

# The Syrinx



## Voicebox of the Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club

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strangely speaks to us. Us, the most fleeting. Once for everything, only once. Once and no more. And we too,

only once. Never again. But to have been here, this once, if only this once:

to have been of the *earth* seems irrevocable.

Rainier Maria Rilke

This is a blend of two translations from the German of the first 15 lines of an 80-line poem. One translation is by Galway Kinnell and Hannah Liebman, the other by C.F. McIntyre. The full poem in several translations, can be found on the Internet.

### The Ninth Elegy

Why, if our time on earth could be spent as laurel, its green darker than all the others, its leaves edged with little waves (like the smile of a wind): why, then must we be human and, shunning destiny, long for it? ...

Oh *not* because happiness is, that rash profit taken just prior to oncoming loss, not out of curiosity, or to give practice to the heart, reasons which would hold for the laurel too ....

But because being here is so much, and everything seems to need us in this fleeting world, and

## Club Meeting

Thur. April 23

Donohoe Center barn

7:00 p.m. Doors open 6:30

Club member Glenn Davis will speak and illustrate his latest exploits in his quest to visit every U.S. national park. This one will be on the national park of American Samoa with a side trip to New Zealand. Join us for what promises to be an interesting evening.



## Field Trips and Outings

### **Sun. April 12 Roaring Run Recreational**

**Area** Join the Botanical Society of Westmoreland County for a walk in this very scenic area along the Conemaugh River and up Roaring Run Trail. **Directions:** From Delmont, follow Rt. 66 north to Apollo. Cross the bridge into Apollo and turn right at the traffic light immediately after the bridge onto Kiski Ave. Follow this road 0.8 miles to a fork. Take the right fork onto Canal Road which dead-ends at the Roaring Run Trail parking lot. Meet at **1:30 p.m.**

### **Fri. April 17 Woodcock Stalk at PV Park** Join Tom Pearson at the PV Park parking lot at **7:30 p.m.**

**Directions:** From the McDonald's light in Murrysville, turn south onto Trafford Rd. Cross over the bridge and railroad tracks, then bear left onto Pleasant Valley Road. Continue on this road for 1.2 miles. There is a diamond shaped entrance sign on the right just before your **left turn** into the parking lot.

### **Sun. April 19 Earth Day Celebration at**

**Saint Vincent College** Drop in between **11 a.m.** and **3:30 p.m.** to see our WBNC Earth Day display or volunteer to help man our booth. Contact info for Rose Tillmann, who is recovering from knee surgery, is on the front page. This year the celebration will take place at the **Fred Rogers Center** right beside the parking lot.

**Thur. April 23 Club Meeting** Details on 1st page. **Directions:** the Rt. 30 traffic light at the overpass to Westmoreland Mall, turn north onto Sheraton Drive. Bear right at the 1st intersection onto Donohoe Road. Go straight through the next light, and look for the Donohoe Center sign on your right at 0.7 miles from Route 30.

**Sat. April 25 Indian Creek Gorge** This is a Mountain Watershed sponsored wildflower walk at **10:00 a.m.** Come early to get a parking space. **Directions:** From the Donegal Turnpike Exit, turn left and follow Route 31 to Sarnelli's Market (about 2 miles). Turn right onto Route 381 and follow it past the Mill Run Reservoir Bridge. Look for the Camp Christian sign, and turn down the road toward the camp. At the Y, turn right and you'll see a small parking area on the right.

### **Sun. April 26 Enlow Fork Extravaganza**

Birding begins at **8 o'clock**, wildflowers at **10 o'clock**, insects and other phenomena in the afternoon.

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, travel I-79 south to Washington to pick up I-70. Travel I-70 east to Exit 6 Claysville. Take US 40 east to Claysville. In Claysville turn right onto PA 231 south. Travel PA 231 south approximately 3 miles to the "Y" in the road; stay right towards West Finley on SR-3029. Travel SR-3029 approximately 7.5 miles to a "T" in the village of West Finley.

**Turn left** onto SR-3037 and travel approximately 3 miles to the first road **past** the closed iron bridge on right. (Note that the **iron bridge at the bottom of Walker Hill Rd is closed.**)

**Turn right** onto Iams Road and travel uphill. At the top make a right onto Nebo Ridge Rd. Travel a short distance and Walker Hill Rd will be on your right. **Turn right** onto Walker Hill Rd, then **turn left** on to Smoky Row Rd. Proceed down Smoky Row Rd, going under a new coal conveyor, follow to the end of the road, you will see the tents and parking.

