

# Valley Views

**Potomac  
Valley  
Audubon  
Society**

**Volume 22, Issue 7**

**April 2004**

## **April Joint PVA/NCTC Program**

**Wednesday, April 14, 2004 at 7:30 PM at NCTC**

This year's joint program with NCTC is likely to be one of the most memorable of the season. The program features award-winning author Gary Ferguson. Gary will highlight his latest book Hawks Rest: A Season in the Remote Heart of Yellowstone. This book is both an exploration of nature and a great adventure.

Gary Ferguson's nature articles have appeared in dozens of national magazines, including *Outside*, *Sierra*, *Vanity Fair*, *American Forests*, *Big Sky Journal*, *Modern Maturity*, *Travel Holiday*, and productions of New York's Children's Television Workshop. He's also the author of fourteen books on nature and science, including Through the Woods: A Journey Through America's Forests, a starred selection in Kirkus Review as well as a winner of the prestigious Lowell Thomas Awards, and Spirits of the Wild: The World's Great Nature Myths, selected by the New York City Public Library as one of the best books of 1996.

Gary has appeared on more than a hundred radio and television programs; his nature-oriented essays can be heard on National Public Radio affiliates throughout the country. Before beginning his writing career he worked as an interpretive naturalist for the U.S. Forest Service in Idaho's Sawtooth National Recreation Area.

Join us at NCTC for an extraordinary program.

## **Field Trips**

On Sunday April 4 at 1 p.m. We will be walking along the C&O towpath looking for early spring migrants, early wildflowers, and perhaps listening to a chorus of spring peepers. We will meet at 1 p.m. at the parking lot of the boat launch area at Dargan's Bend, upriver from Harpers Ferry. Directions: cross the Potomac River on Rt. 340 from WV & VA into Maryland; take the first right, follow the road past Cindy Dee restaurant (on left); take the first right, Harpers Ferry Rd. (signs to Kennedy Farmhouse); follow the road as it parallels then leaves the river; take the next left on a paved road and follow that to the parking lot on the left side of the road.

Saturday, April 17 Bob Dean will be leading a birding and botanizing trip to Shannondale Springs. This should be a real treat! Not only is Shannondale Springs a neat place with the possibility of all sorts of wonderful birds, but Bob is a real expert on plants and there are sure to be some interesting things to be seen. He will meet participants in Martins Food parking lot off Rt. 340 in Charles Town (at the far end opposite the Sherwin Williams store) at 7:30 a.m.

## **Mark your calendar for May:**

May 8 – Birding and botanizing trip in Harpers Ferry National Park.

May 15 & 16 Cape May for spring migrants, shorebirds, and pelagics. You need to get your motel reservations soon. For more information on this overnight trip give Patsy or Ken Hunter a call at 304-725-3936 or via email [phunter@npca.org](mailto:phunter@npca.org).



*Potomac Valley Audubon Society is people dedicated to preserving, restoring,  
and enjoying the natural world through education and activism.*

## STATE WILDLIFE GRANT LOBBY DAY A SUCCESS

In February of this year, Diana Cummins and Susan Brookreson represented PVAS as part of a team from West Virginia at a State Wildlife Grant Lobby Day. This involved conservationists, wildlife managers, and sportsmen from across the country at a training session in Washington, D.C. sponsored in part by the National Audubon Society. Teams from more than 40 states held more than 100 meetings with their Members of Congress and staff to lobby for State Wildlife Grants funding.



The State Wildlife Grants Program is the nation's core program for preventing wildlife from becoming endangered in every state. "This program saves wildlife and taxpayer money. The program supports projects that keep wildlife from declining to the brink of extinction. Instead of reacting to a crisis, this program supports practical, on-the-ground wildlife conservation. In addition, a matching requirement leverages state and private funding to supplement every federal dollar." The purpose of this lobby effort was to support increased funding from the proposed \$85 million to \$125 million resulting in approximately \$1 million for West Virginia.

The team was encouraged to find broad bipartisan support for this funding. Staff from Senator Byrd, Senator Rockefeller, Representative Rahall and Representative Mollohan assured us we have their solid support on this issue. Representative Capito met with us in person and was equally supportive. (Impressively, Representative Mollohan recently sent PVAS a letter asking for our official position on wind power; an action giving PVAS influence on future outcomes).

Our congressional representatives do listen and each of us can make a difference. The West Virginia lobby team repeatedly heard about the huge public outcry over drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The National Audubon Society is one of the oldest and most respected environmental groups around the world, and PVAS's participation in these lobby sessions should make us proud to be supporting such effective activism.

