

QUITTAPAHILLA AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Winter 2016-2017

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.

Please note: that the Lebanon Valley Home has a new policy regarding the front entrance. The door will

now be locked at 6pm each night instead of 8pm for the safety of residents. We will have a QAS member out front on meeting nights until the meeting starts to open the door. There is a doorbell installed which will alert a Lebanon Valley Home employee to your presence if you are late. (Photo by Jesse Reinhart).



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.

January 25 – The Broad-winged Hawk: Conserving a Long-Distance Migrant – Dr. Laurie Goodrich, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

The Broad-winged Hawk is a common raptor of Pennsylvania but its numbers are declining in some regions. Little is known about its long-distance

migration and full life cycle habitat needs. In 2014 Hawk Mountain Sanctuary launched a new study focusing on the breeding and migration ecology of Broad-winged Hawks of PA. With field observations, nest cameras, and habitat analyses we hope to gain a better understanding of the breeding ecology and habitat use of this species. Using satellite telemetry (this study marks the first time a telemetry unit has ever been placed on a juvenile broad-wing), we are able to trace the movements of this long-distance migrant from PA to Central and South America, and back, allowing us to identify stop-over sites, roosting locations, and wintering habitats. Such data is critical to the long-term conservation of this iconic migrant and its migration spectacle!

Dr. Laurie Goodrich is the Director of Long-term Monitoring at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. She obtained her MS from Rutgers University, and her PhD from Penn State. Her job duties at Hawk Mountain include directing long-term monitoring of birds including migration counts, conducting research on migration ecology and breeding ecology of forest raptors, collaborator on Veracruz River of Raptors project, and assists with land conservation and stewardship of sanctuary property. Her MS was on least terns, and her PhD was on habitat use of migrating raptors. She also serves on board of the Hawk Migration Association of North America.

February 22 – Forest Insect of PA Pests – Tom Marasco, PA Department of Forestry

Forest insect pests adversely affect forest and landscape settings. When forest trees are impacted, it can change an entire ecosystem and also result in significant economic losses. Join us to learn and ask your questions about current pest infestations happening around Pennsylvania right now including the Emerald Ash Borer, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Gypsy moth, a handful of native caterpillars, and the Spotted Lanternfly with Tim Marasco of the PA Bureau of Forestry.

Tim Marasco is the Field Operations Supervisor for the Division of Forest Pest Management, PA Bureau of Forestry. His work involves investigating insects and disease that threaten PA forests and mitigating those risks.

March 22 – Antarctic Odyssey – Steve Rannels

A journey to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and Antarctic Peninsula was the realization of a long-time dream for Steve Rannels and his wife, Sharon. Along the way, they retraced some of the path of Sir Ernest

Shackleton's epic 1915 journey in its centenary year. Known locally for his inspiring programs and beautiful photographs, Steve will present breathtaking pictures of colonies of King Penguins, Albatrosses, seals, and sea lions observed against the backdrop of icy mountains, glaciers, and icebergs.

Since childhood, Steve has had a fascination for insects. This interest has persisted and developed into an urge to understand the natural world, know its components, and understand its dynamic interrelationships. Steve and Sharon are active in local bird clubs and land conservation groups. His philosophy is to preserve as much of the environment as possible for all species.

April 19 – Astronomy Program – Rich Fried

The night sky has been a source of wonder and amazement throughout history. To ancient cultures, patterns in the sky were not only religiously significant, but also served as a means to tell time and survive. Presenter Rich Fried will discuss astronomy from a historical perspective. Learn how our understanding of the universe has evolved from ancient times through to modern day. Focus is given to exploring common night sky objects such as stars, constellations, and planets and a discussion of Earth's place in the universe at large.

Rich is a high school Earth and Space Science teacher for the Cornwall-Lebanon School District. In addition to teaching electives in each of the major branches of Earth Science, he manages and operates the school's planetarium for field trips and evening general public star shows. Rich studied Earth Sciences with a focus in climate change at Penn State and is currently pursuing his M.Ed. in Earth Sciences through Penn State's World Campus.

