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 7:30 pm 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.

January 23, 2013, 7:30 pm – Alaska: Beyond the Cruise Ships

If you laid Alaska across the Lower 48, one corner would be in California, one in North Carolina and one in Minnesota. Yet few visitors to the 49th state ever get beyond the typical cruise-ship itinerary. Scott Weidensaul, who has been exploring Alaska for more than 30 years, takes us to some of the most remote parts of this immense and wild state, from the isolated Aleutian Islands and Pribilofs to native villages within sight of Russia, and wilderness rivers on the North Slope - breathtaking landscapes alive with birds and mammals. Scott Weidensaul is the author of more than two dozen books on natural history, including the Pulitzer Prize finalist “Living on the Wind,” about bird migration, “Return to Wild America” and “Of a Feather.” His newest book, “The First Frontier: The Forgotten History of Struggle, Savagery and Endurance in Early America,” was published in February 2012. Weidensaul is a contributing editor for Audubon magazine, and writes for a variety of other publications; he lives in Schuylkill County, where he studies the migration of hawks, owls and hummingbirds.

February 27, 2013, 7:30 pm – History of Pennsylvania Forests

This acclaimed slide program presented by Gene Wingert, noted naturalist and biologist from Dickinson College, examines the recent history (last 14,000 years) of south central Pennsylvania forests and then focuses on the current processes affecting the future of our forests. A quick lesson on forest ecology is included.

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.
March 27, 2013, 7:30 pm – Frosty Forests and Frozen Fields: Winter Birrrding in Ontario

Going north in the winter for bird watching? Yes! It’s quality more so than quantity as this program highlights the various far northern specialty bird species that appear in Ontario and even the northeastern U.S. during certain winters. Irruptive species of raptors and finches, wintering northern species of waterfowl and gulls, and the occasional western vagrants will be covered. Also, the where and when to find them and why they show up so far south of their normal range will be discussed. The emphasis of the program will be on the areas of southern and eastern Ontario and also a few nearby areas in Quebec.

And Our Field Trips at a Glance . . .

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

December 15, 2012 – Christmas Bird Count

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

February 17, 2013 – Union Canal Tunnel Park, Lebanon

Observation of flora and fauna (including data collecting for the “Great Backyard Bird Count”. Meet Sunday 2 pm at the main parking lot off 25th Street.

March 9, 2013 – Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area

Observation of migrating waterfowl. Meet Saturday 9:00 am at the visitor center parking lot. Leader Fritz Heilman, 273-0487.

March 23, 2013 – Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area

Trip details same as the March 9 visit.

March 24, 2013 – Timberdoodle at Swatara State Park

Observation of “sky dance” of the crepuscular woodcock. This field trip is in conjunction with the Friends of Swatara State Park. Meet Sunday 6:30 pm at the intersection of Routes 72 and 443 (we will carpool to the site of the walk). Leader Gary Kinkley 503-4027.

April 14, 2013 – Tucquan Glen


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!

Lots of Happy Birds this Winter

The Wild Bird Seed Sale coordinators Jim and Kitty Logan want to thank all those who purchased QAS wild bird seed this year. We had a very successful sale this year with QAS supporters and bird lovers purchasing over 16,000 pounds of seed. The profits of the sale are used to support our local chapter’s great programs in environmental education. A special word of thanks goes out to those volunteers who helped to unload and distribute the seed. Your job now is to feed those hungry birds this winter and we’ll be ready to re-stock your seed supply next fall.

Hersheypark Fundraiser

Thanks to all who worked at food stands at Hersheypark this year: Pam and David Gray, Kay Knepp, Ken Light, George Mentzer, and our organizer Rosemary Spreha. Volunteers receive a voucher good for a day pass at the park for each shift worked, and QAS receives a donation from Hersheypark for their efforts.
Welcome to our new QAS members . . . Hope to see you at many of our events!
Constance Cormack, Annette Floyd, Craig Gangaware, Danielle & David Hand, April Kolar, Robert Love, Pamela McDermott, Linda Mears, Patricia Rodgers, John Salahub, Rodney Shearer

A Word from QAS President Jim Fiorentino

It is November 1st and the long, hot, and dry summer is a distant memory. I am personally looking forward to the cool fall days and nights. With the summer we had, I started wondering if the weather conditions had anything to do with the increase in ‘rare’ bird sightings in and around our area this spring and summer. It seemed like the spring migration passed rather quickly this year, and we had numerous ‘rare’ bird sighting all summer including the first nesting pair of Summer Tanagers in Lebanon County at Spring Hill Acres. There was an increase in Dickcissel and Blue Grosbeak activity, and a Little Blue Heron was seen both at Middle Creek and the Conestoga Wetlands. I myself had an American Bittern calling this past June below my home in Cornwall – a very late Lebanon County sighting.

