

# VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac  
Valley  
Audubon  
Society

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March 2012

## We Still Need Your Help With Our Annual Appeal!

As this is being written in mid February, 154 of you have contributed \$30,607 to our annual fundraising appeal since December 1.

That's a great result, especially in the current economy! It's 7.5% more than we'd raised by the same time last year, and it's about 97% of last year's annual appeal total of \$31,596.

Thanks to all of you who have contributed so far.

But we're not done yet—our appeal period runs through the end of March, and we hope we can at least equal last year's total.

So if you haven't contributed so far, please consider doing so now.

Remember that your annual appeal contributions are essential to our program efforts. Many of our programs are free. For those that do involve fees, we could never charge participants—especially children—enough to cover all our expenses. Your support makes up the difference!

To contribute, just send a check made out to "PVAS" to PVAS, PO Box 578, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.

## Website Now Up!

The new PVAS website is up and running! Several of you have sent us e-mails with positive feedback. Thank you!

As we enter into a busy spring program season, please check the website often for a variety of field trips, programs, lectures, camps, and more! We are constantly adding more activities in the calendar.

In addition to finding out all of the activities going on, you can register for workshops, camps and field trips, update your membership, sign up for our event "heads-up" e-mails, or receive calendar updates. We're still learning about some of the bells and whistles the new website offers, as well as figuring out a few kinks, so please bear with us!

A huge thank you goes to Kristin Kaineg for all of her "above and beyond" work on the website design, trouble-shooting, and training. She has been amazing to work with. Kathy Bilton has generously agreed to continue being our webmaster for which we

are extremely grateful. She'll help us stay on top of the website updates and information as we move out of the design and setup phase and into our daily use and maintenance.

If you've not yet checked it out, please do so at [www.PotomacAudubon.org](http://www.PotomacAudubon.org). Happy surfing!

## Egg Hunt Set for April 1

PVAS will hold its fifth annual Spring Children's Egg Hunt the afternoon of Sunday, April 1, at the Yankauer Nature Preserve.

Unlike traditional egg hunts, this one combines fun with an educational experience!

The eggs used in the hunt are colored to resemble real eggs of wild birds. Children are challenged to find the naturally camouflaged eggs on the trail and, in the process, they discover how birds keep their eggs safe from predators. Other activities this year will include a "penguin egg walk" and an "ostrich egg balance challenge," as well as an egg-toss game.



*Theo Madison collects eggs*

This year's event will be for children ages 3-6. Eggs for them to collect will be hidden along trails at the preserve.

At the end of the event, collected eggs will be "traded in" for a sweet treat: decorating an egg shaped cookie to enjoy on the spot or take home and enjoy later along with lemonade.

This is always a great family-oriented event and parents should plan to go with their children as they walk on the trail.

The hunt will be held from 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Space will be limited and pre-registration is required. The fee is \$5 per child.

Registration is available at the Society's website at [www.PotomacAudubon.org](http://www.PotomacAudubon.org); look for the Spring Egg Hunt link.

For more information, contact Ellen Murphy, PVAS's Director of Youth Programs, at 304-676-8739 or [pvaprograms@gmail.com](mailto:pvaprograms@gmail.com).

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



Hello everyone:

I want to thank all of you who have already contributed to this year's PVAS annual fundraising appeal.

By now, even though economic conditions are still not good in this region, you've contributed over \$30,000. That's substantially more than you'd contributed by this time last year.

We're very grateful for all your support.

But we've still got a way to go to at least match last year's annual appeal total of \$31,596. And we've only got until the end of March to do it.

So please do give if you possibly can.

Don't worry if you're not able to give as much as you have in the past. Contributions of any size will be welcomed.

As always, PVAS is doing a lot of good things in the community—providing a wide variety of programs and activities that no one else is providing.

And as always, your support is critical to keeping these programs and activities going.

Any help you can provide will be appreciated.

—Peter Smith

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## School Program Update

PVAS' spring Watershed program is underway in seven schools in Jefferson and Berkeley Counties, two schools in Morgan County, and one school in Washington County, Maryland. Our new "Bugs and Beasties!" preschool program, which is being funded by the Two Rivers Giving Circle, begins this Spring, as well, and will bring nature into preschool classrooms through a series of half-hour programs.

St. Joseph's Parish School's third graders recently took feeding the birds to a new level by helping the preschoolers make toilet paper roll bird feeders as part of their monthly service projects with PVAS. The same students also installed a new bird feeding station at their school to replace one that was removed when PVAS help installed the new rain garden at St. Joe's last fall. The feeders and hanger stand were donated by PVAS members Gary and Diane Sylvester.