May 23 – What's Not to Love About a Bluebird – The Ecology and Management of Bluebirds – Dr. Dean C. Rust

*****Please note the new date and the new location for our banquet at the Hebron Banquet Hall, 701 E Walnut Street, Lebanon, PA 17042. The Spring QAS Newsletter will have the reservation form so please look for it and save the date!**

And Our Field Trips at a Glance . . .

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

Sunday, February 19 – Union Canal Tunnel Park – 20th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

Meet 2 PM at Union Canal Tunnel Park for the Observation of flora and fauna including data collecting for the 20th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Leader Fritz Heilman (273-0487)

Saturday February 25 – Barnegat Lighthouse & Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge

This is an all day trip, weather permitting, limit 8. Contact Jim Fiorentino for more information (269-0675).

Saturday, March 18 – Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area

Observation of migrating waterfowl and resident birds. Meet 9 AM at visitor center parking lot. Leader Fritz Heilman (273-0487).

Sunday, March 19 – Timberdoodle at Swatara State Park

The first of two trips to observe the “sky dance” of the crepuscular woodcock in our two beautiful state parks. Meet Sunday 7:00 PM at Trout Run Trailhead parking lot. Leader Gary Kinkley (503-4027).

Sunday, March 26 – Timberdoodle at Memorial Lake State Park

The second of two trips to observe the “sky dance” of the crepuscular woodcock in our two beautiful state parks. Meet Sunday 7:00 PM at the upper parking lot. Leader Gary Kinkley (503-4027).

Saturday, April 8 – Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area

Observation of migrating waterfowl and resident birds. Meet 9 AM at visitor center parking lot. Leader Fritz Heilman (273-0487).

Saturday, April 22 – Monroe Valley Earth Day Wildflower Walk

Observation of wildflowers via easy walk. Insect spray advised. For more details, contact leaders Jim M. Logan (273-8438) and Jim C. Logan (865-5522).

Saturday, April 29 – John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge

Observe resident and early migrant birds. Contact leader Jim Fiorentino for more information (269-0675).

Sunday, April 30 – Swatara State Park

Observation of flora and fauna by walk on railroad bed. Meet 2:30 PM at Trout Run parking lot. Leader Fritz Heilman (273-0487).

QAS Needs You!

If you can give a little bit of your time to QAS, please consider becoming a board member, an officer, or a committee chairperson. Your help will be welcome in any capacity – even if you only have a little bit of time to help. The reach of QAS is only limited by the abilities and contributions of our members. You can talk to any officer or board member anytime about your interest in volunteering. **We would love to welcome you to the QAS team!**

Check out the QAS Grant Program!

The grant applications are online. We accept them year-round! Check out the QAS website if you or someone you know has a project that may qualify for a QAS Grant!

QAS Camper Scholarships – Rosemary Spreha

QAS is looking for qualified local students to attend nature-related summer camps. Scholarships are available for students in first through twelfth grade. Scholarships are also available for Educators. 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 and the criteria are available online at www.QASAudubon.org.

Suggested camps include ZooAmerica Day Camp, Wildwood Way Day Camp, and Hog Island Audubon Camp. Parents are responsible for a portion of the camp tuition and transportation to and from camp.

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

Gloria Belair, James Bower, Steven Carlisle, Jodi Currier, Robert Feaser, William Fessler, Sharon Fry, Peter Grandi, Sylvia Heagy, Janine Jonovich, Nancy Levan, Naomi Moyer, Lori Paladino, Donald Pankake, Jessie Peters, Cindy Whittington.

A Word from QAS President Jim Fiorentino...

It's November 15, as I write this and as I look out my window at all the leaves in my yard, it's very apparent that Fall has arrived and that means that Winter is not far behind. I do enjoy the Fall migration and again this year visited Cape May in mid-October with several members of QAS. We had a wonderful trip and ended the 4 days with a total of 116 species! The highlights included many lifers for several members of the group – including Red Knots, Clapper Rail, Saltmarsh Sparrow, Nelson's Sparrow, Black Scoters, and an immature Golden Eagle to name a few. If you have never been to Cape May in the Fall, do yourself a favor and go – it's a trip you will not soon forget.

