A Message from the President

Fall migration is already happening. Early migrants typically include shorebirds such as egrets and sandpipers, raptors, and varieties of warblers. If you see something unusual, please spread the word so others can enjoy the birds, too.

Thanks to Janet Tice for revising the home page of our website to include updated information about how you can get involved with Conococheague Audubon – check it out by visiting http://conococheagueaudubon.org/.

Conococheague Audubon is looking for a leader for the Hawk Watch. In years past, Dale Gearhart coordinated volunteers who counted hawks at the Pulpit during fall migration (~September – Thanksgiving). The leader schedules who is on duty, helps train the watchers, collects daily reports, and submits the reports to the Hawk Migration Association of North America website. If you are interested in leading the effort or in being a counter, please contact Valerie Barnes (717-352-4397 or Barnes-Va4@comcast.net).

We are also looking for a new Conservation Chair. The Conservation Chair keeps abreast of local, state, and national governmental policies and actions affecting the natural environment and conservation of natural resources. The Chair informs the membership about those issues at meetings and via this newsletter. The Chair also writes letters and sends emails to public officials, representatives, and local newspapers. It’s easy to stay informed about and take action on issues important to Audubon by signing up for email alerts at http://www.audubon.org/takeaction. If you are interested in serving as Conservation Chair, please contact Valerie Barnes (717-352-4397 or BarnesVa4@comcast.net).

The Board is working on an update to the Conococheague Audubon “plan”. Stay tuned for more in the next issue of Naturally. If you have ideas about goals and approaches for CAS to achieve those goals, please contact an officer.

Please see other articles in this issue for exciting news regarding this year’s film series (p.2) and how to submit information about rare and unusual birds for quarterly reporting to PSO (p. 3). Also visit our website to see what rare and unusual birds were reported in Franklin County in March through May.
Announcing Nature Film Event Changes
by Terri Kochert

Are you eagerly awaiting Conococheague Audubon Society’s (CAS) new nature film events like I am? Perhaps I’m a little more impassioned than most because of being involved from the beginning in obtaining a “new look” to our Nature Film Events.

“The films this year are FREE ... our desire is to encourage as many families as possible to come enjoy these excellent films.”

First, I need to answer, “Why change an already good thing?” It has become extremely difficult to locate cost-effective nature films. Due to exorbitant costs the film committee suggested a different venue. CAS will now be presenting professionally-produced nature films to the public without charging a fee. That’s correct. You read correctly. The films this year are FREE.

The main reason for not charging a fee has to do with the agreement of the public performance license we have with the production companies. We legally are not permitted to charge a fee nor advertise the producer of the films. Plus, our desire is to encourage as many families as possible to come enjoy these excellent films. Our hope is to thrill them with the film content. We also will inform them during the course of the evening of the many activities our local CAS does to educate, conserve, and promote the environment and nature.

Thus, in addition to showing our high quality nature film, we will have a locally produced presentation during the pre-show entertainment segment highlighting our local CAS’ many worthy projects. I’d like to acquaint you with some of these projects.

- We are especially proud of providing local “future naturalists” (local 3rd-5th graders) with colorful, informative, instructive, and professionally produced “newspapers” called Audubon Adventures (free to the students).
- We promote Citizen Science by maintaining records of Christmas and Spring migratory bird counts.
- We have a number of volunteers involved in fostering our local bluebird population by giving of their precious time to monitor and maintain our very own Bluebird trail.
- We produce an informative newsletter, Naturally, five times a year.
- Another very successful program has been our June Beginning Birders’ Workshop, through which we have introduced novices to the thrill of bird watching by teaching use of the binoculars and taking participants out on their very first “birding field trip.”
- Several hard-working volunteer gardeners tirelessly maintain our very own Native Plants Garden located near the Norlo Community Center.
- We also provide titillating Field Trips and monthly Speakers at our regular meetings on the second Monday night of the month September through May.
- We have volunteers who present exhibits and presentations to schools and elsewhere.
- We also offer scholarships to anyone interested in pursuing educational activities related to our nature mission.
- At times we support additional conservation efforts, such as the Guatemala Cloud Forest Project.

We do all these as a service to the public at no charge. Yet many of these projects cost CAS money. Alas, that is where you come in. Recently, members received our annual letter explaining much of the content of this article. Included was a donation slip requesting donations to provide for these many aforementioned projects/services.

