



TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 2009 ISSUE 09:09

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

Please forgive the rather somber tone of this Perch.

Many years ago, when I was a child, we had neighbors, Rita and Len Kaczmarek, whom I knew were birders. We would sometimes see them out in their backyard with their binoculars in hand or coming home from an outing, gear in tow. I think my mom mentioned to me once that they were active in Audubon. Years later, after Rita died—and I had joined Audubon myself—I noticed in the Tern of Events that someone had made a donation to the chapter in her memory.

I thought that was a lovely gesture and knew she would be pleased. That memorial came to mind twice in the past month.

First, it came to me as I visited member Ruth Swaney at the funeral home when her mother passed away. Rita Swaney was an avid birder, too, and her casket held her binoculars.

The second time came when I opened our chapter's mail and found two donations made in memory of past member, Katherine Gage. Here, I thought, are people who may not even know anything about Audubon, but had decided to honor their loved one with a donation to something she cared about.

All of this made me start thinking about the concept of legacy. What would I leave behind? What do I want people to know that I had done?

The first thing that came to mind was that I care about the environment. I garden organically and don't use artificial fertilizers or pesticides, and I also gently explain why to others, especially if they seem interested. I good-naturally chide my

neighbor for using a popular lawn care product every spring (and silently worry that he's cursing my "weeds").



The chapter has worked before at educating the public about chemical-free lawns and gardens, but the response was, honestly, not spectacular. So when I learned about Audubon at Home's Bird Habitat Recognition program earlier this year, I was excited. This is a new chance to once again raise community awareness and give our neighbors specific tools to help them succeed. The past years have seen an increasing interest in the topic, so now might be the right time. (Cont. on Page 2)

NOVEMBER THINGS TO DO!

November 10, Tuesday - First Responder Class at Asbury Woods at 6:30

November 11, Wednesday - Conservation Committee Meeting, 5:00 PM at Quinn Firm

November 17, PIA Board Meeting, 7:00 pm in the TREC Board Room

November 20, Friday - PIA Monthly Meeting and Program, 7:00 pm in Room 112 at the TREC. Social at 7:00 pm (See Page 3)

November 24, Tuesday - Festival of the Birds Committee Meeting, 6:00 pm in the TREC Board Room.

2009-2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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.

Address: 301 Peninsula Dr., Suite 8
Erie, PA 16505

Phone: 814-860-4091

Website: www.presqueisleaudubon.org

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (CONT)

I know I could do more on a personal level, too. To do just that, I pledge to register my backyard at the Bird Habitat Recognition program by next month at pa.audubon.org/Audubon_at_Home.html.

To get started I will take an inventory of my plantings and other habitat amenities, and find out what native plants I could add to my yard and how much more I can do to improve the habitat I already have.

I will find out if my native bayberry bushes, deciduous hollies, red-osier dogwood, inkberry holly, service berry and sycamore are enough, or, if they are just the beginning!



RED OSIER DOGWOOD IN FOUR SEASONS

I know that this fall, the berries on the red osier dogwood are going uneaten, mostly, as we have seen no white-throated or white crowned sparrows in the backyard yet this autumn. This is unusual and it concerns me, as they have visited me regularly for the past few years and I so eagerly await their arrival so we can watch them feast on the berries. Perhaps I need to find additional attractions to ensure their visit.

(Cont on Page 3)



WHITE THROATED SPARROW

**"CHEETAH CONSERVATION FUND:
RACE to SAVE an ENDANGERED SPECIES"
November 20, 2009**

Place: Tom Ridge Environmental Center
Address: 301 Peninsula Drive, Room 112
Social: 7:00 pm
Program: 7:30 pm
FREE and open to the public



For our November program, Dr. Cynthia Rebar, Professor of Biology at Edinboro University, will discuss the biology and ecology of cheetahs, as well as many of the programs in which she participated while volunteering at the Cheetah Conservation Fund for four months. Dr. Rebar will, also, provide details of a 10-day trip she is leading to KwaZulu Natal, South Africa during March of 2010.

The cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) once ranged throughout Asia and Africa. Today, however, numbers have declined with ~13,000 found in 25 African countries and only 100 in Iran. The endangered status of this animal prompted Dr. Laurie Marker to co-found Cheetah Conservation Fund in 1990 in Namibia where the world's largest number of cheetahs, ~3000, reside. CCF's mission is "to be an international centre of excellence concerning cheetah conservation, and multi-disciplinary research and education programs; working with all stakeholders to achieve best practice in conservation and management". To accomplish these goals, CCF activities include education programs targeting various groups, international research, conserving habitat and

prey species, developing suitable livestock and wildlife management techniques, and providing sustainable economic support for local communities. The approach taken by CCF is multi-faceted and has gained world recognition for its accomplishments.

~Tracy Graziano, Program Chair

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (CONT)

It does seem, though, that leaving an environmental legacy—no matter how small—is within my grasp. I will report back to you on the process and my progress in next month's Perch.

Until then, please take a few minutes to look around your home and see what you could do to improve your habitat and consider what your environmental legacy might be. It could be as simple as offering a place for some white-throated sparrows to rest on their journey south.

~Mary Birdsong, President of PIAS

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2009**



Please mark your calendars for Saturday December 19th, the date for this year's Erie Christmas Bird Count. Set aside some time and join us for this 110 year old citizen science project. More details will follow in the next issue.

~Chuck Gehringer, CBC Coordinator

PRESQUE AUDUBON WELCOMES NEW AND RENEWAL MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new members. I always want to remind everyone that when a person joins National, they are automatically a member of our local chapter. Join us at our monthly meetings and our field trips.

Erie: Jerry Vogt, Kathy Hayes, Katherine Mattson, Eleanor Dombrowski

Adamsville: Geraldine Burleson

Centerville: Marlana Wilhelm

Cochrannton: James Schlosser, Cliff & Sally Greenfield

Conneaut Lake: Kathleen Noble

Corry: Joette Amy

Cransville: Lee Davis

Edinboro: Mary Skelton

Fairview: Kaylan Stahlsmith, Harriet Grace

Guys Mills: Robert Benacci

Harborcreek: Jeff Jordano

Jamestown: Edward Gross, Patricia Popa

Meadville: Virginia Nageotte, Louise Borkovec

North East: Mary Huntley

Spartansburg: Liz McDannell-Firth

Warren: Barbara Ekey

Also, welcome to our Chapter Only Members, both new and renewals:

John & Lisa Depaul

Issy Lawrie

Caroline Reichel

Tom Wasielewski

Gloria & Michael Kelly

Donald Gorman

Sally Luce

~Ron Intrieri, Membership Chair

membership@presqueisleaudubon.org

Are you interested in offering temporary housing for an Audubon bird bander?

Housing is needed for this spring for one or two banders. Monetary compensation will be provided. Please contact Sarah Sargent of Audubon Pennsylvania, if interested in helping out. She can be contacted via email at ssargent@audubon.org or by phone at (814) 232-3300.

IN LOVING MEMORY

Katherine (Katy) Gage has been remembered through a donation to Presque Isle Audubon Society by Thomas and Irmgard Gage and Monic Collins

IN HONOR

A donation has been made by a member of Presque Isle Audubon Society to honor Chuck and Jeanne Kern

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Do you enjoy watching birds at your feeders? Join Project FeederWatch, a fun and rewarding citizen-science project. As you observe the birds, you'll learn more about their behaviors and witness the changes at your feeders. Your participation helps scientists understand changes in populations of feeder birds throughout the years.

Join the FeederWatch community to learn more about birds and share your observations.

FeederWatch begins in November. Sign up today to receive your FeederWatch kit. New participants receive the *FeederWatcher's Handbook*, instructions, an identification poster of common feeder birds, a bird calendar, the Cornell Lab's *BirdScope* newsletter, and *Winter Bird Highlights*, an annual summary of results from Project FeederWatch. A \$15 fee (\$12 for Cornell Lab members) helps defray costs of materials and participant support. Learn more at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw>



BIRDS, BANDING, AND THE BLUFFS

As many people know, a long history of bird banding exists at Presque Isle State Park. In recent years, Dr. Sarah Sargent, of Audubon Pennsylvania, has been operating the banding at the park, with the help of a hired bird bander and a banding intern.

