

South Mountain Airs

The Newsletter of the South Mountain Audubon Society

April Through June 2011, Volume XXXVI #2 – The E-mail Edition

Celebrating Our 30th Chapter Year

PLEASE READ THIS IMPORTANT NOTICE RE THE SMAS NEWSLETTER

Update on Transition from hard copy paper mailing of the Newsletter to Electronic Transmission via E-mail

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 few quarterly periods.

In this issue of the Newsletter, all those recently joined as new members and those of you who have not yet signed up for receipt of the Newsletter by e-mail, will find a post card type return questionnaire inserted in the hard copy mailing providing several available options on receiving the Newsletter in the future. These options are:

Via **e-mail**, the preferred and postage-free method (immediate delivery with no delays per physical delivery);

Via the regular **USPS Mail** method as in the past;

By **accessing it on-line** at the Yahoo web-site at AdCoNatChat - the Adams County Nature Chat site, and/or at perch.es - the dedicated SMAS Newsletter site (information follows below on these options); or

Not receiving it at all, the best option for those that do not read the Newsletter and do not care to receive it.

If we do not hear from you by way of the return postcard by June 1, 2011, we will assume that you do not want to receive the Newsletter in the future. You can always contact us in the future to reinstate one of the other options, if you so choose.

A great feature of having the Newsletter on-line and receiving it via e-mail, is that you can always access a misplaced or discarded issue at a future date.

For those who missed the recent Newsletter discussions on one of the options, 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. This information is more up to date than the hard copy newsletter mailed once a quarter, as we make changes and corrections to times, dates, locations, room numbers, and other changes that may occur. And, in some cases, an event may be added to or dropped from the schedule.

With costs related to postage, supplies like paper and ink, labels and mailing seals, and publication and printing of the hard copy newsletter, as well as occasional informational mailings, we are spending over \$1,000.00 a year for the hard copy mailing of the Newsletters. This takes up a major portion 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? (pronounced 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, or just read about, birds, butterflies, plants 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. However, 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 most other sites, 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 may have to “join” to post your own items, read other members messages and view their photos, use the calendaring function, and access file applications, upload files and photos, and so on. You might 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 add your thoughts on topics, ask a question or offer 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 Christmas Bird Counts 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 and messages by members, the Calendar and Files section, and much more. Go to:

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

perch.es

The perch.es site (<http://perch.es/>) is the site currently dedicated to South Mountain Airs, this SMAS Newsletter.

This is a fledgling (pardon the pun) site at this point, and the newsletter may be relocated elsewhere in the future. The site has a link to the current edition of the newsletter during any given quarter and an archival link to past issues which, at this point, contains only those issues published and transmitted via mail.

Note, that when you want to access this site, you need only type perch.es into the browser address line of your chosen search browser on your computer. Your browser should automatically fill in the appropriate http, colon and slash entries. Use of www is not necessary. When you press enter, you should go directly to the site. If you type the entry in the search box, usually to the right, it will search and return multiple links for you to select from.

As noted above under the discussion on the return postcard, with the Newsletter(s) on-line and receiving it via e-mail, you can always access a misplaced or discarded hard copy issue at a future date.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE SMAS ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The **SMAS Annual Luncheon**, traditionally held in April of the year, is **not scheduled for April for this year**.

As noted in our banner at the top of page one of the Newsletter, this is the 30th year of existence for our South Mountain Audubon Chapter. Given that this is our 30th Anniversary year, we plan to celebrate by combining our normal annual luncheon with our anniversary, and hold both this coming September.

The scheduled but still tentative date for this is Saturday 24 September, 2011. The time is 12 Noon. We plan to hold this at Hickory Bridge Farm restaurant in Orrtanna, PA, the site where we usually have our annual luncheon. This is pending final date confirmation and restaurant availability. The most likely secondary date is Saturday 10 September.

We will provide complete information as soon as we are able to finalize the particulars. For those of you who are already signed up for emailing of the newsletter, or do so via the postcard method detailed in this edition of the newsletter, we will send you an e-mail. Otherwise, we will publish it in the next hard copy mailing. This will probably be sometime in mid or late July when we have final information on dates and times for all of our fall events.

So please mark your calendars for those Saturday dates in September; and stay tuned for confirmation shortly.

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.

Please note there are no regularly scheduled monthly Chapter meetings in the month of April as we traditionally hold our annual SMAS Luncheon in lieu of the meeting.

Monday May 9th - "**Wings, Sand & Song: Presque Isle's Habitat,**" an award winning documentary created by filmmakers Tracy Graziano and Benjamin Koncewicz of Moonfire Film Productions. As you watch the film you will journey through the unique habitats of Presque Isle in Erie County, PA during all four seasons to view some of the most intimate moments of bird life: watch a Yellow Warbler build her nest, a Killdeer clutch hatch and take their first steps, Baltimore Oriole fledglings being fed by their parents, plus a multitude of other species who call Presque Isle State Park their home.

Monday June 13th - "**Migration Ecology of North American Turkey Vultures**" by David Barber, research biologist with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. Turkey Vultures are the most widespread and abundant new world vulture. Despite this, very little is known about them, particularly their migration ecology. As part of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary's ongoing project on Turkey Vulture migration, how, when and where vultures migrate will be revealed using high tech and not so high tech methods.

