On the Record  by Donna Hocker

Rebecca Wertime led a breeze walk on the C & O Canal in October. The five hikers observed 31 species of birds. The magnolia Warbler was added to the list that now stands at 97 species.

A beautiful fall day and lots of Bald Eagles greeted the eight people who traveled to Blackwater NWR in November. Led by Eric and Rhetta Martin 55 species were seen and the Ruddy Duck, Semi-palmated Sandpiper, and the Western Sandpiper were added to the list. The list now stands at 100 species.

Your Help is NEEDED and APPRECIATED

Starting in January, you may receive a phone call from our Nominating Committee asking you to continue your service, or to volunteer for a committee or board position for the 2011-2012 season. It is our hope that you will respond in a positive way.

Conococheague does an amazing amount of events. We need everyone to take a turn so we do not over burden our members.

Now comes the hard part – we need a Vice President. After considerable thought I have decided that I will stay on as President for one more year. But… there is a catch. I will only remain as President for the 2011-2012 term if someone volunteers as Vice President. If there is no volunteer you have no President.

In January, we begin celebrating our 50th anniversary; it would be a travesty if in April our organization would have to end. Please when that phone call or request is made for you to serve – say YES!

Bird Feeding Tip

Don’t forget about alternative foods and water – suet, fruits, mealworms, and water may attract
species of birds not found at traditional offerings. Printed with permission from Dr. David J. Horn, Director of the National Bird-Feeding Society. For more information about feeding birds visit www.birdfeeding.org

Great Backyard Bird Count

The 14th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will be held February 18-21, 2011. Each year, tens of thousands of people throughout the United States and Canada take part in the GBBC. You can count birds wherever you are, including: your backyard, off your balcony, at a local park, or at a nature center. People of all ages and all levels of bird-watching experience are welcome. You may count by yourself, with your family, community group, school, or friends. For more information visit www.birdcount.org

Migration Count

The New Year has barely begun and we are talking about May. This year the 19th Pennsylvania Migration Count (PAMC) will be held Saturday, May 14, 2011. The PAMC is a county-based bird count. Observations may be made anywhere in Franklin County over a 24-hour period on count day. The results are then sent to the county compiler, Donna Hocker, who in turn forwards them to the state compiler. The resulting data is published in Pennsylvania Birds, our state ornithological journal.
If you are interested in participating please contact Donna at dlhocker@yahoo.com or 717-325-8713.

* * * 50th Anniversary Dinner * * *

By Linda Kaiser

The kick-off of our 50th Anniversary celebration year will be the Anniversary Dinner to be held at Norlo Park Community Center on 10 January 2011 at 6:00 P.M.

Everyone should bring their own place settings (plates, utensils, etc) and a side dish (salad, vegetable, fruit). The meat (ham) beverages, and cake for dessert will be provided.

There will be a display of memorabilia from past years prepared by Joan Bowen, and a great program planned by Dale Gearhart that you won’t want to miss. So come and enjoy the evening with us.

* * * 50th Anniversary Dinner * * *

Other Upcoming 50th Anniversary Activities
By Linda Kaiser

February - Birding Hot Spots in Franklin County-- Open Mike (Regular February meeting)
March - Newsletter Highlighting the Past 50 Years
April - anniversary field trip to the same area visited on 8 April 1961.

Tuscarora Summit Hawk Watch 2010
‘The Pulpit’ by Dale Gearhart

Final Tallies For The 2010 Season
Black Vultures – 69
Turkey Vultures – 306
Osprey - 69
Bald Eagles - 49
Northern Harrier - 55
Sharp-shinned Hawks - 712
Cooper’s Hawks - 64
Northern Goshawks - 3
Red-shoulder Hawks - 22
Broad-winged Hawks - 955
Red-tailed Hawks - 319
Rough-legged Hawks - 0
Golden Eagles - 24
American Kestrels - 36
Merlin - 3
Peregrine Falcon - 7
Unidentified Hawks - 78
Total Count - 2771
Total Hours of Observation – 353.25

The 2010 season was a rather disappointing one.
Our count was one of the lowest on record since 1971 and the lowest in my 13 years as compiler for the site. These records are sent to Hawk Migration Association of North America so the entire continent can be compared and studied. Once this season is completed we may be able to determine a reason for the low count.

Thanks to all who spent many hours at the watch site counting during hot, cold, wet, snowy and windy days. A special thanks to the counters: Rhonda Barnett, Butch and Marion Carmack, John and Joan Carpenter, David Cooney, Diane Jones, Dick and Kathy Lauver, Al Nelson, Delores Purnell, and Herb Taylor.

