



BULLETIN

SUMMER / FALL 2023



In this issue: Creating a Safe Space for Birds

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BULLETIN

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Setting up a bird-friendly backyard attracts and supports feathered friends. But that's just the first step. You also need to keep the area safe for your new visitors.

Yellow Warbler photo courtesy of Diane Taylor / Audubon Photography Awards. Cover photo courtesy of Belen Bilgic Schneider / Audubon Photography Awards.



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This Audubon View

For the past few years, we've been sharing information about the troublesome legacy of John James Audubon—a man with whom we share a name. Through public programs, printed materials, and posting on our website, we have detailed his history of being an enslaver, anti-abolitionist, and plagiarizer, among other misdeeds. We have had long and thoughtful internal discussions and engaged graduate students from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs to research the issue and develop case studies. All of this has helped to inform our decision regarding whether we should continue to use the word Audubon as part of our name.



In March 2023, National Audubon—after completing its own lengthy decision-making process—announced that it would retain Audubon as part of its organization's name. Conversely, a handful of chapters around the country have decided to drop Audubon from their names. Our board has made the decision to retain our current name. There were many considerations that factored into our decision, and two stood out the most. First, we were not named for the man, we were named for the movement his artwork engendered. When Harriet Lawrence Hemenway and Minna B. Hall (the founders of the first Audubon Society) began their campaign to stop killing birds for feathers to adorn hats, they needed a word that had an association with birds. "Audubon" was an obvious choice. It is hard to appreciate now, but the images in Audubon's *Birds of America* had such an impact on people that multiple towns and counties—and hundreds of streets and parks—were given the name Audubon. By the time ASWP was formed in 1916, the word had become shorthand for bird conservation and respect for nature. Even more importantly, ASWP has worked tirelessly since 1916 to provide the very best in environmental education, habitat protection, and all things bird to people in our region. What we've discovered during this process is that our organization, Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, is highly regarded—not just here but across the country. Few people are aware that there even was a John James Audubon.

We've created an organization dedicated to conservation and education work and family-friendly events. Our nature trails are open and welcoming to everyone. We've spent 107 years connecting people to birds and nature and making Audubon a positive word—and we'll continue that work for generations to come.

—Jim

OUR RESERVES, NATIVE PLANT NURSERY, AND NATURE STORES

BEECHWOOD FARMS NATURE RESERVE

614 Dorseyville Road in Fox Chapel, Pittsburgh, PA 15238
Audubon Nature Store & Native Plant Nursery / Dogs not permitted on trails

BUFFALO CREEK NATURE PARK

154 Monroe Road, Sarver, PA 16055
Audubon Nature Store / Dogs on leash are welcome

SUCCOP NATURE PARK

185 W. Airport Road in Penn Township, Butler, PA 16002
Audubon Nature Store / Dogs on leash are welcome

TODD NATURE RESERVE

367 Kepple Road, Sarver, PA 16055
No restrooms or other facilities / Dogs not permitted on trails

ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION: For accessibility needs or questions about any of our sites, please contact Brian Shema at (412) 963-6100 or at bshema@aswp.org. For accessibility needs or questions about any of our programs, please contact Chris Kubiak at (412) 963-6100 or ckubiak@aswp.org. All other questions regarding accessibility or inclusion can be directed to Jim Bonner at (412) 963-6100 or jbonner@aswp.org.

*Brown-headed
Cowbird*



Creating Safe BACKYARD HABITATS



As nature lovers, we enjoy supporting birds and native wildlife in our backyards. And we know that adding native plants to a garden helps to encourage birds, insects, and other native wildlife to visit. But recent studies have demonstrated that there's one more step to be aware of when you're working to make your outdoor space bird-friendly.

Our backyard environments have inherent dangers that can put birds at risk—everything from outdoor cats to glass windows, lights, and pesticides. When you create a welcoming space for birds, they can be exposed to new dangers, and it's our responsibility to ensure their safety.

THE THREATS Outdoor Cats

The birds visiting your native plants quickly spread the word to others—there's free food and shelter at your address! As the number of birds increases, predators like outdoor cats may realize that your yard is “the place” for an easy meal. A recent study by Nature Communications showed that cats kill between 1.4 and 3.8 billion songbirds each year. While you cannot always control neighbors' cats from roaming outside, you can pledge to keep your own cats indoors. You may also take measures to protect the birds in your yard from predatory cats.