Environmental students at Faith Christian Academy have painted more foam eggs as wild bird eggs in anticipation of our annual Spring Egg Hunt in April. Over the years, some of our egg hunt eggs have been lost and Master Naturalist Sherry Cooper volunteered her students to help replace our supply as a way of teaching her students how birds use camouflage to help protect their eggs.

Teachers have also begun reserving spots for spring field trips to Yankauer Nature Preserve, including schools from Washington County, Maryland. Schools interested in visiting Yankauer should contact Ellen Murphy at [pvasprograms@gmail.com](mailto:pvasprograms@gmail.com).

## Potomac Valley Master Naturalists Begin Sixth Season

The sixth Master Naturalist course, coordinated by the Potomac Valley chapter, will begin the weekend of March 17-18, at Cacapon State Park. Classes will continue monthly through October.

The 2012 class is smaller than in some years, but 13 well-qualified and excited students will begin their study with classes on Soils, Geology, Ecology, and Nature Interpretation during the first weekend. Class members must complete 64 hours of classroom study and a minimum of 30 hours of volunteer time to qualify as a West Virginia Master Naturalist. Volunteer projects often include providing programs to school groups or interpretive programs to adults, leading birdwalks, assisting state biologists with research projects or gathering field data, helping with contact booths at fairs and festivals, or participating in invasive removal workdays. Participants have two years to complete their initial certification and can then maintain an active status by taking additional classes and participating in additional volunteer projects. The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist chapter has over 60 active members in the Eastern Panhandle area.

2012 Master Course dates and locations are:

March 17-18, Cacapon State Park  
 April 28, Shepherd University  
 May 19, TBA  
 June 23, NCTC  
 July 28, Cacapon State Park  
 August 11, NCTC  
 September 8, CraftWorks  
 October 6, Yankauer Nature Preserve  
 November/December, Annual Meeting

PVMN also sponsors Natural History Workshops which can be used by Certified Master Naturalists as recertification classroom hours, but are also open to the general public. These are posted at [www.PotomacAudubon.org](http://www.PotomacAudubon.org) and registration for the spring classes is now available.

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## Camp Registration Is Open

Online registrations for sessions at Audubon Discovery Camp are now open! To access all camp sessions, a link has been provided on the PVAS website main page which will take you directly to more information about all camp sessions. A credit card is needed to complete registrations.

Sessions this year will be held at Yankauer Nature Preserve, the Peter Burr Farm, and a new site near Shannondale. Camp dates are May 29-July 20. The first two weeks are for preschoolers; traditional day camp sessions for ages 6-13 begin June 11. The base price for sessions is \$150 per camper, but fees range from \$50 up to \$250 for the teen high adventure sessions.

If you have questions about camp or the registration process, send Ellen Murphy an email at [pvasprograms@gmail.com](mailto:pvasprograms@gmail.com) or call 304-676-8739.



## Camp Scholarship Opportunities!

If you know a young person, or if you ARE that young person who would enjoy learning about the natural world at summer camp, we encourage you to apply for a camp scholarship from PVAS. The deadline for applications is Friday, April 6, 2012, so act now! Scholarships are available for eligible young people within the PVAS membership area – the WV Eastern Panhandle and Washington County, Maryland. Camps, locations, ages, and dates are as follows:

- **Audubon Discovery Day Camp:** our own local camp at Yankauer Nature Preserve, at Peter Burr Farm Site, and at For Love of Children Outdoor Education Center; pre-school to grade 12; week-long sessions May 29 to July 20, 2012.
- **Oglebay Institute Junior Nature Camp:** at Dallas Pike (near Wheeling), WV; ages 10-15; July 22 - 28 or July 29 - August 4, 2012.
- **Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies:** at Capon Bridge, WV; ages 11-15; June 24 - July 7; July 10 - 24; or July 31 - August 13, 2012.
- **Mountain Adventures Camp:** at Mountain Institute, Spruce Knob, WV; ages 12-17; June 17 - 23, June 24 - 30, July 1 - 7, or July 8 - 14, 2012.
- **West Virginia State Conservation Camp:** at Camp Caesar, Webster County, WV; Campers must be 14 years old by January 2012 and not past 18 on June 1; June 11 - 16, 2012.
- **Trout Unlimited Conservation & Fishing Camp:** at Syria, Virginia (next to Shenandoah National Park), grades 8 through 11; June 24 - June 29, 2012.
- **Student Climate & Conservation Congress (SC3):** at the National Conservation and Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, WV; ages 15 - 18; June 24 - 29, 2012.
- **Digital Photo Camp:** at Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV; grades 9-12 (ages 14-18); June 25 - 29, 2012.

Please check our web site at [www.potomacaudubon.org](http://www.potomacaudubon.org) for updates or additional opportunities as they become available. The web site gives more details about individual camps, scholarship application forms, and links to the camps' web sites, providing lots more exciting information and camp descriptions! You may also contact scholarship coordinator Kathryn Henry at 304-876-6681, or [dhenry@myexcel.com](mailto:dhenry@myexcel.com).