Please keep in mind CAS also has paid/will pay money for purchase of the selected nature films, the rental costs of the CAMS South auditorium, the pre-show entertainment costs, the film event prizes, workshop costs, newsletter and other mailings, and the donation given to Norlo Park for the use of the Community Center during the year. These expenses mount up. In order to do all these things with excellence, CAS needs faithful donors like yourself.

Be generous! ... Remember!
What we do today affects our tomorrow and the tomorrow of future generations.

This is our only fundraiser of the year! Be generous! Your CAS family thanks all of you who have already given to CAS thus far, and are beseeching others to consider “giving to the cause.” (This year we will also be accepting donations at the door of each film event.) Remember! What we do today affects our tomorrow and the tomorrow of future generations.

Continued on page 5
Reporting Rare & Unusual Birds  By Bill Oyler
After many years of dedicated quarterly reporting of rare and unusual birds found in Franklin County to Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology, Dale Gearhart is getting a deserved break. In assuming that role, I would like to encourage CAS birders to report their special findings to me. It would be great to have more reports and from more birders! I would welcome having the problem of too much information to choose from regarding what goes into the quarterly report. The purpose of the quarterly reporting is for publication in PSO’s quarterly “Pennsylvania Birds”. Included in that publication is a county by county narrative of rare birds, out of season birds, and unusual sightings. Franklin County has had a number of bird findings that drew state-wide attention … Joan’s Lark Sparrow, Dale’s Lesser Goldfinch and Black-chinned Hummingbird, Bob’s Red Phalarope, and Carl’s Ruff to name a few. But there are all kinds of other good or unusual sightings to report from each “quarter” of the birding year. The periods aren’t actually three months of time, but are really what is considered a birding season (for example March-May & June-July are reporting seasons). We need to be comfortable and careful with what is reported for official publication. The more eyes on the bird the more credible the report. So please get the word out when you find an exceptional bird. This won’t always be possible, but it should be a goal. End of period reports of your special birds are ok, but I prefer to know them as you find them. It is amazing what birds are found in our county. Thanks for getting involved and reporting the special ones! My contacts are cell phone 717-360-5191 (call or text) and e-mail oylerbill@gmail.com.

What Birds Mate for Life?
by Valerie B. Barnes
We have all heard that Canada Geese mate for life (and they do!), but what other species show such loyalty throughout the lifetime of both mates? Michele Berger, in a February 10, 2012 National Audubon article, identifies these species: Bald Eagle, Laysan Albatross, Mute Swan, Scarlet Macaw, Whooping Crane, California Condor, Atlantic Puffin, and Black Vulture. The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior states that ~ 90% of all bird species are socially monogamous (when both parents cooperate to raise the young) at least within a single breeding season. Not all of those birds are also genetically monogamous (in which the male and female together are the sole genetic parents of all the young). A socially monogamous female may accept extra-pair copulation to hedge against infertility in her primary partner or to increase genetic diversity.

Local Christmas Bird Counts
Save these 2016 Dates!
by Valerie B. Barnes
Chambersburg Area: Saturday, December 17
Dinner and tally at 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 19
Fleck Center, Luther Ridge,
2998 Luther Drive, Chambersburg, PA.
Contact Valerie Barnes, 717-352-4397
or BarnesVa4@comcast.net

York Springs Area: Thursday, December 29
Contact Vern Gauthier, 717-385-9526
or pabirder@gmail.com

Newville Area: Saturday, December 31
Contact Vern Gauthier, 717-385-9526
or pabirder@gmail.com

David Cooney Jr. took this photo of a flock of 34 American Avocets that were found at Kriner Road Retention Ponds in Chambersburg on May 1, 2016.
The Pennsylvania Annual Migration Count (PAMC) was held on May 14, 2016 and is an annual one-day snapshot of bird populations with our state attempting to answer which species are present, where they are and how many there are. Detecting the changes in population will help give us an early warning of possible declines and it is hoped that steps can be taken toward assisting their future survival.