If you're feeding birds, do not place seed on the ground where the birds will land and become easy prey. Put out sliced oranges and orange peels to deter cats—they don't like the smell of citrus and (bonus!) the sliced oranges will attract Baltimore Orioles—just put those orange slices up high. And if the situation warrants, you could set up a motion-detector sprinkler that will harmlessly squirt the cat when it enters your property. There's also the option to speak to the cat's owner about the dangers of keeping a cat outdoors.

In addition to the harm it causes to birds, outdoor cats have a significantly shorter lifespan than those kept inside.

Window Strikes

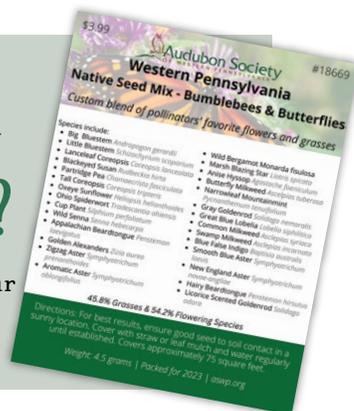
Glass windows provide beautiful views of the outdoors for humans but can be perilous to birds. Because of the glass' clarity, birds may mistake it for a wide open space. The result can be damaging or deadly to the bird. Window strikes kill up to one billion birds each year.

There are simple ways to help birds avoid this mostly-preventable situation. If you're feeding birds, place feeders either very close to the house (within 3 feet) so that the birds don't hurt themselves upon liftoff or place them at least 30 feet away from the house so that birds have enough space to clear the house.

Large, unobstructed panes of glass also benefit from nearly invisible (to people) tape that birds can see and avoid. The tape breaks up the clearness of the glass and birds will realize that they cannot fly through it. It's readily available online and at Audubon Nature Stores. If you have questions about how to best position the tape, just ask us!

THINKING ABOUT TRANSITIONING YOUR LAWN INTO A NATIVE MEADOW?

Stop by Audubon Nature Stores for advice and seeds—we have four different blends in two sizes for meadows big and small.



Light Pollution at Night

Birds are attracted to light. When you have lights on that can be seen from the outside of your home at night, birds may fly toward that light and injure themselves against glass. During migration times, birds may see light and fly toward it, wasting valuable energy that reduces their ability to escape from predators. Light pollution at night impacts birds of all varieties. According to BirdCast, ducks, geese, sandpipers, sea birds, and songbirds of all kinds can become disoriented by light pollution. They are most negatively impacted by red and white light.

The pollution also has an effect on insects—lights at night cause many insects (not just moths) to become disoriented and fly endlessly, leading to exhaustion and death.

Unbalanced Environment

A balanced environment with plants and trees of various heights helps birds, mammals, and beneficial insects to each find their place—from spaces to eat to shelters to nest and hide. This means that when planning a backyard habitat, it's important to incorporate a mix of plants and trees that support safe escape zones during a potential predator attack.

Consider adding height to your garden or backyard space that allows birds to fly up from lower-height plants and seek refuge beneath a tree's leaves. This can provide protection not only from ground predators like outdoor cats, but also a hawk that may be scoping out its next meal.

Pesticide Use

Native plants and trees thrive in Pennsylvania's soil and weather conditions, so there is no need to treat them with pesticides that can negatively impact, or kill, the birds and insects they support. Pesticides are most tightly associated with weed and insect control, but in a balanced backyard environment, they are unnecessary.

Strong native plants will outcompete most weeds. And a large population of beneficial insects will support pollination and provide tasty snacks for insect-eating birds. There are also many natural methods to control especially troublesome pests like ticks. Cedar chips, geranium plants, and cedar oil are all natural and can help to control tick populations without the use of chemicals or pesticides. *Get more tips on naturally combating ticks in Ask the Naturalist on page 11.*

Mulch

Can the decorative mulch you're putting around your home impact birds and insects? Yes, if it's not the "right" mulch.

When you're buying shredded bark mulch, find out where the wood comes from. Much of the mulch you can cheaply buy is created from pressed wood leftover from furniture manufacturing and sawmills. True hardwood mulch will last longer, doesn't attract termites, and is preservative-free which creates a healthier habitat and won't add to chemical run-off when it rains. Untreated mulch can be hard to find and expensive, but it's worth it for the benefits to the environment.