Our annual Seed Sale has just been completed, and again this year, Jim & Kitty Logan did an excellent job at organizing this all important (and only) fund raiser for QAS. My personal thanks go out to both of them for their efforts and to all those that gave of their time and

assisted in the unloading and loading of the orders – a true group effort!

I must also report that a few changes

have been made concerning our annual banquet. The Friendship Fire Hall is no longer catering banquets and, as such, we were forced to find a new venue. After many inquiries at various facilities and several

discussions, it was decided by the Board of Directors that the 2017 QAS Banquet will be held on Tuesday, May 23, at the Hebron Fire Hall. The Officers and Board are still working out some of the details and any updates will be added to the website. I offer my and the Board's thanks to JoAnn Yeagley for her time and effort in getting all the information and presenting it to the Board so we could make an informed decision on the options presented that would be best for our membership and guest speaker.

Changing subjects, I am looking forward to QAS's 37th Annual Christmas Bird Count being held this year on December 17 (which will most likely be over by the time you read this). As in years past, Fritz Heilman will again be coordinating the groups and tallying the species for QAS. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate and we will enjoy a speculator day of birding in and around the Lebanon County area. My thanks to all the participants and especially to Fritz for his efforts in coordinating, updating, and maintaining the records of this activity.

And speaking of field trips, we have many planned for the remainder of this season, be sure you plan to attend at least one, and hopefully several of our many and varied trips – at least one should be of interest of to every member. Along with the field trips, we have several wonderful programs scheduled including programs on Broad Wing Hawks, Forest Insects, Astronomy and Antarctica – hopefully one (or all of them) will interest you.

As I look forward to 2017, I would like to take the time to thank all the Officers, Directors, Field Trip leaders, program presenters, and all the volunteers who helped make 2016 a very successful year for QAS.

In closing, I hope you all have a Happy Thanksgiving, a wonderful joyful Holiday and Christmas season and a Happy New Year. I hope to see all of you on a QAS field trip, along a birding trail, or at a QAS program during the upcoming year! (Photo by Jim Cascarino).

Good Birding to All! – Jim

The 2016 Seed Sale was a Success!

Kitty and Jim Logan, as seed sale coordinators, want to give a special note of THANKS to the following board members and QAS friends for unloading and/or distributing the seed for our 37th seed sale: Fritz Heilman, Gary Kinkley, Jo Ann Yeagley, Maggie Hummel, Brenda Gish, Terry & Karen Weaver, Gerry Boltz, Tom Powers, Joe Fischer, Steve Holzman

Without these volunteers our main fund raiser could not have been completed!



How Much Do You “like” QAS?

QAS is on Facebook! Please stop by and “like” us. We are always adding 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!

Sept. 4 – Pumping Station Road – Fritz Heilman

Trip leader Jim Fiorentino and myself were the sole participants on this Sunday, Sept. 4 field trip to the Hammer Creek area by the old pumping station parking lot off route 322. Our two-hour visit yielded several good looks of some nice birds including a couple black-throated green warblers and perhaps the highlight of the day, a good look at a Canada warbler. Ruby-throated hummingbirds were sighted several times – including a close look at one of these birds obtaining nectar from flowers of the jewelweed (touch-me-not) plant. Two female rose-breasted grosbeaks were also observed along

with several red-eyed vireos, robins, and catbirds (this must be where the Lebanon City



robins and catbirds disappeared to).

After walking this area, we made a side trip to Speedwell Forge Lake where about a dozen double-crested cormorants were noted along with a couple great egrets, a green heron, and a couple great-blue herons. The lake has regained its water level and the flooded vegetation on both the north and south ends should provide extra habitat for waterfowl during the next couple of years.