A typical day of bird banding begins when the sun rises. As the twelve mist-nets are set up, the woods become alive with foraging birds and their calls. Birds have a hard time detecting the fine mesh material of the nets and fly into them. Nets are checked every half hour, and the unharmed birds are promptly removed. Birds are banded with a small metal band on the right leg, supplied by the US Geological Survey. They are also measured and weighed, then released quickly so they can return to their daily activities.

Audubon Pennsylvania bands migrant songbirds six days a week, at two sites on Presque Isle and one site at Erie Bluffs State Park. Banding began at Erie Bluffs last spring; this fall marks the second complete season of data collection.

Interestingly, species diversity and abundance vary between sites. Erie Bluffs offers a different habitat type than that at Presque Isle. Substantial edge habitat, located between agricultural fields and mature deciduous forest, is present at Erie Bluffs. Additionally, invasive plant species are minimal and the understory of the forest is very open.



BIRDS ARE KEPT IN SOFT BAGS READY TO BE BANDED

As of early October, 121 birds, of 35 different species, have been captured at Erie Bluffs. The majority of time spent banding is at

Presque Isle, so more birds are caught there. The two Presque Isle banding sites have yielded 515 birds of 65 different species.



A SMALL METAL BAND IS PLACED ON THIS NORTHERN FLICKER AFTER BEING MEASURED AND WEIGHED

Some species of birds have only been caught at Erie Bluffs, and not at Presque Isle. Erie Bluffs is the only site where Indigo Buntings have been caught. Blue Jays are also banded more commonly here. In both spring and fall banding seasons in 2009 many Hooded Warblers were caught at Erie Bluffs; they are known to breed at this site. Eastern Kingbirds can also be seen perched on top of corn stalks. Furthermore, large flocks of White-crowned Sparrows use the edge habitat during spring migration, and subsequently fly into the nets. Banding here has offered a unique experience.

Erie Bluffs State Park is approximately twelve miles west of Erie, PA, located on Route 5. It is comprised of diverse ecosystems including bluffs along Lake Erie, streams and wetlands, upland forest, and agricultural fields. Birding opportunities are plentiful, including watching raptors, songbirds, and Bank Swallows along the bluffs.

Our banding site at Erie Bluffs is located along the back edge of the corn field. It can be accessed by foot from the parking lot displaying the PA DCNR State Park sign. Thursdays are the current banding day at this site. Check out our blog for more information. Please visit us at the banding table!

~ Linnea Rowse and Andrea Reinhardt, Audubon PA
<http://pispbirdbanding.blogspot.com>

PIAS ITEMS FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS!

P.I.A.S. items are thoughtful, useful and inexpensive gifts for all of your nature-loving favorite people. Remember, this is the last meeting before the holidays at which to purchase them. Our next meeting will be in February. However, some of our items will be available at the locations listed.

2010 "Birds" Calendar - Beautifully photographed with a thumbnail sketch of each vibrantly-colored bird. Available at our meetings, Asbury Woods Nature Center, Chestnut Place Hallmark (Fairview) and Yorktown Giant Eagle.

Nature Watch (\$8.95) - Co-authored by Evelyn Anderson and Jean Stull. Compilation of weekly bird, butterfly, wildflower, plant and amphibian sightings in Erie County. Useful as field guide. Available at our meetings, Asbury Woods Nature Center, Erie Book Store, Nature Shop at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center (TREC) and Wild Birds Unlimited. Very limited quantity. Will not be reprinted.

Nature Notes (\$5.00) - Informal cards with artwork by P.I.A.S. artists Jean Stull, Kel McDonald, Jerry McWilliams and Donna Peters. Package of 8, two cards by each artist. Available at our meetings, Asbury Woods Nature Center, Erie Book Store, Nature Shop at the TREC and Wild Birds Unlimited. In this age of impersonal, instant communication, a hand-written note is special and most welcome.

Golf Shirt (\$18.00) - Imprinted with "Presque Isle Audubon". Soft, double pique, 100% combed cotton, blue, putty and yellow. Sizes and colors limited. Available only at our meetings.

Checklists (\$2.00 each) - "Checklist of Birds Recorded in Erie County, PA, including Presque Isle State Park" compiled by Gerald M. McWilliams and Jean Stull and "Checklist of the Butterflies recorded in Erie County, PA, including Presque Isle State Park" compiled by Gerald M. McWilliams. Available at our meetings, Asbury Woods Nature

Center, Erie Book Store, Nature Shop at the TREC and Wild Birds Unlimited.

