

BULLETIN

— SPRING 2022 —



In this issue: Let's Talk Turkey...Vultures

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BULLETIN

SPRING 2022

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Turkey Vultures are now year-round residents of our area, along with their close relatives, the Black Vulture.

Photo by Michelle Maani; Audubon Photography Awards



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This Audubon View

I focus a lot on ASWP membership—and with good reason. Membership and giving by individuals are our largest source of unrestricted support. The kind of support that helps us to maintain our trails and property, pay staff, and “keep the lights on.” But membership is much more important than just money; it’s an indication of how much people appreciate and value all that ASWP has to offer.

It’s not just me that looks at our membership numbers. Corporations, foundations, the Allegheny Regional Asset District, and elected officials all want to know how many members we have and how they support us. Why? When we ask for support from these organizations, they want to know how many other people believe that we are providing needed services. This helps the organizations to decide if investment in ASWP will serve the larger community.

At the beginning of the 2022, our active membership roster topped 2,900 for the first time ever. As recently as January 2018, that number was around 1,800. And while that growth is remarkable, it’s our membership retention that I am most proud of. One of the highlights of my day is signing membership letters, which includes the date when a member first joined ASWP. The number of people that have been supporting us over 10, 20, and even 30 years always makes me smile. I suspect there are some who top 40 years, but our computer records don’t go back that far!

In celebration and appreciation of this support, we’ve made adjustments to our program charges. You will see more free programs, great member discounts on programs, and a few more members-only activities. It’s just one small way we can say thank you for all that you do to help us connect the people of southwestern PA to birds and nature through our programs, projects, and places.

—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

BUFFALO CREEK NATURE PARK

154 Monroe Road, Sarver, PA 16055

• Audubon Nature Store

SUCCOP NATURE PARK

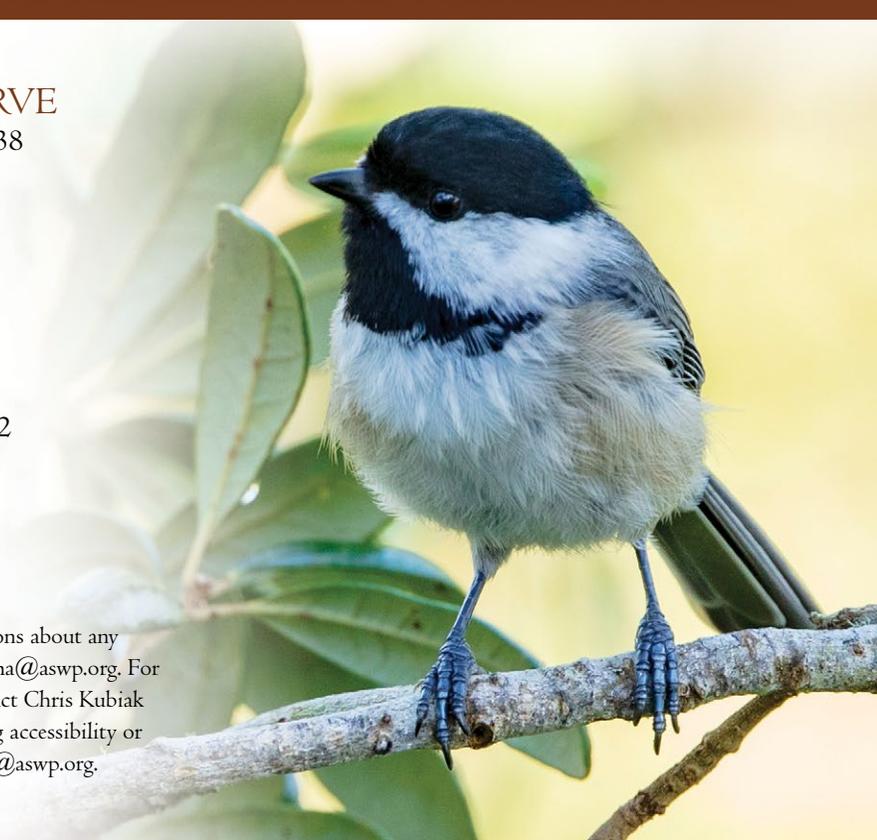
185 W. Airport Road in Penn Township, Butler, PA 16002

• Audubon Nature Store

TODD NATURE RESERVE

367 Kepple Road, Sarver, PA 16055

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.





Winter Vultures

ON THE RISE IN OUR REGION

We often get calls into the office inquiring about large (very large) birds circling overhead. Sometimes they're thought to be eagles. Other times callers think they may be hawks. But when we ask a few questions about the birds' appearance and flight behavior, we quickly know just what they're calling about—Vultures.