Finally, an extra side trip to Speedwell Forge County Park was decided upon. Here we walked the short loop trail which brings one next to Hammer Creek for about a third of the distance. We had few birds, but did see many tall plants of giant ragweed (*Ambrosia trifida*), some around ten to twelve feet high along with some not quite as tall examples of the plant, pilewort, a member of the composite family of plants. (Photo by Jim Cascarino).

Oct. 2 – Stoever’s Dam Park Arboretum – Fritz Heilman

We had four participants on the Stoever's Dam Park Arboretum field trip. We spent about 2-1/2 hours onsite observing the trees and shrubs. Notable observations included the spectacular acorns on the bur oak, the corky bark of the hackberry tree, the impressive size and appearance of the dawn redwood (a tree thought extinct until discovered in China in 1944), the nut of the American beechnut, the nut and curious capsule of the American hazelnut, and the scarlet leaf (a sure sign of fall) of blackgum (also known as sourgum, tupelo). The literature states that migrating birds key in on the scarlet leaves of blackgum, and thereby gain access to the high fat content of its fruit (over 14% fat). This helps fuel these migrants on their journey south!

Oct. 14, 15, & 16 – Cape May Trip – Jim Fiorentino

Six attendees traveled to Cape May for a beautiful weekend of birding. We started the weekend (Friday morning) traveling to Brigantine NWR only to find out that that the wildlife loop road is closed for repairs and will remain closed until sometime in early 2017. If you know of anyone that is planning to drive to Brigantine, I would suggest they check the website first to see what areas they can access. We did end up walking the area around the visitor’s center and the Leeds trail and ended that morning with 45 species. The highlight of the walk was an American Bittern standing along the edge of the marsh in full view and sunlight.

Since we had some extra time, we traveled to the Stone Harbor Wildlife Institute – a new birding location for us. The group was not disappointed as we added 26 species including Tri-colored Heron and had great looks at several flocks of Willets both flying and sitting – those white wings are wonderful to see in the sunlight.

We started our day Saturday morning traveling to the Cape May Hawk watch. There wasn't much hawk activity, but we all had very close-up looks at both Orange & Ruby Crowned Kinglets. We then walked the boardwalk trail, and we were inundated with flock after flock of Yellow-rumped Warblers – there were hundreds (maybe thousands) of them everywhere! We also added Magnolia, Cape May, and Palm Warblers as we walked the boardwalk. The highlight was an Immature Golden Eagle flying directly overhead – giving everyone excellent looks. We ended up spending most of the day in and around the Cape May Point State Park area, and we ended the day with 68 species including

Black Scoter, Parasitic Jaeger, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and a Eurasian Wigeon.

On Sunday, we started the day birding the Meadows areas, and we were again overwhelmed with the number of Yellow-rumped Warblers in the area. We next traveled to the Osprey Birding by Boat 10am tour. Again this year, we were not disappointed in this three-hour trip. We had great looks at Saltmarsh and Nelson's Sparrows, Ruddy Turnstones, Peregrine Falcons, Dunlin, Spotted Sandpiper, and a Clapper Rail in full view walking along the marsh! After the boat tour, we traveled to the Higbee Meadows adding Swamp and Lincoln's Sparrows, a Black-billed Cuckoo, and a Tennessee Warbler to our growing trip list! We were also treated to a Bald Eagle chasing an Osprey several times.

We then traveled to the Avalon Sea Watch. We spent about 2 hours at the sea watch and we had great looks at several flocks of Black and Surf scoters, Northern Gannets, Black-bellied Plovers, Red Knots, and large flocks of Sanderlings. While there, we also observed several dolphins 'wave riding' along the jetty – a really neat thing to see for everyone there!

We were informed of another location where we could possibly observe night herons and Red Knots so we decided to give it shot. We followed the directions given to us and we were soon looking at the Black-crowned Night Herons. We then moved to the next location provided in search of the Red Knots. We arrived at the beach area and observed several hundred shore birds foraging and standing on the surf's edge. We ended up with Black-bellied and Golden Plovers, hundreds of Sanderlings and Dunlin, Least Sandpipers, Semi-palmated Plovers, and several others – but no Red Knots. As it was getting late, we reluctantly decided to call it a day and head for home.