Disease Spread

When birds are together in close proximity, like at a bird feeder, there's always the chance that disease can spread. This can be mitigated by keeping feeders clean. There's a simple way to do this, and it only takes a few minutes each week.

No matter the type of feeder—suet cage, hummingbird feeder, oriole feeder, or seed feeder—it's imperative to clean it each week to prevent illness. (Hummingbird and oriole feeders should be cleaned more often when it is warm outside).

Empty the feeder, wash it with hot and soapy water, rinse, then let it dry. Next, soak the feeder for 20 minutes in a solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water. Rinse, let dry, refill, and place back outside.

HOW DOES YOUR (NATIVE PLANT) GARDEN GROW?

**At Audubon Nature Stores,
pick up tools, gardening supplies,
and outdoor decorations that shine
a spotlight on your beautiful garden!
PS—we have native plants available
that support birds, butterflies,
and beneficial insects!**



Summer/Fall

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

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

Events take place at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve (BFNR), Succop Nature Park (SNP), Buffalo Creek Nature Park (BCNP), Todd Nature Reserve (TNR), or online via Zoom. Register online at aswp.org or call (412) 963-6100.

SOME EVENTS WE JUST CAN'T PLAN IN ADVANCE!

If you're interested in getting on a list to be notified about pop-up events, please let us know by contacting us: register@aswp.org.

 AudubonWesternPA  AudubonWesternPA

Special Events

PICNICS IN THE PARK AT SUCCOP NATURE PARK

Thursdays: July 13, August 10, & September 14, 6:30–8:30 pm / SNP

Bring a picnic dinner and a blanket and enjoy free, live music at Succop Nature Park. There's also limited seating under the pavilion. Band list: July—Brandon Rae Band; August—Washboard Tony & Rocking Rob; September—The Rumlbers.

HAWK MOUNTAIN MINI ECO-TOUR

September 15–17, 2023 / Hawk Mountain

Hawk Mountain is famous for its migrating raptors. During this mini eco-tour, you'll enjoy an afternoon of birding on Friday and a full day on Saturday to see the many birds flying overhead to their migration destinations. Price includes transportation, all meals, hotel accommodations, and admission fees. This tour is limited to 12 people. \$300 per member, \$375 per nonmember.

CROSS POLLINATION: BACKYARD HABITAT SHOW AND TELL

Thursday, September 7, 6–8pm / BFNR

Want to show off your Certified Backyard Habitat? Know that your native plants make your property the prettiest in the neighborhood? Showcase your garden during an evening of camaraderie, skill-sharing, and show and tell. ASWP's Certified Backyard Habitat program has over 850 participants and has created over 1,000 acres of Certified Habitat! Light refreshments will be provided. Registration is required so that we can plan accordingly. Free.

A GUIDE TO RESTORING THE LITTLE THINGS THAT RUN THE WORLD PRESENTED BY DOUG TALLAMY

Thursday, September 21, 6:30–8pm / Online

Join Audubon and the Buffalo Creek Coalition for a presentation by Doug Tallamy, author of *Nature's Best Hope*. A world without insects is a world without humans! Tallamy will remind us of the many essential roles insects play and describe the simple changes we must make in our landscapes and our attitudes to keep insects on the ground, in the air and yes, on our plants. Registration is required. *This program is offered with support from DCNR Environmental Stewardship Fund and PA Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Fund.*

WINGS, WATER, AND WILDLIFE

Saturday, September 23, 10am–2pm / BCNP

Join Audubon and the Buffalo Creek Coalition for a family friendly day of activities that celebrate the Buffalo Creek watershed and Important Bird Area. Enjoy fishing, nature crafts, games, an electrofishing demonstration by Duquesne University, trying your hand at casting with Trout Unlimited, and more! Learn about the important work that is being done in the watershed—in the water and on the land. The Flying Solo Market will be on site selling nature crafts, art, and baked goods. And the Carnegie Natural History Museum's Mini Museum will bring native animals found in the watershed. The first 150 visitors will receive a free tree. *This event is offered for free to the public by ASWP through funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Fund in support of the Buffalo Creek Watershed Coalition.*

Birding & Nature Hikes

BIRDS & MORE NATURALIST-LED MORNING WALKS

BCNP: Every Tuesday at 9am; Free

BFNR: Every Sunday and Wednesday at 9am; Free

SNP: Every Thursday 9am; Free

TNR: Every Friday at 9am; Free

THE NATIVE PLANT NURSERY IS OPEN FOR THE SEASON!

