

# BULLETIN VOLUME 79, NO. 4

In this issue: Outdoor Cats: The World's Most Destructive Invasive Species?



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They may be cute, but outdoor cats have contributed to the extinction of 33 bird species across the world,



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This Audubon View

Last issue we shared with you a just-released report from National Audubon on the impact climate change would have on U.S. bird populations. The findings were not encouraging, with as many as 314 of North America's bird species, nearly 50%, threatened by global warming. Many of the nation's bird species are being forced out of their current home ranges—many with nowhere to go. If things progress unchecked, iconic species such as the Scarlet Tanager may no longer be found in our local forests in as little as 80 years.



But that was not the only recent report on climate change. The United Nations'

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released their "Synthesis Report in early November. The report expresses with greater certainty than in previous assessments "that emissions of greenhouse gases and other anthropogenic (man-made) drivers have been the dominant cause of observed warming since the mid-20th century. The impacts of climate change have already been felt in recent decades on all continents and across the oceans."

Yet despite the overwhelming evidence and the seriousness of the looming situation, a concerted effort to address the situation still seems to be far away. This should not be surprising. This is a complicated problem with hard-to-quantify consequences that will occur over a long period. As with most other environmental challenges, though, it is an amalgam of many contributing factors—many of which we can play some role in addressing.

Starting in January, on our website and through our monthly e-blasts, ASWP will be offering basic steps that we can all take to help address the causes of climate change. While we can't individually build a new power grid or immediately wean ourselves from fossil fuels, we do invite you to join us in a resolution to help reduce our collective carbon footprints.

Have a great New Year,

-Jim

PS – The best way to stay current on all that is going on at Audubon is to regularly visit our website at aswp.org. We'll be adding a section on our website that outlines future plans. Also, make sure we have your current e-mail address to ensure you'll receive our e-mail newsletters regarding upcoming events and developments at all three of our public properties.

## DIRECTIONS TO OUR Reserves

Trails are open year-round, 7 days a week, dawn to dusk.

#### BEECHWOOD FARMS NATURE RESERVE:

Take Route 28 north from Pittsburgh to Route 8 North/Butler exit. Turn right at first traffic light on to Kittanning Road, which becomes Dorseyville Road. Travel 4.3 miles and Beechwood will be on your left.

SUCCOP NATURE PARK: Take Route 8 North from Pittsburgh or South from Butler and turn on to West Airport Road. Once on West Airport Road, Succop Nature Park's driveway will be the first road on your left.

**TODD NATURE RESERVE:** Take Route 28 North from Pittsburgh to the Butler/Freeport Exit 17. Turn right at Route 356 North, and then right at Monroe Road. Travel about 2 miles, and make a right at Kepple Road. Travel I.5 miles and Todd Nature Reserve will be on your right. Park in the lot and please sign in at the informational kiosk at the cabin. Trail maps are located at the kiosk.

Outdoor Cats:

# THE WORLD'S MOST DESTRUCTIVE INVASIVE SPECIES?

Many of us have domestic cats as household pets. They're great companion animals (unless they embrace their aloof image and eschew us common humans) but those that roam outdoors are posing a significant problem to birds. Just as non-native plant species like Garlic Mustard is choking out our native plants, outdoor cats—a non-native introduced species—are causing significant declines in bird numbers. The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) states that this endangers the integrity of our ecosystem.

At Audubon, we believe that cats make great indoor pets a majority of ASWP's employees are proud indoor cat owners. But we recognize that outdoor cats pose a serious threat to global biodiversity. ABC states that cats have contributed to the extinction of 33 bird species across the world and continue to adversely impact a wide variety of species, including those that are threatened or endangered. Cats have had such a negative impact on world biodiversity that the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) list domestic cats as one of the world's worst non-native invasive species.

So what can be done? The simplest answer is to make sure your cat remains inside. Indoor cats live longer, healthier lives. And they're always available for cuddling with their owners.

There are two methods to transition a cat to the indoors: cold turkey or a gradual introduction. The cold turkey method involves simply bringing the cat inside and not allowing it to go back outside again. A more gradual process involves bringing it inside for increasing periods of time. ABC says that the best way to make your cat feel comfortable during this phase to provide lots of love, play, and attention and to set up window perches where the cat can look out windows without knocking over plants or other fragile items.