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 April 23rd **Lily Pons Water Gardens, Frederick County, MD**

Meet at 7:00 AM at the trip leader's house at #231 Carroll's Tract Road just off PA Route #116 near the Fairfield, PA Post Office. #231 is about ½ mile past the post office on the right, the 2nd house after crossing Bullfrog and Mt. Hope Roads; the house sets back several hundred feet from the road.

We will carpool per attendee preferences and available vehicles. Bring a chair if desired, food snacks/drinks and any personal comfort items. Do not forget binoculars and apparel per weather forecast. Scopes a plus if you have one. There is an observation platform. We will walk the area at times and you may walk as you wish or hang out at the platform area. Call the leader for additional information, clarification, or any questions. We'll look for spring land and water migrants as well as resident and local seasonal species. There's a Great Blue Heron rookery along the river here.

Saturday May 14th **Spangler Spring Area At Gettysburg National Military Park**

Meet at 7 AM at the Spangler Spring area. Turn off Middle Street at its intersection with Liberty Street in Gettysburg and go one short block to the park entry. Follow the one-way road to the Spangler Spring parking area. This outing is a SMAS tradition coinciding with International Migratory Bird Day. Easy walking on mostly paved areas. We be there into the afternoon, so depending on your schedule, you can always join us anytime beyond the stated start time. Bring a chair if you wish and hang out.

Do not forget personal items including food, drink and appropriate apparel. This is prime spring migration time and we should see a good selection of passerines and near-passerines as well as a mix of other species. Call the leader for additional information, clarification or with any questions.

Saturday June 4th **Pennsylvania State Game Lands #249**

Meeting time is 7:30 AM at the Gameland's entrance located on Game Lands Road (aka State Game Land Road depending on your map) off PA #234 about midway between Biglerville and US #15. Meet at the rustic sign for the Gamelands just down the entry lane from #234. Depending on the current management configuration of the various areas at the time, we should be able to bird from our vehicles stopping at various vantage points. Some may chose to walk. The area is mostly flat with easy walking. The area includes woods and fields, and there is a stream along part of the road we will drive / walk along. We will look for passage migrants and local resident and nesting species.

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

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

August - The month for our traditional SMAS “**Club Picnic.**” Date TBA

September – **Field Trip** to a nearby Hawk Watch site, most likely to be to the Tuscarora Ridge (aka “The Pulpit”)
– Combination Annual Chapter Luncheon and 30th Year Anniversary Celebration – see info above

October- **Field Trip** TBA

Feathery Factoid: Our last issue covered the greatest documented height of a bird flying over North America as 21,000 feet (6,400 meters). The bird was a Mallard which struck a Western Airlines L-188 Electra above Elko, Nevada on July 9, 1963.

As promised last issue, we found a higher record. On 9 December 1967, about 30 swans were spotted by an airline pilot flying over the Inner Hebrides (off the coast of Scotland) at an altitude of just over 27,000 feet (8,230 meters). These were most likely Whooper Swans. Hopefully, we will find something higher in the world for next issue.

WHERE TO GO BIRDING LOCALLY

This Newsletter edition's of “Where we like to bird locally,” features Strawberry Hill which includes a lot more than just opportunities for birding. Officially known as Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve and Environmental Center, it is a non-profit education & conservation organization located on 600+ acres in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Nestled in the foothills of the South Mountain Range, it offers outstanding opportunities to discover and explore the natural world. The preserve contains diverse habitats, including wet and dry woodlands, three ponds, two mountain streams, and much more. Ten miles of trails meander through the property and lead to unique rock formations, scenic vistas, and secret glades. Trail maps and other materials are available to include a checklist of potential birds that might be seen.

Depending on your birding skills and time spent you can see 100 species of birds over a number of visits throughout the seasons. It is possible to see 6 of the 7 species of woodpeckers that occur in Pennsylvania, maybe all 7.

Directions: Follow PA #116 from the Gettysburg area to the town of Fairfield and turn right at the Post Office as you reach town; proceed to a left on Mt. Hope Rd following it 3 miles to SHNP Headquarters. From US #15 take MD #140 (It changes to PA#16 at PA State Line) to PA #116 and follow through the town to the Post Office & proceed as above.

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		
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Committee Chairs

Conservation	Rusty Ryan	642-9293	rryan@adamscounty.us
Education	Open		
Field Trips	Mike O'Brien	642-6676	mike@maddogobrien.com
Hospitality	Open		
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Due to printing and mailing costs we are trying to reduce the number of newsletters mailed through the postal system. **You Can HELP!**
Please choose & check one option & return this postcard by June 1, 2011. If we don't hear from you, we will assume you do not want to receive the newsletter in the future.

Please apply stamp & mail; 28¢ will suffice. Full details in newsletter.

- Email newsletter to me at: _____
- I'll access the newsletter on-line at: <http://perch.es> or at Adams County Nature Chat: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AdCoNaChat/>
- Continue to send the newsletter via the postal system.
- I do not want the newsletter

Member Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone _____ Email _____