I haven’t seen any studies on this subject (I am sure there are some), but it looks like Lebanon county and the surrounding area’s birding scene may be adding some new species. Is this a good thing? Both yes and no apply. Yes – because there will be new species to observe, and no – because if new species are arriving that may mean some of the old species are also moving their territories or at the very least losing some to the newer arrivals. I guess only time will tell, and Mother Nature seems to always have a master plan.

Nonetheless, by the time you receive this newsletter, QAS’s 34th annual fall birdseed sale will be completed. I wish to thank all members and non-members that have supported the QAS birdseed sale in the past, and I hope you continued that support for this year’s sale. Jim & Kitty Logan again chaired (and have for many years) the QAS birdseed sale this year – please take the time to thank them for their efforts if you see either of them.

I am looking forward to the continuing fall migration, the winter birding season, and hope to see all of you on a future QAS field trip, at a QAS program, or along a birding trail sometime this fall or winter.

Enjoy the fall migration and have a wonderful winter birding season!

On the Web

If you are stuck indoors on a cold winter day, check out these links:

NatureShare is a new social media site designed to allow members to share their sightings on the web. You can share your photos of birds, plants, insects…any aspect of the natural world on the site. The site has been run by the creators of several nature apps for smart phones and tablets – including Audubon’s field guide apps. You can check it out at http://www.natureshare.com/.

You can also follow the birding adventures of some of the best young birders and field ornithologists today – most from or with strong ties to Pennsylvania. The website http://www.nemesisbird.com/ is the home to regular blog posts by several of our best and brightest rising stars in the birding world. You can also check out Dave McNaughton’s article in this newsletter about the eBird 150 Species Challenge which had its origins with the nemesisbird crew.

Lastly, visit http://www.rkwalton.com/ for incredible natural history videos. The videos cover various species of animals and insects with incredible detail and great information about the subjects. Any of you who have studied Peterson’s Birding by Ear CDs to learn bird calls will recognize Mr. Walton’s voice as he narrates the videos.

Whether you are a birder, an amateur entomologist, 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.

Tundra Swan Initiative Update – Brian Byrnes, Audubon Pennsylvania

Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, a site known to all QAS members, is a Globally Significant
Important Bird Area for Tundra Swans; up to 25% of the Eastern Population of Tundra Swans may use the site in February and March, during their migration from North Carolina and Virginia to breeding grounds in Canada and Alaska. The swans roost at night on Middle Creek Lake, but most spend their days feeding in farm fields 5-10 miles to the northwest. The Middle Creek Initiative formed several years ago around fears that many of these privately-owned farms could be lost to development, leaving the swans without a stable food supply.

Recently, Audubon Pennsylvania created a prioritization of all of the farm parcels in the primary feeding area, based in part on the results of a roadside survey performed by Audubon staff and volunteers that documented Tundra Swan feeding locations during the 2011 and 2012 migrations. In 22 surveys we documented a total of 52 swan feeding flocks on 24 unique parcels. Swans were more widely dispersed in the cold winter of 2011 than they were during the warm winter of 2012. Additional data collection over the next few winters will allow for further analysis, including what swan distribution looks like during an “average” winter.

By monitoring feeding sites we were able to score farm parcels based on use by swans and merge these scores with three other metrics. In addition to swan usage, each parcel was scored on seasonally-available water or wetlands, proximity to protected lands, and parcel size. The presence of seasonally-available water or wetlands was included because Tundra Swans frequently utilize low points in fields where rain and snowmelt gathers. Proximity to protected lands and parcel size are two of the most commonly-used attributes by land trusts in prioritizing parcels for protection; targeting large properties and those close to other protected lands are the easiest ways to stitch together a large mass of protected lands.