We ended the trip with 116 species, and we added many life birds for several members of the group. We had beautiful weather, we saw many birds, and we enjoyed great fellowship! It was another wonderful trip to Cape May – I am already looking forward to next year's trip!

October 22 – Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area – Fritz Heilman

We had four participants on this 3 ½ hour visit to Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area – a visit marked by cold and windy conditions.

We first walked a section of conservation trail, just west and south of the visitor's center. Not many birds were noted along this area, but we did observe robins flying overhead. We also took some time to observe the

plants along the pathway and found the seed heads of wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), and in another area, the very sticky seed burs of Virginia stickseed (*Hackelia virginiana*).

Driving up to the parking lot off Laurel Drive, we observed - just off the east end of the lot - many songbirds and a large crop of wild grapes. In this area, we found white-throated sparrows, dark-eyed juncos, and both the ruby and golden-crowned kinglets.

Next, at the dock area, we noted over twenty ruddy ducks out on the water along with an adult bald eagle perched

on a snag just above the water and several great egrets



and great-blue herons. An immature bald eagle was flying above the lake.

Finally, we decided to try for an observation of the red-headed woodpecker off Hickory Road just east of Middle Creek. We were not disappointed as Jim Fiorentino located an immature bird on the edge of the swampy woodlot. The property owner happened by and informed us that the red-headed woodpeckers nested in the woodlot this past summer, raising two young. We were also informed that the ash trees on site were infected by the emerald ash borer beetle, and did not survive into the fall. (Photo by Jim Cascarino).

November 13 – Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area – Jim Fiorentino

We had four participants on about a three hour visit to Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. At our first observation site, stop one, we noted, in the small pond on the west side, several female common mergansers, a couple of ring-necked ducks, and a coot. In the background, just up the bank a doe was busy finding a morning meal. There were many Canada geese on the main lake. We also observed an immature bald eagle while we traveled the main road

On the walk out to Willow Point, we came across a flock of cedar waxwings. Just before the point, on the pond to the north, were many waterfowl including a small group of shoveler ducks. At the point, we saw about fifteen buffleheads; and in the distance perched in

the trees by the water's edge were both adult bald eagles. Thirty-four was the species total for the visit.

The next GBBC is February 17-20, 2017 – <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time.

Now, more than 160,000 people of all ages and walks of life worldwide join the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.

We invite you to participate! Simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, **February 17-20, 2017**. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world, for as long as you wish!

If you're new to the count, or have not participated since before the 2013 merger with eBird, you must create a free online account to enter your checklists. If you already have an account, just use the same login name



and password. If you have already participated in another Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you can use your existing

login information, too.

In 2016, Great Backyard Bird Count participants in more than 130 countries counted 5,689 species of birds on more than 162,000 checklists!

During the count, you can explore what others are seeing in your area or around the world. Share your bird photos by entering the photo contest, or enjoy images pouring in from across the globe. New in 2016: you can add photos and sounds to your checklist. Your help is needed every year to make the GBBC successful!

Then keep counting throughout the year with eBird, which uses the same system as the Great Backyard Bird

Count to collect, store, and display data any time, all the time.

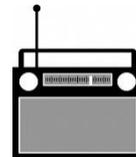
Why count birds?

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document and understand the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time.

Scientists use information from the Great Backyard Bird Count, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and eBird, to get the "big picture" about what is happening to bird populations. The longer these data are collected, the more meaningful they become in helping scientists investigate far-reaching questions, like these:

- How will the weather and climate change influence bird populations?
- Some birds, such as winter finches, appear in large numbers during some years but not others. Where are these species from year to year, and what can we learn from these patterns?
- How will the timing of birds' migrations compare with past years? (Photo by Deb Kreider).

You can join the QAS GBBC effort at Union Canal Tunnel Park! More details are located on page three.



Tune In...