Cat condos are also helpful, providing places where the cat can lounge, play, and scratch.

While some argue that cats are meant to roam outdoors, the outside world is a perilous place for your feline buddy. Outdoor cats can be hunted by other wildlife, including coyotes and even other cats. They are hit by cars and exposed to life-threatening diseases such as rabies, feline distemper, or feline immunodeficiency virus. And they can get lost or stolen.

Keep your cat safe. Keep the birds safe. And be an advocate for keeping our environment native.

Want to learn more? Visit The American Bird Conservancy's page on "Cats Indoors" at www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/ policy/cats/index.html.

According to The American Bird Conservancy, these birds have seen a decline in population due to predation by domestic cats: Northern Cardinal, California Quail, Carolina Wren, Wood Thrush, Hawaiian Petrel, Eastern Bluebird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and Piping Plover.



REGISTER FOR PROGRAMS ONLINE AT ASWP.ORG OR BY CALLING (412) 963-6100.

Special Events

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

February 14, 10am–12pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve February 15, 2–4pm / Succop Nature Park

Join the ASWP naturalists for our annual Great Backyard Bird Count walk on Audubon's trails. Don't forget the bird count training on February 7!

#### MAPLE MADNESS

March 21, 10am / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve March 28, 10am / Succop Nature Park Cost: \$6 per member, \$10 per nonmember

(Starts at 10 am. Last seating for pancake brunch is at 1pm. Last guided bike leaves after the 1pm brunch group has finished their meal). Experience the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of Maple Sugaring as you take a trip through the history and science of maple syrup. Enjoy a pancake brunch, too! Registration is required, with brunch seatings every 30 minutes.

#### PITTSBURGH EAGLE EGG HUNT

April 4, 11am–2pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

Celebrate the region's Bald Eagles at our annual egg hunt! We'll also have crafts, activities for all ages, and PixController will be here for a live NestCam broadcast. Get more details at www. aswp.org. This event is free!

Birding & Nature Hikes

BIRDS & MORE NATURALIST LED MORNING WALKS

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve: Every Wednesday at 9am

Succop Nature Park: Every Thursday at 9am (except January I)

Audubon at Night

MOONLIGHT HIKE

January 3, 7–8:30pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve Cost: \$6 per member, \$10 per nonmember

Enjoy the quiet of a winter night under the light of a nearly full moon. Warm-up afterward with a cup of hot chocolate.

#### CAMPFIRE AND NIGHT HIKE

February 7, 7–8:30pm / Succop Nature Park Cost: \$6 per member, \$10 per nonmember

Enjoy the quiet of a winter night under the stars. Warm around the campfire afterward.

#### SPRING PEEPERS HIKE

April 24, 8–9:30pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve April 25, 8–9:30pm / Succop Nature Park Cost: \$6 per member, \$10 per nonmember

The frogs will be in full chorus. We'll walk the trails at dusk and finish at the pond for a grand finale.

Preschool Programs

#### FLEDGLINGS

January 8, February 12, March 12, April 9 / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve January 13, February 10, March 10, April 14 / Succop Nature Park Cost: \$4 member; \$6 nonmember.

Give your 3–5 year old a head-start on a lifetime of loving the outdoors. Fledglings programs incorporate stories, a walk, and activities to introduce new and fun nature themes to young participants. Parent or caregiver must be present. All programs run 10–11am.

January: Whooo Gives a Hoot?	March: Down the Maple Trail
February: Chick-a-dee-dee-dee	April: Spring Peepers

#### Hands-On Programs Conservation, Lifelong Learning, Educator, & Citizen Science

Please visit our website, www.aswp.org, for a list of free Citizen Science Programs offered throughout the region.

#### ICE FISHING

January 10, 10am–12pm / Succop Nature Park Cost: \$6 per member, \$10 per nonmember

Try your hand at ice fishing on the Succop Nature Park pond.

#### CITIZEN SCIENCE: FROGWATCH TRAINING\*

January 24, 10am–12pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

Learn to identify and count frogs by sound. Frogs are an important indicator of ecosystem health. Visit frogwatch.org for details about the FrogWatch Citizen Science program. Act 48 hours available. This event is free!

