

QUITTAPAHILLA AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2013

P. O. Box 123, Palmyra, PA 17078-0123

www.QASAudubon.org

Upcoming QAS Events

Join Us! Everyone Is Welcome!

Upcoming Programs . . .

The Quittapahilla Audubon Society holds its programs in the Chapel of the Lebanon Valley Home at 7:30pm every fourth Wednesday of the month from September through April (with the exception of November and December). Due to the holidays, the programs are held another week in these two months. Programs are free and open to the public. They are designed for a general audience and children are welcome when accompanied by an adult.

Lebanon Valley Home is located one half mile east of the intersection of Routes 422 and 934 at 550 East Main Street, Annville, PA. There is limited parking in front of the Home with additional parking available on the adjacent streets. Please use the main entrance at the end of the covered walkway in the front of the Home. The Chapel is handicap accessible.

September 25, 2013 – Adventures of our QAS Camper and Saving Pelican 895

Our QAS camper, Nick Silvis, will start the program with a short presentation detailing his summer adventure at Project Oceanology Ocean Camp in Connecticut! We will also screen a short documentary called Saving Pelican 895 which details the journey from rescue to release of an individual pelican that got caught in the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. (Photo from HBO.com)

October 12, 2013 – Creatures of the Night – Family Program!

*****Note:** *this program will be held at a different location and time. It will be held at 11am at the*

Salvation Army Gymnasium at 1031 Guilford Street, Lebanon 17046.



The staff of ZooAmerica will bring some of their furry, feathered, and scaled friends along to this community program in Lebanon. The program will focus on nocturnal creatures and examines the adaptations that make them successful nighttime creatures.

October 23, 2013 – Second PA Breeding Bird Atlas: a Bird Conservation Blueprint for the 21st Century

The 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas summarizes more than 1.2 million bird records, documented by 2,000 of Pennsylvania's birders during 2004-2009. We compare results with the first atlas, twenty years prior, and draw conclusions about the

environmental changes that are causing the ups and downs among the state's 190 breeding bird species.

Andy Wilson has been an avid birder since childhood. In his native UK he was an Ecologist at the British Trust for Ornithology for 10 years before moving to PA for grad school in 2004...just in time for the start of 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas (2nd PBBA) fieldwork. After six years as a 2nd PBBA point count technician, Andy took a lead on analyzing the wealth of atlas data, and, along with Dan Brauning and Bob Mulvihill, edited the atlas book. Andy now lives in Frederick, MD, and is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Gettysburg College.

November 13, 2013 – Wild Borneo

This program is on the nature of Borneo and Northern Sulawesi with an emphasis on the Bornean component. Presenter Steve Rannels will discuss the forest and how all creatures have evolved and adapted to changing environments before and after the last ice age. A perspective from the 19th century naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace will be discussed. Borneo is rich in plant, bird, insect and mammal life – it is a must visit for the naturalist.

Dr. Steve Rannels has been interested in the natural world since early childhood when he joined the entomology club of the 4-H. That interest has persisted ever since. Steve attended Penn State University as a zoology major and then obtained a Ph.D. in Physiology at the Penn State University College of Medicine in Hershey.

December 11, 2013 – Member's Nature Slides and Digitals

Join us as members share their favorite slides and digital photos with the group. This is our holiday social, so please bring a plate of holiday treats to share after the program. Drinks will be provided.

And Our Field Trips at a Glance . . .

Please join us for as many of our field trips as your calendar will allow.

September 21, 2013 – Swatara State Park

Observation of flora and fauna in conjunction with the Friends of Swatara State Park. Meet Saturday 2:30 PM at Trout Run Trailhead parking lot. Leader Gary Kinkley, 503-4027.

October 27, 2013 – Swatara State Park

Bird walk for beginners (and non-beginners) – basic ID of common species. Meet Sunday 2:30 PM at Trout Run Trailhead parking lot. Leader Fritz Heilman, 273-0487.

December 14, 2013 – Christmas Bird Count

QAS thirty-fourth annual. Event includes walking and driving to count birds within prescribed area. Contact Fritz Heilman, 273-0487.

January 1, 2014 – Lebanon Valley Expo Center & Fair Grounds

Start the New Year off Birding! Observation of the local wintering birds while walking along the rail trail. The entire trip will be around 2 miles in length and 2 hours in duration (weather permitting). Come dressed for the weather and meet at the Sheetz parking lot on Rt. 72 (Quentin Road) at 12 noon. Leader Jim Fiorentino, 269-0675.

How Much Do You “like” QAS?

