


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.


Audubon
PENNSYLVANIA
Summer 2007

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

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION...

A new documentary film, produced by Thirteen/WNET New York and Florentine Films/Hott Productions Inc., chronicles the life and legacy of John James Audubon. The film titled *John James Audubon: Drawn From Nature* will be shown on the PBS series *American Masters* on July 25 at 9 pm (check local listings). Audubon Pennsylvania invites you to attend one of three advanced screenings being held in central and southeastern PA.

The Academy of Natural Sciences
Philadelphia, PA
June 21, 2007 • 6 pm
Call 215-545-0613 to RSVP
(guests must RSVP)

Shannondell Performing Arts Center
Audubon, PA
June 24, 2007 • 3 pm
Call 610-666-5593 x103 to RSVP
(guests must RSVP)

**Whitaker Center for Science
& the Arts**
Harrisburg, PA
July 17, 2007 • 7:15 pm
Call 717-213-6883 to RSVP
(guests must RSVP)



LOCAL INTEREST

Audubon PA Partnerships in Action

By Brian Byrnes, *Southeast IBA Coordinator*

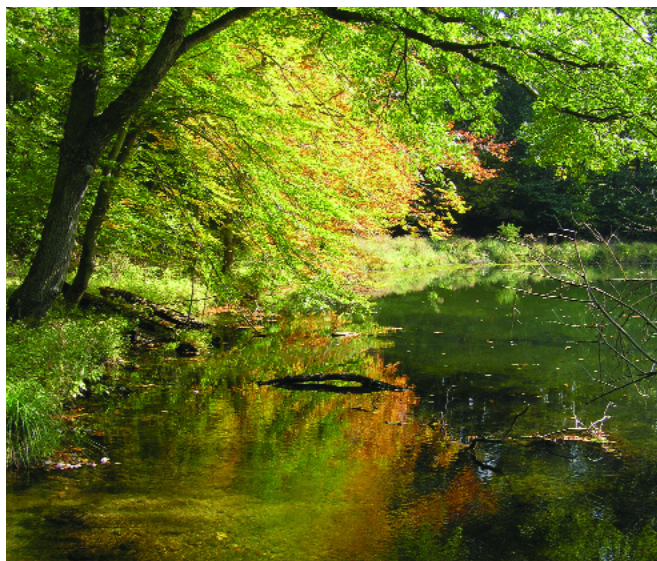
In 2003, the Ridley Creek State Park and Tyler Arboretum Important Bird Area (IBA) in southeastern Pennsylvania was expanded to the north to incorporate the large open spaces of the Willistown area. The IBA was renamed the Upper Ridley/Crum IBA to reflect the fact that the IBA now covers the upper reaches of those two watersheds, along with a portion of the Darby Creek watershed.

The Willistown Conservation Trust (WCT), a non-profit land trust working in these watersheds, has centered their land protection and land management strategies on the Important Bird Area designation. In doing so, WCT formed a model relationship with Audubon Pennsylvania that we hope will be replicated across the state and the nation. Together, the two organizations are addressing the three major threats to bird habitat in the Upper Ridley/Crum IBA: residential development, overabundant white-tailed deer, and invasive plant species.

Willistown Conservation Trust has been working to conserve open land in the Ridley, Crum, and Darby Creek watersheds since 1979, when it began as a satellite program of the Brandywine Conservancy. WCT has protected more than 6,000 acres of land, an area twice as large as Ridley Creek State Park and Tyler Arboretum together. Much work remains to be done. WCT has identified all of the priority unprotected lands within the IBA that provide contiguous wildlife habitat, including valuable stopover habitat for migratory birds.

Early this year, volunteers from the Valley Forge Audubon Society and the West Chester Bird Club began monitoring bird life on several private properties in the IBA. Data collected will be used to monitor bird populations in the area and will let private landowners know just how important their properties are to the health of the IBA. Pileated woodpeckers, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, and a bald eagle were among the highlights from this winter.

