



TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
JUNE 2010 ISSUE 10:05

Our mission is to promote the conservation and protection of wildlife, plants, soil, and water in relation to human activity, to initiate and carry out plans and activities which would contribute to the conservation and protection of these natural resources; and to provide opportunities to become more aware and appreciative of our physical and biological environment.

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

Okay, I'll admit it. I'm a little grumpy about having to write this Perch. It's a beautiful May evening and I'm stuck inside writing this. I'd much rather be outside.

But there are some important things to say here. Quite a few of my conversations and emails in the past few months have been about two environmental issues facing us directly: Marcellus shale and wind energy.

The Marcellus formation—which is under much of Pennsylvania, including Erie and Crawford Counties, harbors huge quantities of natural gas, which energy companies want to access. But very large amounts of water and chemicals are required for the drilling method (called fracturing) they use to extract the gas. What gets done with the waste water from this process has a large impact on the environment.

On behalf of the board and membership, Paul Burroughs, our Conservation Committee chairperson provided comments to the PA Environmental Quality Board supporting their proposed changes to the rules regarding these waste water emissions. Paul's comments, in part, explain why this is so important: "the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has already analyzed the high levels of Total Dissolved Solids in the rivers and streams of the state, particularly in the Monongahela River, and in the Beaver, Shenango and Neshannock Rivers. DEP has identified the issues of sulfates, chlorides, and bromides affecting aquatic life, as well as an increased risk of human bladder cancers."

What he goes on to suggest is not only the implementation of stronger rules controlling waste water emissions, but also the further strengthening of them by the use of best practices already establish elsewhere. One, for example, is a closed loop system for the water emissions, which can reduce the volume of drill fluids and chemicals by 90 percent.

We have already seen environmental damage in this area thanks to oil and gas operations. Tapping into the Marcellus will only increase the pressure on a stressed environment. We must stay informed about what the industry has planned and work to make them adhere to environmentally safe methodology. (continued on pg. 2)



Wild Lupine

JUNE AND JULY THINGS TO DO!

- June 4,5,6** - Allegany Nature Pilgrimage
- June 12, Saturday** - French Creek Field Trip - See Page 6
- June 14, Monday** - Clean-up at PIAS Nature Garden at Scott Park -See Page 7
- June 16, Wednesday** - Conservation Committee Meeting, 5:00 PM at Quinn Firm
- June 18, Friday** - PIAS **ELECTION!** and Meeting. Social at 7:00, Program at 7:30 - "Ruth Swaney's Trip to Africa"
- June 19, Saturday** - Field Trip to Roderick Wildlife Preserve - See Page 6
- July 20, Tuesday** - PIAS Board Meeting, 7:00 PM in the TREC Board Room

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The *Tern of Events* is published by the **Presque Isle Audubon Society**, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of Audubon Pennsylvania serving northwestern Pennsylvania including Erie and Crawford counties.

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The wind energy industry is even more complex on several levels. Many of us can understand how damaging coal and gas extraction can be as we have seen the consequences of unbridled methods. Wind has a variety of new facets that are harder to grasp.

On the face of things, wind seems like a free and clean source of energy. It can be and I really hope someone invents a blade-free turbine I can install on my roof in a cost effective manner (and solar panels, too). But, the large turbines that sweep the sky in an industrial wind farm are an entirely different matter. Evidence indicates that people living nearby cannot live with the noise and flickering light caused by the turbines, and migrating birds face unexpected hazards as they move through the same air corridors most prized by the wind industry. Water-based turbines have similar but a few different issues. If they are far offshore they have little effect on human (except, perhaps aesthetically) but they pose the same threat to birds and they have been found to disrupt aquatic life with sound and vibration.

PA House Bill 2342—"An Act authorizing the Department of General Services, with the concurrence of the Department of Environmental Protection, to lease submerged lands in excess of 25 acres within Erie County, for the assessment, development, construction and operation of utility scale offshore wind, solar or kinetic energy generation facilities—just passed the House unanimously. This bill was introduced by state representative from our region and I'm sure they will tout this as an easy way to use natural resources with little environmental impact and create jobs at the same time.

Even though it mentions that the DEP must sign off on the development, the bill leaves much room for the industry to develop things to their own liking. We cannot leave it to the DEP to police what occurs. The Conservation committee has a meeting planned with an industry representative where we hope to learn more of their plans and how they plan to proceed. I will keep you posted.

Now, I am going outside to enjoy the deliriously wonderful scent of the honeysuckle in bloom by the garage. It's my daily reminder of what needs to be protected and why.