QAS is now on Facebook! Please stop by and “like” us. We are starting to add content about meetings and field trips as well as links which may interest QAS members. In addition, you can still sign up for the **QAS-Announce** mailing list to receive e-mail reminders for our public meetings, field trips, and other announcements of interest. Just go to our website at www.qasaudubon.org!



QAS Annual Bird Seed Sale

Look for the sale flyer in your mailbox in September or early October for this event – the 35th annual QAS bird seed sale. We will again provide the same great variety of high quality bird seed at competitive prices. All profits will support local QAS projects for youth and environmental education. When you receive your flyer, please invite friends, neighbors, and other bird lovers to also take advantage of this sale. Pick-up this year will be on November 2, 2013. The birds thoroughly enjoy the seeds! (Photo by Gary Kinkley)

Welcome to our new QAS members . . . Hope to see you at many of our events!

Lenora Arthur, Jane Bashore, Susan Berger, Linda Biever, James Bower, Barbara Brandt, Robert Brennan, Marjorie Brooksher, Cynthia Davis, Joan Deppert, Holly Dietz, John Dodge, Jerry Dundore, Pennie Freet, Debra Gearhart, Holly Greene, Margaretta Hartwell, Losi Herr, Milenna Hershey, George Hudson, Monica Kohr, Linda Lauman, Connie Lengle, Helen Lupinetti, Greg May, Dawn Moffett, Vivian Narehood, Kurt Nielsen, Charles Panisewicz Jr, Jessie Peters, Linda Reinbold, William Schaeffer Jr., John Shearer, Chris Sides, Pilar Sholley, Joan Smith, Gail Stahlnecker, Dorothy Stamer, Gwen & Eric Vitale, Robert Wilkerson

A Word from QAS President Jim Fiorentino

By the time you read this, my 1st year as QAS President will have been completed, and I must say it's been a very productive and interesting year. Beginning with the September campers program and concluding with the spring migration field trips this April & May – it's been wonderful. Of our six campers, one attended Audubon's Hog Island camp in Maine and five attended an environmental conservation camp in Costa Rica, and all of the Costa Rica campers were members of the Palmyra Middle School Envirothon Team! In October & November we had programs on garbage (pollution) in our local creeks, and an interesting program on Shakespeare's birds. We ended 2013 with a holiday social and the member slides program. There were many interesting slide show presentations, and of course the cookies were excellent and well received – but I'm still waiting for a peanut butter brownie... maybe this year (hint, hint)! We started off 2013 with Scott Weidensaul's Alaska program that resulted in a standing room only crowd and produced one of the most attended QAS monthly programs ever – 157 people! We followed with three more very well attended and interesting programs on our PA Forests, birrrrrding in Ontario, and a unique program on solitary bees & wasps. Our special family program in Lebanon also drew a great crowd. We had the highest attendance at our 2nd ZooAmerica program with over 122 people attending – many of them young children learning about nature with hands on experience. Kudos to Gary Kinkley for organizing this event and to everyone that helped out during the day.

Our field trips provided highlights as well. The annual Christmas bird count produced 83 species which tied the highest number of species recorded by QAS members in 2007, and added a new species this year – the eared grebe reported by Randy Miller! QAS also participated in a cold, windy Great Backyard bird count on February 17 at Union Canal Park. The field trips to Middle Creek as well as the remaining field trips were well attended by members and non-members, and I wish to thank to everyone that made them a success!

Additionally, effective February 8, 2013, the QAS Grant program became available to Pennsylvania environmental organizations in amounts up to \$500 – please see the website and the article on page 6 for further details and recent recipients. As of this writing, several grants have been approved and there are several more applications that the Board will be reviewing in upcoming meetings. QAS also participated in the Coleman's Park Summerfest and the 200th Lebanon Anniversary events where we had a booth display and handouts – all have been well received and I thank everyone that helped, visited, and attended these events... more are planned in the coming year.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone for their patience and assistance in answering my many questions. It has been a pleasure serving as the QAS President these last 12 months. Please take the time to look at the QAS programs and field trips listed in this newsletter or on our website, and plan to attend one or more of them. I look forward to seeing you at one of the events, and as always I'm available to answer any of your questions.

I hope you all get out there and do some birding, hiking or just plain sitting by the river or in your own backyard enjoying the view – nature is yours to enjoy – so enjoy it by attending one of our QAS events!