FALL MIGRATORY BIRD HIKES

Saturday, September 2, 9–11am / SNP

Saturday, September 9, 9–11am / BCNP and BFNR

While we're still enjoying the warmth of summer, the birds are well aware that change is coming. During this naturalist-led hike, we'll be looking for birds that are ready to make their way south for the winter. \$6 per member, \$10 per nonmember. Registration required.

Online Natural History Programs

INVASIVE SPECIES

Tuesday, July 11, 7–8pm / Online

Invasive species are introduced, non-native plants or animals that can severely degrade our local habitats. This program discusses the impact of invasive species and how to combat them with native plant replacement strategies. Free.

TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

Tuesday July 25, 7–8pm / Online

Lyme disease has become a prevalent threat to those who venture outdoors. This presentation will explain the lifecycle of the tick and how the spirochete is transferred to humans. Do not let fear of Lyme disease keep you indoors; arm yourself with knowledge. Free.

PENNSYLVANIA'S ICE AGE PAST

Tuesday, August 8, 7–8pm / Online

Just a geologic instant ago, portions of Pennsylvania were covered in massive glaciers. There are still many signs of this violent age written into our landscape. In this program, you will learn how to identify weathering patterns and rock types that are indicative of glacial activity.

CHANGES IN THE LAND: BEECHWOOD FARMS NATURE RESERVE

Tuesday, August 22, 7–8pm / Online

Based on the classic book *Changes in the Land* by William Cronon, this presentation follows the changes in ecosystems and land usage at Beechwood over the past 300 years. From Native Americans to settlers, learn how people have changed the landscape at Beechwood. Free.

TREE ID: BEYOND THE APP!

Tuesday, September 5, 7–8pm / Online

We love our app-based field guides. But nothing helps you get to know your local trees more than being able to use “old-school” field guides. You'll also learn observational clues that help you to identify the trees around you. Free.

CAROLINA PARAKEET: ECOLOGY, EXTINCTION, AND RESURRECTION?

Tuesday, September 19, 7–8pm / Online

The Carolina Parakeet was eastern North America's only endemic parrot species and was even found in Western Pennsylvania. Learn more about this species' unique ecology, what drove it to extinction, and the controversy surrounding bringing them back through cloning. Free.

Community Science

MONARCHS & MILKWEED

Saturday, July 22, 10–11:30am / BCNP, BFNR, and SNP

Learn the critical importance of milkweed as a Monarch Butterfly habitat and food source—and identify all life stages of Monarchs in the field. We'll also discuss Monarch conservation challenges, how participants can help by planting milkweed in their own backyards, and how to volunteer for the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project. Free.

NATIVE POLLINATORS

Saturday, August 19, 10–11:30am / BCNP and BFNR

Saturday, August 26, 2–3:30pm / SNP

Pollinators play a key role in the development of over 150 food crops in the United States, but scientists have identified long-term declines in pollinator population trends, including our native bumble bees. Learn about these native pollinators and how to help them, including a primer on Bumble Bee Watch.

FALL INTO PHENOLOGY & TREE ID

Saturday, September 23, 10–11:30am / BCNP and BFNR

Saturday, October 7, 10–11:30am / SNP

Phenology is the study of the timing of biological events in plants and animals such as flowering, leafing, hibernation, reproduction, and migration. Gain insight on plant life cycle events (known as phenophases) in the classroom, then head outside for a tree ID hike. Free.

MAKE A STATEMENT

We have fun new bumper stickers for cars, windows, or anywhere you want to make a statement! Stop in Audubon Nature Stores for the full variety!



Preschool Programs

FLEDGLINGS: AGES 3–5

Wednesdays: July 12, August 9, September 13, 10–11:15am / BCNP
Thursdays: July 13, August 10, September 14, 10–11:15am / BFNR
Tuesdays: July 11, August 8, September 12, 10–11:15am / BCNP

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 register and attend with your child. Fee per child at \$4 for members, \$6 for non-members. Adult caregiver, please register using the “Free adult” ticket. Advance registration is required. July’s theme: Monarch Babies; August: Terrific Trees; September: Cricket Cacophony.