There are seven species of New World vultures in the family Cathartidae. You can find two of these in our region, including the Turkey Vulture. This particular bird's featherless head helps it to stay clean when sticking its head into a carcass. The reddish colored heads of Turkey Vultures resemble those of Wild Turkeys, hence the name.

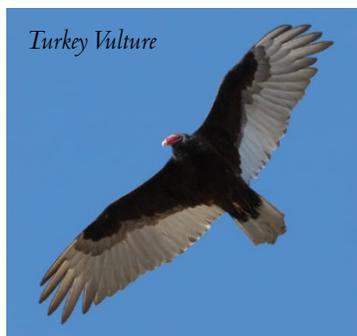
Turkey Vultures were first seen in Pennsylvania by Native Americans and early explorers in the colonial period. In those times, the birds were migrants.

A surprising change began to occur about 17 years ago, when Turkey Vultures were spotted during the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This meant that at least some were staying into the winter, and perhaps overwintering. During the 2021 CBC held just a few months ago, 26 were counted in the Pittsburgh count circle.

The other species in our area is a relatively new arrival. While Black Vultures were historically only found in the southeastern part of the United States, they've been expanding their range northward since the 1940s.

Turkey Vulture or Bald Eagle?

Turkey Vultures have a wingspan just shy of 6-feet, that are showcased in a V shape while in flight. Although impressive, an eagle is even larger, with an almost 7-foot wingspan. They hold their wings level when flying. Turkey Vultures appear to have very small heads, while eagles appear to have large heads.



Turkey Vulture



Bald Eagle

This range expansion could be because of climate change, or because they are able to survive in human-altered landscapes which provide ample sources of food. While still rare locally, a handful of Black Vultures have been found in Allegheny County over the past decade.

THE NOSE KNOWS AND OTHER VULTURE FACTS

Our local Turkey Vultures, now more frequently seen year-round, are referred to as New World vultures—more closely related to cranes than they are to Old World Vultures. This was first suspected when researchers noted that Turkey Vultures and cranes shared the common habit of urohydrolysis, defecating or peeing on their legs to regulate their body temperature. The connection was confirmed by DNA analysis.

Urohydrolysis is beneficial to Turkey Vultures because like all other birds, they do not sweat. So the evaporative cooling effect is helpful to them in warm weather. But it also has another surprising benefit. Because of the acidity of their urine, it helps to kill any bacteria on their legs and feet that they may have picked up when walking all over their dinner.

Turkey Vultures thrive here because of abundant carrion, which they find via their very strong sense of smell. Unlike Old World vultures that use their excellent eyesight to find food, New World vultures rely on their noses. They have the largest olfactory system of all birds and can smell rotting flesh from over a mile away. Thanks to this sense, they play an important role in our ecosystems by acting as nature's sanitation workers—helping to keep the environment healthy.

Taking Flight

During migration, vultures plot their flights by the time of day, soaring on rising air currents called thermals. Thermals are caused by warm air rising, which occurs later in the morning after the sun rises. This gives Vultures a solid reason to sleep in.

The birds' strong sense of smell has also alerted humans to issues with natural gas pipelines. To give natural gas an identifiable smell, mercaptan is added to it—this smell is very similar to the ethyl mercaptan that emanates from carrion. As such, the Vultures can serve as flying notifications of a gas leak—they are often seen circling a gas leak.

OUR LOCAL VULTURES

In Fox Chapel, Turkey Vultures have been consistently seen in winter for the past six years. They often congregate on a local water tower near Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve. We believe that they've chosen this location because of the sunny conditions on the water tower. The vultures are often seen basking in the sun with their wings spread—a strategy to increase their surface area to warm their bodies more quickly. On a few rare occasions, a Black Vulture has joined the local flock.

The number of birds at the tower fluctuates from day to day, but their presence on sunny days is consistent. Prior to dusk, the birds move to an unknown location for the night.



Spring 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), Todd Nature Reserve (TNR), Buffalo Creek Nature Park (BCNP), or online via Zoom. Register online at aswp.org or call (412) 963-6100.

BFNR: 614 Dorseyville Road, Fox Chapel, Allegheny County
BCNP: 154 Monroe Road, Sarver, Butler County
SNP: 185 W. Airport Road, Penn Township, Butler County
TNR: 367 Kepple Road, Sarver, Butler County

Special Events

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT WALK

February 19, 10am–12pm / BFNR, SNP & BCNP

Join ASWP naturalists for our annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) walk on Audubon's trails. Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the GBBC was the first online community-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time. Free.