If you enjoy listening to nature-oriented programs, you may want to consider tuning in to Jack's Backyard, a call-in talk show about nature and birding with a general focus on the great outdoors and creatures in our local environment. Tune into Reading radio station WEEU AM 830 on Saturday mornings from 8 to 10 AM or call (610) 374-8800 or 1-800-323-8800 to participate (note: each Saturday's broadcast is repeated the following Sunday from 10 PM to 12 AM).

Sponsors Always Appreciated for Audubon Adventures for Classrooms

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: _____

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Mail to:

Quittapahilla Audubon Society
PO Box 123
Palmyra, PA 17078

Coleman Memorial Park Trees – Fritz Heilman

On November 16, 2016 at Coleman Memorial Park with the assistance of Bruce Sattazahn and his Kubota excavator, Coleman Memorial Park caretaker Craig Henninger, Jim Logan Sr., and myself, we planted six trees within the park at selected sites. All of the trees came from Althouse's Nursery in Myerstown. Althouse donated several of these trees, and the others were paid for by the Quittapahilla Audubon Society.

The trees planted included white spruce, Serbian spruce, white dogwood, northern red oak, a variety

of crabapple called Firebird, and Persian Perrotia. The perrotia was planted in the yard area near the new playground, and makes a neat addition to the park, as this park has several unique trees planted by the Colemans



years ago, and this particular species was not represented. The northern red oak filled in a more natural area of the park that was recently opened. All trees will be attended to for the next week or so until they are established in their new location. (Photo by Fritz Heilman).

Threatened Birds Recovering Thanks to Endangered Species Act Protection -

<https://abcbirds.org/article/threatened-birds-recovering-thanks-endangered-species-act-protection/>

Seventy-eight percent of the birds listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) have populations that are now stable, increasing, or have recovered enough to be delisted, according to a report published in July by American Bird Conservancy (ABC). “The Endangered Species Act: A Record of Success” analyzed population trends and recovery success for all U.S. listed birds, including those in the Hawaiian Islands and U.S. territories.

“Thanks to Endangered Species Act protection, twice as many populations of listed birds are increasing as are decreasing”, says Steve Holmer, Senior Policy Advisor for ABC and the author of the report. “Meanwhile, species such as the Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Brown Pelican have rebounded sufficiently to be taken off the list of endangered species.”

Revitalizing Vacant City Lots to Feed People—and Birds –Liz Bergstrom

<http://www.audubon.org/news/revitalizing-vacant-city-lots-feed-people-and-birds>

In Buffalo, New York, gardeners are growing crops and native plants to bring food and wildlife to communities in need.

Like many other U.S. cities, Buffalo, New York, struggles with issues of urban blight—think vacant lots filled with trash and weeds—and food deserts where residents lack access to stores selling fresh, healthy food. In response, a local nonprofit is transforming these empty lots into gardens blooming with flowers, vegetables, and fruit. And at the same time, Buffalo Audubon Society is making sure these green spaces are a boon for birds, too.

Grassroots Gardens of Western New York leases empty lots from the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, then provides insurance and support for local residents to turn these spaces into community gardens—more than 100 to date—that are not only beautiful, but also provide fresh vegetables and fruits in food deserts.

Buffalo Audubon started working with Grassroots Gardens in 2015, promoting native plants and their

benefits for birds, people, and the changing climate. The chapter has led pollinator workshops for community gardeners and offers additional resources at open houses and community events.

Loren Smith, Buffalo Audubon's executive director, says initially most of the gardeners didn't have much information about native plants and were focused on

food crops. Native plants, which provide ideal habitat and food for birds, turned out



to be a natural addition to the community gardens. Due to concerns about existing soil quality, the gardeners usually plant vegetables and fruits in raised beds with purchased topsoil. This leaves an open perimeter around the beds, which can fill with invasive plants if untended. Instead, Buffalo Audubon encourages gardeners to add native plants such as milkweed and Joe-Pye weed around the raised beds. These plants attract birds and bees that pollinate vegetables and flowers, helping the crops flourish and providing a better harvest. Buffalo Audubon also starts conversations with gardeners about climate change and birds, and new signs posted in the gardens will underscore these connections for visitors.

