



CHICKADEE CHATTER

Newsletter of the Lycoming Audubon Society

September — October 2007

2007 FALL PROGRAM CALENDAR

September 15, 2007 — Saturday, FIELD TRIP to Canfield Island — BYOB -- Bring Your Own Binoculars! See information inside, page 3.

September 26, 2007

"The Ecology of a Caribbean Coral Reef" —



Dr. Mel Zimmerman has been teaching a Tropical Marine Biology course at marine labs in the Caribbean since 1984. His most recent trip

was to the Island of Roatan, Honduras. His presentation (slides and video) will cover the ecology, biodiversity and current threats to this fragile ecosystem.



October 24, 2007

"Local Barn Owls: Banding and Current Status". — Wayne Laubscher has spent several summers banding owls in the area and will give us an update on the local population status of the Barn Owl.



November 28, 2007

PLEASE NOTE: This is the LAST Wednesday in November!!!

"In Darwin's footsteps - Wildlife of the Galapagos"

Dr. Mary Morrison will give a presentation on her recent trip to the fabulous Galapagos Islands! Finches, tortoises and iguanas!! Oh My, Auduboners!...we are not in Pennsylvania anymore!



December 12, 2007 — (tentative) Holiday Party—Date and details TBD

December 16, 2007 — Northern Lycoming Christmas Bird Count

December 23, 2007 — Williamsport Christmas Bird Count

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope you all have had a great summer!! September brings us cooler weather and always gives me more energy to learn something new. Our programs for the fall months certainly will provide a great opportunity for learning in an enjoyable way. Our own talented LAS members will be presenting the programs for September, October and November.

A new feature this year will be our **"ASK AUDUBON BOX"**. At each meeting, cards will be provided for attendees to write down their questions about wildlife, nature, birds or any other outdoor topic. We will select a few questions at each meeting and have our expert members — of which we have many! — answer them. For example, have you always wanted to know the habits of a particular bird or animal? What are the best binoculars? No question is too simple.... and it will NOT be necessary to sign your name to the question.

This year we would also like to spotlight some of the volunteer opportunities with *Lycoming Audubon Society*. The first volunteer spotlight is *"the Greeters"*. We would like to have two to four members for each meeting, who are willing to come early to help set up the front table, greet members and visitors, assist with the sign-in sheets and door prizes, and to handle membership applications. Please see Donna Krupilis or myself if you would like to help being a Greeter.

Looking forward to seeing you and your friends at the September 26st meeting!

Linda Burk

Purple Martin Project

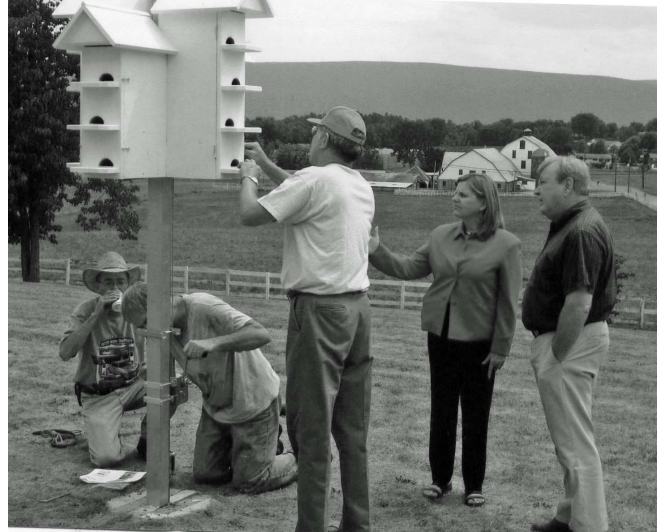
Our Special Project and our Bird Patch promotes Purple Martins — the largest species in the Swallow family.

The Purple Martin population is declining, and the exact reason is still unknown. Martins prefer living around people, but also require wide open space with water nearby. East of the Mississippi River they are totally dependent on "human supplied" housing. LAS purchased a Purple Martin house that was erected in July, at the Lysock View complex on Warrensville Road. The multiple compartment house and location at Lysock View fulfills their housing preferences.

Birds that hatched elsewhere this year will be looking for a nesting site to use next spring when they return from their South American winter visit. Our "Martin condo" will be ready and waiting!