MAPLE MADNESS

March 12, 10am–1pm / BCNP
March 19, 10am–1pm / BFNR
March 26, 10am–1pm / SNP

Maple isn't just something you put on your pancakes—there's so much more to maple sugaring! Experience the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of Maple Sugaring as you take a trip through the history and science of maple syrup. You'll even learn how to collect and make your own! This event will take place completely outdoors. Please dress for the weather! Registration required. \$6 per member, \$12 per nonmember.

Birding & Nature Hikes

BIRDS & MORE NATURALIST LED MORNING WALKS

BCNP: Every Tuesday at 9am; Free
BFNR: Every Wednesday at 9am; Free
SNP: Every Thursday 9am; Free
TNR: Every Friday at 9am (starting in April)

EARLY SIGNS OF SPRING

March 5, 12–2pm / BFNR, SNP & BCNP

When will Spring arrive? It may already be here! Let's look for the first glimpses of the return of spring on our trails. Free for ASWP members, \$5 per nonmember.

PYMATUNING BIRD OUTING

March 27, 8am–12pm / Pymatuning State Park

Pymatuning State Park represents one of the best places in Pennsylvania to observe migrating waterfowl and raptors like Bald Eagles. Participants will meet at the parking lot at the spillway (Linesville side). Contact Chris Kubiak at ckubiak@aswp.org for more information. Registration required. \$5 per member, \$10 per nonmember. Meet at the Spillway parking lot.

TODD NATURE RESERVE BIRD OUTING

April 16, 8am–12pm / TNR

Todd Nature Reserve is home to a number of interesting and unique habitats for numerous bird species. This outing will look for arriving Louisiana Waterthrush, Blue-headed Vireos, Golden and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Winter Wrens, and many other birds. Bring your optics, water, and a snack and dress for the weather. Registration required. Email Chris Kubiak at ckubiak@aswp.org for more details. \$5 per member, \$10 per nonmember. Meet in the parking lot at Todd (367 Kepple Road in Sarver).

AUDUBON BOG TOUR

April 16, 12–3pm / Pine Swamp Natural Area

In this tour, we will meet at the Pine Swamp Natural Area in Mercer county and explore two bogs. Bogs are ancient landforms left over from the last ice age where the only supply of water is from rain. These stagnant wetlands become acidic over time and accumulate large amounts of peat-moss. This area is rugged, there are no trails to follow, and we will have a ¼ mile hike just to reach the bogs. Please be sure to have sturdy footwear, all-weather clothing, water, and a readiness to bushwhack your way to a unique ecosystem. Attendees will be contacted with an exact location of the parking area where we will be meeting. Registration is required, please email Ryan at rstauffer@aswp.org with questions. \$20 per member, \$30 per nonmember.

Hands-On Projects

STORIES AROUND THE FIRE

February 27, March 27, April 24, 1–2pm / BCNP

There's something about telling a story while you sit around the fire. Join us as we grab a cup of cocoa or hot cider and gather around the fire. We will tell a story and then do a participant story where you have a chance to add to the adventure. This event takes place completely outside so dress accordingly. \$5 per member, \$10 per nonmember.

HOT TODDIES AND HERBS

March 18, 6:30–8pm / BCNP

Tired of winter? Need to plant something as a reminder that Spring is coming? At this program, you'll meet Erica Peiffer, owner of Gnome Grown Gardens and enjoy some refreshments, learn about starting herbs indoors, and plant a selection of herb seeds for your own garden. Learn more about how Erica got started and how she creates her special herbal tea blends. \$30 per member, \$40 per nonmember.

YOGA BUNNY AND EGG HUNT

April 9, 9:30–11:00am / BCNP

Begin your day with some stretching as Sylvia Maxwell, Founder of Sol Power Yoga, reads and enacts the story of Yoga Bunny by Brian Russo. Children ages 3-5 will start with yoga followed by an egg hunt. Children ages 6-10 will start with an egg hunt followed by yoga. Bring the whole family and enjoy both yoga, an egg hunt, and some surprise activities. We will have child floor mats and bunny ears and tails available to get you in character! \$5 per member, \$10 per nonmember.

BIRD DRAWING WORKSHOP (TWO-DAY PROGRAM)

April 16 & 23, 10:30am–2:30pm / SNP

Want to learn to draw birds? In this workshop, you'll experiment with basic shapes using value, line, color, texture and more with artist Marianne Pionati. She'll demonstrate how to create bird eyes, beaks, feet, and feathers. Pencil, graphite, colored pencil or watercolor may be used. \$100 per member, \$135 per nonmember.

Expand Your Bird Knowledge

OWL ECOLOGY IN WINTER

February 15, 7–8:30pm / Online

Our region has a number of interesting owl species. Did you know a local owl starts breeding in January? How do they hunt and survive the cold, dark, winter months? This program will look at several of our local owl species and ecology, along with discussing the irruptive Snowy Owl. Free.