**********

Terrific Turnout for Norlo Park Native Garden Open House by Valerie B. Barnes

Nearly 150 people turned out for the Open House at the Conococheague Audubon Native Plant Garden at Norlo Park on September 4th, 2010. Our own members, visitors from the community, Kim Van Fleet from Audubon Pennsylvania, at least one county commissioner, one township supervisor, one township park planner, and several Master Gardeners enjoyed tours of the garden and light refreshments. Corinne Anderson and Cindy Fair prepared the tour guides well, and all who visited the garden learned the value of native plants and what grows well in bright sunshine in this area. Thanks to the many volunteers who put in extra hours this past summer and over the years of planting and tending, the garden was gorgeous.

A Collaborative Funding Grant from Audubon made it possible for us to publish the special newsletter on native plants and the garden. The grant also allowed us to give a native plant (Aster novae-angliae ‘Purple Dome’) to every visitor who wanted one, and provide handouts and educational material about native plants. The garden qualified for Audubon Bird Habitat recognition, earning four stars and a sign to record the achievement. The kiosk now bristles with photographs and information about the garden. Check it all out the next time you are in the neighborhood!

Many thanks to all who made this event so successful. Six new visitors have already signed up to help care for the garden. If you would like to volunteer to help keep the garden thriving, please contact Ruth Barton (352-7349; RuthBarton@embarqmail.com).

**********

Mark Your Calendars

* 2 January 2011 - Newville Christmas Bird Count, meet at 7:30 a.m. at the barn in SGL 169.
* 10 January 2011 - 50th Anniversary Dinner (see previous article for details)
* 12 February - 8:00 a.m., Winter Picnic and Hike along the Falling Spring. Leave from bridge on Quarry Road. Cooking facilities for lunch at the home of Dan and Barb Higgins.
* 14 February - 7:00 p.m. regular meeting at Norlo Park; ‘Birding Hotspots in Franklin County.’
* 17 February (Thursday) - 7:30 p.m. at Chambersburg Area Middle School nature film ‘Yellowstone Wildlife’ presented by Sandy Mortimer.

**********

Change to 11 April Program
By Ruth Barton

Our speaker for the 11 April 2011 meeting will be Dr. Edward W. Sites, Professor Emeritus of the University of Pittsburgh.

John James Audubon was determined to paint every bird in North America. However, he ended his collection at 435 paintings containing over 1,000 birds. No more than 120 complete sets of his collection survive today, and many are in very deteriorated condition. In 1918 and 1925 a complete set of the Audubon collection was donated to the University of Pittsburgh. In 2007 the University digitized all 435 plates of Audubon’s paintings and made them available free to the public via the internet.
Dr. Sites will present a program on the history of the Audubon paintings and their reproduction on copper plates; the destruction of many of the original plates for scrap by Mrs. Audubon to support herself after her husband’s death; and the Pittsburgh Audubon collections, including a video of the restoration and digitization processes, a guide to the Audubon website and a live demonstration on how to access and use the collection.

**********

Some tips for creating a healthy habitat in your yard
By Deb Barnes

(Some of the information below was adapted from a Comcast Newsmakers interview with Steven Shaffer of PA Audubon, available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXL0wr0UmGk)

Hang Feeders
Benefits: making bird seed available, particularly in the winter, helps provide an additional food source for feathered visitors, and also is a great way to engage an interest in birds from children, neighbors, and visitors.
Remember that feeders require periodic cleaning. Use a simple formula of one part bleach to nine parts water followed by thorough rinsing to ensure your feeders are healthy for birds.

Apply to PA Audubon for a sign to post in your yard
Benefits: A sign indicates that part of your yard is “birdscaped,” and could lead to discussions with neighbors and visitors about how they can make their yards healthy habitats for birds, too.
For more information about the PA Audubon Bird Habitat Recognition Program and how to obtain your sign, see http://pa.Audubon.org/habitat/.

**********

Our condolences are extended to Joan Bowen on the death of her brother.

Conococheague Audubon Website
The URL for our website is: http://home.comcast.net/~audubonc/
Visit often to keep up to date on all activities.

OFFICERS
* President: Donna Hocker
dlhocker@yahoo.com  (717) 352 8713
* Vice President: vacant
* Recording Secretary: Rhetta Martin
rhettaanderic@embarqmail.com  (717) 597 8675
* Corresponding Secretary: Valerie Barnes
vbarhen@pa.net  (717) 352 4397
* Treasurer: Henry Betz
Hvbetz@embarqmail.com  (717) 263 3165
* Immediate Past President: Dale Gearhart
Dgearhart01@comcast.net  (717) 597 3979 (H)
(717) 860 5799 (Cell)