~Mary Birdsong, President

NATURAL GAS DRILLING IN THE ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST

Many of us have had the opportunity to really experience the only national forest in Pennsylvania whether we were hiking, biking, birding, or just breathing. Those of us who have been there also have noticed that it serves as a hotspot for oil and gas drilling and it was not so long before the now famous Marcellus Shale formation was being exploited. While we must remember that a national forest is intended to be for multiple uses and does not enjoy the same protections as a national park, it remains disappointing to return to a beloved spot you once visited to see an access road, timber and land cleared, and a well jack or gas pipes.



More disappointing is the result of these additions, pollution, in the form of sedimentation in a stream or the contaminants from the well drilling operation being inadequately retained or discharged into a stream.

Some ask "What is PIAS doing about it?". Good question. The answer comes in the form of what PIAS is doing and what some of its members are doing. As an organization with a small budget and few active members, we do things such as comment on proposed rules to control the concentration of contaminants being considered for permitted discharges, support the efforts of other organizations through letters, review proposed legislation or rules governing oil and gas matters, and financially support publicity about the concerns. And we get really active and out front.

For example, on June 6, a Presque Isle Audubon member will participate in a panel

discussion after two airings of the movie **Gasland*, detailing concerns and realities encountered in the oil and gas field. Some others get very involved, such as documenting pictorially from the air the fragmentation caused by the activities.

One member has provided significant pro bono legal services in federal court litigation aimed at controlling the environmental actual and potential harms caused by the industry.

Finally, people in our community should realize that PIAS is doing what it can with a few active members. Their actions are not always highly publicized but there is action. Many of our activities are reported in the Tern of Events, the chapter's newsletter, at the monthly general meetings, and on the chapter website. The newsletter is also available on that website which is www.presqueisleaudubon.org.

~Paul Burroughs, Conservation Chair

* *Gasland* tells the story of the effects of the largest domestic natural gas drilling boom in history that is sweeping across the United States. The Halliburton-developed drilling technology of hydraulic fracturing, also referred to as "fracking", has unlocked a "Saudi Arabia of natural gas" just beneath us.

The Struthers Library Theater (302 West 3rd Avenue, Warren, PA) will host the first screening on June 6th, a Sunday matinee, at 1:30 PM.

The Environmental Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford Campus (300 Campus Drive, Bradford, PA) will host the evening show on June 6th at 6:30 PM.

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SPRING HIGHWAY CLEANUP

Hooray, we finally had some good weather for our Spring highway cleanup. On Saturday, April 24th we collected 11 bags of trash. This was more than we usually collect, but Spring always brings more trash. I am scheduling another pickup for this Fall, in September. We will have details in another issue of the Tern of Events. Thanks to Tom Wasilewski and Ruth Swaney for their help with the pickup.

~Ron Intrieri, Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator

**BIRD SIGHTINGS
APRIL THROUGH MAY, 2010**

The following birds of note were reported from Presque Isle State Park unless noted otherwise:

American White Pelican—1; May 15; Thompson Bay; fide J.Ma., et al.



White Pelican Photo by Jimmy Marsz

American Bittern—1; April 15; Niagara Pond; J.M. 1; May 15; Long Pond area; C.B.

Great Egret—up to 5; April 19 to May 6; throughout the park; m.ob.

Snowy Egret—1; May 5 & 6; head of Presque Isle Bay; B.B.

Black-crowned Night-Heron—1; April 15; head of Presque Isle Bay; S.S.

Sandhill Crane—total of 10; periodically April 13 to May 20; Presque Isle Hawkwatch and Presque Isle; J.M. et al.

Northern Goshawk—1; April 30; Erie Bluffs State Park; T.J.C.

American Avocet—1; May 6; Gull Point; M.P.

Willet—1; May 2; Gull Point; J.M. 1; May 17; Thompson Bay; J.M.

White-rumped Sandpiper—2; May 9; Gull Point; J.M.

Lawrence's Warbler—1 male; May 2; Pine Tree Trail; J.M.; photo by J.M.

Orange-crowned Warbler—1; May 14; Fry's landing; J.M. 1; May 20; Gull Point Trail; R.S.

Prairie Warbler—1 or 2; May 14 & 15; Pine Tree Trail; S.G.

Connecticut warbler—2; May 14; Pine Tree Trail; J.M. 1; May 15; Beach 11; D.H. 1; May 17; Fry's landing; J.M.

White-winged Crossbill—1 female; April 22;

Waterford; at a feeder; fide S.S.