Swatara State Park Is a Friendly Place

The Friends of Swatara State Park host habitat days, field trips, and other activities in our beautiful State Park in northern Lebanon County. More information on the Friends group and upcoming activities can be found at

www.friendsofswatara.org. This fall, QAS board members Gary Kinkley and Fritz Heilman will be leading joint field trips with the Friends of Swatara State Park on September 21st and October 27th at the park (see page 2 for more details). There have been many new upgrades to the park over the last year including better parking, better signage, and trail improvements

throughout. So please come out and rediscover one of our two great state parks!

HersheyPark Fundraiser — Rosemary Spreha

QAS will once again participate in the HersheyPark Food Service fundraiser. Volunteers work at food booths in the Park, Stadium, or Giant Center. HersheyPark makes a donation to QAS for every hour worked and the volunteer receives a voucher good for a day pass at the park. Shifts are from 5 to 8 hours in length. If you are interested in helping with this fundraiser, please contact Rosemary Spreha at rspreha@excite.com or 717-657-0271.



On the Web

The focus of this issue “On the Web” is videos. There are a lot of great videos on the internet covering a variety of topics that QAS members may be interested in. Some are strictly educational, as you will see, and some may lean a little more toward entertainment...

The first video is an excellent explanation by Dr. Ingraffea from Cornell University highlighting the connection between fracking and climate change: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o78j77I7XUw>.

There is another great video about climate change from Bill Nye the Science Guy that is presented more for younger viewers, but it is filled with great information and visuals: <http://www.upworthy.com/bill-nye-the-science-guy-explains-the-basics-of-something-you-should-really-know-5?c=ufb1&g=2>.

The next video is both an educational and entertaining look at owls (you can decide for yourself whether it is more educational or more entertaining): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeFxdkaFzRA>.

This video is an interesting clip that attempts to answer the question “why are bugs attracted to light?”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVrWjpEOtts&feature=youtu.be>.

Finally, if you missed the cicada emergence this spring, there are a multitude of incredible cicada videos on the Cicada Mania website: <http://www.cicadamania.com/video/>.

Whether you are a birder, an amateur entomologist, a botanist, or just a *naturally* curious person, there are new websites waiting out there to be explored. Share

some of your favorites with us by emailing your links to qas@qasaudubon.org. We may share one of your links in a future newsletter.

Sponsors Always Appreciated for Audubon Adventures for Classrooms

Each year, students in classrooms in Lebanon County and the Hershey/Hummelstown area benefit from reading *Audubon Adventures*. This activity helps them to improve their informational reading skills and broadens their awareness of the environment. The classroom kits are provided by our local Quittapahilla Audubon Society and are sponsored through donations.

If you would like to continue making this valuable resource available to local children, please complete the form below and mail it to QAS. A label indicating your sponsorship will be placed on the *Audubon Adventures* kit.

AUDUBON ADVENTURE SPONSORSHIP FORM

Yes, I wish to sponsor an *Audubon Adventures* classroom for a donation of \$45. I understand a label indicating my sponsorship will be placed on the kit.

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Mail to: Quittapahilla Audubon Society
PO Box 123
Palmyra, PA 17078

April 14, 2013 – Tucquan Glen – Jim C. Logan & Jim M. Logan

Eleven participants completed a four hour trip for the observation of spring wild-flowers in southern Lancaster County.

Among the wildflower highlights were Bloodroot, Small-Flowered Buttercup, Blue Cohosh, Dutchmen’s



s Breeches, Hepatica (Photo by Fritz Heilman), Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Trout Lily, Marsh



Marigold,
May Apple,
Skunk
Cabbage,
Spring
Beauty, and
Susquehanna
Trillium.
While the
focus was
wildflowers,
there were

avian highlights as well including a Golden-crowned Kinglet, a White-breasted Nuthatch, and a Louisiana Nuthatch. Another highlight was a Five-lined Skink which posed for the assembled group (Photo by Fritz Heilman).

May 11, 2013 – Pennsylvania Migration Count – Chuck Berthoud

QAS participated in the 22nd annual PA Migration Counts with members spread throughout the county. The final tallies documented 169 species for the day, and a total 4,634 birds counted. Conditions were at times challenging with a few showers, but as often is the case, the rewards were worth enduring the conditions. The best bird of the day by far was a Pacific Loon spotted by Jonathon Heller at Memorial Lake State Park! Other highlights included Common Loon, White-winged



Scoter
(Photo by
Gary
Kinkley),
Stilt
Sandpiper,
a trio of
Terns
(Black,
Caspian,
and

Common), and 28 species of warblers – many of which appeared in high densities!

New PAMC compiler, Chuck Berthoud, extended thanks to all who participated in a successful count!

