



TERN OF EVENTS



October 2008

Presque Isle Audubon Society Membership Newsletter

Issue 08:08

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

Presque Isle Audubon Society started its new year with a sumptuous and well planned banquet followed by a lively and informative talk. Thank you to Jeanne Kern and her committee for a memorable evening.



BARB MITCHELL, SAM STULL, LOIS WILEY

A painting, "A Spit on Presque Isle", was donated by Lois Wiley for the fund-raiser. The lucky recipient of that painting was Sam Stull shown in the picture above. Happy faces, all!

I would like to congratulate and thank the five people who pledged to avoid the dreaded plastic bags while shopping and instead use the cloth/canvas bag that they received. I talked to many attending the banquet and was told by them that they already made the transition to the cloth/canvas bags. I guess I was "preaching to the choir" when I asked you all to take the "pledge". It still bothers me, though, when I see the plethora of blue bags when I shop at the grocery stores. Now I have to figure out a way to get to those people, obviously not members of PIAS. Anyway, this battle is not over. I'll come up with a plan somehow. Any suggestions?

~Janet Price, President

NEWS FLASH!!!

The PIAS Executive Board voted to have a second birding festival next year during the weekend of May 8, 9, and 10. The dates will coincide with the International Migratory Bird celebration which is held on May 9. We will need many of you to serve on the planning committee. Read more on page 7 of this newsletter and consider being a part of this venture.

"WIND, SAND AND SONG: PRESQUE ISLE'S HABITATS"

Our DVD will be for sale at the concession stand of the Big Green Screen Theatre very soon. Look for the sign in the lobby for details. Copies are also sold at Wild Birds Unlimited and at Asbury Woods Nature Shop and there is an order form on the PIAS website, www.presqueisle.org/audubon.

OCTOBER THINGS TO DO!

- October 1-31, Every Day** - Get out into nature and notice all the signs of the new Fall season. Article on pages 5 and 6.
- October 14, Tuesday** - Regional Science Consortium Speaker at the TREC at 7:00 pm; Ronald Bruch on "The History, Management, and Global Implications of Lake Sturgeon". Call 835-6075 for more information.
- October 15, Wednesday** - Conservation Committee Meeting, 5:00 pm at the Quinn Law Firm
- October 17, Friday** - PIAS Program/Meeting at the TREC at 7:30. "Birding the Serengeti: an African Safari. Social at 7:00. (P 2)

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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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PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON'S PROGRAM FOR OCTOBER 17, 2008

BIRDING THE SERENGETI: AN AFRICAN SAFARI

Jim and Carolyn Baxter visited northern Tanzania in late February to early March, 2007. Their trip included The National Parks of Arusha, Lake Manyara, the Ngorongoro Crater, Olduvai Gorge Visitor Center, Serengeti NP, Tarangire NP, and Lake Victoria.



BIRDS OF SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK

In addition to over 300 species of birds they saw the "Big Five" and "Big Ten" most looked for mammals.

Jim is a two time past president of PIAS and Carolyn is a life member of the PIAS, an honor given her for her many years of showing our birds slides to the area garden clubs.

Jim kept a detailed journal of their trip and it, along with many pictures, can be seen online at

www.tanzaniasafari2.blogspot.com.

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ADVOCACY CORNER

Remember a few years ago when Presque Isle Audubon Society held some workshops on alternative lawns? We advocated especially for organic means of gardening and landscaping in order to reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides. The attendance at those workshops was disappointing. Especially disappointing was the lack of interest shown by the movers and shakers of our area: the mayor of Erie; members of City Council; the County Executive; members of County Council. Apparently nobody thought it was worth giving up time to learn about the facts and figures on the amount of toxic yard chemicals used by homeowners and the increasing list of health and environmental issues related to them.

There is some evidence recently that some have been getting the message. I have seen, just this summer, in the city of Erie, some of the most creative uses of vines, ornamental grasses, ground covers and flowering plants in the designing of landscapes of beauty. And these are in city yards, yards that in other years might have been swaths of ordinary turf grass whose emerald-green grandeur could only be maintained by substantial doses of fertilizers, water, and pesticides (some for insects, some for weeds, and some for fungi). These are all materials that have to go somewhere else after the grass has taken all of its requirements. That somewhere else can be our streams, the lake, ground water, and the body systems of people, pets, and wildlife.