The Conococheague Audubon Society’s participation in the PAMC was the 24th year that we have been involved; 59 people participated and saw a total of 141 species and 9,477 birds. The top ten species were as follows: European Starling – 688; American Robin – 660; Red-eyed Vireo – 486; Common Grackle – 455; Canada Goose – 400; Red-winged Blackbird – 298; American Goldfinch – 289; House Sparrow – 289; Northern Cardinal – 284; Gray Catbird – 278.

We spent 63 hours on foot and 70.5 hours by car. We also traveled 39.8 miles on foot and 535 miles by car. Our totals were down from recent past years (149 species and 12,106 birds in 2015) but rain played a part in our efforts. Thank you to all who participated and hope that you can help next year.

**CAS Native Garden** By Shirley Fenstermacher

On July 19, 2016, the Shippensburg Garden Club arrived at 3050 Lincoln Way East, Fayetteville, PA (along Route 30) by 5:30 p.m. and attentively followed and listened to Susan Donaldson and Shirley Fenstermacher tell the tale of our garden’s creation, the value of promoting “native” plants, the challenge of “weeding” and maintaining a 9,000 square foot project on the muscle of “volunteers”.

There are nearly 50 perennials, 9 shrubs, and 9 trees growing beautifully on a hilly slope, surrounded by a border of mulch, and a center path of grass, with a gurgling water feature edged by large rocks, some stepping stones, a few benches, and a kiosk with bulletins of upcoming events, and some bird pictures.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Audubon Pennsylvania, Guilford Township, Valley Quarries, Lowes Charitable Foundation, Walmart, Wagoner’s Memorials all contributed to the cost of obtaining some of the plants, brass plaques, and other expenses. We even enlisted the help of a local Boy Scout troop to assist us in the original plantings, approximately ten years ago.

After an hour and a half our 11 guests were ready to say “good-by” to the beautiful farm setting with its brick-end barn, original farm house, picnic tables, bluebird boxes, purple martin house on its tall pole, colorful Bergamot, Bee Balm, Viburnums, Elderberries, Sea Oats, and all that represents the spirit of Conococheague Audubon Society.

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**Spring Birding Field Trips -- May**

Bob Keener led a trip to Path Valley with 5 birders. A total of 85 species were seen including the rare Clay-colored Sparrow. The list for Path Valley totals 138 species.

The Lehmans again opened their home to 15 birders who spotted 37 species. In the two years Audubon members have birded the Lehman farm a total of 51 species have been seen.

**Spring Birding Field Trips -- June**

The last trip of the 2015-2016 season was to the IBA area on South Mountain. The Martins led the trip with 8 members and saw 48 species. New to the list was the Magnolia Warbler. The list for the IBA area is 91 species.

Thank you to all who led trips last season. The first field trip for this season is set for Sept. 17 to Heisey Orchard and Michaux Forest for Fall migrants led by Bill Oyler.

**On the Record** By Donna Hocker

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**Birders’ Workshop** By David Cooney Jr.

This year marked the 8th Beginning Birders’ Workshop sponsored by Conococheague Audubon. We were fortunate that the weather cooperated and all participants had a great time; 25 people attended this year with 9 of them being children. The birds didn’t show themselves readily, but we still tallied 40 species. Everyone in one group got excellent looks at this year’s new species: Hermit Thrush. Caledonia Park Manager Phil Schmidt again expressed his support for the event and we’re hoping that he or another one of his staff can speak at next year’s event. We couldn’t pull off this event without the dedication and help of our volunteers. Thank you all for your commitment and hope to see you again next year.

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**Conococheague Audubon Scholarships**

The Conococheague Audubon Society is pleased to offer scholarship support for educational activities in keeping with our mission: promoting the conservation of wildlife and the environment by appreciating, studying, and observing nature.

We especially encourage youngsters to apply for help in attending a birding-related camp. Individuals or groups may apply for aid. Details/applications are available on our webpage http://conococheaugeaudubon.org/scholarship.htm
In an international study published in 2014, researchers found that females in 71% of all songbird species will burst into melody just like their male counterparts.

Most female birds that sing are those that live year-round in tropical climates, reported the Leiden University (Netherlands) biologist Katharina Riebel, who led the study published in the journal “Nature Communications.” The research team included scientists at University of Maryland Baltimore County (Maryland) as well as two universities in Australia.