May 2013 – Birdathon – Fritz Heilman & Dave McNaughton

Two teams set out on consecutive weekends for this year's QAS Birdathon. Fritz's team shared the following highlights from their effort on May 19th. Fritz started at the pumping station parking lot off route 322, and walked the unpaved road adjacent to Hammer Creek

– warblers in this area included three Canada and a cerulean (high in a tree next to the creek) singing its territorial song. Several other warblers were present in the area as well including Louisiana Waterthrush. A stop at Middle Creek produced bobolink at stop 3, and a willow flycatcher (fitz-bew call) at stop 4. Along the northeast extension at the pond to the east of the cul-de-sac a female bufflehead was present with four lingering snow geese. Middle Creek also produced an active purple martin colony in a bird house along route 897. Another great highlight was spotted along Fonderwhite Road as a red-headed woodpecker was entering and exiting a possible nest cavity. Altogether, Fritz's team tallied 65 species.

Dave McNaughton's team crisscrossed Lebanon County combining their PAMC and Birdathon effort, and the rarities mentioned in Chuck Berthoud's PAMC report helped Dave's team tally 123 species total and 24 species of warblers! Among their highlights were Pacific Loon, White-winged Scoters, Red-breasted Merganser, Virginia Rails, Wilson's Snipes, Black Tern, Common Tern, Swainson's Thrush, Tennessee Warblers, Vesper Sparrow, and Dunlin.

Dave's team just barely checked off that Pacific Loon in an exciting race to the finish. "We had 5 minutes left in the 24 hours and were below the dam breast on the trail at Memorial when Jonathan Heller called about the Pacific Loon. We had just been up on the shore to see the Common and Black Terns a few minutes prior. When we got the call we knew it would be close. We ran to the car, drove up to the Middle Road lot and had just 2 minutes left. Chris Bortz and I sprinted to the lake with 1 scope to find Jonathan at his. He let us each look for the official count with seconds to spare. Thrilling!"

Even more thrilling is the \$545 collected to help fund QAS's education programs – thank you to all participants in the 2013 Birdathon!

June 1, 2013 – Roundtop Mountain (SGL 246) – Art Schiavo

Eleven participants headed out of the Round Top Road

parking lot into SGL-246. We hiked to the top of the main access road and back down again. Among the avian



highlights were: Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Veery, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Indigo Bunting. We also saw a good variety of dragonflies, butterflies, and other insects. Fritz Heilman, Brenda Gish, Ruth Krebs, and Pete Fox all helped to identify the many plants we encountered on the walk. (Photo by Fritz Heilman)

July 14, 2013 – Butterflies, Dragonflies and their Habitat – Fritz Heilman

We had five participants and spent about two hours at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area starting first at the garden by the visitor center followed by a short walk down to the sunfish pond to observe the dragonflies. At the garden some noted species included the snowberry clearwing moth, tiger swallowtails, one specimen of the American Lady, one of Great Spangled Fritillary, and a notable Viceroy (See photo by Fritz Heilman). The



Vicroy is a Monarch look-alike – excepting the extra dark band running the length of the hindwings. The pond dam repairs are still not complete so

observation was limited. We did see common whitetail and widow skimmer dragonflies along with the emerald jewelwing damselfly in the usual location opposite the dam in the shaded stream area. A ruby-throated hummingbird was also present. I had an opportunity to talk with Ellen Rupp, who manages the butterfly garden by the visitor center (and was on duty today in the visitor center), and thanked her for the effort to make this available to the public.

Conservation Contributions

At the May 14th and July 9th Board meetings, your QAS Board voted in favor of several financial contributions to conservation initiatives.

- \$300 was contributed to Audubon Pennsylvania to support their conservation and education work throughout the Commonwealth.
- \$250 was contributed to Bat Conservation International for their continued efforts to combat White-nose syndrome and for other bat-related issues.
- \$500 was contributed to the Lebanon Valley Conservancy for their educational efforts as well

as the effort to create stopover habitat for Tundra Swans around Middle Creek.

- \$400 was contributed to the Ned Smith Center's Northern Saw-whet Owl research project which has long been supported by QAS and several members as volunteers.



Stormy Weather Meeting Cancellations

When bad weather forces our chapter meetings to be cancelled, you can hear about it on CBS-21 or CW-15. These TV stations have agreed to broadcast cancellation announcements. They will also have this information available on their station websites: www.cbs21.com and www.cw15.com.