LAS wishes to thank Mr. Carl Wentzler and Mr. Steve Rush for their assistance in the installation of this nesting box.

Photo: (left to right) Steven Rush, Carl Wentzler, Fred Stiner, Ms. Rebecca Burk, County Commissioner and Mr. Gary Hutchinson, County Public Safety Director.



Purple Martin Project PATCHES — are now available!!

Ron Beach has provided us with another beautiful patch this year to commemorate our Purple Martin Project. \$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.



Annual Picnic at Rider Park

Our Annual PICNIC was held July 25th at Rider Park. A big thanks to LAS member, Duane Gipe, for providing a beautifully painted apple gourd that he crafted into a "small-bird", natural bird house. This was given to the person who traveled the furthest to enjoy the event. Thank you Duane, for the very kind gesture!

LAS LISTSERV



LAS has instituted a listserv for providing information to the membership,....quickly, via email.

To receive notices of bird sightings, last minute meeting changes, and short notice field trips....., just send an email to: **lasbatsbirds@aol.com**, and include both your name and email address.

Don't forget to add our Fall program dates to your calendar!!!!



LAS Projects List

AUTUMN

September: Bird Seed Sale — Coordinator: Ron Beach

Field Trip: Canfield Island — Coordinator: Mary Morrison

October: Litter pick up on old route 220 near Twin Hills — Coordinator: Sondra Beach
Hummingbird Project — Coordinator: Steve Pinkerton and Wayne Laubscher

WINTER

December: Christmas Bird Count — Coordinator: Dave Ferry

January & February: Winter Raptor Surveys — Coordinator: Joe Yoder

February: Monitor nesting structures at Lycoming Audubon Society's wetland areas (Haleeka and Poweys) — Coordinator: Fred Stiner

SPRING

April-August: Monitor bird boxes at Canfield Island and Rider Park — Coordinator: Fred Stiner
Breeding Bird Atlas Survey — Coordinator: Dan Brauning

Purple Martin House Project — Maintenance and Monitoring — Coordinator: Ron Beach

April: Litter pick up — Coordinator: Sondra Beach

May: Spring Migration Count — Coordinator: Dave Ferry

Bird-A-Thon — Coordinator: TBA

May: Spring clean up and planting at the Lycoming Audubon Society sponsored butterfly and hummingbird garden at Rider Park — Coordinator: Ron Beach

Field trip: Canfield Island — Coordinator: Mary Morrison

Spring: Annual Canfield Island bird survey Report (Info from Spring Migration and Bluebird Monitoring) — Coordinator: TBA

SUMMER

June-August: Summer Bat Concentration Surveys — Coordinator: Linda Burk

August: Litter pick up — Coordinator: Sondra Beach

Summer: Monitor and band Barn owls/saw whet owls — Coordinators: Wayne Laubscher and Steve Pinkerton

OTHER

Environmental Directory — Coordinator: Judy Ryder

Williamsport High School Native plant garden — Coordinator: Dave Ferry

SEPTEMBER Field Trip Canfield Island

Loyalsock Riverfront Park

Saturday, September 15th

Come explore one of the hidden gems along the West Branch of the Susquehanna. All levels of birders are welcome, including beginning birders and families. **BYOB — Bring your own binoculars!** Share a pleasant morning walk, learn about this historic island, which was used by native Americans as early as 5000 BP (before the present), and learn how different kinds of birds make a living today in this fascinating river's-edge habitat. Possible sightings include pileated woodpeckers and, if we're very lucky, a bald eagle. We will also learn about any animal tracks we see along the way.

We will meet at Wegman's food court at 8:30 am, and carpool or caravan for the 10 minute drive to Canfield Island. (or meet the group at Loyalsock Park at 8:45 am). No pets are allowed on this field trip. Physical activity rating is easy — walking over flat ground, less than 2 miles total. Sneakers are advisable, as the ground may be a bit muddy in places. This trip will be canceled in case of rain. No RSVPs necessary; just be at Wegman's by 8:30 am to join the group — look for the folks with binoculars!



VISIT our Website at

<http://www.lycoming.org/audubon/>

Find out the latest Lycoming Audubon information and other interesting "stuff", by visiting our website at: www.lycoming.org/audubon/

Check for reports of interesting local bird sightings, by and clicking on "sightings" in the right side bar. Our webmaster maintains this list along with a "hot link" to information about the bird.