Hands-on Learning and Outdoor Programs

MOTH MADNESS

Saturday, July 22, 9:30–11pm / BFNR
Wednesday, July 26, 9:30–11pm / BCNP
Saturday, August 5, 9:30–11pm / SNP

During the 12th annual National Moth Week, learn about some of the 600 species of moths that call Pennsylvania home—from inconspicuous micro-moths to large silk moths. We will begin the evening with a short presentation then go outside to test various lighting techniques to attract moths. This event is intended for adults and children 10 or older, who must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Registration required. Members free, non-members \$5.

FLYING JEWELS: DRAGONFLIES THROUGH BINOCULARS

Saturday, July 29, 10am–12pm / BCNP, and BFNR
Saturday, July 29, 2pm–4pm / SNP

Dragonflies are flying jewels! Get to know them better—start in the classroom with a review of common dragonfly species and their habits. Then head with us to the pond to watch them in action! Suitable for adults and older children. Members free, non-members \$5.

MAKE AND TAKE: CREATE A WALKING STICK AND HIKE

Saturday, August 5, 10am–12pm / BCNP
Saturday, August 26, 10am–12pm / BFNR
Saturday, August 5, 2–4pm / SNP

A walking stick is a great tool to have on the trail. We’ll use tough and sustainable birch wood to create a custom walking stick with an inlaid compass, leather lanyard, and measurement notches. Then we’ll take it out for a hike, measuring the height of trees and navigating. All materials are provided and we’ll make one walking stick per registration. \$25 per member; \$35 per nonmember.

MAKE AND TAKE: NATURE JOURNALS

Saturday, September 30, 10–11:30am / SNP
Saturday, September 30, 12–1:30pm / BCNP
Saturday, September 30, 2–3:30pm / BFNR

In this program, you will bind high-quality paper to heirloom quality leather covers to create a unique journal in which you can record your observations. You’ll decorate the journal and add a clasp that will secure it shut. Registration is required one week in advance. \$25 per member, \$35 per non-member.

BACKYARD STREAM REPAIR

Saturday, October 21, 9am–12pm / BFNR

Is your stream getting deeper or wider? Are you losing some of your land every time it rains? Have you wondered why your streambanks are changing so rapidly? Join Audubon and Penn State Extension to learn more about backyard stream repair solutions. The program includes a set of pre-recorded webinars that you can view at your own pace, followed by an in-person field day where you can put what you learned to practice—including stream evaluation, and different approaches to riparian buffer and streambank stabilization. Participants in this workshop will receive a copy of the Penn State Extension publication, *Simple Solutions for Your Eroding Backyard Stream*. This program (\$30 value) is offered at a discounted rate with funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Five Star and Urban Waters Grant. Space is limited—registration is required. \$5 per member, \$10 per nonmember.

Native Plant Programs

These programs are offered free of cost thanks to generous support from the Fox Chapel Garden Club.

WETLAND BENEFITS

Saturday, August 19, 10am–12pm / BFNR

Take a closer look at the benefits that wetland habitats have for people and wildlife—and how they’re being impacted by climate change. We will investigate a range of plants and adaptations they possess to thrive in these unique ecosystems—and get an up-close look at some native aquatic plants that thrive in our region.

SEED COLLECTION

Saturday, September 30, 10am–12pm / BFNR
Saturday, September 30, 2pm–4pm / BCNP

Learn how to harvest native seeds while you help Audubon Center for Native Plants to replenish its stocks. You can even take some home to start your own plant collection! Participants will get hands on experience collecting, cleaning and sowing a variety of native plant seed.

Buffalo Creek Watershed & Important Bird Area Series

These programs are offered free of cost by Audubon and the Buffalo Creek Coalition with support from the Pennsylvania Department of Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Environmental Stewardship Fund and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Fund.

STREAM EXPLORATION DAYS

*Fridays: July 21 and August 4 / BCNP
Session 1: 10am–12pm; Session 2: 1–3pm*

Are you looking for a fun way to cool off this summer while connecting with nature? Grab your family and friends and join us to learn about streams and how to keep our local waterways healthy. Explore Little Buffalo Creek, search for macroinvertebrates, and learn about watersheds and their ecology. This is an experiential program, so come prepared to get wet; water shoes are required and you may wish to pack a towel and/or change of clothes. Registration is required; space is limited. All children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Free.