PASSENGER PIGEONS: FROM BILLIONS TO NONE

March 15, 7–8:30pm / Online

At one time in North America, Passenger Pigeons were the continent's most abundant bird species. Some flocks would take days to pass over, and even into the 1860s, numbers were recorded to be in the billions. Yet by 1914 the last Passenger Pigeon died and the species went extinct. This program covers the conservation tale of this species and the reasons for why it was ultimately doomed to extinction. Free.

BIRDING 101

April 12, 7–8:30pm / Online

Birdwatching is one of the fastest growing hobbies in the United States. Learn the basics of birding and why watching our feathered friends is such a captivating hobby. Free.

Natural History Virtual Series

PENNSYLVANIA'S ICE AGE PAST

February 14, 7–8:30pm / Online

Just a geologic instant ago, portions of Pennsylvania were covered in massive glaciers. This program will explore how this has shaped our state's geography and biology. There are still many signs of this violent age written into our landscape; you will learn how to identify weathering patterns and rock types that are indicative of glacial activity. Free.

FROGS OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

March 14, 7–8:30pm / Online

How do frogs survive the winter? Is it true that they can breathe through their skin? Western Pennsylvania has a fascinating number of frog species, with distinct ecologies and calls. This program will discuss a number of different local frog species, their life histories, as well as their distinct calls. Free.

WILDFLOWER FOLKLORE

April 11, 7–8:30pm / Online

Humans have given flowers wonderful names, developed creative uses for them, and incorporated them in other imaginative ways into our culture. In this program, we'll dive deeper into the human facets of local native wildflower natural history. Free.

WILDFLOWERS IN A WARMING WORLD

April 19, 7–8:30pm / Online

Over the past two years, botanists at the University of Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Museum of Natural History have been studying how warmer spring weather may lead to earlier emergence of our forest flora, including many of the charismatic wildflowers found here. *Continues on next page.*

Learn about their new findings regarding how warming springs and invasive woody shrubs may impact wildflower species in Beechwood's forests. Presenters: Sara Kuebbing from the University of Pittsburgh; Abby Yancy, and Mason Heberling from Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Free.

Native Plants

MAXIMIZING HABITAT WITH NATIVE LAYERED GARDENS

February 26 & March 12, 7pm / Online

You can increase the habitat value and beauty of your outdoor space by incorporating native plants in a layered approach. Join Audubon to explore native species from each layer, including propagation, plant care, special value to wildlife and people, and common pests and diseases. This is a two-part series. The February 26 program will focus on sunny layered gardens and the March 12 program will focus on shady layered gardens – join for one or both! Free.

NATIVE PLANTS FOR CHALLENGING SPACES

April 2, 7pm / Online

Discover a variety of native plants that have adapted to challenging landscape spaces in the Pittsburgh region—spaces including hillsides, slopes, and clay soil. These same plants may also attract beneficial wildlife, provide a delight on the dinner table, and reduce maintenance in the garden. Free.

Kids & Preschool Programs

FLEDGLINGS PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES: AGES 3-5

February 10, March 10, April 14, 10–11:15am / BFNR

March 8, April 12, 10–11:15am / SNP

March 9, April 13, 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 (for free) and be present. \$4 per child-age member; \$8 per child-age nonmember.

BEECHWOOD AFTER-SCHOOL SERIES

February 23, March 9 & 23, 4:30–6pm / BFNR

Want to get your K-3rd grader outside into nature this winter? This after-school program at Beechwood serves as the perfect respite from an overload of screen time. Winter at Beechwood has its own unique features and fascinating encounters with nature. Explore our meadows, forests, and ecosystems for animals and their winter homes. \$5 per member, \$10 per nonmember.

HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMS

February 25, March 25 & April 29, 10am–1pm / SNP

Register for classes scheduled on these dates or choose a topic of your choice and schedule it with our environmental educator. Many of the classes can be expanded to multiple sessions if requested. These classes are for K–12 with mixed grade levels welcome. They run from 10am–1pm with a mid-point lunch break. Contact Ryan Stauffer at rstauffer@aswp.org for pricing and more info.

