

MAKING A DIFFERENCE by
conserving, restoring, and protecting
Pennsylvania's natural ecosystems,
focusing on birds and other wildlife,
for the benefit of humanity and
the earth's biological diversity.

[*The Newsletter from the Pennsylvania State Office of the National Audubon Society*]

UPDATE...

During the 2006 fall migration, Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch experienced a record high seasonal count for three raptor species.

Golden eagles — 275

Bald eagles — 332

Ospreys — 682

In addition, eight other species exceeded average seasonal counts.

Black vulture — 134

Turkey vulture — 1,415

Northern harrier — 366

Sharp-shinned hawk — 7,931

Cooper's hawk — 986

Broad-winged hawk — 7,421

American kestrel — 358

Peregrine falcon — 82

For more information on bird counts at Waggoner's Gap visit <http://user.pa.net/~waggap/>



STATE PERSPECTIVE

Pennsylvania's 185-mile-long Kittatinny Ridge houses 160 miles of the Appalachian Trail; provides important drinking water supplies; and supports vital forest habitat for various bird, mammal, reptile, and amphibian species. The Ridge is a significant migration flyway used by millions of birds, and it is the largest of PA's Important Bird Areas. Audubon Pennsylvania leads the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Project (KRCP), a group of local, regional, and state organizations dedicated to protecting the Ridge from further habitat loss, fragmentation, and inappropriate land use. The following article addresses a KRCP initiative supported by Audubon Pennsylvania. For more information on the KRCP please visit KittatinnyRidge.org.

— Timothy D. Schaeffer, Ph.D., Audubon PA Executive Director

Audubon PA Helps Local Conservation Efforts

By Jeanne Barrett Ortiz, Director, Environmental Advisory Council Network

Thanks to a partnership between Audubon Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, a number of local governments are forming Environmental Advisory Councils (EAC) to help protect the Kittatinny Ridge.

Many elected officials want to alleviate development pressures along the Kittatinny Ridge, but they struggle to fit conservation issues into their busy workloads. In response to this dilemma, Audubon Pennsylvania and PEC embarked on a project in August 2005 – visit elected officials along the Ridge and inform them about a highly effective and money-saving conservation tool: an Environmental Advisory Council.

An EAC is a group of environmentally-conscious local residents appointed by elected officials to offer advice on matters related to the protection, management, and use of a municipality's natural resources. EAC volunteers work closely with municipal officials on a wide range of projects including open space and water resource protection,

natural resource inventories, habitat protection and restoration, greenways and trails, sustainable agriculture, and more.

As part of the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Project, Audubon Pennsylvania and PEC spoke about EACs at boards-of-supervisors meetings. There are now nine EACs in communities situated along the Ridge in Monroe, Northampton, Lehigh, and Berks Counties, and more are being formed. These EACs are busy reviewing and improving ordinances and site plans, drafting official maps, tracking deer and invasive species, promoting public education, and restoring habitats.

To learn more about EACs in your community, contact Jeanne Barrett Ortiz, Director, EAC Network, at 215-592-7020, x103 or jortiz@pecpa.org. You can also contact Holly Smith, Audubon Pennsylvania Education Project Coordinator at 717-213-6880 x12.

More information is also available at EACnetwork.org.



EACs help protect open space along the Kittatinny Ridge

STAFF PROFILES

Keith Russell



*Keith Russell,
Fairmount Park
Outreach Coordinator*

Keith Russell joined Audubon Pennsylvania as Outreach Coordinator for the Fairmount Park IBA in December 2006 after having been employed

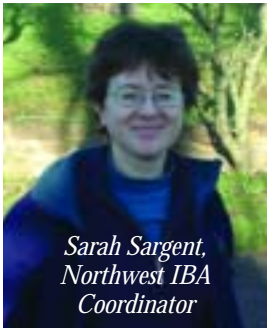
by National Audubon Society since 2003. His talents are aimed at getting residents of Philadelphia, especially those living in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood, to recognize Fairmount Park and the East Park Reservoir area as a valuable natural resource that benefits the community.