BUFFALO CREEK COALITION MEETING



Wednesday, September 13, 6–7:30pm / BCNP or Online

Do you live, work, or play in the Buffalo Creek Watershed? Join Audubon and the Buffalo Creek Coalition to learn more about the state of the watershed, habitat restoration and enhancement efforts, monitoring programs, and opportunities to get involved while also sharing your priorities, perspectives, and concerns within the region to help guide our work.

DO YOU LIVE IN THE BUFFALO CREEK WATERSHED?

The municipalities that make up the watershed are—Townships: Brady's Bend, Buffalo, Clearfield, Clinton, Concord, Donegal, East Franklin, Fairview, Harrison, Jefferson, North Buffalo, Oakland, South Buffalo, Sugar creek, Summit, West Franklin, and Winfield. Boroughs: Chicora, Freeport, Saxonburg, and Worthington.

Volunteer Opportunities

NATIVE PLANT NURSERY WORK SESSIONS

Every Tuesday from July–September, 10am–1pm and 4–6pm / BFNR

Choose one of two sessions each Tuesday and get your hands dirty while learning new skills and making a difference for local habitat! Volunteers are needed to help with native plant nursery tasks such as transplanting seedlings, watering, and sowing seed. Space is limited; registration is required so that we can plan accordingly.

DEMONSTRATION GARDEN & LANDSCAPING SUPPORT

Every Thursday from July–September, 11am–2pm / BFNR

Volunteers are needed to help ASWP maintain demonstration gardens and other landscaped areas around Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve. Materials and training will be provided. Registration is requested.

LITTER PICK UPS

Tuesday, August 8, 10am–12pm / BCNP

Help us with litter pick-ups near our nature sites! It's an easy way to make an immediate positive impact on local habitats and waterways. All materials will be provided including gloves, trash bags, and safety vests. Please wear long pants, sturdy shoes, and dress for the weather. Thank you for helping to keep our streams and forests healthy! Registration requested.

HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

Saturday, September 16, 9am–12pm / SNP

Saturday, September 23, 10am–12pm / TNR

Invasive plants degrade ecosystems and displace native species. It's best to get them under control before they're established—and even easier with extra hands! Volunteers are needed to help remove invasive species at Succop Nature Park and Todd Nature Reserve. All materials will be provided and no experience is necessary. Registration is requested.

TREE PLANTINGS

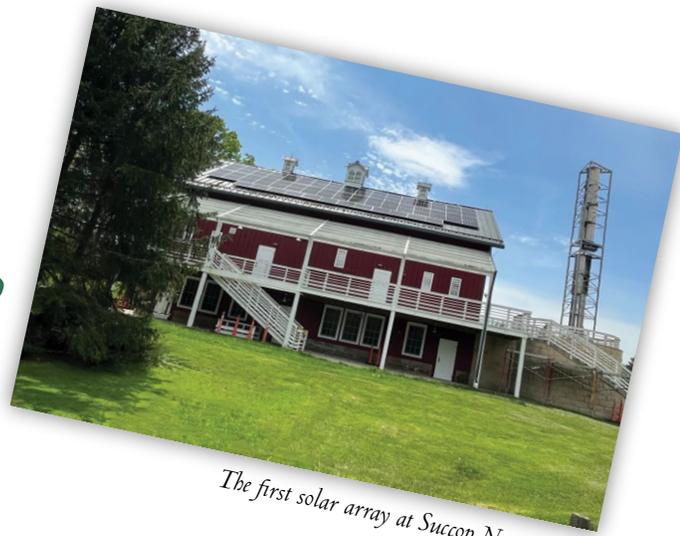
Saturdays, October 7 and October 14, 9am–12pm / BFNR

Help to make Beechwood even more bird-friendly and improve local water quality by planting native trees and shrubs. All materials will be provided and no experience is necessary. Groups are welcome; registration is requested. *Special thanks to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Five Star and Urban Waters grant program for its support of habitat enhancement efforts at Beechwood in 2023.*

AUDUBON ECO-TOURS SEE BIRDS OF THE WORLD!

Registration is open now for an eco-tour to Colombia November 1-9, 2023. This trip starts at \$4,545 and is all-inclusive including airfare from Pittsburgh. Find more information and register at aswp.org. Contact us for information on details and pricing on these tours which are planned for next year but not yet open for registration: Panama (February 2024) and Tanzania (August 2024).