Volunteer Opportunities

WEEKEND VOLUNTEER NATURALIST PROGRAM

February 12, 9am–12pm (Future trainings also planned) / BFNR & SNP

Share your enthusiasm for nature as a weekend trail docent! This new program will train you in casual interaction with visitors to our reserve to connect them to birds and nature while also recording wildlife sightings and, where appropriate, participating in community science projects. This program series will give you a foundation in the general natural history and common plants and animals. Here's how it works: take at least four trainings, choose a focus area, then volunteer. Commitment is a two-hour window on Saturday or Sunday, six times during the year. Opportunities to help with other weekend programming may be available but is optional. Please note: because of work with the public, a background check is required. Free. *February 12: Hidden Life: Signs of animal activity. Future training programs include: Waters: Critters and water quality assessment; Birds 2: Migrants and summer residents; Spring Flowers and Plants; Leaf Litter Life; Bugs!; and Late Summer Flowers and Plants.*

TODD CONSERVATION CORPS: LONG TERM VOLUNTEERING WITH AUDUBON

March 5, 12:30–2pm / BCNP

Conservation Corps participants adopt and steward sites within the Todd Nature Reserve for at least 1 year, committing to visit their site at least 4 times during the year. Training, supplies, and support will be provided by ASWP. Interested in participating but can't make the training? Contact Karen at (724) 295-3589 or kstein@aswp.org.

WEEKDAY VOLUNTEER NATURALIST TRAINING

Six Mondays, March 21–April 25, 9:30am–2:30pm / BFNR

Learn how to lead our school field trips to Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve! We'll give you background in natural history and tips on interacting with and educating students. We need your enthusiasm for nature and working with children!

BUFFALO CREEK LITTER PICK-UP

April 9, 10am–12pm / BCNP

Picking up litter is an easy way to make an immediate positive impact on local habitat and creeks. All materials will be provided, including gloves, trash bags, and safety vests. Meet at Buffalo Creek Nature Park at 10am. Please wear long pants, sturdy shoes, and dress for the weather. Thank you for helping to keep our streams and forests healthy!

HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

April 30 & May 7, 9am–12pm / BFN

Volunteers are needed to help make Beechwood even more bird- and pollinator-friendly. Activities will include removing invasive species and replacing them with high wildlife-value native plants such as milkweed. All materials will be provided and no experience is necessary. Special thanks to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Monarchs and Pollinators Conservation Fund for its support of this project.

Community Science

PHENOLOGY COMMUNITY SCIENCE WORKSHOP AT BEECHWOOD

February 12, 9am–12pm / Online

Join researchers Abby Yancy and Dr. Mason Heberling from Carnegie Museum of Natural History's Section of Botany to learn about ongoing research on climate change's impacts on the timing of plant flowering, or phenology in our region. This interactive workshop invites community members to contribute to this research through Nature's Notebook, an online platform where anyone can upload their observations of plant and animal life cycles to a national database. In this program, you'll learn how to record these types of phenological observations and set up a long-term monitoring site in your backyard or beyond. Open to teachers, interested public, and students. Free.

PROJECT BUDBURST

April 9, 10–11:30am / BFN, SNP & BCNP

Project BudBurst participants make careful observations of the timing of leafing, flowering, and fruiting phases of plants (plant phenophases) throughout the year. Spring, summer, fall, and winter phases are all valuable. Learn how scientists and educators use the data to learn more about how plant species respond to changes in climate locally, regionally, and nationally. Free.

Buffalo Creek Watershed & Important Bird Area Series

Offered free of cost by Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania and the Buffalo Creek Watershed Coalition with support from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Fund.

MASTER WATERSHED PROGRAM OVERVIEW

February 10, 7 pm / Online

Do you have a deep love of wildlife, water, and woods? Do you enjoy learning about the environment and being outdoors? If you believe in the importance of preserving our waterways and natural areas for future generations, you can take action. The Master Watershed Steward (MWS) program educates and empowers volunteers to participate in watershed projects and education in their communities.

Join ASWP and Penn State Extension Master Watershed Steward Coordinator, Justin Mansberger to learn about the MWS program and the ways that you can get involved in helping to protect the Buffalo Creek Watershed. Free.

THE BELLWETHERS OF BUFFALO CREEK—NORTH AMERICA'S GIANT SALAMANDER: THE EASTERN HELLBENDER

February 23, 7 pm / Online

The Buffalo Creek region contains some of the highest quality habitat in western Pennsylvania. It is home to many species that are not commonly found. Learn about some of these amazing species, their importance, and how they help us to understand the state of the watershed. Free.

POND MANAGEMENT

March 17, 7 pm / Online

Ponds are a popular landscape feature across Pennsylvania, but surveys show that more than 75% of pond owners have problems with nuisance aquatic plants, algae, wildlife, or water quality issues. Many of these problems can be best managed with simple actions. Join ASWP and Penn State Extension to discuss some of the causes of common pond problem and best practices to help maximize the habitat value of your pond or lake. Free.

