



Kingfisher Courier

SEPTEMBER 2015

APPALACHIAN AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

AAS PROGRAM | SEPTEMBER

ZooAmerica

We've planned something really special for the start of the 2015–2016 season. ZooAmerica North American Wild Animal Park, which features animals and birds native to the diverse environment of our continent, is one of the most popular attractions in the Hershey area. In addition to maintaining the onsite facility, the staff provides an outreach program to educate the public.

Our program tonight is *Paws, Claws, Scales and Tails*. This exciting program features live animal demonstrations and focuses on the adaptations that animals use for survival in the wild. Some of the animals we will be visited by include:

- a Barred Owl,
- an alligator,
- a striped skunk.

Paws, claws, scales and tails are important for defense, finding food, eating, swimming and escaping predators.

This is a program for the whole family so bring your children, grandchildren and neighbors. Taking into consideration the age of many of our guests, we moved our social time to 6:30pm. Our meeting will start at approximately 6:50pm followed by the ZooAmerica presentation. Please plan on joining us at Christ Presbyterian Church in Camp Hill for an entertaining and informative evening.

We will have Birdseed Order Forms available if you would like to place your order at the meeting. Cash, check or credit card accepted.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Thursday, September 17 @ 6:30pm

Note the earlier start time.

Fledge Watch Volunteers Give Young Falcons a Good Start

by Sue Hannon

The 2015 edition of the Harrisburg Peregrine Falcon Fledge Watch was in action from May 29 through June 8. Our function as watch volunteers is to monitor falcon activity at or near the nest ledge, record fledging progress and other significant occurrences, and to stand ready to rescue any fledgling in danger. We also take every opportunity to educate interested passersby about Peregrine Falcons in general and the Harrisburg falcons in particular, and sometimes we learn a thing or two from local observers.



The Rachel Carson falcons produced three female chicks this year, known as Red, White, and Blue (so called for the colored strips of tape affixed to their USFWS leg bands for ease of identification). The season began in dramatic fashion with an inadvertent fledge when Blue was bumped off the ledge by another chick. After dropping away from the ledge, Blue disappeared from view. After an extensive search, she was found in a low roof area on the Carson building known as the "Well." In past years, several chicks have required rescue from the Well, as they are unable to get enough lift to clear the wall that encloses the area. With the assistance of the Capitol Police, we gained access to the roof, descended into the Well and retrieved Blue. A careful examination turned up no signs of injury or illness and indicated normal development with nearly complete feather growth. In short, she was a perfectly healthy, flight-ready juvenile.

Blue was released on the Carson Building roof where she remained until the next day, when she flew successfully to the roof of 333 Market St, the tallest building in Harrisburg, before returning to the nest ledge. Sadly, two days later, Blue flew at full speed into a reflective window and was killed instantly. Birds are not equipped to recognize glass instinctively; they must learn about it through experience. Too often, they learn too late. Estimates of birds killed by building and window impacts each year range from 100 million to upwards of 1 billion. In addition to fatalities, countless birds experience debilitating or life-threatening injuries from building and window collisions. Blue's death was a terrible shock to all of us on Watch, but we still had White and Red to keep track of so we carried on.

Continued on next page



I still can't believe I'm sitting here writing this column. When I joined AAS eighteen years ago, being President was not my objective. I wanted to learn more about birds—they had always fascinated me.

So I started going to monthly meetings and signed up for field trips. I began to work at the birdseed sales and other chapter events. After a few years, Grace Randolph asked me to serve as a Director on the Board. I was honored. Fourteen years later here I am, sitting on my perch.

I have some pretty big shoes to fill. From Bob Schell, who was President when I joined, to Susan Miller, our past president, each individual has helped our chapter to grow. Someone recently asked me if I had a vision for the chapter in the next two years. I've been giving it a lot of thought. I'd like this to be a time when we, as a chapter, can continue to learn about birds and other creatures and how they are affected by us, in both good and harmful ways. I want to continue to make it possible for young people in our area to be exposed to outdoor experiences that can be life changing. (You'll be hearing from three of our recent scholarship recipients in the next few months.)