Audubon Pennsylvania and Willistown Conservation Trust are showing how partnerships can make the Important Bird Area program a catalyst for land conservation, resulting in enhanced bird habitat. The experience gained from our partnership will assist us in implementing conservation plans at IBAs across the Commonwealth.



Waterloo Mills Preserve, part of the Upper Ridley/Crum IBA.

STATE PERSPECTIVE

Deer Management: Focus on the Forest

By Timothy D. Schaeffer, Ph.D., *Audubon PA Executive Director*

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) recently released a report documenting the negative impact of deer browsing within the state's forests. The study revealed only 24% of study plots with desirable regeneration and 44% of plots with no woody regeneration. According to the study, this "indicate[s] that browsing has not been down long enough for a widespread regeneration response."

Audubon cares about deer management because we care about birds and their habitats. Seventeen percent of the worldwide population of scarlet tanagers and nearly 10% of the world's wood thrushes nest in Pennsylvania. DCNR's data show that the habitats upon which these birds depend have not been given a chance to recover after decades of a deer herd out of balance with the forest ecosystem.

Considering this study, Audubon Pennsylvania applauds the Pennsylvania Game Commission for approving the number of antlerless deer licenses – the primary tool for managing deer – recommended by its staff for the 2007-2008 hunting season. This action demonstrates the Commission's dedication to conserving all birds and wildlife – game and non-game species – by continuing a seven-year initiative to bring deer into balance.

The Commission has been under increasing pressure from the Pennsylvania House and Senate to abandon its program in the wake of demands from angry hunters claiming there are fewer deer in Pennsylvania.

Legislators need feedback from those of us who think the Game Commission is moving in the right direction. Audubon



members are 50% more likely than the general public to be hunters, and members who do not hunt support deer hunting as an effective management tool. We need your help!

Please contact your legislators to let them know you support a science-based approach to deer management. Our elected officials need to hear from hunters and non-hunters that support the Game Commission's deer program.

Audubon PA is also working in the field with private landowners and other partners, like the Willistown Conservation Trust, to assess conditions within existing and potential Important Bird Areas and other significant habitats. Based on these assessments, we are recommending ways to balance deer with habitat and monitoring the long-term recovery of the vegetation and bird populations.

It is exciting for us to combine our science, policy, and education work around a common issue, and we hope to use this integrated approach more and more.

*To locate the name and address
of your local legislators please visit
<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/>.*

CURRENT EVENTS

Ned Smith's Art Comes to JJAC

On May 12, 2007, the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove (JJAC) opened its summer-long art exhibition – *A Sense of Place—Two Men, Two Eras, One Land: John James Audubon and Ned Smith*. The show runs through October 7 and compares the ideologies, techniques, and artwork of renowned Pennsylvania wildlife artists John James Audubon and Ned Smith.

Admission is free with regular museum admission: \$4 adults, \$3 seniors (60+), and \$2 children (5-17). JJAC is open to the public Tuesday thru Saturday 10 am – 4 pm, Sunday 1 pm – 4 pm. JJAC is closed on Monday and major holidays.

For more information call 610-666-5593 x101.



*Ned Smith,
Waiting for Dusk,
1983, oil on canvas, 36" x 24"*



THANKS

*to Arader Tree Service,
which cleared a number
of ailing trees, ground stumps,
and planted new trees at
Mill Grove this past spring.*

Kiwanis Lake Rookery Update

By Kim Van Fleet, *Central IBA Coordinator*

Local York Audubon chapter members are already monitoring bird activity at the Kiwanis Lake Rookery IBA as herons and egrets return for another year. As of early May, over 35 black-crowned night herons, 4 great egrets and at least one yellow-crowned night heron have been observed in the area with more expected to follow. A pair of belted kingfishers has also been frequenting Kiwanis Lake and Willis Run.

Steven Saffier (Audubon program staff), Dick Humbert of the York Audubon chapter, and I recently met with Tom Landis of the York City Parks and Recreation Department to discuss and plan a tree seedling-planting project at Kiwanis Lake Rookery on Friday, April 20th. The discussion also included incorporating Audubon At Home into future habitat improvement projects at this IBA. Tom indicated that plans were underway to purchase more mature shrubs and trees for the site as well.

