

South Mountain Airs

The Newsletter of the South Mountain Audubon Society

January Through March 2011, Volume XXXVI #1 – The E-mail Edition

Celebrating Our 30th Chapter Year

Results of SMAS CBC #111 - 18 Dec 2011

Our Annual Christmas Bird Count for Gettysburg and Surrounding Areas took place on Saturday, 18 December.

SMAS had 16 members and volunteers comprising 10 teams counting the number of bird species and the total individual number of birds in the field throughout most of the day in the Gettysburg count area, a 15 mile diameter circle centered on Knoxlyn, PA. 15 people also participated by observing at their bird feeders and yard areas.

A total of 76 species were seen with 7911 individual birds tallied. One additional species was reported during the count week. 36 Feeder and yard area species totaling 830 individual birds were reported and are included in the overall totals above. These participants added 3 species not found by those involved in the field counts. The species and individual totals this year compare with 75/14395 and 73/6562 in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

Total party hours this year were 58 ¼ with 13 ½ hours on foot and 45 ½ by vehicle. Party miles were 15 ¼ miles on foot and 414 by vehicle.

The complete count is summarized by species and numbers in an Attachment at the end of the Newsletter for USPS hard copy mail recipients and as a second attachment for recipients of the e-mail edition.

UPCOMING SMAS PROGRAMS & PRESENTATIONS

Unless indicated otherwise all SMAS Programs will be held at the Agricultural Resource Center, 670 Old Harrisburg Road, Gettysburg, PA at 7:30 PM. A room number for the SMAS meeting will be posted on the front door.

Monday January 10th Kathy King and Mike Bertram will speak on **“The Serpentine Barrens”**

This talk will cover and explain the ecology of Serpentine Barrens where an unusual geology supports rare plants and animals. The State Line Serpentine Barrens in Chester and Lancaster Counties, Pennsylvania and Cecil County, Maryland includes a National Natural Landmark and is the largest serpentine area on the Eastern Seaboard. The talk will also describe conservation work undertaken on these barrens and will be illustrated by many photos.

The presenters, Mike and Kathy, recently moved to our area and are now members of our local South Mountain Audubon Chapter. Come out and meet them at the next meeting.

Monday March 14th **“Ramsay Koury's Road Trip”**

The mighty Mississippi, the boreal forests of Minnesota, the pothole prairie regions of North Dakota, and the splendor of Rocky Mountain National Park are some of the many places Ramsay Koury visited on a 7000 mile, 16 state journey in June 2009. From elk, moose and bison, to abundant waterfowl and an exciting search for the elusive White-tailed Ptarmigan, come to the SMAS March meeting and hear Ramsay describe his experiences in the upper Midwest and Colorado.

Ramsay Koury, from Camp Hill, PA, has been interested in birds since the third grade. A sometime dentist, but a birder all the time, he enjoys looking at birds anywhere, whether they are on the Susquehanna River or in a far away foreign country.

UPCOMING SMAS FIELD TRIPS

Contact Mike O'Brien, Field Trip Chair, as necessary for more information on all Field Trips and the annual Christmas Bird Count: 717.642.6676 Res / 540.314.5108 Cell / maddogobrien@gmail.com E-mail. Please let the Leader know in advance if you plan to attend any field trip.

Saturday January 15th Antietam National Battlefield

We will visit the Antietam National Battlefield at Sharpsburg, MD. We hope to see resident and overwintering birds. Bring binoculars, appropriate clothing per the weather and snacks/drink as per personal needs. Will be birding from vehicle(s) most of the time. Easy walking in most areas when out of vehicles. Facilities available. Contact the leader per above as needed / for additional info. Meet at the leader's house, #231 Carroll's Tract Rd, Fairfield, PA at 8 AM. We plan to return by 2 to 3 PM.

Directions: To reach the leader's house: Coming from Gettysburg on PA Rte #116 (Fairfield Rd) turn right on Carroll's Tract Rd at the "Tee" intersection at the Fairfield Post Office immediately before entering the town. Proceed about 1/2 mile to #231 passing an intersection with Mt. Hope (on left) and Bullfrog (on right) Roads. #231 is the second driveway on right after this intersection.

