



CHICKADEE CHATTER

Newsletter of the Lycoming Audubon Society

July – August 2007

UPCOMING EVENT

LAS Annual Summer Picnic

July 25, 2007 – 6:00 pm

Rider Park, Warrensville



This is our annual Family Picnic – children are invited!!

Again, everyone brings a **Dish to Share**, your own tableware and utensils. Drinks will be provided.

Afterwards, plan to take a walk along one of the several trails looking for flora and fauna!

A program for the children on **BATS**, will be presented by Linda Burk following dinner.



Directions to Rider Park:

Proceed North on Warrensville Road (SR 2039) from Route 220/I-180, "crossing over" Route 973 at Warrensville, and continuing onto Pleasant Valley Road. Go approximately 1 mile, and turn right onto Caleb Creek Road (dirt road). Follow this road 1.7 miles until you come to a gate and parking area.



**Our 2007–2008 Program
year
will begin on Wednesday,
September 26, 2007.**

LOCAL CHAPTER MEMBERSHIPS !! DUES ARE DUE!!

If you have "Local Chapter ONLY" membership, your dues have expired on June 30th. To renew, send your check for \$10.00 for July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008 to :

Donna Krupilis, LAS Membership Chair
728 Pennsylvania Avenue
Williamsport PA 177701

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Happy Summer!

As your new president I wish to express my appreciation for your vote of confidence and wish to acknowledge the wonderful dedicated members of Lycoming Audubon Society. There are many who work behind the scenes to make the organization run smoothly.

Along with our newsletter editor Joan Knight; Joe Yoder, Joann Wolfe, Margery and Paul Blystone, Judy Fulmer, and Dan Alters work together to bring the *Chickadee Chatter* Newsletter to you every other month.

Our meetings include wonderful programs organized by the program chair, Mel Zimmerman. They are always educational, and with the help of our board members the meetings run smoothly.

At each meeting Tink Reish provides refreshments of special homemade treats, and Sondra Beach is there to help wherever we need it.

Throughout the year, the various committee chairmen handle their special duties, from conservation projects and various bird counts, to membership, educational projects and field trips.

The more members that help with the many Lycoming Audubon Society projects and events, the stronger our organization will become and the greater influence we will have in the community. Watch for the LAS project list in the September newsletter and consider helping out with a project of special interest. If you would like to volunteer in any capacity, please see any board member.

Hope to see you at the July 25th picnic in Rider Park!! Until then, Happy Summer!

Linda Burk

lasbatsbirds@aol.com

Our new LAS patches commemorating the Purple Martin, are available!! \$5.00 each, make checks or money orders payable to Lycoming Audubon Society, and mail to: Ron Beach, 1217 Cedar Street, Montoursville, PA 17754. Include appropriate Shipping charges: \$.50 for one; two or three \$.65; four to six, \$.85; \$1.00 for seven to ten patches. More than ten are shipped free.



PURPLE MARTIN PROJECT

This year our Special Project and our Bird Patch promotes Purple Martins. We have acquired a Purple Martin house which will be erected at the Lysock View complex.

Purple Martins are the largest member of the swallow family, about 7 1/2 inches from tip to tail. East of the Mississippi River they are totally dependent on "human supplied" housing and prefer to live near human settlements where nest houses are provided. They

especially like to be near water and large open areas. They are unusual among birds that use nest boxes, as several pairs will nest in a single box or house with multiple compartments.

Martins are daytime feeders, and only eat flying insects which they catch in flight. Their diet is quite varied and includes dragonflies, damselflies, flies, midges, mayflies, stinkbugs, leafhoppers, Japanese beetles, June bugs, butterflies, moths, grasshoppers, cicadas, bees, wasps, flying ants, and ballooning spiders. Martins are not large consumers of mosquitoes as is often claimed. A seven year study conducted by the Purple Martin Conservation Association, failed to find a single mosquito among the diet samples collected from parent martins bringing insects to their young. The samples were collected from martins at all hours, all season long, and in numerous habitats. Martins feed high in the sky; whereas mosquitoes prefer low damp places during daylight hours, and only become more active in the evenings.

They are Neotropic in nature and migrate to South America (Brazil and surrounding areas) each winter. Purple martins have a very strong site tenacity and will usually return to the same site where they successfully fledged young from the previous year.

For more information, see: <http://purplemartin.org/> and <http://www.purplemartins.com/>

Bird Observations.....continued from following page....

Street in Montoursville on May 13. Black Vulture sightings have become increasingly prevalent here in the past few years.

On a trip to south Florida a few weeks ago, Meredith and I found quite a few Swallow-tailed Kites at Audubon's magnificent Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Naples, including one bird that swooped into a tree and appeared to emerge with a young Northern Mockingbird in its talons (while being hotly pursued by an adult Mockingbird). Red-shouldered Hawks are everywhere, including some young birds that called constantly during our hike of the boardwalk. If you get the opportunity, I highly recommend visiting Corkscrew, which has the largest remaining stand of virgin Bald Cypress trees (some over 120 feet tall and 500 years old) in the United States. Corkscrew also has the advantage of having mosquito fish, which eat mosquito larvae, thereby keeping bites to a manageable minimum.