The GPS coordinates for the parking lot are 39.960781--- 80.463546

### **Sat. May 2 Deadman's Hollow** Meet Jim

Pemberton at **8:00 a.m.** for birds and wildflowers. We have not been here since 2005. **Directions:** Follow Route 48 south from Irwin through Versailles across the Boston Bridge. Immediately **turn right** at the end of the bridge and follow the street into the Yough River Bike Trail parking lot. Consider wearing an orange cap.

**Sun. May 3 Harbridge Run Hollow** for birds and an old quarry at **9:00 a.m.** **Directions:** From Rt. 217 south of Blairsville and south of Pizza Barn Rd turn east onto Gray Station Rd at a bend in Rt217. Follow Gray Station Road for 1- 1.25 miles beyond the RR tracks in Gray Station to the parking lot which is on the left after a sharp turn in the road. We'll follow a well worn trail up the side of the ridge, following Harbridge Run Hollow, to the quarry. Leader: Tim Vechter (724-216-8218).

**Sun. May 3 Buffalo Creek** Join Larry Helgerman at the intersection of U.S. 40 and SR 221 at **7:30 a.m.** We will be taking a nice walk through a variety of habitats. Focus will be on early spring migrants, but also on other aspects of nature. Directions: I-70 to exit 11 Taylorstown.. North on SR-221 to the intersection of SR-221 and US-40. Parking area on left just past the S-Bridge.

**May outings on Saturday are during turkey season! Wear an orange cap. If on game lands, you'll need a vest too.**

**Sat. May 9 Annual Pennsylvania Spring Migration Count** Contact Dick Byers (contact info on front page) for an assignment or where you'd like to do the counting. He can email you a tally sheet or mail it if you don't have email. This count covers the entire county, so if you're only interested in doing a feeder watch, your only requirement is to be living in Westmoreland County.

**Wed. May 13 Westmoreland Heritage Trail** for spring warblers. Join Ken Byerly (724-468-8594) at the Delmont McDonald's at **8:00 a.m.**

**Sat. May 16 Picnic Trail Bird Walk at Laurel Summit State Park** No leader. Directions: Take Linn Run Road from Rector to the picnic pavilion on top of the mountain and park behind the pavilion. Take the picnic trail that branches off from the trail to Spruce Flats Bog. Meet at **8:30 a.m.**

**Sat. June 6 Charles F. Lewis Natural Area** for venomous snakes, resident birds, salamanders, and wildflowers. Join Jim Pemberton in the natural area parking lot at **10:00 a.m.** The trail through this scenic reserve is ultra steep and slippery in places, not for those with a heart problem. Wear substantial footwear and bring a walking stick. Directions: Head east from New Alexandria on Route 22. Turn south on Route 403 past the Armaugh exit. Follow Route 403 two miles through Cramer. Just past Cramer, look for the parking lot to your left. Or follow Route 30 to Ligonier. From Ligonier follow Route 711 north to Cramer. Turn right in Cramer and look for the parking lot on your left just out of town.

**Sat. June 13 PV Park** for general ecology. Join Tom Pearson and Jim Pemberton for birds, butterflies, snakes, amphibians, and wildflowers in the reserve parking lot at **9:00 a.m.** Directions: From the

McDonald's light in Murrysville, turn south onto Trafford Rd. Cross over the bridge and railroad tracks, then bear left onto Pleasant Valley Road. Continue on this road for 1.2 miles. There is a diamond shaped entrance sign on the right just before your left turn into the parking lot.

**Wed. June 17 Skena Kellman Nature Reserve** Join Dick Byers for a general data collection walk for the club book at this nature reserve in Murrysville at **9:30 a.m.** Directions: At the McDonald's light in Murrysville, turn north onto Hall Road. At the next light, turn right, go about 100 yards and turn left up the steep North Hills Road. Follow North Hills Road past MacArthur Drive on your right and park on the right just past Skena Lane.

**Sat. June 20 Evening Vespers** Dine at the Darlington Inn Buffet at **5 p.m.** **RSVP** Karen Jackson (724-668-7421) by Wednesday June 17 before our annual trip to Spruce Flats Bog to hear the hermit thrushes and veeries sing on this primarily social outing. Directions: From Latrobe, follow Route 30 toward Ligonier. Just before crossing the bridge at Long Bridge Station, turn right onto Darlington Road. Drive about a mile to the Darlington Inn parking lot on your left. If you miss the turn at the bridge, turn right at the top of the hill and follow the road down to Darlington Road. Turn right and drive to the restaurant parking lot on your right.