After receiving a B.S. in biology from Cornell University and an M.S. in zoology from Clemson University, Keith spent ten years working for the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia as a collection manager in the exhibits department. During this time he cared for the Academy's extensive collection of specimens.

Keith then worked as an assistant editor for *The Birds of North America*, a serial publication produced at the Academy and published by Birds of North America, Inc. Consequently, Keith is also an accomplished author. He has published several articles on various bird species and is currently writing a book for Temple University Press entitled *Birds of Philadelphia: Status and History*.

Since joining Audubon Pennsylvania, Keith has been working from his Philadelphia office on a number of projects inside Fairmount Park, with a focus on the East Park Reservoir. He is assisting with a barn owl monitoring program, leading birding tours for local school groups, and helped compile a fact sheet about the Fairmount Park IBA. He has also been an instrumental figure in an ongoing collaborative effort involving the Fairmount Park Commission, Philadelphia Water Department, and Audubon Pennsylvania. The project's goal is to establish an Audubon Center in the East Park region of Fairmount Park.

Sarah Sargent



*Sarah Sargent,
Northwest IBA
Coordinator*

Sarah Sargent began working as Audubon Pennsylvania's Northwest IBA Coordinator in November 2006. Her office is located in Meadville,

situated approximately 40 miles south of Erie. Sarah boasts an extensive background in bird conservation and habitat protection.

While working toward her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University, Sarah studied the impact birds had on dispersing seeds. This area of study led her to conduct field research in Costa Rica, New York, and Florida. After completing her Ph.D., Sarah developed a large-scale monitoring program (which has been continued by the Forest Service in South Carolina) to examine the availability of fruit to birds.

Since 1996, Sarah has been a part-time professor of in the Biology Department of Allegheny University. She also became actively involved with the French Creek Valley Conservancy and served as the group's first Executive Director. Her experience with land conservation led to the acquisition of a number of land tracts and helped Sarah build strong relationships with many of northwestern Pennsylvania's conservation organizations.

Sarah will be helping Audubon Pennsylvania implement its policies and programs at IBAs in northwestern Pennsylvania – focusing her initial efforts on building partnerships in local watersheds. She will also serve as Audubon Pennsylvania's point person for communicating with chapters located in that portion of the state.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JJAC's 3rd Annual Juried Art Show

The John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove (JJAC) announces its 3rd Annual Juried Art Show. From April 20-29, 2007, JJAC will exhibit approved entries in its historic 240-year-old barn. Last year, the show attracted more than 100 professional, semi-professional, and amateur artists. Nearly 1,000 visitors attended last year's event and purchased many of the 400 works displayed. JJAC looks forward to repeating last year's success.

JJAC will be accepting works in most fine art media including drawings, paintings, prints, and sculpture.

Many of the works will be available for purchase. Prizes will be awarded in various categories, and a portion of all art sales benefits JJAC.

For more information on show hours or entering the show, please call 610-666-5593 or visit <http://pa.audubon.org>.



Guests enjoy JJAC's 2006 Juried Art Show

Birds and People Feeling “At Home” in Pennsylvania

By Steven Saffier, *Audubon at Home* Coordinator

Pennsylvania joins a handful of other states that are putting *Audubon At Home* to work by conducting outreach and addressing the needs of our homeowners and landholders. When it comes to bird diversity, Pennsylvania is a rich tapestry and the birds will benefit directly from the cumulative actions of people implementing *Audubon At Home* in their backyards and beyond.

So, what exactly is *Audubon At Home* and how can Pennsylvanians participate? For a general idea about the principles of the program, please visit National Audubon’s website at www.audubonathome.org. The Pennsylvania state program is being developed as you read this. We will be working with universities and other educational institutions, partnering with watershed, land trust, and conservation organizations, and helping Audubon chapters, members, and other individuals realize the broad benefits of bird conservation.



Male house finch

We have already filled one need by creating the *Audubon At Work* program that aims to engage large-acre corporate landholdings in an effort to improve these properties, dedicate some land as bird habitat, and engage their employees in enriching outdoor experiences. The impacts of this program will be especially resounding in areas close to Pennsylvania Important Bird Areas where properties can serve as a corridor for bird movement.