## NATURALLY CREATIVE: MAKE & TAKE SEED PAPER VALENTINES

January 31, 2–4pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve February 1, 2–4pm / Succop Nature Park Cost: \$6 per member, \$10 per nonmember. Limit 15 participants.

Make handmade paper infused with native plant seeds; transform it into a unique card that can be planted after Valentine's Day! Each participant will make at least one piece of seed paper, and we'll also make recycled paper envelopes to hold them.

#### CITIZEN SCIENCE: GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT TRAINING\*

February 7, 10am–12pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

The Great Backyard Bird Count takes place Presidents day weekend and can be done anywhere there are wild birds. Get ready to count with this training reviewing common species and reporting procedures. Visit GBBC.org for details about the count. Great for scout leaders, parents, and others who want to learn about the count and get tips for getting their groups involved. Act 48 hours available. This event is free!

#### WINTER SURVIVAL

February 7, 10am–12pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve February 14, 10am–12pm / Succop Nature Park Cost: \$6 per member, \$10 per nonmember

Learn winter survival tips that can help you to survive in a winter emergency situation. You'll get insight into what to do and not to do from a seasoned survivalist.

#### GROWING UP WILD FOR EDUCATORS

March 14, 10am–2:30pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve Cost: \$50 per person. Limit 25 participants.

Growing Up WILD is an early childhood education curriculum guide that builds on children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. Visit ProjectWILD.org for details. Participants receive the guide and six Act 48 hours.

#### NATIVE PLANTS: NATIVE SEED SOWING\*\*

March 15, 2–4pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve March 14, 2–4pm / Succop Nature Park Cost: Free for ASWP & Fox Chapel Garden Club members, \$6 per nonmember

Learn to properly prepare and plant native seeds to get ready for the upcoming growing season.

#### CITIZEN SCIENCE; PROJECT BUDBURST\*

April 11, 10–11:30am / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve April 4, 10–11:30am / Succop Nature Park

Learn how to gather data for scientific use about the annual lifecycle of common plants. Visit BudBurst.org for more information. Act 48 hours available. This event is free!

#### MEET THE CONIFERS

April 11, 10am–12pm / Succop Nature Park Cost: \$6 per member, \$10 per nonmember

Get your hands dirty making useful items from pines and spruces, as we get to know practical uses for conifer trees.

#### NATIVE PLANTS: INCREASING BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY\*\*

April 18, 10am–12pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve April 19, 2–4pm / Succop Nature Park Cost: Free for ASWP & Fox Chapel Garden Club members, \$6 per nonmember

Learn to select and place native plants in your backyard to create a beautiful, practical habitat for wildlife. we get to know practical uses for conifer trees.

#### WILDFLOWER WALK

April 19, 2–4pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve Cost: \$6 per member, \$10 per nonmember

The spring ephemerals of Beechwood will be in peak condition for a pleasant stroll.

\* Citizen Science programs are offered for free through a generous grant from Dominion Foundation.

\*\* Native plant programs are discounted through a grant from Fox Chapel Garden Club.

## NATURALLY CREATIVE: MAKE & TAKE GREEN ROOF BIRDHOUSE

April 26, 2–4pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve April 25, 10am–12pm / Succop Nature Park Cost: \$20 per member group, \$25 per nonmember group. Each group makes one birdbouse.

Build your own birdhouse, complete with a green roof! Bird house materials and native plants are provided, but please BYOH— Bring Your Own Hammer!

Just for Scouts

For programs at Beechwood, contact Scott (412) 963-6100 ext. 20 and for programs at Succop, contact Ryan at (412) 963-6100 ext. 46. Cost varies by program.

#### BIRD STUDY MERIT BADGE

February 28, 9am–3pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve & and Succop Nature Park

Earn your Bird Study Merit Badge for Boy Scouts in one day. Bring your blue card and a lunch. Advance registration required.

#### MAPLE FOR SCOUTS

March 14, 10am–2pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve and Succop Nature Park

Experience the science and history of Maple Sugaring. Groups or individuals welcome; advance registration is required.