Thursday March 17th Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area

The Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, located on the Lebanon-Lancaster County line about one mile south of Kleinfeltersville, is a tract owned by the Pennsylvania Game Commission for the protection, propagation, management, preservation and controlled harvest of wildlife. Per the PA Game Commission, this area of more than 5,000 acres provides habitat for waterfowl, forest and farmland wildlife species, and includes a 40 acre shallow lake and 70 acres of impoundments.

The area is a stopover for massive numbers of migrating Snow Geese and Tundra Swans as well as numerous other waterfowl, landbirds and eagles as well as containing many resident species.

Bring binoculars, appropriate clothing per the weather including windy conditions, and snacks/drink as per personal needs. Scopes are desirable if available. Mixed birding from vehicles on wildlife drive loop roads and some walking to include, if desired, about a quarter mile to viewing point on the lake area (and return). Facilities available. Contact the leader as needed / for additional info

Meet at the parking lot area between CVS and Burger King (across road opposite Walmart) on US #30 near its intersection with US #15 at 8 AM (this is on the West side of the US #30 and #15 interchange).

A Look Ahead to the next quarter's field trips – Mark your calendars

April 21st 7 AM - Meet at Jubilee Market, Emmittsburg, MD – Lily Pons Water Gardens, Frederick County, MD

May 14th 7 AM at site–International Migratory Bird Day – Spangler Spring area of Gettysburg National Military Park

June 2nd 7:30 AM at entrance sign – PA State Gamelands #249

All dates and meeting times for the next quarter are believed firm, but April and June could change by a few days.

Memorial / Honor Book for Carol & Conrad Richter

SMAS recently purchased a book for the Adams County Library System, *The American Bird Conservancy Guide To Bird Conservation* by Danile J. Lebben, et al. This was donated in honor of Conrad and Carol Richter, in appreciation for their excellent presentation at our November 2010 SMAS Meeting.

Feathery Factoid: Did you know that the greatest documented height of a bird flying over North America is 21,000 feet (6,400 meters). The bird? It was a Mallard which struck a Western Airlines L-188 Electra above Elko, Nevada on July 9, 1963. Stay tuned. Next month we'll find something higher elsewhere in the world.

SMAS Board Member Officer Elections

We now have an officially elected President and Vice-President. Welcome aboard Melissa & Cy Deitz.

However, our Secretary has recently stepped down and we also have an open Education Chair. In addition, we are looking for someone to serve as our Hospitality coordinator. Note that the Treasurer, Publications and Membership posts are being filled in an interim status too, so if you have an interest in keeping the minutes from our Board meetings several times a year, handling our Chapter's checkbook and financial records, editing and putting this Newsletter together, or just helping to drum up new members, please give some thought to volunteering & contact us.

You do not have to be a bird expert or any other kind of expert or need any special talents in any area to qualify, and certainly not to be an effective member. We will gladly answer any questions or concerns anyone may have if they are interested in joining us in the Chapter's organization and governing.

Update on Transition from hard copy paper mailing of the Newsletter to Electronic Transmission via Email

Most of you who read the Newsletter have probably noted that we have been in the process of changing the way we deliver the Newsletter over the past couple of quarters. For those newest members since last quarter there is a short note attached to this edition regarding this process.

In the next quarter or so, those of you who have not already signed up for receipt of the Newsletter by email will receive a post card type return questionnaire on how you wish to receive the Newsletter in the future: By e-mail, the preferred and postage-free method; via the regular US Mail System as in the past; by accessing it on-line at AdCoNatchat, the Adams County Nature Chat Site on Yahoo.com; or not receiving it at all, the best option for those that do not read the Newsletter or care to receive it at all. If we do not hear from you before the ensuing quarter, we will assume that you do not want to receive the Newsletter.

For those who missed the recent Newsletter discussion on AdCoNaChat, this information is repeated here following this topic. Please note that we post our SMAS field trips, meeting dates and topics, special events like an annual picnic, a spring luncheon, an owl prowl, and other club news on the Calendar area as well as other information in the Files section of this site.

We spend well over a \$1,200.00 a year on postage costs alone for the hard copy mailing of the Newsletters and occasional informational mailings. With the addition of costs related to supplies, publication and printing this takes up the majority of our limited budget. E-mail transmission is virtually free and will allow us to more directly spend our monies on our mission of education and conservation related to nature in general and bird-life in particular.