**Sat. June 27 Mountain Streams Trail in Forbes State Forest** Meet Dick Byers at the 2nd Donegal Lake parking lot at **9:45 a.m.** to arrange a car shuttle for this hike from the top of Laurel Hill down to Sky View Road - about 5 miles. Bring lunch. Object is a general nature hike to collect data for the club book. Anyone with specialty expertise is especially welcome. All others come anyway to get a feel for this part of Forbes State Forest and learn some natural history, a rapidly disappearing subject in today's high tech world. Directions: From the Pennsylvania turnpike exit in Donegal, turn left from the pay booth onto Route 31, drive about 100 yards and turn north on Route 711. Drive about 2 miles on 711. In a half mile after descending a steep hill, look for the Fish Commission sign to Donegal lake on your left and turn left onto Donegal Lake Road. Drive another mile to the second parking lot on the right. Park near the porta-John.



## Field Trips and Outings Revisited

Sun. Jan 18 Winter

### Ecology at Keystone S.P.

The forecast of rain held attendance of Tom's annual winter walk down to six people. Japanese stilt grass hasn't choked out all the wildflowers as yet. Tom found about 50 species, a few prominent ones being monkey flower, both species of vervain, early and Canada goldenrod identified by the galls specific to them, virgin's bower, false climbing buckwheat, orange dodder, wild yam, Indian hemp, evening primrose, basil, and white snakeroot. Jim Pemberton kept the bird list which was short due the dark overcast and light drizzle conditions. Of 14 species, the best were golden crowned-kinglets, hairy and pileated woodpecker and a flicker. We walked through the table mountain pine plantation, discussed the beaver disappearance and found the tracks of a mink. Tom says they plan to restore the beaver from a project at the Loyalhanna Dam. We need beavers at Keystone to increase biodiversity. Beavers creates habitat for many other species. New species of birds were just beginning to appear when the beavers were trapped out of the park. Another story says the beaver left on their own and began building dams elsewhere and the farmers trapped them out. Which story is true we don't know.

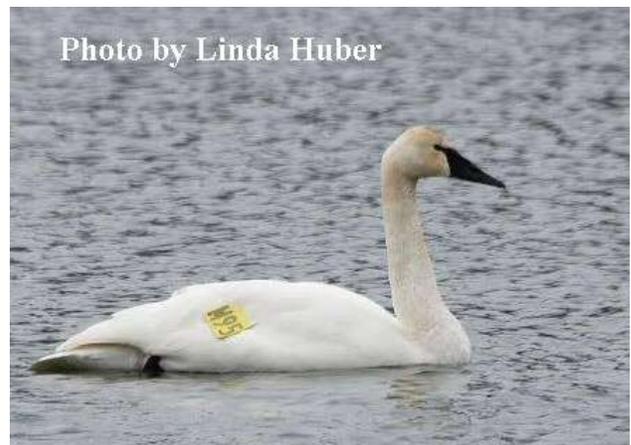
I checked the condition of the Keystone Park Tree of Distinction, a 300-year old shagbark hickory on our way out of the marsh area. The base of it is half rotted, so it won't be standing too much longer. We have a picture of it in the club book and may have to rewrite that section before publication. There are still impressive trees behind the stone house lodge.

I stopped at Derry Lake on the way home. There was a tundra swan among seven or more snow geese on the ice, but the trumpeter swans had left.



Participants 1 to r: Janice Davis, Nicole McCoy, Dennis McCarthy, Tom Pearson, Jim Pemberton.  
Photo by Dick Byers.

## 4th County Record for Trumpeter Swan



**Trumpeter Swan on Derry Lake Jan. 15, 2015**

Linda Huber posted this shot on the Internet of a banded trumpeter swan. She tracked down the band and found it to be a male bird captured in LaSalle Park, Burlington, Ontario on April 19, 2014. It was born in 2012 or earlier. Burlington is on the western end of Lake Ontario almost directly north of here. I am not 100% certain, but I believe this is the **4th** county record. Our current checklist records only the first in 1995 at Mammoth Park. We have since had two other records, six at Trout Run in 1998 and three at St. Vincent Lake in 2002. The bird is part of a reintroduction effort to its eastern range.