The second key part of the garden project takes place in area schools, where Grassroots Gardens has the ambitious goal to bring gardens to every school in Buffalo. The Audubon group created a climate, birds, and native plants curriculum tailored to different age groups, using activities that teach young people about these issues while reinforcing math and literacy skills. Chapter educators lead students on pollinator counts in community gardens, have them graph their sightings, and even use interactive games to show the effects of climate change on pollen production. "The hope then is that we can parlay this into kids taking this information home and saying, 'Hey mom, we need to plant this at home so we can attract hummingbirds and other birds and bees,'" Smith says.

According to Smith, well-planned gardens with native plants can act as carbon sinks and reduce runoff in addition to providing habitat. "They can have a broader [benefit for] the community and the ecosystem in which it's embedded," he says. As the world's climate continues to warm, birds will need this habitat more than ever. Native plants aren't the only solution to fighting climate change, Smith says, but they go a long way to

building resiliency for bird and human communities alike. (Photo by Deb Kreider).

How Golden Eagles Spot Prey from Incredible Distances — BirdNote <http://www.audubon.org/news/how-golden-eagles-spot-prey-incredible-distances>

The secret is in the density of their visual cells.

Ever used the term "eagle eye"? The eye of an eagle is one of the most sensitive in the animal kingdom, and its size can cause it to weigh more than the eagle's brain. The secret to the bird's exceptional vision is the density of visual cells, the rods and cones of its retina.

Look at the back of your hand: your rods register the overall shape, the cones register details such as contour and color. The density of rods and cones within a raptor's eye may be five times more than in your own eye.

So when hunting in open country, the Golden Eagle uses its seven-foot wingspan to ride thermals high into the air. There, it spots the minute movement of its favorite prey, a rabbit, over a mile away. That's like you driving at forty miles an hour, and being able to look back to where you were when this BirdNote started and see a jack rabbit.

So the next time you give the "eagle eye" to a raptor, chances are, it saw you first.

The Birdist's Rules of Birding: Rule #3: Take a Stand for Birds —By Nicholas Lund <http://www.audubon.org/news/rule-3-take-stand-birds>

The election is over, but the work is just beginning.

The results of this week's election have been a shock for those of us who care about birds and the environment. Donald Trump made no secret during his campaign of his desire to do away with many of our current protections for air and water, and to facilitate unrestricted development of fossil fuels. He doesn't believe that humans are causing climate change, and he might even try withdrawing America from the Paris Agreement, the largest global climate treaty in history. This is going to be an extremely difficult four years.

The question is, what are we going to do about it? Just sit here and let terrible things happen to our beloved planet? Of course not. We're going to roll up our sleeves and take a stand.

The good news is that there are lots of things each and every one of us can do to help, ranging from actions that take very little time, to others that can take your life in another direction. Either way, you're needed more than ever. Birds can't defend themselves from what's about to happen.

Your scope can be local or national. There'll be no shortage of things to do, and working hard to protect birds and their habitat in your town is just as important as working on a larger scale. In fact, since there are fewer voices in local issues, yours is all the more likely to be heard. The issue should come first. Find something you're passionate about and work for it, no matter where you are.

Once you've figured out how you want to start advocating, here's how to do it, beginning with the easier actions and building from there.

Join Up. If you're not an official member of the Audubon Society or any other of the thousands of environmental non-profits out there, now's the time. There is strength in numbers, and you need to be counted. These organizations will help you stay on top of the issues and provide you with opportunities to make your voice heard. Take the potential loss of the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. That is an important issue that Florida Audubon has been key in raising awareness about and fighting against.

