

South Mountain Airs

The Newsletter of the South Mountain Audubon Society

April – June 2015, Volume XXXVIX #2 – The E-mail Edition

Message from the President

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the President of South Mountain Audubon Society for 2015-2016.

My interest in birds began when I was in college and chose to take Ornithology as one of my science electives. Instead of working in a laboratory setting each week, our lab involved riding in a van with our instructor to locate and identify local birds. It was not until my retirement from teaching kindergarten for the Spring Grove Area School District that time permitted me to become actively involved with SMAS. Since that time, I have enjoyed spending time with other SMAS members while participating in programs, field trips, and social events.

My hobbies include travel, nature photography, flower gardening, creating habitat for native animals, and volunteering. I have been a volunteer naturalist at Nixon County Park in York County for over 20 years and I also present nature-related programs to many organizations, with my favorite being programs about bats.

I am looking forward to working with our dedicated board as SMAS continues to provide quality programs and field experiences, in addition to enhancing our community-participation projects.

Hershey Zoo America

On Monday, March 9th, approximately 40 children and 40 adults attended the “Scales, Tails, Paws, and Claws” program presented by Hershey Zoo America and sponsored, free of charge to the community, by South Mountain Audubon Society.

Patrick, from Hershey Zoo America, entertained and educated those present on the adaptations of a snake, a lizard, an owl, an alligator, a skunk, and a porcupine with the live animals that he brought from the zoo. The children loved being up close and personal with the animals! Funds that were raised by those who sponsored SMAS members who participated in the December 2013 Christmas Bird Count paid for this educational program. It was an evening full of fun, surprises, humor, and education!

Donations to Gettysburg Area School District Elementary Libraries

In late March three elementary librarians in the Gettysburg Area School District will receive checks from the South Mountain Audubon Society to be used for the purchase of nature-related books for their libraries.

The school librarians have chosen books about birds - including field guides, a biography of John James Audubon, and books that relate to environmental issues and how birds are affected. Due to the success of our December 2013 Christmas Bird Count fundraiser, South Mountain Audubon Society was able to present these gifts in addition to providing the Hershey Zoo America program for the community. We hope to make donations to other area schools in the future.

After-school Birding

Members of the South Mountain Audubon Society will assist educators at Lincoln Elementary with their after-school birding program this spring.

For six Wednesdays in the months of March and April, some of our members will volunteer their time to walk with the children to nearby bird habitats and help them to locate and identify birds. We are looking forward to sharing our knowledge and passion for nature with these youngsters!

If this is something with which you might like to assist, please contact Linette Mansberger via email at Lmcopperhead@aol or telephone at 495-8137.

UPCOMING BIRD RELATED / OTHER EVENTS

SMAS Annual Luncheon

It's Not Too Late to sign up for the SMAS Luncheon.

Those receiving this Newsletter should have received earlier emails regarding the SMAS Annual Luncheon with a sign up / information attachment flyer. That flyer is again provided here as a separate attachment to the email for this Newsletter edition.

The luncheon will be held at our traditional site, the Hickory Bridge Farm Restaurant located in Orrtanna, PA, on Saturday 25 April; meal at 12 Noon; social time at 11:30.

Upon receipt of this, you should have time to return the sign-up form and make your payment. If it gets too close to the luncheon date to depend on the regular mail and you want to attend, you can also call the phone number on the flyer for the Point of Contact, Deb Siefken, to sign up and let us know you want to attend and are sending the form and payment to us. You may be able to make arrangements to pay at the door. We have to provide the restaurant a head count to allow the correct number of meals to be prepared and we are then on the hook to pay.

We will have a program presentation at the luncheon. More details below; sign-up flyer attached to this email.

All are cordially invited to attend.

International Migratory Bird Day

What is International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD)?

IMBD celebrates and brings attention to one of the most important and spectacular events in the Americas - bird migration. IMBD is a Western Hemisphere-wide event and is celebrated in Canada, the United States, Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Held each year on the second Saturday in May, it will be on Saturday May 9 this year, 2015.

This IMBD date is also used for the Pennsylvania Migration Count (the PAMC), Pennsylvania's way of celebrating IMBD. People all over the state count birds and the totals are collected to form a "Snapshot" of the great spectacle of migration across our portion of the Americas. Virtually every county and province in every

country carry out some type of celebratory event, festival, or other undertaking on this day. No matter where you are on this day you can find an IMBD event taking place. Just go to your internet browser and type in International Bird Day (optionally add 2015 to limit the search to current time) and you can find myriad goings-on across the country and beyond. For more information on IMBD, the url for the IMBD Home Page is: <http://www.birdday.org/>

BUT, you can join us right here in the Gettysburg area. The South Mountain Audubon Society (SMAS) counts our local birds right here adjacent to downtown Gettysburg on the Spangler Spring portion of the Gettysburg National Battlefield and elsewhere across the region. See details below under field trips.