Pine Siskin—1; April 27; Erie; K.A.

Cerulean Warbler—1 or 2; May 15; Beach 11; J.F.



Cerulean Warbler

Contributors: K.A.-Katie Andersen, B.B.-Brian Berchtold, C.B.-Carolyn Blatchlee, T.J.C.-Toby and Jean Cunningham, J.F.-John Fedak, S.G.-Steve Gosser, D.H.-Deuane Hoffman, J.Ma.-Jimmy Marsz, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, M.P.-Mike Plyler, R.S.-Randy Stringer, S.S.-Sam Stull, m.ob.-many observers

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Records Chair
814-868-3059, jerrymcw@aol.com

AND THEN THERE WERE TWO

Last month I included a photo by Jimmy Marsz of an adult Great Horned Owl and one owlet. For the longest time many wondered if there was more than one offspring. Well, here is the answer to that question. The proof is in the picture.



Owlets

Photo by Jimmy Marsz

WELCOME TO THE NEW MEMBERS OF PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON

We want to welcome our new members who joined National Audubon, as well as transfers into our chapter, and our renewal Chapter members. As always, I want to remind our National members that they are automatically a member of our local chapter.

Erie: Stephen Volk, Ed Schneider, Frank Ferraro, Terry Pierce, Vineet Garg, Chris Magee, Karen Euliano, Barbara Stevenson, Kathryn Eisert, Kevin Hansen, Janet Kisiel, Pat Wenzel, Judy Lipsitz, Jeanne and Chuck Kern, and Andy Troyer

Adamsville: John Scullin

Cambridge Springs: Rexford Wellman

Edinboro: J. Lindenberger

Fairview: Karen Brady

West Springfield: L. Risinger

~Ron Intrieri, Membership Chair

www.presqueisleaudubon.org

PLEASE HELP!



The Presque Isle Audubon Society is looking for its misplaced AV equipment. If you know anything about the portable projection viewing screen or lavalier (lapel) portable microphone unit, please contact Mary Birdsong, President of PIAS at president@presqueisleaudubon.org or Janet Price, Editor of TOE at editor@presqueisleaudubon.org.

~Dave Gustafson, PIAS Board Member

FIELD TRIP TO LAURA OLSON MEMORIAL SANCTUARY Saturday May 15, 2010

Attended by: Mary Birdsong, Mike Plyler, Sue Murawski, Tim Lyons, Lee and Reed Trimble, Gloria and Mike Kelly, and Bertha Mesarch.

Sunny weather and a light breeze made for a pleasant, four-hour field trip at Laura Olsen Memorial Sanctuary in Crawford County. We were amused by a Canada goose mother protecting her goslings by sticking out her tongue at us as we drove by. In the wetlands on the southwest corner of the Sanctuary we spotted yellow warbler, red-winged blackbird, song sparrow, tree swallow, turkey vulture, common grackle, American goldfinch, Eastern bluebird and belted kingfisher. Moving into the woods, we viewed dark-eyed junco, red-eyed vireo, wood thrush, black-throated green warbler, hooded warbler, least flycatcher, American redstart, red-bellied woodpecker, scarlet tanager, blue jay, cowbird, Baltimore oriole and veery. Seen but not heard were Eastern wood peewee and tufted titmouse.

Red admiral butterflies were in abundance. Blooming wildflowers included wild geranium, foam flower, long-spurred violet, lily-of-the-valley, false Solomon's seal, Solomon's seal, Mayapple, cinquefoil and English plantain. Blooming shrubs viewed (and sniffed) were Russian olive and honeysuckle.

Beavers have taken up residence at the sanctuary along with the birds and other wildlife.



Beaver lodge at Laura Olson Sanctuary

~Sue Murawski, Sanctuary Chair

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Where: Roderick Wildlife Preserve

When: Saturday, June 19

What Time: 8:30 AM to ?

Directions: Meet just west of the intersection of Route 5 and 20 at the parking lot of a closed restaurant on the south side of the road. We'll then head north on Rudd Road to go to our favorite areas.



**Pond at State Gameland #314
One of many types of habitats**

State Gameland 314 is located at the PA/ Ohio border. Although few people know where it is, some of us do because we've been there to bird for pleasure, to do point counts, or to clean up trash for the Intercoastal Clean-up. This gem spans 3,131 acres with many different habitats and 1.5 miles of shoreline along Lake Erie with a breath-taking overlook. It was designated as one of Pennsylvania's Important Bird Areas by Audubon Pennsylvania.