QAS Environmental Grants

This winter, we began receiving applications for the newly created QAS Grant program. We awarded four grants for the first year of the program. Here are the organizations which received the grants along with a little information about the projects that will be funded:

- Paddle Without Pollution was awarded a \$300 grant for their efforts in cleaning up Pennsylvania waterways. Last year, their low impact efforts (they only use paddle powered boats) removed 15.3 tons of trash from our rivers, creeks, wetlands, and lakes! You can learn more about the group at <http://paddlewithoutpollution.com/>.
- The Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art received a \$500 grant to be used for trail repairs around the center. Chronic trail erosion is creating excessive runoff and sediment build-up in the Wiconisco Creek. The quality of the creek habitat has been degraded as a result. You can learn more about the Ned Smith Center at <http://www.nedsmithcenter.org/>.
- The Seven Mountains Audubon Society received a \$100 grant for the creation of the Snyder County Birding Trail. Volunteers are building

and installing nest boxes on over 300 acres of reclaimed farm land that is owned by the Snyder County Conservation District. The grant funds will go toward materials. You can learn more about the group at <http://www.sevenmountainsaudubon.org/>.

- The Westmoreland Conservancy also received a \$100 grant for building and installing nest boxes. The project will create bird nesting habitat (focusing on owl & kestrel boxes) in the 270 acre Morosini Reserve which has a mix of young forest, meadows, lake, and stream habitat. You can learn more about the Westmoreland Conservancy at <http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org/>.

If you know of any organization that needs funding for similar projects, please direct them to check out the application on the QAS website. All of the links mentioned in the article are also posted on the QAS website.



Wanted: Campers for Summer 2014 –

Rosemary Spreha

QAS is looking for qualified local students to attend nature-related summer camps. Scholarships are available for students in first through eleventh grade. Anyone interested in attending summer camp and applying for a QAS scholarship needs to choose a camp appropriate to their age group and submit a scholarship application to QAS. Updated applications will be available this fall online at www.QASAudubon.org.

Suggested camps include Governor Dick Explorers' Camp, ZooAmerica Day Camp, Mass Audubon Camp, Teen Adventure Camp of Audubon Pennsylvania, and Hog Island Audubon Camp. Parents are responsible for a portion of the camp tuition and transportation to and from camp.

Keep These Lands Wild – Dan Alters from the Williamsport Sun-Gazette, June 16, 2013

**Editors Note: The following article is a letter to the editor of the Williamsport Sun Gazette from an actual attendee to the invitation-only meeting that DCNR held*

concerning drilling in the Loyalsock State Forest. This article serves as an update to the ongoing issue first described in the article Conservation Action Needed in our Spring 2013 Newsletter. Action is still need. Please consider contacting your representatives, Governor Corbett, and the DCNR.

I attended the DCNR meeting June 3 at Lycoming College. I endured a poorly planned and even more poorly managed meeting for over three hours but was denied the opportunity to present any comment on the protection of the Clarence Moore tracts of the Loyalsock State Forest, public lands having incredible natural, scenic and recreational value.

While I was pleased DCNR finally agreed to hold a public meeting, I was disappointed that less than two weeks' advance notice was provided, that such a short amount of time was allotted for this important issue, and that it was held on a Monday at 4 p.m. when a lot of people are still at work.

Some people might get the impression Secretary Allen did not really want citizen input, the position he clearly took during the closed door, invitation-only meeting near Laporte two months ago when he stated there would be no public hearing. The gas development on the Clarence Moore tracts involves multi-millions of dollars in business for the gas industry. It is obvious DCNR knows how important public participation can be, especially when a proposal or project may be controversial, but somehow deems itself beyond review or reproach where gas development is involved.

This is incredible arrogance and shows a complete disdain for the opinion of all Pennsylvanians!

Ms. Arianne Proctor did a fine job explaining what DCNR has done thus far to examine the proposal by Anadarko to drill on State Forest Lands.

She supplemented the slide show she used at the invitation-only meeting with some improved and more specific data, but it was not the complete picture. Anadarko is only one of the two gas companies with rights to the gas under the Loyalsock State Forest.

If DCNR persists in its obvious intent to allow gas development in the Loyalsock State Forest, we should all insist that DCNR make its proposed deal with all of the gas industry available to the public and solicit comments from the citizens of this Commonwealth consistent with legitimate public participation policies.

The effective input of the public cannot begin until details of the complete proposed agreement are known, adequate time is made available to review that proposal, and a public hearing is announced at least 30 days prior to a hearing held at a time convenient for the

majority of people that have a stake in the future of the Loyalsock State Forest.

DCNR must hold a true public hearing on the complete proposal and obtain comments prior to making any decision on gas well development on the Clarence Moore tracts. The citizens of Pennsylvania deserve nothing less. I urge everyone with a desire to protect these public lands to write to both DCNR and our state legislators expressing that concern. We must keep these lands wild!