AdCoNatChat - Do You AdCoNaChat? (add coe natch it)

AdCoNatChat is the Adams County Nature Chat site, a Yahoo Groups Chat Site. Are you a Member yet? If not and you like to trade information on birds, butterflies and other things out there, you should consider joining the group. If you just want to see what is it about and not post to the group that is fine too. Many people just browse the site. But these days most sites require you to join as they want to count you as a user of their site. This simply requires a user ID and a password like any other site and you probably already are in this position on numerous sites. On some such sites you can still read the message boards, but on almost all, you now may have to "join" to post items, use the calendaring and file applications, upload files, and so on. You may possibly already be a Yahoo user.

Some members of this site have an interest in photography, others in birds and birding, butterflies, native plants, and the list goes on. Of course, much of it relates to Adams County and nearby. The nice thing is you can ask a question or for opinions on whatever, and people will join in and everybody learns something.

We post our SMAS field trips, meeting dates and topics, special events like an annual picnic, a spring luncheon, an owl prowl, and other club news on the calendar. There are directions uploaded to the files section for some areas we have trips to, and also, we often upload the species list from completed field trips and CBCs on the Files area. You can access the AdCoNaChat web-site at the link provided below. This is the link to the home page and from there you can access posts by members, the Calendar and Files section, and much more.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AdCoNaChat/>

The 2011 GBBC will take place Friday, February 18, through Monday, February 21. Please join us!

What is the GBBC? (The Great Backyard Bird Count)

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. The GBBC website will be adding updated GBBC materials for this year's count as they become available. Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the Great Backyard Bird Count Website which follows, or you can simply type Great Backyard Bird Count in you browser's search box. <http://birdsource.org/gbbc>

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or anywhere in the United States and Canada. They can also see how this year's numbers compare with those from previous years. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see. A selection of images is posted in the online photo gallery - <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/gallery/> - accessible from the GBBC web site's main pages.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada, and sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited. Checkout the GBBC and all of the many features offered out at the links provided above.

WHERE TO GO BIRDING LOCALLY

One of our favorite not too far away places is Pennsylvania State Gamelands #249 North of Gettysburg. We usually include this location for our last outing of the field trip year.

Looking for a little bit of everything? Take a stroll through State Gamelands 249. Visitors can enjoy 1,942 acres of mixed woodland, shrub/scrub, riparian, grassland, and fallow field habitat easily accessed by a variety of trails and gameland roads. Shallow water impoundments and a scenic 65-acre restored wetland draw dabbling ducks, Tundra Swans, American Woodcock. The gamelands are free and open to the public, year-round. Please follow gameland regulations as posted. Wetland areas close during nesting season, March through June 15. This diverse habitat attracts Downy Woodpecker, Belted Kingfisher, Great Blue Heron, Carolina Wren, Eastern Towhee, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Osprey, migrating warblers, sparrows, and shorebirds. Additionally, this is home to Ring-neck Pheasant, eastern cottontail, white-tailed deer, red fox, and a variety of reptiles and amphibians.

Directions: From Biglerville at the intersection of Routes #34 and #234, travel east on Rt. 234. Turn right onto State Gamelands Road and follow it into the #249 area at the rustic sign. To get to the restored wetland, from Biglerville take Rt. #234 east. Cross over Route #15, and turn left on Gun Club Road. The Gamelands will be on the right.

OTHER SMAS RELATED INFORMATION

SMAS Board Members

			Email addresses
President	Melissa Deitz	334-5585	sdeitz1630@comcast.net
Vice-President	Cy Deitz	253-0297	sdeitz1630@comcast.net
Secretary	Open		
Treasurer	Mike O'Brien	642-6676	mike@maddogobrien.com
Director At Large	Nancy Locher	334-4768	nclocher@embarqmail.com
Director At Large	Judie Hogan	642-5718	judie685hogan@yahoo.com

Committee Chairs

Conservation	Rusty Ryan	642-9293	rryan@adamscounty.us
Education	Open		
Field Trips	Mike O'Brien	642-6676	mike@maddogobrien.com
Hospitality	Open		
Membership	Judie Hogan	642-5718	judie685hogan@yahoo.com
Programs	Deb Siefken	677-4730	siefkend@embarqmail.com
Publications	Mike O'Brien	642-6676	mike@maddogobrien.com