But now, guess what? The National Audubon Society is promoting a program called Audubon at Home that invites homeowners to create healthy habitats in their own backyards and to sign a pledge to plant native species, remove invasive species, reduce or eliminate pesticide use, and

conserve water. All of this will in turn help protect birds whose habitats are dwindling throughout the United States and throughout the world. You will hear much more about this at our April meeting where Steve Saffier, coordinator of Audubon at Home, will be our speaker. There will still be time to integrate his ideas into your spring plans for your yards. In the meantime here is the website that you should consult to get started: http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/.



Be attentive to information of this type. Be ready to go when spring arrives. Be ready to challenge bureaucratic obstinacy regarding height levels at which grasses and lawn plantings can be maintained. Be an ambassador to your neighbors. I know it can be difficult if you live in a development with row after row of conformists who dare not let a single dandelion appear lest it offend their meticulous neighbors. Instead stand up and let them know that what you are doing is right for the environment and health. What they are doing is a silly exercise in control with no thought to the effects on the local habitat, let alone effects on the streams, lakes, oceans and in fact the health of every living thing on this big blue ball that astronauts have seen from space.

~Toby Cunningham, Conservation Committee



RECENT BIRD SIGHTINGS

The following birds were reported from Presque Isle State Park unless noted otherwise.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck—1; Aug. 31 to at least Sept. 8; Pymatuning WMA; trapped banded, and released by PA Game Comm. Personnel



Least Bittern—1; Aug. 24 to 30; head of Presque Isle; M.F., J.L., resp.

Great Egret—1; Aug. 30; head of Presque Isle; M.F. 1; Sept. 6; Marina Lake; J.L.

Peregrine Falcon—1 or 2 adults; Aug. 20 to 28; head of Presque Isle & Gull Point; J.L., J.M.

Sandhill Crane—up to 2; Sept. 1 to 7; Land-O-Lakes, Crawford Co.; B.G., T.W.

American Golden Plover— 1 adult; Aug. 28; Gull Point; B.C.

Stilt Sandpiper—2; Aug. 28; Gull Point; B.C.



Contributors: B.C.-Ben Coulter, M.F.-Michele Franz, B.G.-Bob Grubbs, J.L.-Julie Leonard, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, T.W.-Tom Wasilewski

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Records Chair
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AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

Adopt-a-Highway Project

We had our semi-annual Adopt-A-Highway cleanup on Sunday, Sept 21st. It started at 9AM, and took 2 hours to complete. Our stretch of highway starts at 8th & Peninsula and extends to Schenk Ave, a length of 2 miles and we collected 7 bags of trash. Thanks to Tom Wasielewski and Ruth Swaney for their help. We will have another highway pickup in the Spring.

~Ron Intrieri, Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator

Membership Report

National is making changes to its membership report, and it will not be available for this issue. But we have developed a Chapter only membership card for those members who join our chapter, and choose not to belong to National. Every Chapter only member will eventually get a membership card, or I will have them for our members at the monthly membership meeting.

~Ron Intrieri, Membership Chair

Intercoastal Cleanup

Three PIAS members undertook the cleanup of the coastline at Roderick Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, September 20. Linda Donati, Pat Howell and Janet Price collected six huge bags of trash over a three hour period, mostly styrofoam and cigarette/cigar tips. The most unusual find was an old Jeep that someone drove over the cliff. We did not bag that article!!!!



Janet and Linda (Pat took the picture!)

~Janet Price, ICC Coordinator

"FIRST FALL FINDS"

It wasn't an official, scheduled Audubon outing, but four local members--Pat, Janet, Ruth, and Linda--were lingering with Mary Ann, their visiting friend from Iowa, over coffee and pastries this morning when one of us remembered that it was the first day of autumn. A field trip was born. Janet wanted to see mushrooms. Pat wanted to watch bird migration. Linda had her botany loupe and field guides at the ready. We all relied on Ruth to identify tracks and insects. Mary Ann reiterated her motto: "I want it all, and I want it now." We whisked her off to Presque Isle.

"Nature never does betray the heart that loves her," Walt Whitman wrote, and if you walk with your eyes and heart open, neither will she ever disappoint you. We offer the following lists of what we saw and what you might also find on an October walk as proof of that belief and as encouragement for you to go and do likewise.

WATCHING FOR BIRDS

As you walk along the trails you'll find that watching for birds results in relatively few species. If you look long and hard enough, you might find the following along with the blue jays, sparrows, and goldfinches. Some of these birds are "passing through" while others are summer residents and will be leaving soon on their way to warmer, southern climes.