By adding the four characteristic scores, the prioritization process gave every parcel in the focal area a score from 0-1000. Of the 4,115 parcels evaluated, just 27 parcels—covering a total of nearly 2,500 acres—scored 360 points or more. These highest priority parcels are the best candidates for protection efforts by regional land trusts and the county agricultural preservation program.

Audubon Pennsylvania will once again be coordinating a monitoring effort during February and March 2013. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Brian Byrnes at bbyrnes@audubon.org or 610-666-5593 ext. 106. In addition, please contact Brian with any observations of feeding Tundra Swans (birds that are on the ground, not flying over) in Lebanon or Lancaster Counties; be sure to include the date, location, and estimated number of birds. Each sighting adds to our knowledge of Tundra Swans and allows us to make better conservation decisions.

**Great Backyard Bird Count Goes Global in 2013**

Bird watchers worldwide can take part for the first time – from http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/

After 15 years of success in North America, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will open up to the entire world for the first time in 2013. Anyone, from anywhere on earth, can participate by visiting www.birdcount.org and reporting the kinds and numbers of birds they see during the 16th annual count, February 15–18, 2013.

A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with partner Bird Studies Canada, the four-day count typically receives sightings from tens of thousands of people reporting more than 600 bird species in the United States and Canada alone.

“This year’s count will give us a whole new perspective as sightings pour in from around the globe in real time,” said Marshall Iliff at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. “Millions of people encounter birds every day all over the world. Imagine what scientists will learn if each one of us shares observations from our own area!”

During the 2012 count, participants reported 17.4 million bird observations on 104,000 checklists. Snowy Owls thrilled many participants when these striking birds-of-prey ventured south from the Arctic in record
numbers. In 2013, scientists predict that U.S. and Canadian bird watchers will see an influx of Red-breasted Nuthatches and winter finches (such as Pine Siskins) because of scarce food supplies on their northern wintering grounds.

“The GBBC is an ideal opportunity for young and old to connect with nature by discovering birds and to participate in a huge science project,” said Gary Langham, Audubon’s Chief Scientist. “This year, we hope people on all seven continents, oceans, and islands, will head out into their neighborhoods, rural areas, parks, and wilderness to further our understanding of birds across the hemispheres.”

Participating is easy. Simply watch birds for at least 15 minutes at the location of your choice on one or more of the count days. Estimate the number of birds you see for each species you can identify. You’ll select your location on a map, answer a few questions, enter your tallies, and then submit your data to share your sightings with others around the world.

The global capacity for the count will be powered by eBird, an online checklist program for all of the world’s 10,240 bird species. Participants will be able to view what others are seeing on interactive maps, keep their own records, and have their tallies recorded for perpetuity.

“The popularity of the Great Backyard Bird Count grows each year,” said Dick Cannings, Senior Projects Officer at Bird Studies Canada, “and with the new features, participation will be even more exciting.”


***See page 2 for details about QAS’s GBBC effort!

**Peregrine Prints**

Two signed and numbered copies of Mark Anderson's "Return to Penn's Woods" print are available for sale. They feature a Peregrine Falcon next to a rock cliff overlooking a stream far below. We had offered these prints for sale a couple years ago, and they sold out quickly. You have another chance to purchase this print for $50. They would make great presents! If interested, contact Rosemary Spreha at 657-0271 or rspreha@gmail.com. (the photo shown is not of the actual print)

**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.

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**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

**Lookout for details about the new QAS Grant Program!**

At the July 10th QAS Board Meeting, your QAS Board voted in favor of adding $1000 to the 2012-2013 QAS Budget to be earmarked for a new QAS Grant Program. More details will follow. Make sure to look for it on our website in the coming months!

**QAS Campers Scholarships for Summer 2013 — 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.

**Program Rewind**

Did you enjoy our October and November program meetings so much that you had to know more? Did you miss the meetings – leaving you inconsolable ever since? Our speakers have suggested a few great websites to check out related to their topics.

You can read more about the Quittapahilla Creek Garbage Museum on the museum’s Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Quittapahilla-Creek-Garbage-Museum/182372358478777. You can also watch the video from the Colbert Report that Michael Schroeder played during the meeting by going to http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/260772/january-06-2010/charles-moore. Further information on the research and effects of plastic garbage in our waterways can be found at http://www.algalita.org/ as well as several videos available on YouTube by searching for the Atlantic and pacific garbage patches.