#### SCOUT BADGE DAY

April 18, 10am–2pm / Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve and Succop Nature Park

Earn a nature-related badge of your choice. Arrangements are by den or troop and must be made in advance by contacting our education department.

# WINTER/SPRING 2015 Calendar of Events

### Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve IANUARY

- 3 Moonlight Hike (7pm)
  7 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
  8 Fledglings: Whooo Gives a Hoot? (10am)
  14 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
  21 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
  24 Citizen Science: Frogwatch Training (10am)
  28 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
  31 Naturally Creation Soci Paper Voluntings (2)
- 31 Naturally Creative: Seed Paper Valentines (2pm)

#### FEBRUARY

- 4 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 7 Citizen Science: Great Backyard Bird Count Training (10am)
- 7 Winter Survival (10am)
- II Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 12 Fledglings: Chick-a-dee-dee (10am)
- 14 Great Backyard Bird Count (10am)
- 18 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 25 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 28 Scouts: Bird Study Merit Badge (9am)

#### MARCH

- 4 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- II Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- I2 Fledglings: Down the Maple Trail (10am)
- I4 Growing up WILD for Educators (10am)
- I4 Scouts: Maple for Scouts (10am)
- 15 Native Plants: Native Seed Sowing (2pm)
- 18 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- **2I** Maple Madness (10am)
- 25 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)

#### APRIL

- I Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 4 Pittsburgh Eagle Egg Hunt (11am)
- 8 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 9 Fledglings: Spring Peepers (10am)
- II Citizen Science: Project Budburst (10am)
- 15 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 18 Native Plants: Increasing Backyard Biodiversity (10am)
- 18 Scouts: Badge Day (10am)
- **19** Wildflower Walk (2pm)
- 22 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 24 Spring Peepers Hike (8pm)
- 26 Naturally Creative: Green Roof Birdhouse (2pm)
- 29 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)

## Succop Nature Park JANUARY

8 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
10 Ice Fishing (10am)
13 Fledglings: Whooo Gives a Hoot? (10am)
15 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)

- 22 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 29 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)

#### FEBRUARY

- I Naturally Creative: Seed Paper Valentines (1pm)
- 5 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 7 Campfire and Night Hike (7pm)
- 10 Fledglings: Chick-a-dee-dee (10am)
- 12 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 14 Winter Survival (10am)
- 15 Great Backyard Bird Count (2pm)
- 19 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 26 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 28 Scouts: Bird Study Merit Badge (9am)

#### MARCH

- 5 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 10 Fledglings: Down the Maple Trail (10am)
- 12 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- I4 Scouts: Maple for Scouts (10am)
- I4 Native Plants; Native Seed Sowing (2pm)
- 19 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 26 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 28 Maple Madness (10am)

#### APRIL

- 2 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 4 Citizen Science: Project Budburst (10am)
- 9 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- II Meet the Conifers (10am)
- 14 Fledglings: Spring Peepers (10am)
- 16 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 18 Scouts: Badge Day (10am)
- 19 Native Plants: Increasing Backyard Biodiversity (2pm)
- 23 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)
- 25 Naturally Creative: Green Roof Birdhouse (10am)
- 25 Spring Peepers Hike (8pm)
- 30 Birds and More Naturalist Led Hike (9am)

# Audubon HAPPENINGS

This past fall, we held the inaugural season of "Picnics in the Park" at Succop Nature Park. Free, live music and BYOP—bring your own picnic. In October, Good Brother Earl performed while guests toasted marshmallows and sang along.

In November, we installed a new, accessible boardwalk at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve. It quickly attracted both human and insect visitors—including an Autumn Meadowhawk. Thanks to Allegheny Regional Asset District for its support of this project.

Creatures of the Night attracted over 300 people this year at Beechwood and Succop. Led by a human-sized firefly through the trails at night, participants learned about the nocturnal creatures that call our reserves home.

It was another magical holiday season at Succop Nature Park. Our holiday teas were filled to capacity and we added an extra session of "Girls and Dolls" tea an enchanting tea party where girls and their favorite dolls share treats, make a craft, listen to a holiday story, and sing carols.