Yellow-bellied sapsucker	Brown creeper
Kinglets, golden and ruby-crowned	
Pied-billed grebe	Wood duck
Killdeer	House wren
Gray catbird	Double-crested cormorant



YELLOW BELLIED
SAPSUCKER



BROWN CREEPER

Give a big welcome to our hardy winter residents among which you'll find:

Ring-necked duck Yellow-rumped warbler
Lesser scaup (Greater will arrive in November)
White-throated and White-crowned sparrows

SHORT LIST OF LATE BLOOMING FLOWERS

It's amazing how many flowers one can see when looking for them while walking along Presque Isle. Many probably see the colors but don't really "see" the flowers on each plant. An up close look can be very rewarding if you take the time to do so. Some of the common but unobserved or unknown species follow.



New England aster with purple rays and gold disks



Blue-stemmed or wreath goldenrod with arching stems and flowers growing along the stem in the leaf axils



Boneset white crowns of flowers with leaves joined at the base around the stem (Cont.)

FINDING FUNGI

The beginning of Fall didn't come with much rain or moisture (not the best conditions for finding mushrooms) but we looked anyway as we tried to identify flowers and spot the few birds that were present. We carried George Barron's Mushrooms of Northeast North America hoping to put names to the few fungi we did find. Here are some common fungi that have been found on Presque Isle and identified by more expert mycologists than ourselves.

Scleroderma areolatum--a brown puffball covered with a network of fissures so that it resembles a potato, except that the spores inside are purple. We found this one on Pine Tree Trail.



Orange peel - a sac fungus that grows on trail edges.



Shaggy mane--a white, bell-shaped cap covered with scales that curl up at the tips



Chicken of the woods--a yellow to orange bracket fungus that fruits on both hardwoods and conifers, living and dead. There's often a spectacular display of it at the west end of Marsh Trail where it joins Ridge Trail and Fox Trail.



Deer Mushroom--a gill mushroom with a flat tan cap, paler near the margin. It appears on rotten wood.



Fringed earthstar--a puffball with a star-shaped base. We found a litter of stars at the east end of the pine trees stand on Dead Pond Trail.



Eyelash fungus - The fruiting bodies are red-orange disks with a fringe of stiff, black hairs around the edge.



FESTIVAL OF THE BIRDS AT PRESQUE ISLE: TAKE TWO

It's time for action if we want to have another successful birding festival next May, but in order to take action, we need people. One of the frequent comments made about last year's festival was that it was so well organized. And that it was, mainly because so many of the planning committee spent a lot of their precious time tending to the many details involved in such a huge undertaking.

I'm sure many members of that committee will also work on this year's plans, but some will not. Nevertheless, we need new people both to fill empty positions and maybe head some new endeavors. We also need new volunteers to share new ideas with us and give us another perspective besides the one we had last year. We'd like to make this year's event even better than last year's, if that's even possible. For sure it won't be the same; things are never the same. So don't hesitate to volunteer to work with us on one of the following committees. **Contact Janet Price if interested or if you have any questions - jrplkm@aol.com, phone 814.825.8394.**

Publications - This committee oversees the creation of postcards, brochures and programs.

Sponsors/Advertisers - This committee contacts individuals and groups for donation/sponsorships and keeps records of such.

Registration - This committee receives and documents all mail in registrations as well as registering attendees on the first days of the festival if they have not pre-registered.

Publicity - This committee will see to all the advertising for the upcoming festival. This includes such actions as contacting magazines, TV stations, newspapers and other Audubon chapters, and mailings.

Speakers and Field Trip Leaders - This committee will schedule and recruit individuals to conduct workshops and field trips. They will also send letters to each individual stating their benefits and responsibilities and will verify the times, dates and locations of their activity.

Grants - This committee will research and write grants for funding for the festival.

Welcoming - This committee prepares the welcome package and sees to its distribution among the attendees.

Hospitality - This committee will plan and oversee the meals and organize and staff the "breakfast" area.

Reception - This committee will plan and conduct the evening reception that will serve as the opening of the festival.

Education - This committee will plan events that will involve the youth of our community. These events will be free and open to the public.

Volunteers - This committee will recruit all volunteers needed as stated by other committees and will schedule them as needed. A written communication verifying the time, date and place each will be working will be necessary.

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 jrplkm@aol.com or 418 E. 36th St., Erie, PA 16504. If you have any questions, call Janet at 814.825.8394.

Printed on recycled paper.

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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*.

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