BUFFALO CREEK STATE OF THE WATERSHED

March 23, 6:30–8pm / Online

The Buffalo Creek Watershed and Important Bird Area contains some of the best habitat in our region. Join us to learn more about this ecological gem, conservation, and education that ASWP and its volunteers have been able to accomplish over the past year, and give us your input to help guide our future work. Free.

CREATING WATERSHED FRIENDLY PROPERTIES

April 21, 7 pm / Online

Make a difference in the health of our local creeks! Join ASWP and Penn State to learn what you can do to help improve stream health and water quality, including participating in the Watershed-Friendly Property Certification Program. The Watershed-Friendly Property Certification program is a collaboration between the Penn State Extension Master Watershed Program and Nurture Nature Center. Free.

Scout Programs

MAPLE FOR SCOUTS

March 12, 10am–12pm / BFN & SNP

March 19, 10am–12pm / BCNP

Experience the science and history of Maple Sugaring. Groups or individuals welcome; advance registration is required. Contact Scott Detwiler at (412) 963-6100 or sdetwiler@aswp.org to make your reservation. \$10 per scout.

Audubon NATURE STORE *Signs of Spring*

HERE THEY COME: HUMMINGBIRDS AND ORIOLES

Hummingbirds and Orioles will soon be on their way back to our area, so it's time to stock up on their favorite foods!

We love the easy-to-clean, BFA free hummingbird feeders from Aspects. Plus, they have a lifetime warranty and a built-in ant moat! Returning Orioles will enjoy our variety of fruit and jelly feeders—plus don't forget to pick up our best-selling Birdberry Jelly.



DO YOU HAVE GARDENING FEVER?

Get prepared for gardening season with snazzy new tools from Felco Tools, gardening gloves, and our ever-popular Zinc Garden Markers—so you can easily mark and ID the Native Plants in your yard. Plus, add beneficial plants and flowers to your yard by picking up packets of our ASWP meadow mixes—for large spaces or small, and sun or shade.

BEECHWOOD FARMS NATURE RESERVE

614 Dorseyville Road in Fox Chapel · 412-963-6100 · Tuesday–Sunday from 9am–5pm

BUFFALO CREEK NATURE PARK

154 Monroe Road in Sarver · 724-295-3589 · Tuesday–Sunday from 9am–5pm

SUCCOP NATURE PARK

185 W. Airport Road in Butler · 724-586-2591 · Tuesday–Saturday from 12–5pm

Store hours change seasonally; please check aswp.org for the most updated hours of operation.

Ask the NATURALIST

MYTHBUSTERS EDITION

In this Myth-busting edition of Ask the Naturalist, we'll address a common question: Does 5G cause bird deaths?

There are many stories online that claim to connect bird mortality to 5G communication technology. Recent stories about 5G and airplanes may be adding to the confusion. These reports spread quickly and can (understandably) cause panic amongst bird lovers. In a recent story posted by National Audubon, Joe Kirschvink, a biophysicist at the California Institute of Technology who specializes in magnetics says that “radio wave emissions above 10 MHz from radio transmission antennas (including cell telephone towers) are not known to harm birds.” 5G uses frequencies from 600 MHz and higher.

One online report in particular continues to pop up, though it's been repeatedly debunked. The story attempts to connect the deaths of 200 starlings in the Netherlands to a 5G test. The report circulated around the world before additional investigation (and the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy) revealed that no 5G tests had occurred near the area in question.



Necropsies of the birds found that they'd died from trauma consistent with fleeing from a predator. Traces of a toxin (from berries the birds are known to consume) were also found in their bodies. It's also notable that other mass starling die-offs have occurred in the past—before 5G.

We urge members and friends to search for scientific explanations when presented with potentially questionable information. Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania's mission involves advocating for responsible stewardship of the natural world that supports birds, animals, and people. We're happy to myth-bust stories that falsely represent fiction as being fact. Let us know if you have a story that you'd like us to look into!

Read more on this topic by visiting National Audubon's website www.audubon.org/news/no-5g-radio-waves-do-not-kill-birds.



AUDUBON
NATURE CAMPS
FOR KIDS AGES 5-18

Audubon's summer camps get kids into nature. No screens, no devices. Build friendships, make memories, and connect with the outdoors.

**SUMMER IS A TIME TO
EXPLORE, HAVE FUN—AND
LEARN ALONG THE WAY!**

Camps take place at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve (Fox Chapel), Succop Nature Park (Butler), and Buffalo Creek Nature Park (Sarver). Register today at www.aswp.org or by calling (412) 963-6100.

 Audubon Society
OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
www.aswp.org

AUDUBON News



ASWP RECEIVES \$10,000 GRANT FROM DUQUESNE LIGHT

ASWP recently received a generous grant from Duquesne Light that will support our work to expand the Rights of Ways (ROWs) for Pollinators Program. ROWs are areas that include everything from roadsides to railways to transmission/pipeline corridors. They're necessary parts of our society but are often poor habitats for Monarch Butterflies and other wildlife.