AUDUBON News



The first solar array at Succop Nature Park

FIRST SOLAR ARRAY IN PLACE AT SUCCOP NATURE PARK

Two major advances happened this May that add to ASWP's pledge to become a net-zero energy organization. First, we activated the first solar array at Succop Nature Park—and next, we were awarded a grant to fund a second array.

The solar array on the T. W. Phillips Barn consists of 80 panels and is rated at 38.8 kW DC. It will generate approximately 75% of the current electric demand at Succop Nature Park. The second solar array will be funded by a grant of \$146,766 from West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund. This 40.3 kW DC array will be located on the nature park's garage and will consist of 84 panels. It will be installed later this year. To learn more about the funder, please visit wppsef.org.

GRANT RECEIVED TO CREATE COLLEGE BIRDING CLUBS

ASWP received a grant of \$240,000 from Richard King Mellon Foundation to assist in the creation of birding clubs at eight western Pennsylvania colleges and universities.

The project is part of an ongoing effort to engage a younger, more diverse audience in birding. In addition to supporting staffing, the funds will help to pay for binoculars, spotting scopes, and transportation to and from birding locations throughout the region. More information about the funder may be found at rkmf.org.

Memorials AND Honors

Memorials

Anne H. Buchanan

Sylvia's Duck, OBX Friends

Rosemarie Calandra

Martha Smith

Joyce Dombroski

Marie & Eric Bishop
C.G. Johnson Elementary Family
Colleen Cook
Maureen Leach
Laraine McCrea
Carolyn & Larry Szebalskie

Robert W. Hodil

Joann Maier

Thomas S. Lynch

Chris Baldwin
Susan & Gary Sobkiw

Juniper Ling Schubert

Marlee Gallagher

Susan Sphar

Tingle & Richard Barnes
Bett Beeson
Ginny Merchant &
Jim Brainard
Nancy Brownell
John Culbertson

Susan Sphar (continued)

Dee & Dan Delaney
Betsy & Bob Kampmeiner
Ann & Richard Meyer
Martha & Bill Pumphrey
Peggy Runnette
Abby & Reid Ruttenberg
Carolyn & Scott Sanford
Molly Sauereisen
Mikell & Bill Schenck
Jolie Schroeder
Holly Shoup
Jeremy & Peter Smerd
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Martha Smith
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Gifts received through May 8, 2023

Ask the NATURALIST

HOW CAN I NATURALLY REPEL TICKS IN MY YARD?

Ticks deserve their bad reputation. They move around by hopping a ride—most often on mice—and spread diseases including Lyme Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Powassan Virus Disease, and Anaplasmosis to people and pets. Their small size makes them very difficult to spot.

While these mini pests aren't going anywhere soon, there are natural measures that you can take to reduce their numbers. Please note that it's important to always check yourself, your family members, and your pets for ticks after being outdoors—even in your own backyard. Ticks lay in wait for a blood meal and you don't want to be tonight's dinner! Here are some steps you can take to make your yard less desirable for ticks:

Clean up leaf litter: Ticks like damp areas like leaves that have been left on the ground over winter. Other, beneficial insects like leaf litter, too, so if possible leave it on the ground until after May, when all insects will have awakened from overwintering and left the leaf pile behind.

Create a natural barrier around your yard: Ticks don't like to cross dry spaces like bare dirt. Creating a dry barrier will reduce the number of ticks that walk their way onto your property.

Cut back shrubs along walkways: Remember how we mentioned that ticks lay in wait? They'll do that on shrub branches that overhang walkways, hoping that you stroll by. Don't give them the opportunity—cut back shrub branches to keep walkways clear.

Eliminate invasive shrubs that harbor ticks: While you're assessing your shrubs, check to see if you have barberry in your yard.

These shrubs have dense vegetation that creates a high-humidity environment that ticks adore. Remove the barberry and replace it with a native plant or shrub that will support beneficial wildlife!

Invest in a natural spray for pets: There are several natural peppermint-based sprays that can be directly applied to your pet's fur. Ticks are not peppermint fans and are more likely to avoid your pet when it's wearing the spray. Bonus—your pet will smell minty for days!

Apply a natural oil to tick-prone areas: Walnut-oil and eucalyptus-oil based products are available online, in stores, and from lawn services that can help to cut down the number of ticks in your yard. These oils repel ticks because the ticks don't like their smell, but they won't get rid of every tick.

Even with the tick numbers down in your yard, it's always smart to do a tick check when you come indoors.

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