If you've never been there, this is a perfect chance to check it out. And if you have been there, you'll want to see what the birds are doing at Roderick.

Wear sturdy shoes or boots, and long pants. Also bring water, a snack, insect repellent, and a bag lunch if you'd like for later.

If you would like to carpool call Janet at 825-8394 or Pat at 474-3044.

Oh! and one more thing. There will be doughnuts. It's tradition! Hope to see you there.



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FRENCH CREEK FLOAT TRIP

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

Join Presque Isle Audubon members and friends on Saturday, June 12 for a fabulous float down French Creek! We'll put in at 10:00 am and take out at 2:00 pm, so bringing a lunch is in order, as we'll be also stopping for lunch on the shore. This is an easy stretch of the creek and is suitable for all skill levels.

The trip leaves from the Fish and Boat Commission boat launch just south of Saegertown and takes out in Bicentennial Park in Meadville. Along the way, we'll stop to learn about resident fish and mussels, and if we're lucky, we'll see the famous hellbender salamander.

Darran Crabtree, Director of Conservation at the Nature Conservancy will share his knowledge with us and John Tautin (of the French Creek Conservancy and the Purple Martin Conservation Association) will be our host. John has arranged for a special permit so there will be no launch fees and individual launch permits are not required.

Some requirements: Participants must have a personal flotation device and should plan to wear footwear for wet environs. Of course, you'll need a canoe or kayak (but if you want to go and don't have one, contact us anyway, as you may be able to double up with someone else or find someone with an extra craft).

Also, we will need to arrange a car shuttle, so participants are asked to volunteer to show up at 9:15 am to ferry a few cars to the take out point for the return trip.

There is a 20 vessel limit to the trip, so all those interested must register by Thursday, June 10. Email Mary at mary.birdsong@yahoo.com if you are interested in participating. Please provide your phone number or other pertinent contact information so if bad weather or any last minute creek conditions require us to cancel the trip, organizers will be able to contact you, and mention if you can arrive early for car ferrying.

Mary will provide directions to the boat launch area once you are registered.

See you on June 12th, on the creek with a paddle!

~Mary Birdsong, Field Trip Chair

**CLEAN-UP AT PIAS NATURE GARDEN AT
SCOTT PARK
Monday, June 14, 2010**

A couple of years ago Pat Howell and I recruited students from Villa Maria Elementary School to rid an area of Scott Park of invasive plants and broken limbs and twigs. The purpose of this venture was to prepare ground where native plants could be introduced and nurtured for the public to learn about these plants and to enjoy such a garden. A few people donated trees, grasses, ferns and various types of flowers which would thrive in the type of environment that was prepared. The Villa students along with Pat and I placed these items strategically so that a path could be made through the area to observe them.

Things were looking good until last year when no work was done to maintain the garden. We walked through the area recently and found many of the species still growing and decided that we needed to resume our work at keeping the area clear of invasive plants and debris.

We have planned a clean-up evening on **Monday, June 14 beginning at 6:00 PM.** Please consider coming to help if even for a half hour or so and **bring gloves, trowels, shovels, buckets, clippers, and even a wheel-barrow if possible.**

To get to the nature garden, just enter Scott Park and go down the road around the curve about 100 yards. You can park along the road on the right or proceed to the parking lot a little further on the left. We will be there to meet and greet you.

Note: Bob Gross has offered to design and make signs for the garden once we get things organized. Thanks, Bob, for the offer.

~Pat Howell and Janet Price, Organizers

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE THIRD
ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF THE BIRDS AT
PRESQUE ISLE, 2010**

Another successful festival was held this year even though the weather presented some challenges. All of our hearty field trip leaders and birders carried on with the planned treks and spotted more birds than expected. All told, there were at least 98 species of birds spotted and identified, just a little less than the 120 seen last year when the weather was more ideal.



Two happy birders



Chuck checking the bird list

Our workshop presenters also had to meet a challenge. We lost electricity for about an hour during which the first set of workshops was to be held. Our proficient presenters adapted to the situation and conducted interesting and successful presentations, as reported by those attending.

The chair of the event was extremely pleased with the positive feedback and the encouragement to have another festival next year! So we will!



~Janet Price, the Happy Chair of the Birding Festival

The Presque Isle Audubon Society's newsletter, the *Tern of Events*, is published monthly, except in July and January. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month preceding publication. All published material subject to editing.

Send submissions to Janet Price, editor, via editor@presqueisleaudubon.org or 418 E. 36th St., Erie, PA 16504. If you have any questions, call Janet at 814.825.8394.

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Please enroll me as a New member in the National
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