PA Agency Gets Lion's Share of Funding from Drilling Industry — Sandy Bauers, Inquirer Staff Writer, July 4, 2013

The agency that oversees the state's parks and forests has conservation in its name. But its funding source has become much more about extraction - of natural gas.

The current budget, passed Sunday, shows that the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources no longer gets most of its money from the state general fund. It now gets the bulk of its operating revenue from a fund swollen by money from natural gas development.

The practice, started under Gov. Ed Rendell and escalated under Gov. Corbett, leaves the agency improperly beholden to the natural gas drilling industry, says State Rep. Greg Vitali (D., Delaware County).

"There's a concern when an agency whose mission is to conserve state lands is funded by the extraction of resources from state lands," said Vitali, minority chairman of the House Committee on Environmental Resources and Energy. "It's a conflict of interest."

The current budget shows a \$30 million payment to the DCNR from the state's general fund, and more than three times that - \$106.5 million - from the Oil and Gas Lease Fund, which consists of rents and royalties from drilling on state forestland.

Vitali called the figure "shocking." He voted against the budget because of it, he said. He and others said the funding was not helping the agency, just getting state finances out of a bind. "I'm not even sure this appropriation is entirely legal," he added. "My mind begs for an audit."

The way he reads the law, lease-fund money is to be used only for special projects and infrastructure improvements, not day-to-day operating expenses.

A spokeswoman for the department said the contributions were proper. "We say this is consistent with the goals that were established when the fund was created, which is conservation, recreation, and flood control," said Chris Novak.

The lease fund was created in 1955 by the now-legendary Maurice K. "Doc" Goddard, a forester who wanted to see a state park within 25 miles of every

resident. He saw revenue from the fund as a way to achieve that.

Before drilling for natural gas came to the state's Marcellus Shale region, about \$5 million a year went into the fund from oil and natural gas drilling, Novak said.

But in recent years - as leases on state land were sold and wells gradually were drilled and started producing - "we have seen the fund increasing exponentially," she said.

The money flowing to the DCNR from the lease fund has steadily risen, reaching \$106.5 million in the year that started July 1.

Likewise, money from the state's general fund fell from \$116.5 million in 2007-8 to \$30 million this year.

"They're almost taking this whole agency off budget," Vitali said. He said previous DCNR secretaries had noted about \$1 billion worth of project backlogs, including replacing high-hazard dams, that he said the fund could be used to pay for.

Patrick Creighton, a spokesman for the Marcellus Shale Coalition, an industry group, called the current concerns a manufactured issue "solely for the sake of stirring controversy," adding that it "shows how dangerously out of touch" some can be.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Foundation, a nonprofit formed in 1985, filed suit against the state in 2012, contending the practice of using money in the lease fund for general expenses instead of further land protection, improvement, or mitigation from natural gas development violated state law.

The suit was in response to Rendell's requiring state forestlands to be leased, and then using the money to fill a \$60 million budget gap.

"Leasing state land for gas extraction, that's causing harm," said the group's attorney, John Childe. "Taking the money from that lease and using it for the general fund, rather than to protect and conserve the land that's being impacted . . . is unconstitutional."

The lawsuit is ongoing.

The influx to the lease fund took off in 2010, when natural gas drillers bid \$128.5 million to develop 32,000 acres of state forests. The acting DCNR secretary, John Quigley, said he was worried the windfall might prompt policymakers to push for more leases.

"As we sit here this afternoon, fully one-third of the state forest is now leased for gas exploration," he said in an interview then. "I think that raises some important questions. How much is too much?"

Reached Monday, he declined to comment on the current issue.

Later, Rendell enacted a moratorium, which still stands, although the leases that were sold are being

developed and generating more income. Corbett has the authority to lift the moratorium at any time, but Vitali has introduced legislation to permanently ban the leasing of state forestland for natural gas drilling.

Currently, 700,000 of the state's 2.2 million acres of state forest are available for leasing, Novak said. Nearly 900 wells have been permitted; 325 are producing gas - and providing royalties. That leaves more than 500 wells in the queue, potentially adding still more to the lease fund's coffers.

Bald Eagle numbers soar in Pennsylvania

— Paul Smith from Fox43.com

**Editors note: Many of our members were able to observe Lebanon County's well-publicized Bald Eagle nest along Pine Road, and articles have appeared in all of our local papers. That very special nest is emblematic of the positive trend that our national symbol has been experiencing statewide. Conservation Chair, Art Schiavo, shared this great article that chronicles this great conservation success story.*

A bald eagle soaring high on the Fourth of July. It's about as American an image as one could conjure.