## Rector Christmas Count

In near perfect weather Larry Long at Powdermill fielded **18 people** + 6 at feeders to tally **2882** birds of **58 species**. The noteworthy birds on the list include (species in bold are those we did not have on the Bushy Run count) **ruffed grouse** - 4, **black vulture** - 7, **turkey vulture** - 33, **Cooper's hawk** - 1, **red-headed woodpecker** - 1, Carolina chickadees - 7, Black-capped chickadee - 233, red-breasted nuthatch - 5, **winter wren** - 1, golden-crowned kinglet - 33, fox sparrow - 2, **purple finch** - 5, **pine siskin** - 36.

Species we picked up that they missed are **sharp-shinned hawk, red-breasted merganser, ring-billed gull, brown-headed cowbird, cedar waxwing, rusty blackbird** and **common grackle**. **70** species were represented in these two Westmoreland County circles.

## Mr. Bluebird Passes

Al Goga, locally known as Mr. Bluebird because of his love for that species and the boxes he provided for them, died Jan. 14 at the age of 93. Al participated in the Bushy Run CBC's as a feeder watcher. I could always count on a list from him. My last change of the count circle position to a mile southeast of Delmont in order to include Keystone State Park put him outside the circle boundary, so I lost that reliable feeder counter.

Something I didn't know about Al was his photographic abilities. He was the aerial reconnaissance photographer for the 380th Bombardment Group in the Pacific during World War II. Funny he never mentioned that to us. Many long-time club members remember the many interviews he had on local radio talk shows for his conservation work with bluebirds.

## Snowy Owl Irruption 2015

They're back! Although not quite as great as the 2013-14 winter, the 2014-15 winter is still seeing a heavy movement. Ornithologists surmise that last year's unprecedented sweep was triggered by a

record nesting season in northern Quebec. The bumper crop of owls forced many to fly south to find food. Consequently, the majority of snowy owls seen in the lower 48 last year were young males. In the summer of 2014 there was another bumper crop of owls, this time in Nunavut and Byloy Island. The previous high in 2010 on the island was 33 nests. This year they counted 116.

Most of the 1,200 snowy owls thus far reported are in the northern tier states and Great Lake shorelines. Not many have been seen in Pennsylvania as of the late January.

## Gulls invade Pittsburgh

Whenever the Great Lakes freeze over, thousands of gulls are driven out and many come down the Allegheny River into the Pittsburgh area. Iceland, greater and lesser black-backed, Thayer's, glaucous, ring-billed, herring and kelp gulls were reported, but not all confirmed. Club members saw greater and lesser black-backed, Iceland, ring-billed, herring and glaucous species in early February.

## 4th Quarter 2014 Westmoreland County Bird Report Karen Jackson

### Loons & Grebes

Grebe, Horned -4 Beaver Run 11/27 (KB)

Grebe, Pied-billed -10 Beaver Run 10/17 (KB)

### Cormorants

Cormorant, Double-crested -4 Beaver Run 11/3

### Hérons

Heron, Great Blue -2 Keystone SP 12/28 (KJ)

### Waterfowl

Swan, Tundra - 50 Donegal Lake 11/6 (GS), 3 Derry Lake 11/24 (L&LH)

Swan, Mute -5 Trout Run 10/22 (KB)

Goose, Ross - 1 St. Vincent lake 11/29 (MM)  
Goose, Cackling - 2 St. Vincent lake 12/7 (MM)  
Goose, Snow - 2 St. Vincent lake 11/29 9MM)  
Goose, Canada - 300 Beaver Run 12/20 (MM)  
Duck, Wood -18 Beaver Run 10/10 (KB), 1 eclipse plumage St. Vincent lake 12/7 (MM)  
Teal, Green-winged -1 Beaver Run 11/7 (KB)  
Duck, American Black - 50 Beaver Run 12/20 (MM)  
Mallard - 400 Beaver Run 12/20 (MM)  
Pintail, Northern - 6 Trout Run 12/12 (TV)  
Gadwall - 2 Lycippus 12/13 (TV)

Wigeon, American - 4 Derry Lake 10/22 (KB)  
Scaup, Greater - 2 Derry Lake 10/22 (KB)  
Scaup, Lesser -1 female Beaver Run 12/20 (MM)  
Bufflehead -20 Donegal Lake 11/13 (L&LH)  
Merganser, Hooded -18 Beaver Run 12/20 (MM)  
Merganser, Common - 10 Latrobe 10/27 (TV), 90 Beaver Run 11/2 (KB)  
Duck, Ruddy -57 Derry Lake 10/22 (KB)1