For more information or to take action, please go to this web-site: <http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/summary.asp?subject=203&flow=2>

*dc, sb*

## Working for New Wilderness Areas on the Monongahela National Forest

The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition is a grassroots endeavor coordinated by the Sierra Club West Virginia Chapter, the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy and The Wilderness Society. The Coalition's goal is to protect special wild places on West Virginia's federal public lands through congressional wilderness designation. Wilderness areas, such as Dolly Sods, Cranberry and Otter Creek, enjoy the strongest level of protection that can be granted for federal, public land. Wilderness designation protects special places from timbering, mining, road building, and motorized use.

The coalition has spent the past several months inventorying and evaluating all potential new wilderness areas on the Mon. The coalition is now nearly finished with its proposal for new wilderness designations on the Mon National Forest. We are working closely with our congressional delegation and exploring the possibility of introducing a new West Virginia wilderness bill. We are very fortunate to have a large number of areas that will qualify for wilderness designation on the Mon. In addition to Cranberry Wilderness—Roaring Plains, Seneca Creek, and Spice Run are just a few of the areas we hope will be protected.

If you live in West Virginia, you can send a fax to our congressional delegation and Governor Wise, telling them you support wilderness designation directly from our website: <http://www.wvwild.org>. If you are from out of state and want to see more wilderness on the Mon, go to [http://www.wvwild.org/get\\_involved](http://www.wvwild.org/get_involved) for talking points and contact information for decision makers in West Virginia. Please contact me or visit our website for more information. Matt Keller: [mattk@tw.s.org](mailto:mattk@tw.s.org) or (304)864-5530

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## Boreal Songbird Initiative

In keeping with the theme of this year's Christmas Bird Count, boreal birds, National Audubon is actively engaged in conservation and preservation of North American boreal forests. As a member of the Boreal Songbird Network, Audubon is a supporter of the Boreal Songbird Initiative, a new project dedicated to educating birdwatchers and naturalists about the importance of the boreal forest of North America to migratory birds. Visit the Boreal Songbird Initiative website at [www.borealbirds.org](http://www.borealbirds.org) to find out more.

## Christmas Bird Count Reflections

The annual Christmas Bird Count is a time of reflection for many participants. The focus of the reflection may be multifaceted, involving a combination of focal points; past counts, species composition, available habitat types, why Wil always gets more species, weather considerations, missing species on the day's tally, time constraints, etc., etc.

Now, if we may, let's reflect way back to bedtime on December 19, 2003. When the alarm sounds at 5:30 a.m. on the 20<sup>th</sup> we'll be filled with anticipation that this Charles Town count will indeed be special. Some unexpected species will surely be located. Some great lunch spot will materialize from the fog with the best vegetable soup we've ever had. We won't run out of gas or have a flat. Our fellow birders for the day will match our level of enthusiasm for the chase and our joy of discovery.

Many of these things did come to pass on December 20. We tallied 76 species for the day with a grand total of 7,335 individual birds. **Bird of the day** honors go to Jim Keel and Carl Hall for a female **Common Yellowthroat** and Susan Brookreson, Cheryl Jennings, and Nancy Mitchell for a **Merlin**. A close runner-up was the **Herring Gull** located by Bruni Haydl, Tess England, and Lynne Wiseman. The team of Matt Orsie, Wil Hershberger, and Bob Dean got a few "often-hard-to-find" species including **Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, and Pine Siskin**. The early owlers came up with 4 **Eastern Screech-Owls**, a **Great-horned Owl**, and 3 **Barred Owls**. The most abundant species was (as usual) the lovely European Starling with some 2,552 counted. The Common Grackle was next in line with 1,003, followed by the seemingly ubiquitous Canada Goose with 526. There were no Northern Bobwhites or Ring-necked Pheasants found this year. Although they were likely present but quiet, no Fish Crows were counted. Waterfowl were generally scarce with only 1 Pied-billed Grebe and 9 duck species located.

January 3, 2004 was a day of unseasonable warmth and suppressed bird movement. Thus the Inwood count was a bit short on total species, 67. The total tally for the day was 5,778. Not bad considering the dearth of avian activity. Wil and Donna Hershberger got the **bird of the day**, an **American Woodcock**, which was followed closely by the **Loggerhead Shrike** found by Bruni, Tess,

*-Christmas Bird Count continues on page 5*

## President's Perch

Hi Everyone - By the time this arrives in your mailbox, it will be "officially" spring. Isn't it great to hear frogs again...and all those birds singing in the morning? We have a pair of barred owls at my house hooting it up...but they will turn quiet when those chicks hatch.



We are really excited to offer camp scholarships to five different camps this year (for ages 6 to 15), and one of them is to our very own Yankauer Nature Day Camp (see article on page 4 and visit our website for an application form at [www.potomacaudubon.org](http://www.potomacaudubon.org)). Please pass the application forms around...and thanks for buying that birdseed, it helps pay for these scholarships.

Please NOTE that our April program featuring author Gary Ferguson will take place at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) outside of Shepherdstown (see article Page 1) instead of at Leetown. Once a year we jointly sponsor a program with NCTC, and this is it. The time is 7:30 p.m....come a little early and get a good seat.