And for Pennsylvanians this Independence Day, the opportunity to witness such a sight firsthand is greater than at any other time in recent memory.

In the 30th anniversary year of efforts to restore bald-eagle populations in the Commonwealth, the bird – a national symbol of strength and freedom – not only is continuing its remarkable comeback, but is taking it to new heights.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission this week released its preliminary count of bald eagle nests statewide, and the numbers chart yet another high point in an impressive upward trend.

So far this year, 252 eagle nests have been confirmed throughout the state, with nesting eagles present in 56 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

That's a sharp increase from the previous mid-year report, which the Game Commission typically releases just before the Fourth of July.

A year ago, there were 206 confirmed eagle nests in 51 counties.

Game Commission Executive Director Carl G. Roe said that as eye-popping as the latest numbers might be, they're far from surprising.

"We're to the point in Pennsylvania where the bald eagle's success is something that's expected," Roe said. "Year after year, their numbers grow. Year after year, their range grows broader.

"It truly is a remarkable story," he said. "And remarkably, it's a true story, and one that continually builds up to a better and better ending."

Just 30 years ago, the bald eagle's future in Pennsylvania looked bleak. Its population decimated by the effects of water pollution, persecution and compromised nest success caused by organochlorine pesticides such as DDT, only three pairs of nesting eagles remained in the state – all of them located in Crawford County, in northwestern Pennsylvania along the Ohio border.

But in 1983, the Game Commission launched what would become a seven-year bald eagle restoration program. The agency, as part of a federal restoration initiative, sent employees to Saskatchewan to obtain eaglets from wild nests.

Initially, 12 seven-week-old eaglets were taken from nests in Canada's Churchill River valley and brought to specially constructed towers at two sites. At these towers

– at Haldeman Island on the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg, and at Shohola Lake in Pike County – the birds were "hacked," a process by which the eaglets essentially are raised by humans, but without knowing it, then released gradually into the wild.

In all, 88 bald eaglets from Canada were released from the sites as part of the program, which was funded in part by the Richard King Mellon Foundation of Pittsburgh and the federal Endangered Species Fund.

This reintroduction jump-started the recovery.

By 1998, Pennsylvania was home to 25 pairs of nesting bald eagles. Within the next three years, the number of nesting pairs doubled. Eagles continued to thrive, and in 2005, the Game Commission took the bald eagle off the state's endangered list and reclassified it as a threatened species.

A year later, more than 100 nests were confirmed statewide. And now, the number stands at 252.

It's not likely to stop there, either, said Patti Barber, a biologist with the Game Commission's Endangered and Nongame Birds section. While the mid-year update on nests provides a good indicator of how bald eagles are doing statewide, Barber said it's a preliminary number and additional nests typically are confirmed as the year goes on.



– at Haldeman Island on the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg, and at Shohola Lake in Pike County – the birds were "hacked," a process by

In 2012, for instance, 206 nests were reported preliminarily, but the year-end total was 237 statewide. It was a showing similar to 2011, when the preliminary total of 203 nests increased to 217 by year's end.

But with a lofty 252 nests at mid-year, how many more could really be out there?

"It's hard to say, but in all likelihood more remain to be counted," Barber said. "Our tally was 249 just a week or two ago, and three more were reported since that time, so I'd be surprised if the preliminary number doesn't grow."

Perhaps the easiest way to report a nest is to contact the Game Commission through its public comments email address: pgccomments@pa.gov, and use the words "Eagle Nest Information" in the subject field. Reports also can be phoned in to a Game Commission Region Office or the Harrisburg headquarters.

Barber said discovering a new eagle nest can be exciting, but people need to keep their wits about them, and make sure they're not doing anything to frighten the birds.

Those encountering nests are asked to keep a safe distance. Disturbing eagles is illegal under the federal



Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Some pairs are tolerant of human activity, while others are sensitive.

Their reaction often depends on the activity and approach of the individual, the nesting cycle stage, and if the eagles are used to seeing people.

"Where there is regular public access and established viewing areas, some pairs can be very tolerant if visitors are predictable and nonthreatening," Barber said. "But when someone sneaks to the base of a nest tree, most eagles become alarmed."

Barber said there have been cases where people purposely flushed eagles from nests in attempts to get pictures of them in flight. Such behavior not only is illegal, but runs the risk of killing unhatched or recently hatched birds, she said.

Adults that are scared from a nest could abandon it, or might not return in time to keep unhatched eggs at the proper incubating temperature. Frightened eaglets also could jump from the safety of the nest, then have no way to return, Barber said.