#### **Birds of Prey**

Vulture, Turkey -7 yard 10/2 (DB)  
Osprey -2 Keystone SP 10/22 (DB)  
Eagle, Bald. - 1 Packsaddle Gap 10/19 (DB), 2 Keystone SP 12/27 (KJ), 2 Beaver Run 11/20 (KB)  
Harrier, Northern -1 Salem Twp 10/25 (DM)  
Hawk, Sharp-shinned - 1 yard 10/13 (DB)  
Hawk, Cooper's - 1 Delmont 12/8 (KB)  
Hawk, Red-tailed -3 Delmont 12/8 (KB)  
Hawk, Rough-legged -1 Delmont 12/10 (KB)  
Kestrel, American - 1 Latrobe 12/13 (TV)  
Falcon, Peregrine - 1 Delmont 10/9 (KB)

#### **Wildfowl**

Pheasant, Ring-necked - 5 RT711 11/3 (L&LH)  
Turkey, Wild - 9 Bethel Church Rd 12/5 (L&LH)

#### **Rails & Coots**

Coot, American -1 Donegal Lake 11/13 (L&LH)

#### **Shorebirds**

Killdeer -10 Beaver Run 11/7 (KB)  
Yellowlegs, Greater -1 Beaver Run 11/14 (KB)  
Sandpiper, Solitary - 2 Beaver Run 10/3 (KB)

Sandpiper, Spotted -1 Beaver Run 10/3 (KB)  
Snipe, Common - 1 Beaver Run (KB)

#### **Gulls & Terns**

Gull, Bonaparte's -1 Trout Run 10/22 (KB)  
Gull, Ring-billed - 5 Keystone SP 11/20 (KJ)

#### **Doves**

Pigeon, Rock - 11 Derry Twp 10/14 (KJ)  
Dove, Mourning - 31 Yard 10/3 (L&LH)

#### **Cuckoos**

Cuckoo, Yellow-billed -1 Delmont 10/1 (KB)

#### **Owls**

Owl, Screech, 1 WHT 11/9 (KB). 2 all quarter DB  
Owl, Eastern -1 Keystone SP 10/15 (KJ)  
Owl, Great Horned -2 Murrsville 11/17 (MJS)  
Owl, Barred - 2 yard 10/18 (L&LH),  
Ow Short-eared -1 being harassed by crows north of LigLlgonier 12/12 (TV), 1 Loyalhanna Twp 11/5 (L&LH)

#### **Swifts**

Swift, Chimney -1 Delmont 10/9 (KB)

#### **Kingfishers**

Kingfisher, Belted - 2 Beaver Run 11/7 (KB)

#### **Woodpeckers**

Woodpecker, Red-bellied - 6 Delmont 10/2 (KB)  
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied - 2 Delmont 11/3 (KB)  
Woodpecker, Downy - 5 yard 10/3 (L&LH)  
Woodpecker, Hairy -4 yard 10/3 (L&LH)  
Flicker, Northern -3 yard 10/10 (DB)  
Woodpecker, Pileated - 2 Keystone SP 12/28 (KJ)

#### **Flycatchers**

Phoebe, Eastern - 5 Delmont 10/9 (KB)

#### **Jays, Crows**

Jay, Blue - 8 yard 11/1 (L&LH)  
Crow, American -5 yard 11/1 (L&LH)  
Raven, Common - 1 New Alex 11/28 (KJ)

#### **Titmice**

Chickadee, Black-capped - 2 yard 10/3 (L&LH)

Chickadee, Carolina - 4 yard 12/1 (L&LH)  
Titmouse, Tufted - 6 yard 12/1 (L&LH)

### **Nuthatches, Creepers**

Nuthatch, White-breasted - 8 yard 12/1 (L&LH)  
Creeper, Brown - 1 yard 11/7 (L&LH)

### **Wrens**

Wren, Carolina - 1 yard 12/31 (L&LH) always seen on this date since they have lived at this location  
Wren, Winter - 1 yard 10/16 (DB) , 1 Beaver Run 11/13 (KB)

### **Kinglets**

Kinglet, Golden-crowned - 2 yard 10/23 (L&LH)  
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned - 6 yard 10/13 to 10/19 (L&LH)