There is some great information online as well about Shakespeare’s bird references in his works. A nice overview is available at http://www.acobas.net/teaching/shakespeare/masters/. The blog Trevor’s Birding also has an interesting discussion on the topic at http://trevorsbirding.com/the-birds-of-shakespeare/. Finally, you can check out http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=call-of-the-reviled for a discussion about the introduction of foreign species to North America by a misguided group enamored with the Bard’s work. … and don’t miss the next QAS Meeting!

**eBird 150 Species Challenge** – Dave McNaughton

Early last winter, Drew Weber (formerly a grad student at Penn State) offered a challenge to the state’s birders: using only statistically valuable data, reach 150 species in every county in PA on eBird by year’s end.

In case you haven’t had a chance to use it, eBird is an online tool that tracks user’s birding trip lists and counts via maps and forms to develop sophisticated analysis of population trends, breeding data, morph andcline geography, and migration information. The tool has been widely hailed in the conservation community for its power and scope, while revolutionizing the birding hobby and competitive birding with shared statistics and lists of top birders by region, state, and county.

This tool depends on data taken in a relatively small space – less than 5 miles of linear travel, stationary counts, or counts by area. In order for an entry to be statistically valuable, it must sit near to the actual location it was taken (no county-level locations), and fall into the type and recommended limits listed above. If a bird was seen at Kreider’s Farm ponds for instance, it would not be considered valid if entered as just a county sighting at the county’s center point or if entered as part of a 25 mile county route.

The challenge was taken seriously by many of the state’s most active eBirders. The first county to fall was Lancaster with 157 in mid-April. Lebanon, Dauphin, Berks, and Cumberland fell by the end of that month. By the end of spring, most of the more heavily-populated portions of the state reached their 150. As the summer wore on, difficult counties began to come into view.

At the start of September, only Fulton fell below 130. Clearfield fell by that month’s end. Wyoming and Montour reached the goal in early October. Blair, Fulton, Columbia, and Potter went by early November. The challenge was getting tougher. Lackawanna fell on November 9th. Bradford (thought unreachable) reached 150 by the 20th.

Now only Greene remains. A small group of birders has been active in the county and a few times the finish line was within a leap. Again and again those county-level observations have made the challenge look met only to be reversed. Now, with a month to go, the 150 “Ticks” project has only 8 species to go. If you have some time in the southwestern-most county this holiday season, consider checking a few hotspots. Enter in a few birds. Be a birding hero.

The reward is enriched county data for even the most remote corners of our state. Those crevices where the gas industry or wind farms may have an impact? Lists available. Those cracks where habitat fragmentation hasn’t yet engulfed our rarities? Inventoried. The places you’d like to get outside for a bit, but don’t know what
you’d find or where to go? Mapped and producing bar charts of common and rare finds.

For more information: http://www.nemesisbird.com/2012/02/the-pa-150-ticks-project/ and http://www.ebird.org

Swatara State Park Field Trip – Gary Kinkley

On the morning of September 15th, we had 6 attendees on our joint field trip with the Friends of Swatara State Park. We were met with the challenge of having our original walk location closed off due to continued construction in the west end of the park so we diverted the walk a few miles down the road to cover a section in the east end of the park. We could not have asked for a nicer fall day. Bird activity was low overall, but the scenery and company made up for that.

Rosemary Spreha spotted a Yellow-breasted Chat across from the meeting point which accounted for one of our two warbler sightings. There were also several American Goldfinches, Blue Jays, American Crows, Catbirds, and a few Turkey Vultures in the area as we waited for others to arrive. Soon after beginning the walk itself, Thyra Sperry spotted a Northern Parula foraging south of the trail, and two Phoebes were working the area as well. As we passed the swamp that runs along the south side of the trail, we found many of the usual suspects in sparse numbers including a pair of Mallards, a Great Blue Heron, Northern Flickers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, a Kingfisher, Carolina Wrens, Catbirds, more Turkey Vultures, Cardinals, and a House Wren. Among our highlights were a probable Purple Finch in the swamp (poor lighting prevented definitive identification), and Maggie Hummel had a possible Connecticut Warbler in the old airport field. There was no doubt on the ID as a pair of Bald Eagles, one full adult and one in fourth year plumage, put on quite a show for us. Perhaps the location, over the old airport, inspired their acrobatic display?