Audubon Pennsylvania received 200 white-pine seedlings from the York County Conservation District. These seedlings were planted with help from teacher Lynn Toft, York City School District, and about 40 of her students from William Penn High School. Members of York Audubon also joined in the fun. This planting constitutes the first phase of improving the park habitat for the birds and residents of York. Future habitat improvement projects within and beyond park boundaries, along Willis Run and Codorus Creek, are being discussed with local partners including Codorus Creek Improvement Partnership.

In the meantime, with support, Audubon is drafting a site conservation plan and educational materials pertaining to the rookery and the birds that inhabit it.



Volunteers from William Penn High School at the Kiwanis Lake Rookery

Local York Audubon chapter members are already monitoring bird activity at the Kiwanis Lake Rookery IBA as herons and egrets return for another year.

Pennsylvania is a Breeding Ground

By Devon Reeser, *Development Associate*

Beginning in 1984, the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas (PBBA) shaped our basic knowledge of Pennsylvania habitat by providing the first comprehensive analysis of which birds were breeding in Pennsylvania and where they were nesting. Twenty years later, the Second Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas was formed to collect much-needed current data. This data, especially from Important Bird Areas (IBAs), will identify areas of greatest conservation concern for both common and migratory birds – allowing Audubon and the Ornithological Technical Committee to update IBA designations and prioritizations.

But time is running out. Currently, we are in year four of the five-year project, and data for only 14% of IBA habitat has been collected! Audubon Pennsylvania has partnered with Powdermill Nature Reserve (55 miles east of Pittsburgh), who is coordinating the count, to get 100% coverage on IBAs before the end of year five.

So how does PBBA work?

Using US Geological Survey's 7.5-minute maps, PBBA partners are contracting volunteers and birding professionals to systematically count birds during breeding season (the end of May through the beginning of July). Each map is broken into six "blocks," totaling 4,937 blocks throughout the state.



© USDA-NRCS Shirley Barr

Young house finches

1,285 blocks are located wholly or partially on IBAs, and only 184 of these blocks are complete. Many local chapters, conservation organizations, and individual volunteers have already adopted IBAs, but we need your help to finish the job!

If you would like to find out more about how you can partner with us this year, contact your regional IBA Coordinator:

NORTHWEST PA:

Sarah Sargent, 814-232-3300, ssargent@audubon.org

CENTRAL PA:

Kim Van Fleet, 717-213-6880 x11, kvanfleet@audubon.org

SOUTHEAST PA:

Brian Byrnes, 610-666-5593 x106, bbyrnes@audubon.org

For more on PBBA, visit www.pabirdatlas.org. For more on Pennsylvania's IBA program, visit www.pa.audubon.org.

Support Audubon with a tax-deductible gift today!
Give online at pa.audubon.org/SupportAudubon.html



Nature day camp at Mill Grove

Happy Little Campers

By Antonia Nocero, *Education Manager*

The John James Audubon Center will once again be hosting the Audubon area YMCA for the 2007 summer camp season. Camp begins the week of June 18 and runs for 10 consecutive weeks ending August 24. YMCA campers will be exposed to the life, history, and art of John Audubon and will work with Beth Allen on a variety of natural science exploratory activities. The weekly campers will see Beth onsite at Arcola Middle School and will then have an opportunity to hike with her at Mill Grove for the last two weeks of camp.

The site will be hosting the Outdoor Living Skills camp for three 2-week sessions throughout the summer season. Campers will learn primitive survival skills, natural history, and canoeing. They will also camp out at Mill Grove one night during each session.

If you would like to register for summer camp please contact the Audubon YMCA at 610-539-2974.

MOVING? Advance Audubon's mission when selling your property!

To discuss your options and potential tax savings, call Bob Wallis at 610-666-5593 x111

<http://pa.audubon.org>

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JOHN JAMES AUDUBON CENTER at MILL GROVE

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