### **Thrushes**

Bluebird, Eastern - 6 ODR 10/19 (L&LH)  
Sparrow, Swamp - 1 Delmont 10/3 (KB)

Thrush, Hermit - 4 packsaddle gap 10/19 (DB)  
Robin, American - 100 yard 10/1 (DB)

### **Mimics**

Catbird, Gray - 3 yard 10/10 (DB)  
Mockingbird, Northern - 1 Donegal Lake 11/13 (L&LH)  
Thrasher, Brown - 1- 4 mile run rd 10/18 (L&LH)

### **Waxwings, Pipits, Shrikes**

Waxwing, Cedar - 150 Hamilton Rd 11/13 (KB)

### **Starlings**

Starling, European - 17 New Alex 11/1 (KJ)

### **Vireos**

Vireo, Philadelphia - 1 Trees Mills 10/1 (KB)  
Vireo, Red-eyed - 1 Delmont 10/23 (KB)

### **Warblers**

Warbler, Orange-crowned - 2 yard 10/10 (DB) new to yard list. 1 ad. 1 imm.  
Warbler, Nashville - 2 yard 10/10 (DB)  
Warbler, Yellow-rumped - 4 yard 10/20 (L&LH)

Warbler, Mourning - 1 Delmont 10/2 (KB)  
Yellowthroat, Common - 2 yard 10/12 (DB)

### **Tanagers**

Tanager, Scarlet - 1 Delmont 10/1 (KB)

### **Finches**

Cardinal, Northern - 8 yard 10/3 (L&LH)  
Grosbeak, Rose-breasted - 1 female, yard 12/17 (possible black-headed?) (DB)  
Bunting, Indigo - 2 Delmont 10/2 (KB)  
Towhee, Eastern - 5 Delmont 10/8 (KB)

### **Sparrows**

Sparrow, American Tree - 10 Ringertown 12/21 (KB)  
Sparrow, Chipping - 25 Delmont 10/8 (KB)  
Sparrow, Field - 5 yard 10/10 (DB)  
Sparrow, Fox - 6 yard 11/21 (L&LH)  
Sparrow, Song - 6 Ringertown 12/21 (KB)  
Sparrow, Lincoln's - 1 Delmont 10/20 (KB)  
Sparrow, White-throated - 5 yard 10/12 (DB), 14 Delmont 11/5 (KB)  
Sparrow, White-crowned - 10 Crabtree 11/18 (KB)

### **Juncos**

Junco, Dark-eyed - 60 yard 12/1 (L&LH)  
Junco, pink-sided - 1 yard 11/7 (L&LH)

### **Blackbirds**

Blackbird, Red-winged - 330 Keystone SP 10/11 (DB), 6 Murrysville 11/18 (MJS)  
Meadowlark, Eastern - 2 ODR 10/31 (L&LH)  
Blackbird, Rusty - 1 Murrysville 11/18 (MJS)  
Grackle, Common - 500 yard 10/13 (L&LH)

### **Red Finches**

Finch, Purple - 6 yard 11/1 (L&LH)  
Finch, House - 25 Delmont 12/25 (KB)  
Redpoll, Common - 3 yard 12/22 (DB)

### **Yellow Finches**

Siskin, Pine - 25 Murrysville 12/6 (DM)  
Goldfinch, American - 30 yard 12/1 (L&LH)

## Weaver Finches

Sparrow, House- 30+ New Alex 12/2 (KJ)

**County Year Total - 211 2nd lowest since 1998.  
Record - 238**



### Sandhill Crane at St. Vincent Wetlands

Tim Vechter, while ice skating on St. Vincent Lake, spotted this sandhill crane flying with a huge flock of Canada geese that had just been spooked on 2/13/15.

## Inviting Pileated Woodpeckers to your Yard

Dale and Xina Matuza seem to have solved the puzzle of repeatedly attracting pileated woodpeckers to suet feeders. The trick seems to be a special suet cupcake and the method of attachment. I have had pileated woodpeckers come and peck on the tree my suet feeder is attached to, but they never find the feeder, even though they have been as close as 5 feet. The suet cake Xina made is more visible and since Dale read that pileated's use their tail feathers as a brace more than other woodpeckers while feeding, the placement of the cake can

make a difference. See the pictures.

Below is Xina's recipe, which she packs into a plastic cup in which Dale has placed a 1/8 inch wooden dowel (which when removed makes it much easier to mount the cake on the nail in the tree or post where you plan to use it.