Finally I'd like us to think about what we can do individually to make life better for our wildlife. There are many ways to do this: Add native plants to your garden (we're having a program on this), sign a petition to defeat a bill that is harmful to local wildlife habitat, or spend a morning pulling weeds in a clean-up day. (We have one of these coming up too.) Every small step we take matters.

Kathy Kuchwara

Fledge Watch Volunteers *continued from page 1*

White had fledged that morning. Bucking the tradition of fledging flights to the University or other buildings on Market Street, she made for the Capitol Complex where she remained until making her way back to the Carson Building the next morning. White flew fairly well from the beginning, but it took several days for her to build up the stamina to sustain flight, and it was several days before she got the hang of landings. Red fledged the morning after White. Her first flights were weak and she eventually came to ground on the sidewalk in front of the Carson Building, where she was rescued and released to the roof for another try. The smallest and most likely youngest of the three, Red's growth and development were a bit behind that of her bigger sisters. However, after a few days in the air (and a second rescue), she caught on and began flying well. White was also rescued twice during the first week of flight, both times from the balcony above the nest ledge. This is fairly typical for a fledging season. It takes a few days of flying for young falcons to learn how to use their wings effectively, and they often overestimate their ability, end up exhausted by repeated efforts at an unattainable perch, and become unable to reach even a low rooftop. This is why Fledge Watch usually continues for several days after the last chick has fledged.

Fledge Watch ended on Monday, June 8, when both of the surviving chicks were observed flying strongly and easily landing on selected perching spots. Falcon watchers continued to observe them throughout June and July as the adults taught them how to catch prey and refine their flight skills. By the end of July, visits to the ledge had become rare, and both chicks apparently left the area by early August.

Fledge Watch ran for 11 days. It was a week and a half of excitement, sadness, exhaustion and finally satisfaction. Between the DEP and volunteer watches, 31 volunteers contributed 524 hours to cover three fledges, five rescues, and one casualty, and help these two young falcons prepare to head out into unknown territory and seek out their own place in the world. Many thanks to Appalachian Audubon Society and its membership for its enthusiastic support of the volunteer Fledge Watch.

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Trout Run
Vacant

Hog Island: A Birder's Paradise

by Eli DePaulis

Imagine you are a birder alone on an island in a small wooden blind 10 miles from the mainland. The sound of cars and other manmade noise is nonexistent, and the lack of it is strange. Suddenly, out of the fog an endangered Roseate Tern flies in and lands next to your blind. As he begins to preen his picturesque plumage, a flock of Atlantic Puffins come in from a foraging trip out at sea and join him. The sound of all the birds is deafening, but beautiful. After spending an hour in the blind, you go back to the main base camp where you are greeted by a man named Dr. Peter Vickry. Only later do you find out that he is a world famous ornithologist renowned for being one of the first people to study the birds of the South Pacific. He asks you how the birding was and you soon break into conversation over lunch. After lunch, you walk down the narrow path to the landing rock where you and a few others are to be picked up and taken back to your camp. The surf is furious, making the wooden dory you have to board smash violently against the rock. You jump in the dory quickly as the weather worsens. The captain rows you to the main vessel and you eventually climb on board the large fiberglass fishing boat. By now, a heavy rain storm has moved in, drenching you as you wait for the dory to transport the rest of your expedition to the boat. After a tense 20 minutes, your whole expedition is safely on the fishing boat as you speed away from the small island, recounting what just happened.

I don't have to imagine because that was one of my many experiences at the Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine. I was able to go to Hog Island after receiving the 2015 Appalachian



Eli DePaulis at Eastern Egg Rock. Photo courtesy of Hog Island.

Audubon Hog Island scholarship. Being able to go to Hog Island was a great blessing because of the fabulous experiences it provided and the people with whom I was able to connect and learn.

I was able to spend a week birding Hog Island as well as the other islands in the area with expert instructors like Scott Weidensaul, Stephen Kress and Frank Gill. All the instructors were very helpful and great people to bird with. The other young birders I was with were extremely skilled birders from all across the county. It was much fun to share birding stories with them and compare field notes. Over the course of the week, we were able to see over 100 species of birds, many of which are not found here in Pennsylvania.

I'm extremely grateful to Appalachian Audubon for giving me the opportunity to have this wonderful adventure.

Stay Tuned for Upcoming Education Camp Scholarships!