Earth Day

Earth Day is April 22, this year, 2015. Founded in 1970 as a day of education about environmental issues, Earth Day is now a globally celebrated holiday that is sometimes extended into Earth Week, a full seven days of events focused on green awareness. The brainchild of Senator Gaylord Nelson and inspired by the antiwar protests of the late 1960s, Earth Day was originally aimed at creating a mass environmental movement. It began as a "national teach-in on the environment" and was held on April 22 to maximize the number of students that could be reached on university campuses. By raising public awareness of air and water pollution, Nelson hoped to bring environmental causes into the national spotlight. Earth day has continued to grow and is now recognized and participated in around the planet.

Please become more attuned to this area and its related issues. Just go to your internet browser and type in Earth Day and surf some of the wealth of available information.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & PRESENTATIONS

Unless indicated otherwise, all SMAS Programs are held at the Adams County 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 lobby entry inner door.

We've posted the information on our total activities' schedule throughout the year at the end of this edition.

UPCOMING SMAS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Saturday April 25th - SMAS Annual Luncheon, 2015

We do not have April Program meetings as we hold our annual SMAS club luncheon in April. It is held on a Saturday at noon, not a Monday evening. See general info on the luncheon above and on an attached or embedded flyer.

We will have a program presentation at the luncheon. SMAS member and photographer, Bonnie Portzline, will reprise her highly regarded Birds With A Gettysburg Address program with a new iteration titled: "*Birds with a Gettysburg Address: The Winter Edition*" See attached flyer for info including sign-up and reply form.

Monday May 12th - **“Adams County Birds – Species ID and Separation” - Mike O'Brien**

SMAS member Mike O'Brien will discuss many common local birds that can be seen in and around Adams County. This will include identifying individual species and separating them from similar birds. Depending on interest and audience response, an ensuing field trip outing is possible some time after the program meeting, where all can put some of what we learn into practice.

Monday June 8th - **“The Serengeti Birds and Wildlife Program” - Terri Kochert**

Terri Kochert, retired teacher of Chambersburg, PA, will be presenting her “The Serengeti Birds and Wildlife Program.” In May 2011 Terri and her husband had the opportunity of coupling a short mission's trip with a short safari through the Serengeti National Park in northern Tanzania. In conjunction with the safari guide they were able to identify 82 “Lifers.”

So come along as we check out these amazing birds as well as phenomenal wildlife. This will be an adventure you won't want to miss.

UPCOMING SMAS FIELD TRIPS

Contact Mike O'Brien, Field Trip Chair, as necessary for more information on all Field Trips, the annual Christmas Bird Count and the Spring Migration Count: 717.642.6676 Res / maddogobrien@gmail.com E-mail.

Please let the Leader know in advance if you plan to attend any field trip, especially if you plan to go direct. Trips are subject to weathering out, especially in the colder months, or otherwise being changed. In addition, if we have only one or two known attendees, we may cancel or reschedule a given field trip. We cannot alert you unless we hear from you.

Saturday May 9th - **Spangler Spring Area At Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP)**

Meet at 7 AM at the Spangler Spring area, GNMP. Turn right off Middle Street at its intersection with Liberty Street in Gettysburg and go one short block to a left at 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 (See above). Easy walking on mostly paved areas. We'll 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. Facilities should be open.

Thursday June 11th - **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 Rte #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 choose 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. Bring your optics, weather appropriate clothing and any food or drink you may need. No facilities.

Book Review

The Thing with Feathers, by Noah Strycker, is an entertaining non-fiction tome, subtitled *The Surprising Lives of Birds and What They Reveal About Being Human*.

Strycker does not emphasize anthropomorphic musings, however, other than in a clever Introduction; instead, he structures the text around well-documented scientific studies of bird behavior, citing notes and sources in End Notes and an Index. What makes this book a charming read is Strycker's adeptness in weaving anecdotes within the facts. These stories emanate from his extensive world field work and his Associate Editorship of the American Birding Association's journal, "*Birding*."

Every chapter presents a different study and bird behavior. Then, Mr. Strycker teases the reader to consider behavior similarities between observed bird and human behaviors and practices. Although the experienced birder may be familiar with fairy-wren cooperative nesting, the caching memory of nutcrackers, and the choreographed flocking of starlings in flight for example, when accompanied by discussions of altruism, global positioning systems, and gaming theory, a new perspective is created. Many fascinating topics are covered. From a publisher's search for a writer for a new bird book to the eventual collaboration of Strycker and his associates, ***The Thing with Feathers*** was hatched, reared and fledged.

Anyone who is fascinated with birds should not miss this entertaining and informative book!

Wendy South, South Mountain Audubon Society

Feathery Factoid (The Quiz Version) :

The largest (living) bird is the Ostrich. It outweighs the world's smallest bird, the Cuban Bee Hummingbird, by 100,000 times. The world's largest mammal is the Blue Whale at 150 tons or more, and the smallest mammal is the Kitti's Hog-nosed Bat (also known as the bumblebee bat). Take a guess at how many times the whale outweighs the bat? Answer below.