In addition to our avian highlights, we had several Painted Turtles sunning themselves in the swamp, and Maggie pointed out a beautiful and delicate wildflower called Forked Bluecurls. The detour turned out to lead us to a really great section of the park that I personally had not previously visited - I think it would be a great trail to walk in the spring as well!

Memorial Lake and Second Mountain Field Trips – Fritz Heilman & Rosemary Spreha

Weather conditions were a challenge for both of our trips to Memorial Lake and Second Mountain this fall. The first visit on October 6th was met with some light rain and overcast skies, and the second trip on October 27th came with the threat Hurricane Sandy’s landfall looming. The weather may have deterred many potential attendees as there were only four on the two trips combined. Still, the birds were there.

Rosemary reported Ruddy Ducks and Coot on the lake as well as Eastern Bluebirds, large groups of Blue Jays, and Chimney Swift. The Hawk Watch birds included Peregrine Falcon and Osprey as well as numerous low flying Sharp-shinned Hawks at hawk watch. She also reported many curious visitors at the hawk watch. “They enjoyed the sharp-shinned hawk show!”

Fritz reported 78 ruddy ducks, 2 horned grebes, and 2 pied-billed grebes as the highlights for Memorial Lake. Up at Second Mountain Hawk Watch, 2 harriers, 2 red-shouldered hawks, about 5 red-tailed hawks, two cooper’s hawks, and numerous vultures were observed. In addition to the raptors, there were many passerines present on the mountain as well including a raven, 2 hermit thrushes, 2 juncos, a ruby-crowned kinglet, and 3 cedar waxwings. Sounds like a day worth braving the elements!

Stoever’s Dam Park Arboretum Field Trip – Fritz Heilman

On November 18th, we had seven participants along on the approximately 90 minute visit to Stoever’s Dam Park. We observed around twenty specimens of primarily trees with a couple of notable shrubs. As the leaves were absent, it was an excellent time to clearly observe structural details of the plants.

Among the observed species was a hackberry tree with its characteristic corky bark. Of further note on that bark was a rather notable "wheel bug" — one of the assassin
bugs. QAS President Jim Fiorentino found a section of flower buds of the dawn redwood (I have never seen this before). The dawn redwood is getting the look of the mature tree trunk — very sculptured. Finally, among the species of note, was a toon tree — the most northern of the mahogany family of plants.

Pennsylvania, the 2012 Supercenter of Superstorm Birding – Dave McNaughton

As winds and currents determine the courses of so many birds, the disturbance of the upper atmosphere often brings migrants off their course and into new habitats and new birding opportunities. The largest hurricane to hit the Atlantic coast in recorded history and the Western pull that followed its passing brought some of the best inland birding experienced in a generation or more this fall. “Superstorm” Hurricane Sandy left much of its devastation along the coast, causing seabirds to drop out in the calmer weather that Southcentral Pennsylvania experienced on Tuesday, 30 October 2012.

The new media immediately began to fail as servers in New Jersey and New York (including Audubon’s central servers) went offline due to damage or power outages. Phone networks became jammed with traffic, many home computers were without power sources, and many wireless network locations were closed due to weather. Birders were prepared to do serious sharing, but ended up seeking their own local birding locations. Luckily, migrants were falling out everywhere in our area and very few were disappointed. At some locations word-of-mouth still prevailed with up to 35 birders assembling for the “greatest day of birding ever.”

Possibly the most active hotspot was along the Susquehanna River in Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, and York Counties. Birders in West Fairview, Marysville, and the Conejohela Flats recorded life, state, and local bird records every hour. The list is long but amazing: a state first Cory’s Shearwater, a Northern Gannet, 58! Pomerine Jaegers in one location, Parasitic Jaegers, Leach’s Storm-petrels, Black Skimmers, American Oystercatchers, Red Phalaropes, Hudsonian Godwits, Red Knots, a Black-legged Kittiwake, Cave Swallows, and Cattle and Snowy Egrets all came through, most heading north. Along with them record numbers of unusual but annual migrants (high counts from various locations listed) – 679 Northern Pintail, 548 Brant, 400 Scaup (both Lesser and Greater), tens of each of the Scoters, 695 Dunlin, 50 Laughing Gulls, 58 Common Terns, 250 Forester’s Terns, 4,000 Tree Swallows, and more.