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

Winter Hummingbird Contest



Our annual Hummingbird Contest will begin October 1st. Western species of hummingbirds have been

turning up with increasing frequency in Pennsylvania. Last year a Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird sighting was confirmed on October 14 in Unityville.

To enter the contest: Maintain a hummingbird feeder through December 2007. If you see any hummer at your feeder after October 1st, call Wayne Laubscher at 748-7511; Steve Pinkerton at 494-1308 or Dave Ferry at 323-1590. Keep your feeder clean. Sugar to water ratio of 1 to 4. Red coloring is not needed. If temperatures are to go below 25°F, bring the feeder in for the night. Maintaining the feeder will NOT prevent Ruby-throated hummers from migrating south.

Winners will select from either Sibley's Guide to Birds (North America) or a \$25.00 gift certificate to Gander Mountain.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY PLEASE RESPOND!!!



Enclosed with the newsletter is a membership survey, which we hope each one of you will complete and return. We are interested in receiving feedback about our programs, and what you, the members, would like to have LAS provide going forward. All you need to do is answer the questions, add any additional comments, and return the survey, by refolding the sheet to show the LAS address, tape the flap down, add a stamp, and mail!!



THANK YOU !!!

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

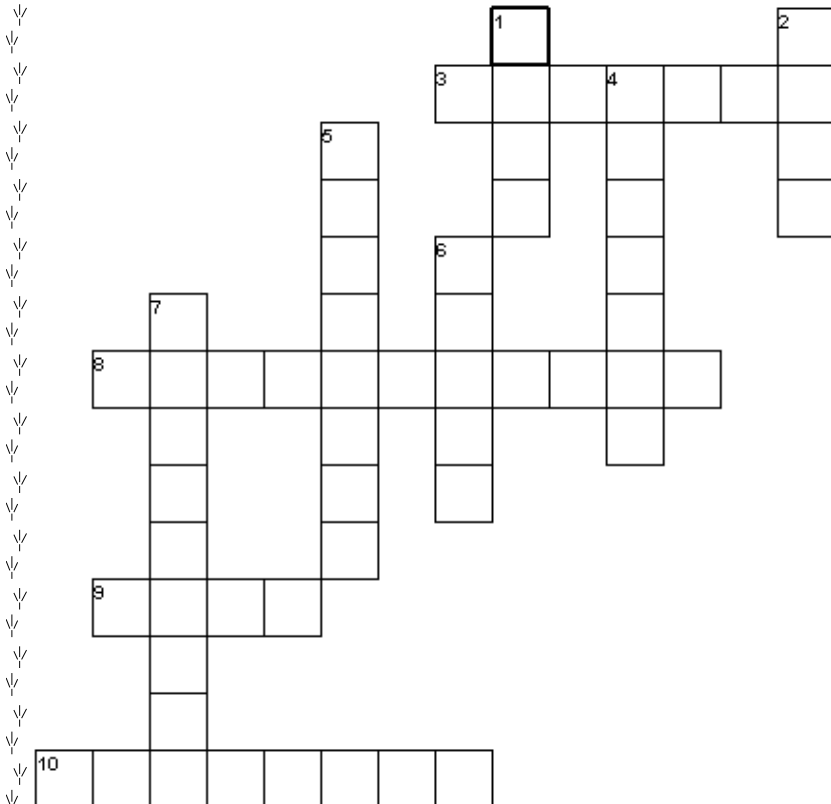
On July 23, Jeff Schaffer found a juvenile Virginia Rail at the wetlands near Mill Hall. "Given previous observations of this species as adults at this location, there seems to be some pretty good evidence that they are breeding here," he wrote on PA Birds.

In late July, Ron Beach reported a nice find near the entrance to Rider Park on Caleb Creek Road: a Red-headed Woodpecker.

Enjoy the rest of fall migration, and please share your sightings with me, other LAS board members or the chapter's Web site.

Joe Yoder

KIDS KORNER.....



1. Large bird that cries 'caw'.
2. What most birds lay their eggs in.
3. Common black bird with yellow eyes.
4. Bird with a 'meow-like' call.
5. Red male bird with crest.
6. Huge bird with a white head.
7. Plant with yellow flowers that seed-eating birds love.
8. Very tiny bird.
9. Fast-flying bird with noisy wings.
10. Source of water for birds and bees.