This grant will help to restore, enhance, and improve ROWs. Through restoration, enhancement, and improved management, ROWs can become beneficial habitats! The \$10,000 will expand on work started last year with funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Monarchs and Pollinator Conservation Fund.

IT'S TIME TO WATCH THE EAGLES

The Bald Eagles in Hays are well into their breeding season, and this year, you can see the eggs, hatching, and growth of the eaglets even more clearly! In December 2021, a new camera was installed to stream the Hays Bald Eagles. The camera also restores sound to the live feed.

As always, the trek to the nesting site and the climb up a tree to install the camera (on a very steep cliff) was quite the adventure. Special thanks to our partners at Davey Tree and PixCams for helping us to bring you another exciting year of eagle watching. Watch the cam via our website: aswp.org.

ASWP AND VOLUNTEERS CLEAN UP COMMUNITIES

Did you know that we've helped to collect over 52,000 pounds of waste from the Buffalo Creek Watershed and Important Bird Area? And we did it with your help.

It's sometimes hard to imagine just how much trash and waste people create. So we'll break down the numbers. At just our household hazardous waste collection event, 220 households turned in 19,565 pounds of paint! Our electronics recycling event netted 11,138 pounds of televisions. And during our litter pick-ups, we bagged 471 pounds of trash.

We all have a responsibility to keep the environment clean for birds, animals, and future generations of people. Special thanks to all of the volunteers—I08 volunteer hours were clocked during these cleanups—who are helping to make a difference in our communities.

Additional support was provided by: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Five Star and Urban Waters Fund, Freeport Area School District, Pennsylvania Resources Council, Patagonia Pittsburgh, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, I Noah Guy L.L.C., and Duquesne University.



Memorials AND Honors



Memorials

Kerry Abbott

Jill Brethauer

William Aiken

Betsy Owens

Darlene Bish

Jason Tracy

James Braham

Molly & Ferd Sauereisen

Joan Chelemer

Dr. & Mr. Rodakowski

Dianne E. Dencler

Melissa Mascari

Betty Louise Elliott Butler

Elizabeth Johnson

Betsy Owens

Connie Fitzpatrick

Kay Fredette

Carly Ann George Voigt

Regina & Doug George

Sandra Goldsmith

Terry and Ted Scheetz

Liang Zengxiang & Ju Guifang

Xu Liang

Clay Hardon

Betsy Owens

Barbara Heilmann

Shannon Flynn

Lewis & Sally Johnson

Dana Martin

Karen F. Nagy

Joan Ray

Warren Ormerod

Linda Owens

Robert Palumbo

Maryann Brendel

Harry Paras

Bill & Lisa Donovan

Aunt Patty

Pat Conlon

Quinn Peyton

Amy & Rudolph Maceyko

Ruth Ralston

Amy & Rudolph Maceyko

Anne Capets Schmidt

Jessika Strauss

Marilyn Shure

Mr. & Mrs. Mark Pacilla

Raymond Stouffer

Audrey Stouffer

Franklin C. Thompson

Rebecca & Daniel Boland

Bella & Chick Thompson

Antonia Traficante

Cheryl & Jerry Turner

Clement Valchar

Ross Nese

Nancy Von Vreckin

Paula and Charles Brethauer

Rick Webreck

Gina Colella Hench

Honors

The Artz Family

Susan Okun

Pauline Babyak

Emily Babyak

Tingle Barnes

Laurie & John Culbertson

Jim Bonner

Mary & Henry Ewalt

Joy Borelli-Edwards

Sybil & Kevin McKeegan

Dan and Nancy Fales

Marnie & Howard Owens

Norm and Ruby Hayden

Carol Bergstrom

Chris Kubiak

Terry & Ted Scheetz

Dean Michael Mandell

Deanna Steele

Samantha Mielo

Jessica Clancy Raco

Susan Moore

Nancy & Marc Bedford

Carol Mullen and Reed Williams

Susan Wool

Kimberly Olivito

Michel Taylor

Betsy Owens

Arlene & William Gordon

Beth & Bill Reigel

Beth & Gus Succop

Rebecca Serey

Sharon McRae

Susan & Holly Sphar

Frederick Sphar

Tom & Jo Ann Succop

Beth Succop

Roxanne Swan

Liz Spence

Ellen Kight & Steve Woods

Victoria Lish

Northern Cardinal

William Lipowcan

Oops! We regret the omission of the Highland Park Garden Club from our 2020-21 Annual Report.

Save the Date!