Other locations were not missed. Memorial Lake turned up two Leach’s Storm-petrels, Scoters, and Scaup as well. A farm near Gap (Lancaster County) and Lake Ontelaunee hosted Red Phalaropes. Raystown Lake (Huntingdon County) held a state-first Wilson’s Storm-petrel and a Sabine’s Gull along with a Cave Swallow and Common and Red-throated Loons. Carbon County added a Ruddy Turnstone and a Red-necked Grebe. Bucks County added a Saltmarsh Sparrow and a Royal Tern. Franklin County added Black-bellied Plovers, a Wilson’s Phalarope, and 2 Piping Plovers. Philadelphia held its own Sabine’s Gull and a Sooty Tern. Somerset held a Eurasian Wigeon.

Even more amazingly, a believed Herald Petrel was found beneath a mailbox in Hollidaysburg and delivered to a wildlife rehab. Unfortunately, the bird had suffered greatly in the storm and did not survive the week. This Petrel is one of two species believed to have been seen from Hawk Mountain in a great 70 year American Birding Association debate, now refreshed with one species certainly being added to Eastern North America’s birdlist. Oddly or predictably enough, that debate started in the wake of its own large storm event in the late fall season.

In the wake of the disruption, Western birds have been found throughout the state including a Pacific-slope Flycatcher in the brush of State Gamelands 230 in Cumberland County. All 5 Pennsylvania-recorded Grebes (Western, Red-necked, Eared, Horned, and Pied-billed) spent several weeks together on Memorial Lake. Western hummingbirds including the state’s first Calliope and the state’s first Black-chinned along with the second Allen’s and many Rufous have been banded throughout the region. A strong movement from the arctic has brought high numbers of winter finches (and maybe soon owls) as well.

Together, the collection of bird species found in the Eastern United States this fall may be the highest avian diversity ever recorded here (at least the argument has been presented by some notable names in birding). The
The destruction of Hurricane Sandy will be remembered for a century or more, but the silver lining is a strong record of this rare ecological phenomenon for generations to come.

**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.

**The Clean Water Act – Because Everybody Lives Downstream** – from The Xerces Society

In June 1969, Cleveland’s Cuyahoga River caught fire. A few weeks later, a *Time* magazine report described the river as "Chocolate-brown, oily, bubbling with subsurface gases, it oozes rather than flows." This was a dramatic illustration of the state of the nation's waterways. At that time, industrial waste and untreated sewage were routinely dumped without concern, and two-thirds of the country's lakes, rivers and coastal waters were unsafe for fishing or swimming. Thanks to the Clean Water Act, signed in October 1972, this is just a bad memory.

Congress passed the Clean Water Act to protect the "waters of the United States." For forty years, both the courts and the agencies responsible for administering the Act interpreted it to broadly protect our nation's rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Rivers no longer burn, fish have returned to many waters, and the rate of wetland loss is lower. Not many people talk about how this act benefited invertebrates, but the return of fish is intimately wrapped up with the recovery of invertebrates at the base of the food chain.

Unfortunately, new court rulings have narrowed the definition of the law, so that it no longer protects all waterways. Rivers that are within one state, those that sometimes run dry, and lakes unconnected to larger water systems are now excluded. Additionally, pesticide regulations have been relaxed, so that increasingly they can be used near or over waterways.

Invertebrates can be a very important piece of the puzzle for understanding and protecting our waterways. These animals act like "the canary in the coal mine" allowing us to better understand which streams, rivers, and wetlands are impaired. The Xerces Society has resources that help watershed stewards, agencies staff, and others to use invertebrate to assess these areas. We also work to protect key species like freshwater mussels, long-lived animals that actually help clean waterways.

You can help keep our water clean too!

- Visit the EPA's "Adopt Your Watershed" web page to find groups working to protect and restore your local waterway.
- Visit Xerces' Aquatic Program web pages to find resources for watershed stewardship.
- Old motor oil, paint, pet waste, and pesticides are major sources of water pollution. Make sure storm drains are marked so that people do not dump pollutants in them.
- Avoid using pesticides. If you must, use the least toxic and dispose of them properly to prevent them from entering waterways.

**Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania** – Edited by Andrew M. Wilson, Daniel W. Brauning, and Robert S. Mulvihill

Twenty year after the first Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania was published, the *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania* brings our knowledge of the state’s bird populations up to date, documenting current distribution, abundance, and changes in status for nearly two-hundred bird species. Two thousand dedicated birdwatchers completed the surveys of birds in the 4,937 blocks across the state during six survey years (2004–2009). The data amassed provides a comprehensive understanding of the distribution of each species and shows in detail the changes in distribution since the first Atlas. Additionally, a highly trained survey crew carried out a rigorous bird count protocol at more than 34,000 locations statewide. These point counts tabulated not just species, but individual birds, in a manner that enabled for the very first time precise estimates of the actual statewide populations for more than half of the 190 breeding species detected during the atlas. In all, more than 1.5 million sightings were compiled during the second Atlas, providing an unprecedented snapshot of the bird life of Pennsylvania—perhaps even of any comparably sized region in the world.

The data gathered and summarized for the second Atlas was the raw material used by more than forty...
contributing authors, each selected to write authoritative species accounts. Each account is illustrated by a stunning photograph, usually taken somewhere within Pennsylvania. Up to three maps per species show in fine detail the current distribution based on the second Atlas, changes in distribution since the first Atlas and, for more than one hundred species, detailed maps of abundance and a chart showing 40-year population trends. The introductory chapters describe and discuss recent changes in climate and bird habitats within Pennsylvania and provide other information used by the species account authors to inform their detailed accounts. One such chapter on bird conservation demonstrates why the second Atlas promises to be a vital tool for bird conservationists in Pennsylvania for many years to come. Accounts of past breeding species, and tabular summary of nesting seasons and habitat relations combine to make this the definitive reference a rich source of information on Pennsylvania nesting birds.

***A 20% discount on the book is available to all QAS members – forms are available at our membership meeting!

From the Pages of

QAS History

At the second organizational meeting on November 28, 1978, the name Black Raven Audubon received the most votes while Quittpahilla Audubon came in second. There is no documentation regarding why Quittpahilla ended up winning despite the second place finish in the voting – perhaps one of our current members has the answer to that mystery?

The first public meeting of QAS was planned for February 28, 1979 at the Optimist Club of Lebanon. Proposed meeting topics included a presentation by the PA Bureau of Forestry’s Jerry Hassinger and a program on snakes by an unnamed presenter. The final decision was not recorded – leaving yet another mystery. Regardless, QAS was on its way to becoming a full-fledged Audubon Chapter.

Join the QAS Team! – Gary Kinkley

On October 20th, our family program at the Salvation Army Gymnasium on Guilford Street in Lebanon attracted 128 attendees from the community – 74 of which were children! By any measure, it was a great success as the children and their parents got to meet and learn more about many of ZooAmerica’s education animals. This was the second year for the event, and the attendance spike was attributable to getting the word out earlier, the cooperation of the Salvation Army’s staff, and the work of QAS members who contacted local schools. It really was a great example of what we can do as an organization.

It really isn’t hard to find the great work that QAS volunteers do year-round. Last year, 60 volunteers contributed over 1300 hours to various QAS projects! From our programs and field trips to our fundraising efforts and our education outreach programs, QAS volunteers make this a great organization to be proud of. Unfortunately, we still have some vacancies in our leadership positions. Most notably, we have not had an education chairperson for the past three years, and we have not had a hospitality or program chair for a longer period. Other board members have pitched in to cover vacant board and chair positions, but we really do need more support. Almost all of our current officers and board members have far exceeded their initial terms in order to keep doing good works for our membership and the community, but there have been some opportunities lost to partner with the community due to an overworked volunteer base. What is the answer? It could be 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. Our nominating committee will be forming soon, but 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!

QAS Spring Newsletter Deadline

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

QAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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Art Schiavo (2014)...............................533-1978
Fritz Heilman (2014)...............................273-0487
Ruth Krebs (2014).................................867-4884
Jim C. Logan (2014)..............................865-5522
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Membership - Jim M. Logan................273-8438
Newsletter - Gary Kinkley................503-4027
Programs - Board Members
Publicity - Ruth Krebs..................867-4884

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.
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.