Designed by Jim Green

[Answer Guide](#)



BIRD OBSERVATIONS



Another fall migration is upon us. Shorebirds have been moving for a couple of months, warblers and other passerines are winging overhead as we sleep, and the first waves of southbound raptors have been gliding down Pennsylvania's ridgetops since early August.

It's the time of year when I keep one eye on the Weather Channel, the other on weather Web sites and my ears tuned to that computer-generated fellow on the weather radio for hints that a cold front is on the way – one that will usher in stiff winds from the northwest, banish the haze and humidity and trigger big flights of migrants.

As you read this, I will probably be on vacation at Waggoner's Gap, once again taking in the spectacle that is the annual Broad-winged Hawk migration. I never tire of scanning the skies for the mother lode – a large "kettle" of Broad-wings following one another and the thermals that help them soar their way to Central and South America with the least expenditure of energy. As I've said before, you need not be on a mountain to witness this. You just have to be in the right place at the right time. Your best hope is in late afternoon, when the thermals are deflating and the birds are descending from their neck-stretching midday heights. The big Broad-wing flights in the Northeast usually take place a few days on either side of September 17. Good luck.

Raptors aren't the only migrants we see at hawk watches. As I write this in the fourth week of August, mind-boggling numbers of swifts and swallows are zipping down the ridges; Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Monarch Butterflies and dragonflies are also moving. An occasional shorebird overhead may challenge your ID skills, and this year appears to be another good one for Red-breasted Nuthatches. If you get to the watch early, and there's still a bit of morning fog to burn off, you may find yourself staring eye-level at a tree full of warblers and other passerine migrants feeding and seeking shelter after a night of flight.

Another note on raptors: I've had a pair of Cooper's Hawks nesting somewhere in my Faxon neighborhood this summer (I never did pinpoint the exact location; I've seen the birds range as far as wooded areas near Water Tower Square). When the young fledged, they entertained me on my deck as I witnessed their clumsy attempts to hunt near Miller's Run, which flows behind my place. They often announced their presence with screams, which certainly doesn't lend itself to surprising and snagging wary prey birds. I sense it was more of a signal to mom and dad: "Hey, feed me, I don't yet have the hang of this hunting thing."

Steve Pinkerton circulated photos that a local man took of a white (albinistic or leucistic) Red-tailed Hawk in the Linden area. The bird had been seen in a field along Pine Run Road near Willits Truck Body Shop. Skip Heller provided a photo of an apparent albinistic/leucistic House Finch that was seen in July in the yard of Tom and Nina Dempsey of Williamsport.

Don Bastian reported three Northern Goshawks near a cabin in Liberty Township, Tioga County on July 29. He wrote: "One was screaming, and two others hopped and flew about the pine tree they were in. Two adults and one juvenile, I assume. We watched them for a half hour, flying low, landing on the ground, and perching close to the ground on low branches. They came to within 100 yards of our position. The juvenile never stopped squawking ... What a thrill!"

On Audubon's PA Birds listserv, Deuane Hoffman reported a confirmed find of a breeding Red Crossbill in northern Lycoming County on one of his blocks for the Breeding Bird Atlas (Cedar Run). After hearing one of the birds from his car along Gamble Run Road on Aug. 13, he ventured into the bog, finding an adult female feeding two dependent young.

Earlier that day at Game Lands 252 ("The Ordnance"), Deuane found a few shorebirds: Killdeer, 22; Spotted Sandpiper, 4; Lesser Yellowlegs, 2; Least Sandpiper, 6; Semipalmated Sandpiper, 2; and Solitary Sandpiper, 2. On Aug. 11 at Game Lands 252, Moses Martin reported some good wading birds at the large pond on the north end, including 20 Great Blue Herons, 4 Green Herons and 4 Great Egrets. He also saw 4 Belted Kingfishers, a few dozen Wood Ducks, a good number of swallows and flycatchers, a Hairy Woodpecker and some Fish Crows.

Also noted on the listserv: While surveying in July for the Breeding Bird Atlas in Region 48 in Clinton County, Greg Grove watched an adult Chestnut-sided Warbler feeding three young Brown-headed Cowbirds on an old forest road in Sproul State Forest. He estimated the cowbirds were five times larger (in body volume) than the poor warbler feeding them.

Continued in middle of previous page.....