NATIVE PLANT NURSERY OPENING DAY

May 14, 2022 from 9am-5pm at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

Stop by Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve on May 14 to kick off this year's gardening season. We'll have staff on hand to help you choose the right native plants for your yard. Native plants attract and support birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects—and they're beautiful, too! Learn more about them by visiting our native plants section at aswp.org.

SHARE AUDUBON WITH YOUR FRIENDS: GIFT THEM AN *Audubon Membership*

Give the gift of birds and nature with a yearlong membership to Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania. They will enjoy a 10% discount on Nature Store purchases and bird seed, advanced notice of sales and events, discounts on the nature programs they love, a subscription to our quarterly Bulletin, invitations to members-only events, and updates on important scientific, conservation, and legislative issues, all while you get the 100% good feeling of supporting the birds and environment of our region! Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania (ASWP) is a nonprofit organization supported in large part through membership dues. You can also join or renew your membership at www.aswp.org.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New or Renewal Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual: \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservationist: \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household: \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Steward: \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Naturalist: \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Level: \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ecologist: \$250 | |

Go online now or mail this form with payment to:
ASWP Membership, 614 Dorseyville Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238.

Your Name: _____
E-mail: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Employer (for matching gifts): _____

IF THIS IS A GIFT MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE COMPLETE ABOVE SECTION & THE FOLLOWING:

Recipient's Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: _____

NOTE: Gift memberships will be sent directly to the recipient.

How to list your recognition on the recipient note:

PAYMENT BY:

Check Enclosed Credit Card
Credit Card No.: _____
Expiration Date: _____

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

More Membership Perks

You may have noticed something different when you looked at our events list. We have a lot more events offered for free to our members! We value our members and the commitment that they have to our organization. So we wanted to be sure that they have many opportunities to interact with us for free or at a reduced price when compared to non-members.

Members get discounts on items in our Nature Stores—and on events such as Maple Madness, Creatures of the Night, and Summer Camps. Membership makes good sense! And it helps to support a great cause.

Thank you to everyone who is a member of Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania. And remember—membership makes a great gift, too! Read above to learn how you can make it happen for a friend or family member.



PITTSBURGH CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT *Wrap-up*

This past Christmas Bird Count was notable for its less than ideal weather—with pouring rain. Still, 72 species and a total of 16,197 birds were found on the count. For the most part, individual species numbers hovered at or just below their 10-year averages. These lower numbers are likely a result of the weather, which reduced visibility and the ability to detect birds by sound.

A few species were found in high numbers—their highest in recorded history for the count. These include 4 Gadwalls, 8 Northern Ravens, 5 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 13 Swamp Sparrows, and 30 Red-winged Blackbirds. The notable find this year was an Orange-crowned Warbler visiting a jelly feeder in Oakland. Even more remarkable, the bird was found at the same feeder that produced an oriole last winter.

The weather also greatly affected our ability to tally American Crow numbers.



This single species is often responsible for one third of the total birds counted each year. They're typically tallied as they return to their roost at dusk. The dense fog made that count nearly impossible, thus, the crow tally fell to a 10-year low of 1858 individuals. The birds are still in much higher numbers at their roost; the count was just not able to depict the actual numbers.

For a complete summary of the Pittsburgh Christmas Bird Count, and to read about the South Butler Christmas Bird Count numbers, please visit our website at aswp.org.



The graphic features the text "Maple Madness" in a large, blue, stylized font. A small yellow bird is perched on the letter "e" in "Maple". The background is white with scattered yellow maple leaves. At the bottom left, there is a logo for the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, which includes a small bird icon and the text "Audubon Society OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA". Below the logo is a small illustration of a maple tree branch dripping sap into a blue cup.

March 12
Buffalo Creek Nature Park
154 Monroe Road • Sarver

March 19
Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve
614 Dorseyville Road • Fox Chapel

March 26
Succop Nature Park
185 West Airport Road • Butler

10am-1pm

Maple Madness takes you on a naturalist-led walk through the history of maple sugaring. You'll see how maple has been used and enjoyed by people for hundreds of years—from the Native Americans to pioneers through today. This event takes place on our trails outdoors; rain or shine. Reserve your space online at aswp.org or call (412) 963-6100.



614 DORSEYVILLE ROAD
PITTSBURGH, PA 15238



LOOKING FOR THE
Perfect Location

— FOR YOUR —
WEDDING, SHOWER,
BIRTHDAY PARTY, OR
OTHER EVENT?

Contact us at (412) 963-6100 to learn more about all of your rental spaces, surrounded by the beauty of nature. We offer rentals at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve, Succop Nature Park, and Buffalo Creek Nature Park.

Photo courtesy of Michael Will Photographers