Last year, the Science office along with the Bucks County Audubon Society published *The Audubon Guide to Gardening for Life in Southeastern Pennsylvania*, a book that may serve as an important resource for residents who can utilize it in conjunction with Audubon Pennsylvania programming. Companion workshops and other public presentations are planned to help people realize their vision of creating healthy habitat for birds.

Audubon At Home aims to create a culture of conservation in Pennsylvania that will be pervasive and mainstream...and hopefully set the bar for other states to follow. We invite you to learn more and stay tuned to the Audubon Pennsylvania website and publications for updates and news.

For more information, contact Steven J. Saffier at ssaffier@audubon.org

Allegheny Front Important Bird Area

By Kim Van Fleet, *Central IBA* Coordinator

In September 2006 the state Ornithological Technical Committee officially designated the Allegheny Front as Pennsylvania’s newest Important Bird Area (IBA). This IBA’s boundaries include the Allegheny Front Section of the Appalachians Plateaus Province extending from the Pennsylvania/Maryland border north to where route 322 crosses the Front in Centre County. The forest habitat throughout the Allegheny Front Section is fairly contiguous with large blocks of interior forest interspersed with occasional clear-cuts and resultant early succession forest. This habitat and that of surrounding areas provide essential resources supporting diverse numbers of breeding and/or migrating birds.

The following criteria qualified this site as an IBA:

- 1. Spring and fall raptor migration**, especially golden eagles (fall and spring) and osprey (spring).
- 2. Exceptional concentrations and/or diversity of birds.**
A total of 195 species have been identified throughout the Allegheny Front with 123 of these documented during breeding season. Trained observers have also documented large passage rates of fall migrating land birds with smaller numbers observed in the spring.
- 3. Presence of Pennsylvania Species of Conservation Concern** that either breed throughout and/or utilize the front in migration including: American woodcock, osprey, bald eagle, northern goshawk, peregrine falcon, whip-poor-will, yellow-bellied flycatcher, acadian flycatcher, black-billed cuckoo, blue-headed vireo, wood thrush, Swainson’s thrush, brown thrasher, cerulean warbler, golden-winged warbler, Louisiana waterthrush, Kentucky warbler, scarlet tanager, pine siskin, and many more species.
- 4. Exceptional representative of interior forest habitat** within the Appalachian Plateaus physiographic province.
- 5. Ongoing avian monitoring**, including standardized season-long spring and fall migration counts.

Audubon Pennsylvania is proud of this new IBA and the dedicated members of Allegheny Plateau Audubon who helped to make the IBA designation possible.



View of the Allegheny Front

Barbara Leo



Barbara Leo and friend

Thank You!

For the last five years, Barbara Leo, a member of Northeast Pennsylvania Audubon Society (NEPAS), has actively worked on a number of projects benefiting birds and wildlife. One of Barbara's most important contributions has been her involvement with a grassroots effort to preserve the red knot, a shorebird that uses Delaware Bay as a migration stopover.

While gathering information about Important Bird Areas, Barbara learned about efforts to limit horseshoe crab fishing in New Jersey. Horseshoe crab eggs are an important food source for red knots. In recent years, fishing pressure has led to declining numbers of crabs, which has caused a rapid decrease in the bird population – from an estimated 100,000 birds in 1992 to fewer than 18,000 in 2005.

Barbara collected signatures for a petition to restrict the horseshoe crab harvest. In 2004, this petition was coupled with a similar petition from New Jersey and sent to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). This action began the application process for getting the red knot listed as an endangered species. Barbara wrote the application's cover letter.

In September 2006, FWS designated the red knot as a candidate for protection under the Endangered Species Act. Barbara's effort, in conjunction with others, has also helped limit horseshoe crab fishing in New Jersey and Delaware. Barbara says, the red knot is a "perfect example of a bird in decline," so it's important for groups from larger areas to work together because "what we are doing along the [northern] Delaware River also impacts conditions [further south] in Delaware Bay."

MOVING? Audubon can help you save taxes while creating a meaningful gift at no cost to you.

Call Bob Wallis at 610-666-5593 x111



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