Every year throughout its 30-year history PVAS has sent youngsters to camp on scholarships, supported by our fall bird seed sale. Additional community sources also support scholarships to our own day camp program at the Yankauer Nature Preserve. PVAS thanks these loyal supporters!

## “Race for the Birds” Only Two Months Away

Here's a reminder that our 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Race for the Birds will be held April 21 at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) near Shepherdstown.



To register, and for more information, go to the race website at [www.raceforthebirds.org](http://www.raceforthebirds.org). Or contact the race directors, James and Suzy Munnis, at [jmunnis@earthlink.net](mailto:jmunnis@earthlink.net) or 304-876-6784.

As before, the Race for the Birds will include two professionally timed races—one 4.9 miles long and another 7.7 miles long.

There will also be a self-timed 2-mile community jog/walk for families and individuals who prefer a slower pace, and a 1-mile “Fun Run” for children under 10 years of age.

The 4.9- and 7.7-mile races will follow trails that wind through the forests and fields of the 538-acre NCTC campus.

The 2-mile jog/walk will follow a course that will be very user-friendly for families with small children, and trail-friendly baby joggers will be appropriate and encouraged.

The trails on the NCTC campus are not normally open to the general public so this will be a good opportunity to visit and enjoy the facility's beautiful trail network.

The two races will begin at 9:00 a.m. The jog/walk will begin shortly afterwards and the children's Fun Run will be held at about 10:45 a.m.

The children's Fun Run will be free. Fees for the other portions of the event will range from \$15 to \$25.

All proceeds will be used to support PVAS's programs for children, and all fees will be tax deductible.

## There's Still Time to Register for Birding 101

As this is being written, there's still space available in this year's “Birding 101” course for beginning birders, which will be held during April.

This will be the 27<sup>th</sup> year we've offered this course.

It's taught by leading local bird experts, including Bob Dean and Matt Orsie.

It utilizes both evening classroom sessions and daytime field trips. Participants learn everything from bird identification to birding techniques and resources to field etiquette.

It focuses on bird species that are found in the Eastern Panhandle.

The evening classroom sessions will start on Thursday, April 5, and be held each of the following three Thursdays (April 12, 19, and 26). All of these sessions will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. at the National Conservation Training Center.

The field trips will be held at various locations around the Panhandle from roughly 7:00 a.m. to 12 noon on the Saturdays following the Thursday evening sessions (April 7, 14, 21, and 28).

Tuition for the full course package of four classroom sessions and four field trips is only \$75.

Registration is required. Online registration, mailable registration forms and more information are available on the PVAS website at [www.potomacaudubon.org](http://www.potomacaudubon.org). Or contact Ellen Murphy at 304-676-8739 or [pvasprograms@comcast.net](mailto:pvasprograms@comcast.net).



## Sign Up Now for Wee Naturalists Program

There's still time to sign up for our spring Wee Naturalists program, which begins later this month.

The program is designed to provide regular opportunities for children ages 3-5 to explore nature together safely under the guidance of an experienced PVAS instructor. At each session, children must be accompanied by a parent, grandparent, other adult relative, or guardian.

All sessions are held at the Yankauer Nature Preserve. Each will last from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Dates for this spring's sessions are March 21 and 22 and April 25 and 26.

In March, children will explore the theme "Let's Go Outside," a call to start exploring outside as winter is ending and spring is beginning. The April theme is "What Do April Showers Bring?" Here, children will explore the preserve's trails, looking for changes in nature brought about by spring rains.

The program is led by Suzi Taylor, of Sharpsburg, Maaryland, a veteran Audubon camp director who has a degree in environmental education.

To ensure that everyone receives close, personal attention, enrollment will be limited and pre-registration is required.

Easy on-line registration is available on our new website at [www.potomacaudubon.org](http://www.potomacaudubon.org). Families may register for one or both months. The fee is \$5 per child/adult team per session.

For more information, contact Ms. Taylor at 301-432-1908 or [tomandsuzi506@cs.com](mailto:tomandsuzi506@cs.com).

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## View from the Eagle's Nest

*by Sandy Sagalkin*

Bob Reynolds, who will take over as the new PVAS President in July, recently confided in me his reluctance to get into birding because it was all so overwhelming: so many birds, so little time. Sometimes it does appear overwhelming, especially when you go out with one of our more experienced trip leaders where they are identifying most birds by their songs. But one of the joys of birding is that it is not a competitive sport and each of us learns at his or her own speed. Moreover, it is a physical activity that you can enjoy into your 80s, if you are otherwise physically fit.