Patch (\$4.00) - Meticulously stitched with PIAS logo.

Cap (\$5.00) - Imprinted with "Audubon" and National logo. Available only at our meetings.

Pins (\$1.00 each) -

- 1) "Junior Member" Kingfisher
 - 2) Cloisonne with word "Audubon" and National logo
- Available only at our meetings.

Sticker (\$0.50) - National logo with word "Audubon", 2"x6". Available only at our meetings.

Bookmarks (book of 12 - \$2.00, individual - \$0.25)

- 1) John James Audubon Birds
 - 2) Wildflowers
 - 3) Butterflies
- Available only at our meetings.

Nature Stickers, Assorted (book of 20 - \$2.00) - Available only at our meetings.

DVD (\$15.00) "Wings, Sand and Song," the introductory film for the "Festival of the Birds on Presque Isle," highlights the birds, habitat and hot spots of Presque Isle in all seasons.

Happy Holidays!

~Jeanne Kern, Chair, Sales and Marketing

ADOPT A HIGHWAY CLEANUP

Luckily the rain held off on Sunday, Oct 4 for our Adopt A Highway pickup. We started at 9AM, and finished at 11AM, and picked up 8 bags of trash. Thanks to Tom Wasielewski and Ruth Swaney for their help. We will have another pickup next Spring in April.

~Ron Intrieri, Adopt A Highway Coordinator

ENWR PHOTO CONTEST

Sunday, October 11th was a happy day for those photographers who won recognition for their nature photographs at the Awards Reception for the 12th Biennial Nature Photo Contest. The Erie National Wildlife Refuge headquarters in Guys Mills was visited that day by photographers and nature photography fans alike. Patty Nagel, Refuge Manager, welcomed the crowd and our PIAS President, Mary Birdsong, presented the awards.



RICH EAKIN AND MARY BIRDSONG WITH THE WINNING PHOTOS

Eighty-eight photographs were submitted to the contest. Three judges viewed all the photographs and chose the following winners:

Wildlife: 1st place Bill Kuczynski
2nd place Tim Lyons
3rd place Joseph Kostansek

Honorable Mention: Chuck Gehringer (3),
Holly Walsh, Jack Foltyn (2), Traci Stewart
Mary Mulligan-Hanes

Landscape: 1st place Joseph Kostansek
2nd place Greg Palmer
3rd place Mary Thall

Honorable Mention: Ruth Swaney, Ron
Leberman, Joe Kostanek, Greg Palmer

Plant Life: 1st place Joseph Kostansek
2nd place Mary Thall
3rd place Joseph Kostansek

Honorable Mention: Carol Mullen, Greg
Palmer, Mary Mulligan-Hanes

Best Photo taken on the Refuge: Judith Oakes
Best Youth Photo: Chris Foltyn

First place winners were awarded \$50, while second place winners received \$25. A \$75 award was given for best photo taken at the Refuge, and the youth winner received \$25.

Special thanks to our three judges: Larry Brown, Dennis Burchard and Michelle Franz. Larry Brown is a Board member of the Erie Photography Club, Dennis is owner of Burchard Photography, and Michelle is co-author of Presque Isle Naturally Blog and Secretary of PIAS. They came early on Sunday morning and scrutinized each entry thoroughly, offering comments on what made a photograph stand out and how to improve photos. All submitted photographs will remain on display at the Refuge through November 13th. Please call before visiting the Refuge at 814-789-3585 to make sure the office is open for visitors.

~Sue Murawski, Sanctuary Chair

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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TOM RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
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Chapter only membership includes membership in the
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chapter newsletter *Tern of Events*.

Individual membership \$10.00/year

Name _____

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**Ronald Intrieri, Membership
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National Audubon Society Membership Application

Please enroll me as a New member in the National
Audubon Society. Membership includes membership
in BOTH the National Audubon Society and the local
Presque Isle Audubon Society. National members
receive *Audubon Magazine* (6 issues per year) and the
monthly newsletter *Tern of Events*.

Introductory membership \$20.00

Renewals \$35.00

Students and seniors \$15.00

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