April is my favorite flower month, I just love seeing flowers again, and the spring beauties along the river banks are something to see! So come join us on April 17 at Shannondale Springs, and bring your binoculars too because we are bound to see a few birds along the way. Spring is in the air, so let's get out and take some in ... hope to see you there! *Diana Mullis, President, PVAS*

### Camp Scholarship Reminder

Scholarship applications are due by April 15. Applications are available at the PVAS Web site, <http://www.potomacaudubon.org>. If you would like to receive an application by mail or need more information, contact Sue Mellott, 304-725-4153.



## **News from Yankauer Nature Preserve . . .**

### ***Annual Appeal Goal Met!!!***

Thank you so much for your generous donations! Because of your gifts, the lofty goal of \$12,000 has been met and even surpassed! Many of you even donated a second time to help us meet the challenge by our Anonymous Donor. We can't thank you enough. At the writing of this newsletter, the Anonymous Donor will be matching your combined March gifts of \$1,320, making the Annual Appeal our most successful yet: \$13,946! Thank you for believing in the Yankauer project. With your help, we will continue to put forth our very best efforts to provide quality educational programming to our community. It's not over yet; the Appeal doesn't end until March 31. Next month we will announce the final result of the Annual Appeal as well as list the names of those people who made it possible.

### ***Audubon Discovery Camp!***

Registrations have begun coming in! There is still room left for all eight sessions! The weekly sessions will take place June 14-August 6. Additional details and camp registration materials are on our website at [www.potomacaudubon.org](http://www.potomacaudubon.org), or call 304-676-3397 and we'll send you a hard copy via mail.

This year we are pleased to announce a partnership with the local Boys and Girls Clubs to offer Yankauer camp scholarships to children enrolled in their programs. Several PVAS members have pooled their resources to provide 23 scholarships so far, and they invite you to join them in providing even more children with this unique, local, day camp experience. We have just completed a grant application we hope will allow us to provide daily bus transportation from the Clubs to the Preserve.

We have also launched an Intern Fund to help pay our summer interns a small stipend. The stipend provides interns with a living wage while they participate in this valuable learning and career development opportunity. We have recently received our first contribution towards this fund, and we hope you will join them in helping to provide these valuable opportunities for young future educators. We hope to raise a total of \$8,000 to fund this summer's interns. Please call Jean Neely, 304-876-2410, to learn more about this new fund.

### ***Got Picnic Tables?***

If you have a spare picnic table in the backyard you don't use any more, why not donate it to Yankauer or loan it out for the summer? While waiting for the permanent floor and benches, we are looking for a few good picnic tables we can use for summer camp. If you can help us out (or if you know who can) please call Suzi Taylor at 304-676-3397.

### ***Watershed Update***

The watershed program is still going strong! This month 4<sup>th</sup> graders are learning about where the water goes when it runs off their schoolyards by looking at maps and building watershed models. Also this month, they are learning about pH, dissolved oxygen, and water temperature, and how each impacts the creatures that live in ponds and rivers. They will use this knowledge next month when they visit their local sewage treatment plants and test the water quality of the Potomac River.

### ***Preserve Partners Kickoff a Success!***

Thank you for coming to the Preserve Partners Kickoff! The event was a wonderful success with about sixty folks coming out to show their support and interest in the Preserve. Ann Craig, Yankauer Outreach Coordinator,

did a wonderful job of planning the event. About 30 new volunteers signed up to help with various projects! If you are interested in signing up but couldn't attend the event in February, the form is on our website at [www.potomacaudubon.org](http://www.potomacaudubon.org).



### ***Program Volunteers Needed***

This is shaping up to be one of our busiest seasons ever! If you are interested in helping out with youth programs, please let Kristin know. We have an exciting season ahead of us! You can sign up using the Preserve Partners form (see above) or just contact Kristin at 304-676-3397 or [PVASmail@aol.com](mailto:PVASmail@aol.com).

## ANNUAL DINNER, MAY 8 at 4:30 p.m.

You are invited to a family style, potluck dinner at The Yankauer Pavilion. Bring a dish to share (if your last name starts with A - G, bring some type of protein, H - L, a starch, M - R, fruits and veggies, S - Z, desserts). Also bring folding chairs or a blanket to sit on, your own beverage and utensils (plates, silverware, etc.) Plan on taking all trash home as we don't have garbage pick up at Yankauer. A bird walk will take place at 4:30 P.M. and a Owl Prowl at dusk. We have tentative plans for some musical entertainment. Most important, come out to enjoy the beautiful scenery, the camaraderie and to applaud some of our outstanding volunteers. Also, find out first hand who our newly elected officials will be for the coming year. If you have any questions, please call Susan Brookreson at (304) 263 - 2823.