"There are all types of problems associated with getting too close to a nest," Barber said. "For the sake of

eagles, use you binoculars or a spotting scope. They are after all, still on the comeback trail from being an endangered species."

While the bald eagle population grows stronger each year in Pennsylvania, the birds remain classified as a threatened species statewide.

Their rebound, however, continues to astonish and provide those who love wildlife with reason to celebrate. Just this year, 41 pairs of eagles – believed to be first-time nesters – nested at new sites. (Photo of Pine Road adult by Gary Kinkley, Photo of Pine Road nestlings by Harry Fox)

International Vulture Awareness Day

Celebrate nature's clean-up crew! – Hawk Mountain Sanctuary website

September 07, 2013

10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Held rain or shine – Vulture programs held indoors in the event of rain.

Programs are FREE with trail fee

Hawk Mountain loves to observe, study and learn more about vulture species here, and around the world. Join us in celebrating our winged clean-up crew with a live vulture program from Red Creek



Wildlife Center at 12, a day-long vulture counting activity at the lookouts, and information on our own long-term research on this social, graceful, and incredibly sanitary scavenging raptor.

Trail fee applies. Check out <http://www.hawkmountain.org/events/international-vulture-awareness-day/page.aspx?id=683> for more details. (Photo by Gary Kinkley)

QAS Winter Newsletter Deadline

If you have an item or article you would like to submit for inclusion in the next issue of the Quittapahilla Audubon Society Newsletter, please send them to Gary Kinkley by November 21, 2013. Articles may be emailed to cathartesaura@live.com or mailed to him at 3 Clark Road, Annville, PA 17003. Comments are also welcome. This is your chapter and your newsletter, and we want to hear from you!

LEAVE A LEGACY FOR QAS

You, as a member or friend of QAS, can leave a legacy that will help save the special areas you have explored and loved long after you are gone. Remember Quittapahilla Audubon Society, your LOCAL Audubon connection, through a bequest in your Will or through a gift annuity that will specifically support QAS programs while paying you a monthly income for life.

To learn more about how you can make a bequest and create a permanent legacy in your name or in someone's memory, as well as tax benefits for planned giving options, please contact your attorney or financial advisor.

In supporting a cause that you hold dear, you can have peace of mind that your time on this planet has mattered.

Chapter-Only Membership Application Information

Quittapahilla Audubon Society offers a local Chapter-Only membership that differs from the current National Audubon membership in these ways:

- 1. The annual fee of \$20.00 will go directly for QAS activities only.
- 2. The membership period runs from July 1st to July 1st, regardless of when you join.
- 3. You will receive the chapter newsletter informing you of upcoming events, but you will not receive the *Audubon* magazine.

If you are interested, please issue a check to QAS for \$20 and mail to: Chapter-Only Membership, c/o Jim M. Logan, Chairman, 810 Hill St., Lebanon, PA 17046. Do not mail to the National membership address in Palm Coast, FL.

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The QAS Board meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday in January, March, May, July, September, and November at the Lebanon Valley UCC Home, Annville, PA. Meetings are open to interested persons. If you would like to attend a meeting or are interested in finding out about any of the open positions listed here, please contact Gary Kinkley, President.

Please send **ADDRESS changes and corrections** to Jim M. Logan, 810 Hill St., Lebanon, PA 17046.

**National Audubon Society
CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Local Chapter Quittapahilla Audubon (C0ZU16OZ)

Yes, I would like to join. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and my local chapter at the **INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP** cost of \$20. Please send AUDUBON magazine, my membership card, and the chapter newsletter to the address below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Introductory Membership \$20.00

My check for \$_____ is enclosed.

Please make all checks payable to:

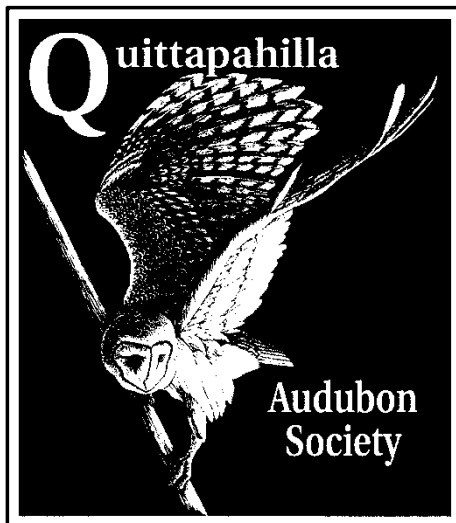
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