Carmack**, 717-597-8631.

Oct. 12, Monday MEETING

6:45 PM **Youth Contest Bird Photos & Lists due tonight.**

7:00 PM. *Birds of Ecuador* by Bob Keener.

Nov. 9, Monday MEETING

7:00 PM *Chesapeake Bay: Saving a National Treasure* by Lane Whigham. Arranged by Terri Kochert. **Youth Contest Winners announced tonight.**

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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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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