As long as you're in that neighborhood, check out J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on nearby Sanibel Island, where we photographed a Reddish Egret from a couple of feet away as he fished totally unperturbed by our presence. You will need the bug spray here, though: not just for mosquitoes, but also for the dreaded "noseeums" (midges). I'm still sporting some welts.

Joe Yoder

BIRD OBSERVATIONS

Summer is here, and we are between the big migrations, but that doesn't mean there isn't any birding action in north central Pennsylvania. Dave Ferry recently reported some good finds from birders doing surveying for the Breeding Bird Atlas.

Yellow-throated Vireo was found where Route 973 crosses Lycoming Creek. This spot also has Northern Parula, Warbling Vireo and Northern Rough-winged Swallow. Louisiana Waterthrush is being found in areas where forestry roads parallel streams (along with Wood Thrush and Veery). There have also been many Acadian Flycatchers found along streams.

Difficult-to-find Yellow-breasted Chat and Golden-winged Warbler were found singing along Steam Valley Road, not far from Fry's Turkey Ranch Restaurant off Route 15.

Dave says many Ruffed Grouse broods (with extremely protective parents) are being found along forestry roads. When the young are approached on foot, the adult birds become quite agitated.

Dave had a Northern Saw-whet Owl respond to an Eastern Screech-Owl call near Wildwood Cemetery in Williamsport – a place you would not expect to find the secretive owl species. He's been able to find Barred Owls in the middle of the day with voice calls rather than taped calls. He notes it's a very quick way to find other species, as well. Rose-breasted Grosbeak came "chinking" to his Barred Owl call in one instance, and cuckoos have responded to Saw-whet calls. In the upland swamps to the west of Route 14 near Ralston, Canada Warbler, Eastern Bluebird and Brown Creeper have been found. Dave said it's interesting to watch bluebirds in their historical habitat. Other finds were Northern Goshawk and Henslow's Sparrow in the Laurel Ridge area.

On June 27, Wayne Laubscher reported on the PA Birds listserv spotting a Common Moorhen that was found earlier this spring at the mitigation wetlands at Mill Hall. Also present were Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot and Wood Duck, as well as Green Heron and Great Blue Heron.

The next day, Chad Kauffman, of Mifflintown, reported that he and Aden Troyer (who owns Lost Creek Shoe Shop in Oakland Mills, a great place to buy birding optics) teamed with Wayne to look for the Common Moorhen at Mill Hall and found it. The fun wasn't over, though, as they soon saw an American Bittern fly overhead. Other highlights were Pied-billed Grebe, at least six young ones being fed by an adult; Green Heron; Wood Duck, many with young; American Kestrel, apparently using the nesting boxes; American Coot; Killdeer; and Swamp Sparrow.

On June 6, Bonnie Ingram reported there is a partial albino Chipping Sparrow in a neighbor's orchard northeast of Clarkstown. That same day, Harlan Pidcoe reported that an albino sparrow has been seen in the vicinity of Sycamore Manor.

On May 26, Steve Pinkerton was calling owls just off of Jack's Hollow Road when a red-phase Eastern Screech-Owl came within 3 feet of him. "So after sitting there staring at each other for a good 2 minutes, I got bold enough to reach for my camera and snap a shot," Steve said. On May 14, Larry Waltz reported that a Red-headed Woodpecker was seen for several days at mid-Daugherty's Run.

Also: Pennsylvania's first Yellow-billed Loon, in nearly full breeding plumage, was found in early May on the Susquehanna River across from Harrisburg.

Speaking of firsts, it's been a banner year for Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon nests in Pennsylvania, and my friend Meredith Lombard was instrumental this spring in locating the first peregrine nest in Lancaster County in 60 years. The pair attempted unsuccessfully to nest on the Route 30 Bridge spanning the Susquehanna River near Wrightsville. Meredith found the birds while scoping from Breezyview Overlook in Chickies Rock County Park, not far from her home. The last time peregrines nested in Lancaster County was on a cliff at Chickies Rock in 1947. The female bird, who is not yet sporting full adult plumage, produced several eggs that did not hatch. To read more about it, check out this June 12 article in the Lancaster New Era: <http://local.lancasteronline.com/4/205527>

Also at Breezyview Overlook, Meredith and I found a subadult Mississippi Kite on May 28, the same spot where we observed two subadult Mississippi Kites put on quite a show on May 28, 2001. Meredith also found kites there in May 2004, and others have reported finding them nearby along the river on a couple of occasions. Who knows, maybe some day we'll have nesting Mississippi Kites in Pennsylvania. Meredith and I found another southern species that has been expanding its range northward, Black Vulture, at Mill

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