Biologist Karan Odom, then a doctoral student at UMBC, said that in the tropics, most females sing just as long and loud as males, and many of them are just as colorful.

Odom and UMBC evolutionary biologist Kevin Omland compared their studies on closely related species of orioles, all members of the genus Icterus.

In Maryland, Omland studied the Baltimore and orchard orioles, while in Puerto Rico, Odom and others worked with the tropical oriole, Venezuelan troupial, and with the Puerto Rican oriole found only on the island.

The teams discovered significant differences: As opposed to their northern kin, the Puerto Rican oriole females are just as colorful as males, and both sexes sing – often in duets, with one bird beginning and his or her mate following.

Australian songbirds that feature melodic bird song from both males and females include lyrebirds, fairy-wrens, honeyeaters, fantails, whistlers, and magpies.

What explains these differences? The biologists say clues lie in how the birds live their entire lives. In Maryland, male birds are in a hurry. They must work quickly to secure territories, fend off competitors and grab females’ attention, so they can reproduce, rear their young and migrate south before fall arrives.

Orioles in Puerto Rico breed year-round in the same territories; thus, their major concern is competition for food and other resources. Both males and females take part in this competition, and females often defend males as well as the pair’s territory.

Some North American female songbirds that sing are the northern cardinal – who put out a softer version of the male’s song, sometimes in unison with their mates – and the mockingbirds, who mimic sounds of birds around them.

Just for the record, The Macaulay Library of Cornell Lab of Ornithology reports that mockingbirds continue to learn new sounds throughout their lives!

(Some information derived from a National Wildlife Federation article, “Busting a Birdsong.”)

**Nature Film Event Changes Continued …**

- **The first film to be presented this year will be American Serengeti on November 17, 2016.** This discusses the important project of restoring the wildlife of America’s Great Plains i.e. bison and wolves.

- **Secondly, we will show Big Sur: Wild California on January 19, 2017,** learning about the contributions of condors, sea otters, and mountain lions to the seaside ecosystem.

- **Our third and final film of the year will be Hummingbirds: Magic in the Air on March 23, 2017.** Come prepared for an utter “feast for the eyes” with the stunning high-speed definition videography of hummingbirds world-wide.

We may also shoulder-tap CAS members to share some of their film-related photos for a particular film evening. We will also conduct our “prize giveaways” in a different way too. We also have other invigorating ideas to promote interest in nature, both viewing/enjoying it and preserving it.

We truly hope that you come to our film events with an expectant and open heart, bringing your loved ones—kids and grandkids—for an entertaining, yet educational evening. Invite your neighbors too! Please join us—via your physical participation, your moral support, and yes, your financial support—in realizing the Conococheague Audubon Society’s mission to educate and to promote conservation of the environment and all nature for the benefit of all members of society, young and old alike. We’re looking forward to seeing you, your family, and friends at our film events.
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 the leader for a potential mid-week option on his/her scouting trip.

Films – Free, all begin at 7:30 PM in Chambersburg Area Middle School South, 1151 E. McKinley St., Chambersburg, PA. Pre-show musical entertainment begins at 7 PM.

September / October 2016 Schedule:

Sept. 12, 2016, Monday
7:00 PM. Birds of Honduras and Their Shade-Grown Coffee Habitat, by Laura Jackson. Arranged by Rhetta Martin.

Sept. 17, Saturday
7:30 AM for FALL MIGRANTS. Meet in parking lot off Scotland Exit 20, I-81 northbound. Moderate walk of less than .5 mile in wet grass at Heisey Orchard, then bird by car in Michaux SF from Stillhouse Hollow to Fayetteville. Bring binoculars and snacks. Should end by noon. Bill Oyler, oylerbill@gmail.com or 717-360-5191.

Sept. 24, Saturday
7:30 AM. Conococheague Institute near Welsh Run for LATE MIGRATING and RESIDENT BIRDS. Leave from Sunnyway Foods parking lot, 49 Warm Spring Road, Chambersburg. Bring binoculars, CBs, and snack. Shirley Fenstermacher, 264-8344.

Oct. 1, Saturday

Oct. 10, Monday
7:00 PM. Exploring eBird: finding birds, keeping lists, alerts, hot spots and more! by Valerie Barnes.

Oct. 20, Thursday

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Send all mailing changes to the assistant editor.

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