HEY!! Checkout our South Mountain Audubon Society Website!!!

SMAS has a Website which is being added to on a regular basis.

The home page has some general information and synopses of Chapter activities as well as a number of links to other informational aspects. These include the Calendar, Board members and officers, Chapter meeting minutes, current and archival newsletter editions, and links to a number of other Adams County organizations as well as other county, state and national groups and organizations.

We are also working to put up some location specific area checklists. Many of these are in place. All are encouraged to offer suggestions on what you would like to see on the website. Contact info is on the site.

Accessing the SMAS Newsletter

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. You can access the Newsletter in several ways.

First, if you do not routinely discard your emails or you retain selected items in your in-box or transfer them to a saved information folder or similar, you can always access them at a future date on your own system.

Second, we archive the electronic edition on the internet at the following url: perch.es

Simply copy the url and paste it into your browser search box or just type it in (Clicking may not always work).

The first header that appears is for the current (most recent) issue. In addition, there is a heading, by year, for past quarter issues which we archive on the site. We have put the past issues here since we started the electronic edition.

Third, you can access it on the internet at the Yahoo.com Chat Group site, Adams County Nature Chat (AdCoNaChat). Presence of the information on this site may lag the Newsletter somewhat.

We post our SMAS field trips, meeting dates and topics, special events like an annual picnic, annual luncheon, 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. Copy and paste the following url into your browser search box:

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

And, of course, per information above re the new SMAS Website, you can reference current & past issues there.

SMAS Annual Schedule Information

Regular SMAS Monthly Program Meetings are usually held Jan / Mar / May / June / Sept / Oct / Nov.

Unless indicated otherwise, all meetings are held on Mondays at 7:30 PM at the Adams County Agricultural Center. Please see complete information at the beginning of this and every Newsletter in case there is any variation by quarter. Please check individual programs in each issue in the event of a change in times and / or venue.

Field Trips are normally held monthly in Jan / Feb / Mar / April / May / Jun / Sept / Oct / Nov. In December we substitute the annual Christmas Bird Count for the monthly field trip.

Some of these monthly field trips traditionally repeat each year, such as the Christmas Bird Count and the Migration Count in May. We usually go to a nearby hawk watch site in late September or early October.

The Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is held by design between 14 Dec and 5 Jan. For SMAS, this is in lieu of a regular field trip. We schedule our SMAS CBC on the first available Saturday after 13 Dec. In the

event of really bad weather, we may cancel and reschedule.

The Annual Luncheon has been traditionally held in April, in lieu of, the regular monthly meeting.

Our SMAS Annual Picnic and get together is held in August on the second Monday. This is "Bring A Dish" to share and the kickoff is 5 PM with dinner at 6 PM. In addition to bringing a dish to share, attendees should bring their own place setting materials. Drinks and some type of main dish(es) will be provided. See the summer Newsletter edition for details on times and directions.

All meetings, field trips and other activities are subject to weathering out or other cancellation reasons. If you are on our email list (receiving our Newsletters and other information) you will get an email notification as soon as the decision is made. Otherwise, if there is some question based on the weather or some other issue, please contact the field trip leader or someone from the list of Board Members / Committee Chairpersons applicable to your question(s).

OTHER SMAS RELATED INFORMATION

<u>Board Members</u>	Point of Contact	Telephone	Email address
President	Linette Mansberger	495-8137	Lmcopperhead@aol.com
Vice-President	Deb Siefken	677-4830	siefkend@embarqmail.com
Secretary	Kathy Gelner (202)	471-0300	klgelner@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Mike Bertram	352-7936	the2nomads@centurylink.net
Director At Large	Nancy Locher	334-4768	nclocher@embarqmail.com
Director At Large	Betsy Griffiths	334-3824	Elizabeth.Griffiths@stockton.edu
Director At Large	Cy Deitz	253-0297	sdeitz1630@comcast.net
<u>Committee Chairs</u>			
Conservation	Carole Simon	337-1662	carolesimon@embarqmail.com
Education	Carole Simon	337-1662	carolesimon@embarqmail.com
Field Trips	Mike O'Brien	642-6676	maddogobrien@gmail.com
Hospitality	Vacant		
Membership	Mike O'Brien	642-6676	maddogobrien@gmail.com
Programs	Bob Brandt (703)	615-8002	brantownb@aol.com
Publicity	Cynthia Chambers	624-4397	cynthiachambers@embarqmail.com
Newsletter	Mike O'Brien	642-6676	maddogobrien@gmail.com

Feathery Factoid Quiz Answer:

The Kitti's Hog-nosed Bat weighs less than 1.5 grams or 0.053 of an ounce. At 150 tons or more, an adult Blue Whale outweighs the bat by over 48 million times.