### Slate for Next Year's PVAS Board of Directors

The slate of officers for the 2004-2005 open positions on the PVAS Board of Directors is:

Conservation:	Andy Vecchio
Education:	Bob and Karen Fuegi
Fund Raising:	
Membership:	Dave and Mary Sue Eldridge
Publicity:	
Secretary:	Mina Goodrich
Treasurer:	
Yankauer Liaison:	

Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the annual meeting on May 8. Please, nominate only yourself unless you have the consent of another person you wish to nominate. The meeting will be a dinner at our beautiful Yankauer Nature Preserve. If you will not be attending the meeting and wish to vote by proxy, please contact Diana Cummins or Diana Mullis.

As you can see, most positions are not filled. PVAS cannot exist without a board of director. **Please volunteer.** You may also choose to co-chair any of the positions. The positions officially begin on July 1 for the following 12 months. Each has duties that can mostly be done at home. The Board meets at 7:00 PM on the first Wednesday of the month for a two-hour meeting at Shepherd College.

We look forward to hearing from you.

-Christmas Bird Count continues from page 3



and Lynne. Beyond this the highlights were more cerebral; unbridled exuberance, sudden exhilaration, and unexplained euphoria at the sight of a Starling claiming to be a Killdeer or Bobwhite, neither of which he much resembles. Alas it was a pleasure to feel seasonable temperatures two days later when the local birds returned to the feeders in numbers. Speaking of numbers the most plentiful species were, once again, the lovely European Starling (2,442) in first place, followed by Mourning Dove (520), Rock Pigeon (330), and Canada Goose (302).

And it gives me unprecedented pleasure to announce at the end of this report that spring migration is underway! Get out there and enjoy!

*Reflectively submitted by Bob Dean*

#### MAKE A DIFFERENCE, JOIN PVAS TODAY!

When you join PVAS, you automatically become a member of the *National Audubon Society*.

Your membership includes:

- ◆ One year (six issues) of award-winning *Audubon Magazine*
- ◆ Eight issues of *Valley Views*, PVAS's newsletter of field trips, programs, and local issues
- ◆ Advance notice of all PVAS events

ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK FOR:

\$20 Individual SPECIAL OFFER, 1st time members only!

\$35 Individual (renewal)

\$15 Seniors and full-time students.

Make checks payable to  
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Membership Chair, PVAS  
P.O. Box 578  
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

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<http://potomacaudubon.org>

**DATED MATERIALS**

MAIL TO:

April 2004

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The *Potomac Valley Audubon Society* meets at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April, in the auditorium at the USGS Leetown Science Center, Letown/Kearneysville, WV. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about *PVAS* or its programs and activities, please call any of the board members listed her or see <http://potomacaudubon.org>. *PVAS* serves the Easter Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

**PVASBOARD**  
 The *PVAS*Board meets the first Wednesday of the month (Sept.-April) at Shepherd College, Snyder Hall, Room 317, 7PM. These meetings are open to all *PVAS* members.

- PVAS Officers and Board Members**
- President: Diana Mullis 304 267-3482 ..... dianamullis@aol.com
  - Vice President: Diana Cummins 304 728-0345 ..... montex@frontiernet.net
  - Secretary: Mina Goodrich 304 876-2159 ..... larrymina@aol.com
  - Treasurer: Mike Zagarella 304 876-3165 ..... ozcouple@intrepid.net
  - Conservation: Dale Nisbet 304 535-9916 ..... dale\_nisbet@nps.gov
  - Education: Sue Mellott 304 725-4153 ..... llamamama1@earthlink.net
  - Field Trips: Patsy & Ken Hunter 304 725-3936 ..... phunter@npca.org
  - Hospitality: Susan Brookreson 304 263-2823 ..... brookre@earthlink.net
  - Membership: Mary Sue & Dave Eldridge 304 876-2337 ..... marysuee@citlink.net
  - Newsletter: Wayne Braunstein 304 728-7181 ..... wbraun1@peoplepc.com
  - Programs: Fiona Harrison 304 724-7458 ..... fharrison@brces.org
  - Publicity: Diane Sylvester 304 263-6449 ..... twosylvesters@cs.com
  - Fundraising: (please volunteer to fill this space)
  - International: Bill Belton 304 258-3067 ..... wbelton@intrepid.net
  - Yankauer liaison: Susan Brookreson 304 263-2823 ..... brookre@earthlink.net
- Special Contacts**
- Director of Yankauer: Kristin Alexander 304 229-9771 ..... Kaemail730@aol.com
  - Newsletter Publisher: David Miller 304 263-3130 ..... cdmillermart2@juno.com
  - Web Master: Kathy Bilton ..... kathy@fred.net
  - PVAS Wildlife Rescue Coord: Diana Mullis ..... 304-267-3482 & 304 724-4500(day)