1-cup lard  
2-cups chunky peanut butter  
4-cups cornmeal  
1-cup sunflower seeds  
1-cup peanut pieces  
1-cup raisins  
1-cup dried cranberries (Craisins)  
Melt lard and peanut butter over low heat in a large pot. Add remaining ingredients one at a time mixing well after each addition. Xina pours the mix into recycled "Can't Believe It's Not Butter" containers coated with Pam. Can use any plastic container. Store in refrigerator.



**This may not work well if you have a lot of squirrels!**

## **Preliminary Results GBBC**

Total checklists: 147,265 (up 3, 156)

Total species: 5,090 (up 794)

# participants: 143, 941 (up 1,890)

U.S.A. # species - 671 # checklists 108, 396

## **The Anti-Science Attitude in the U.S. is gaining ground**

Trofim Lysenko was the head of Soviet agriculture during the Stalin-Kruschev era. He believed in Lamarckian rather than Darwinian evolution and totally outlawed Mendelian genetics. Consequently his food production predictions never materialized and many Russian people starved, but his erroneous ideas still held sway and the competent Russian scientists, who dared to criticize him, died in prison. Because of Lysenko, biological science in Russia from 1930 until the 1970's was entirely political and based on non-scientific methods. The story is a marvelous example of how the general public can be led to believe in pseudoscience and superstition and to distrust the findings of competent scientists.

It's hard to believe the same distrust of scientists is happening in the country that put people on the moon, but it is occurring on two fronts: global warming and the theory of evolution. Polls indicate nearly half of the U.S. population does not believe in evolution and almost as many do not believe in global warming.

Despite the massive evidence behind climate change, the right-wing news agencies are successfully creating doubt by a well known propaganda technique. First, deny the problem even exists. It's just a hoax. Second, minimize the problem. It won't happen for a hundred or more years, so why worry about it? Third, call for more studies. Emphatically claim that scientists haven't proven it is manmade instead of natural. Fourth, cherry pick the data and take it out of context. There are many examples of warmer trends in the past, but don't mention it took thousands of years to reach that warmer state, whereas we're going to hit the same temperatures in just a hundred years. Fifth, attack all alternatives. Reducing CO2 emissions won't do any good anyway and solar is too expensive. Sixth, shift the blame. The real culprits of global warming are volcanic action and increasing temperatures on the surface of the sun, not carbon emissions. Seventh, interview scientists hired by the polluting industries to show evidence to the contrary

(like the tobacco companies did about smoking and cancer). Eighth, keep repeating the idea that global warming is a hoax. It has been found that constant repetition of a falsehood eventually becomes believable.

For people who do not know the overwhelming evidence for global warming, and do not understand the scientific process behind the conclusions, this type of propaganda is very convincing. Fox News commentators are experts at it.

Fox News also withholds information about the Keystone pipeline that would discredit it and are careful not to over-publicize new global warming evidence. How many Americans knew that the toxic oil Canada wants to pipe through the U.S. would be sold to Indonesia and China? The 100 foot wide strip plus the maintenance roads for that pipeline would rip up thousands of acres of some of our richest farmland and threaten the greatest aquifers in the country, so a Canadian oil company can sell their product in Asia. Fortunately, there were enough nay votes to prevent an over ride of Obama's veto. But, it's sad, particularly when TV commentators don't even know basic grade school science. I heard Bill O'Reilly say scientists couldn't explain what causes tides.

Worse, the most scientific illiterate conservative politician in Congress is head of a scientific committee. **James Inhofe**, who wrote the unscholarly book entitled The Greatest Hoax: How the Global Warming Conspiracy Threatens your Future, is Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee that oversees the work of the Environmental Protection Agency. Other misfits abound. Missouri representative **Todd Akin**, who sat on the Committee on Science, Space and Technology, made the statement that "women rarely get pregnant from legitimate rape because the female body has ways of shutting it down." Fortunately, that superstitious unsupported statement cost him the 2012 election. House speaker John Boehner has advocated teaching creationism in the public schools.

Anti-science in today's inept Congress seems to have become worse since Chris Mooney published his book The Republican War on Science in 2005. In this age of planetary degradation - ocean acidification, rain forest destruction, climate change, mountain top removal, 6th great extinction, plasticized oceans, fracking poisons, forest fragmentation, human proliferation, etc., we need politicians who are scientifically literate and a public that pays closer attention. D.B.