#### FROM ALL OF US AT AUDUBON, WE WISH YOU A WONDERFUL 2015!

# AUDUBON NATURE STORE Sweet Shopping!

Visit Audubon Nature Store on February 7 from 9am-5pm for hot chocolate and sweet delights as you shop for that perfect gift for your Valentine. Whether you're looking for jewelry or binoculars, we will help to make your search a little sweeter. You may even find a little treat for yourself!

Be sure to stop by Audubon Nature Store for pure maple syrup, perfect for maple season (and every season)!

Save some fuel! Order from our online store and pick up at Succop Nature Park. Our online store features bird food and feeders available for pick up at Succop Nature Park in Butler. Simply place your order and we'll have your merchandise available at the Nature Park the following Monday. Visit aswp.org to start shopping!

#### NATURE STORE WINTER HOURS START JANUARY I

Tuesday-Saturday: 9am–5pm Sunday: I-5pm

## Ask the anaturalist Q: WHERE'S ASK THE NATURALIST?

 $\mathcal{A}$ : Ask the Naturalist will be back in a future issue of the Bulletin!

Nushroom Club

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 7pm at Beechwood. The 2015 schedule is:

APRIL 21	JULY 21	SEPTEMBER 15
MAY 19	AUGUST 18	OCTOBER 20
JUNE 16		NOVEMBER 17

# Home IS WHERE THE NEST IS

In November 2014, Audubon acquired the Harmar Bald Eagle nesting site land, located on a hillside above Route 28. We're pleased that our purchase will preserve and protect the land from any development that could keep the Bald Eagles from utilizing the nest again. The Harmar Bald Eagles have been at the nest site for the past two years, successfully raising one eaglet in 2014.

To help offset the cost of the property purchase and associated management, we kicked off the "Home is Where the Nest Is" campaign, and hope to raise \$35,000. Because the opportunity to purchase this land came up very quickly, we could not pass it up—Audubon literally went out on a limb and we're seeking your support to help us cover the acquisition costs.

Any donation helps—the Bald Eagles thank you and so do we! Please make your donation at www.aswp.org. We're also hoping for another successful season for the Hays Bald Eagles—this year we'll be leading the webcam project at the Hays nest that broadcasts the eagles' lives, 24/7. You'll recall that last year certainly had some exciting moments—with a raccoon visiting the nest and one of the young apparently falling from the nest. The Hays Eagles successfully raised three eaglets in 2014 and are already expanding their nest for the 2015 breeding season.

While we won't be placing a streaming video camera at the Harmar Bald Eagles' nest for 2015, Audubon plans to document this year's activity through still photography that will be made available to the public.

Visit our website, www.aswp.org for the link to the Hays Bald Eagles' camera, for still images from the Harmar Bald Eagles' nest, and to make your donation to "Home is Where the Nest Is."

ASWP gratefully acknowledges the generous support received from the following corporations, foundations and trust funds:

# Oursupporters

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MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS: 10% Discount on Nature Store Purchases & Bird Seed, Subscription to Bulletin Newsletter, Library & Teacher Resource Center Lending Privileges, Tuition Discounts & Advance Notice on Education Programs, Invitations to Nature Store Open Houses & Special Events, and a 100% Good Feeling for Supporting Environmental Education.

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614 DORSEYVILLE ROAD PITTSBURGH, PA 15238

> 10am-3pm Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve 614 Dorseyville Road • Fox Chapel March 28 10am-3pm Succop Nature Park 185 West Airport Road • Butler Enjoy a naturalist-led walk through the history of maple sugaring after diving into a Pancake Brunch!

> > Rain or shine. Last seating for pancake brunch is 1:00 p.m.

March 21

Reserve your space online at aswp.org or Call (412) 963-6100

## Your Online Holiday Shopping CAN SUPPORT ASWP

Your online shopping can benefit ASWP! Register, then shop online through smile.amazon.com and .5% of your purchases will be donated directly to Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania.

It doesn't cost you anything! Visit smile.amazon.com and when prompted to choose a charity, type in "Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania" to choose us as your charity.

You must shop through smile.amazon.com (not just amazon.com) for us to get this benefit.

Thank you!



Audubon Society