Writing letters to Congress or other leaders, as quaint as it sounds, is actually critically important. I live and work in the environmental advocacy community here in Washington, DC, and the thing I think most people forget about Congress is that these people really are here to work for their constituents. The trouble is that if no one tells them about an issue, or they're unaware how many people in their district care about it, they won't do anything. They might not do what you're asking anyway, but at least they'll know they'll be making people mad. And here's a little insider secret: You know what's better than filling out those online letters and emailing them to your Representative? Writing and mailing an actual letter. I'm totally serious. I interned on Capitol Hill after college and was in charge of constituent mail. The vast majority of letters that came in on all issues were form letters. We'd take note of all the senders and keep track of the numbers, but on the quite rare occasion that we received an actual handwritten letter, we'd make sure it was set aside. A handwritten letter was pretty much guaranteed to be personally read and responded to by the Representative. Try it.

Give money. I know, I know, everyone's got their hand out. But trust me, giving money, even if it's just an annual membership fee, is a great way to actually achieve the results you want. The reason is because you're letting the pros handle it. All of these organizations are staffed with people whose whole job it is to fight for the environment. They know the ropes. The only thing preventing further progress is a lack of funds. Non-profits spend a whole lot of their time figuring out how they can raise the money they need to

accomplish their goals, time that should be spent actually accomplishing those goals. Giving money is the most efficient thing you can do to help the causes you care about.

Vote. My goodness, please vote. You can't complain if you didn't vote, and plenty of people in this most recent presidential election didn't show up at all. You just need to vote. Vote in all the elections you are allowed to, from president to school board to whatever. There are enough of us out there who care about the environment to achieve the goals we want. We just need to elect representatives who care, too.

Get Involved. Want to get really serious? Start putting some time into the conservation movement. You might not know this, but I am a conservation professional (I don't know if that's a real term). By night I moonlight as your bird-advising columnist, but by day I work to protect national parks from the harmful impacts of energy development (join us, we're great). Working in the conservation community is incredibly



rewarding. On certain days, like days last week when the National Park Service finalized new rules to protect parks from oil and gas drilling, you feel a sense of pride I'm not sure you can get anywhere else. On other days, like this week, it can seem like there's no depth unreachable. But that's why we fight. That's what we do.

So how can you get involved? There are lots of ways. The first is volunteering, which is more than just helping pick up trash at the beach (which is also great) but also includes things like writing letters to the editor for local paper, making phone calls, hosting events, joining a protest march, doing research, visiting Congress, or a ton of other things. Get in touch with your favorite group to ask how you can help.

Want to go even bigger than that? Apply for a job! Give yourself over to the cause! There are lots of roles to play, from communications to administration to policy, all working toward the same goal. We all love birds, but appreciating them also comes with a duty to

protect them. We're incredibly lucky to share our planet with these creatures, but they can't help themselves. It's up to us to take action. (Photo by Deb Kreider).

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. **Your \$20 yearly fee goes 100% to local chapter activities.**
2. The membership period runs from July 1st to July 1st, regardless of when you join.

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.

National Audubon Society Membership

For information concerning National Audubon Society membership click on the following link:

<http://www.audubon.org/> or call **1-844-428-3826** for more information

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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 Jim Fiorentino, President.

QAS Spring Newsletter Deadline

If you have an item, an article or a photo that you would like to submit for inclusion in the next issue of the QAS Newsletter, please send them to Gary Kinkley by March 17, 2017. 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!**

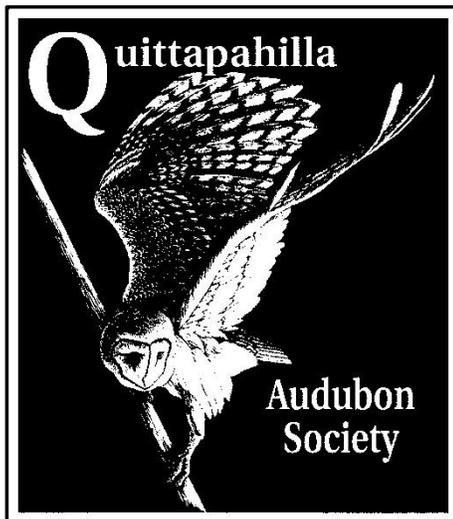
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Quittapahilla Audubon Society

**Your local Audubon chapter,
working to
preserve nature and the environment,
invites you to join us for
our programs and field trips.**