Appalachian Audubon annually offers youth and adult scholarships for ornithology, natural history, conservation, field biology, and environmental leadership camps. More information will be provided on our website, www.appalachianaudubon.org, in our newsletter, and at our monthly meetings as it becomes available. This year we will be seeking applicants for the following:

Audubon Hog Island, Maine: *Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens*, June 12 to 17 or June 19 to 24. Our 2015 recipient, Eli DePaulis, will share his experiences at our September meeting; *Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week*, July 17 to 22; and *Family Camp*, August 7 to 12. Check Hog Island's website <http://hogisland.audubon.org/> for more information and updates.

Goddard Leadership Legacy Institute: This week-long environmental camp is held outside of Carlisle in Michaux State Forest. Our 2015 recipients will share their experiences at our October meeting and in our October/November newsletter.

Wildwood Lake Nature Center: Located in Harrisburg, the center offers a variety of week-long summer day camp experiences with a focus on nature.

Appalachian Audubon also will consider providing scholarships to cover other nature-related camp experiences upon request. Please send requests and inquiries to Karen Atwood, Education Chairperson, at atwoodphoto1@verizon.net.

SEPTEMBER 2015

Except for the May Banquet, AAS monthly programs typically take place on the third Thursday of each month at the **Christ Presbyterian Church** located at 421 Deerfield Road, in the Allendale neighborhood of Camp Hill. Join us at 7:00pm for socializing and refreshments. The program begins at 7:30pm.

DIRECTIONS

I-83 southbound — take exit 40B towards New Cumberland. Stay straight, cross Carlisle Road to Cedar Cliff Drive. Turn left onto Allendale Way and turn left onto Deerfield Road. The Church is on the left. Park in the second lot.

I-83 northbound — take exit 40B, turn left onto Carlisle Road/Simpson Ferry Road and go under I-83. Turn left again at the light onto Cedar Cliff Drive. Turn left onto Allendale Way and turn left onto Deerfield Road. The Church is on the left. Park in the second lot.



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**Appalachian Audubon Society**

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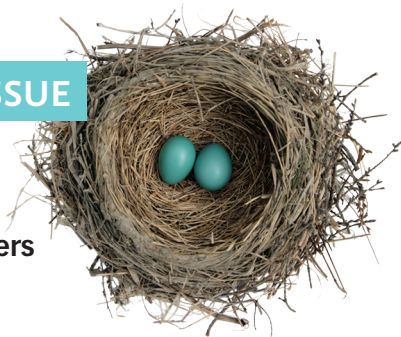
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**Birdseed Volunteers Needed**

Our annual Birdseed Sale will be held this year on Friday, September 25, and Saturday, September 26, at the Camp Hill Boscov's. This is our largest fundraiser of the year and we are asking all members to consider volunteering to help make this sale a big success. We need volunteers to help unload the trucks, set up the area, direct traffic, load seed in customers' cars, and help keep the tables neat and organized. Many hands make light work, so please lend a hand.

For additional information and to sign up for a shift please contact Sue Hannon at sbhannon@gmail.com or (717) 736-1035.

AAS Gifts Acknowledged

Appalachian Audubon recently received thank you notes from the recipients of our Coins for Conservation donations. The Red Creek Wildlife Center and Bird Refuge of York County each received \$153.06.

Also we received a thank you letter from the Central PA Conservancy for our \$450.00 donation towards the Goddard Leadership Academy Scholarships.

Trout Run Volunteers Needed

In the middle of July a group of five AAS volunteers, assisted by two homeowners who live in the development adjacent to our Trout Run property, spent several hours clearing away overgrown brush from the upper level of the preserve. The brush was blocking the flow of water from entering the drainage system and caused water to back up onto residents' properties. Paul Zeph also worked with a group of residents to take down some trees to alleviate the problem. There is still more work to be done, however, to finish this project. We are assembling a group of volunteers who can spend a few hours on a Saturday morning (probably in October) to remove additional trees and brush. We also need volunteers with chainsaws for tree cutting. Please contact Paul Zeph at pzeph1@verizon.net if you can lend a hand. Thank you.

Inserts include:

Bird Seed Order Form | Dates are: September 25th & 26th
2015-2016 Brochure | Check out our September Field Trips