We kicked off our 2012 PVAS bird walks on February 4 at NCTC. We had over 20 people register for the walk, which I had planned for the Riverview Farm Trail that goes by the Bald Eagles' nest. Bob and his wife, Linda, came along and borrowed two pairs of our loaner binoculars, which we bought last year. We gathered in the Visitors parking lot, which has always been a good place to start birding at NCTC. Someone spotted a Northern Mockingbird and we spent a few minutes discussing the bird – how big it was, its shape, its long tail. We discussed its songs. The Northern Mockingbird may be able to sing a thousand or more songs or phrases, make up new ones, and mimic other birds and sounds, and it usually sings each song or phrase three or more times before switching. In fact, we can usually identify the mockingbird by its song alone. We can

also distinguish the mockingbird from its close relatives, the Gray Catbird and the Brown Thrasher, by the number of times each repeats a phrase.

We saw about 25 species that day at NCTC and had especially good looks at the two eagles; one on the nest tree, the other perched nearby. NCTC is also a great place to see Eastern Bluebirds and they gave showy displays that Saturday. The Riverview Farm Trail was beautiful and the walk took about 2½ hours. Everyone had a good time and I hope everyone learned something about the birds we saw that day.



All of our birding activities are for your enjoyment and your education. Our hope is that if you learn about birds and their habitat, you will become their advocate. Many bird populations are in serious decline. PVAS has a number of ways to help you improve your birding skills, in addition to our bird walks. In April, we start our core birding workshop, "Birding 101," which will set you on your way in birding. Some of the best birders in PVAS started off in Birding 101 and were inspired to pursue birding seriously. This fall, we hope to begin to offer Advanced Birding workshops that will focus on specific groups of birds, such as raptors or warblers, or a workshop on bird songs.

PVAS also has a new website to help you learn about birds and birding; click on "Birding" and a drop down menu will take you to our new PVAS Birding Trails site, a Birder's Blog, Birding 101 information or other birding resources. So please join us and become a birder.

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## Join a Hike to Jefferson's Rock!

PVAS invites hikers of all ages and abilities to join veteran trail hiker Dave Michener for a short hike up to Jefferson's Rock at Harpers Ferry on Sunday, March 25.

Participants will meet at the Harpers Ferry train station at 9 a.m.

Anyone with an interest is welcome to come along. There is no fee for the hike but parking in the train station lot will cost \$5.

Bring a camera to capture the amazing views from Jefferson Rock. Thomas Jefferson visited this spot on October 25, 1783, and called it "perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in nature."

On the way back to the train station, the group will hike along part of the Appalachian Trail.

This hike will be relatively easy but it will include some steep steps. It will take about an hour. It will take place rain or shine.

Participants should wear sturdy footwear and dress appropriately for the prevailing weather conditions.

Pre-registration is encouraged but not required. To pre-register or for more information contact Dave at [DaveMichener@msn.com](mailto:DaveMichener@msn.com) or 703-973-6435.

## Join Cacapon State Park Tree ID Trip

PVAS will offer a winter tree-identification field trip at Cacapon State Park the morning of Saturday, March 3.

West Virginia state forester Ben Kunze will lead the trip. He will show how to identify trees through such clues as their branching habits and overall shape, twigs and buds, and bark.

Participants will meet at 10 a.m. at the Park's Nature Center.

There is no fee, and anyone with an interest is invited to attend.

Pre-registration is recommended but not required. To pre-register or for more information contact Kelly Wolf at [kheldreth@hotmail.com](mailto:kheldreth@hotmail.com) or 304-229-6229.



The total time of the trip will be about two hours.

If there has been a major snow the day before or the weather is especially inclement on the day of the trip, call Ms. Wolf to make sure the trip is still on.

If the trip is snowed out, it will be rescheduled to March 10.

Those who participate should be sure to dress warmly and wear sturdy footwear.

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## Rich Variety of Local Birding Trips Scheduled

PVAS is sponsoring a rich variety of local birding trips during the month of March and the first week of April.

All the trips are free and anyone with an interest is welcome to come along, regardless of their birding skills. Children will be welcome. Binoculars will be available for anyone who needs them.

For each trip, everyone should dress appropriately for the terrain and prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water and bug spray.

Trips may be cancelled in the event of snow or steady rain. Various trip details could also change depending on weather or recent bird sightings.

The specific dates, destinations and details are as follows:

**Wednesday, March 7: Harpers Ferry National Historical Park's Murphy's Farm.** The historic Murphy Farm, which comprises 99 acres, was the site of both a Civil War battle and, later, a landmark meeting of African-American leaders that led to the creation of the NAACP. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park acquired the farm in 2002, thereby preventing a 188-home subdivision that had been planned for the land.

The walk will involve about two miles of moderate hiking, mostly through fields. Species likely to be sighted include Bald Eagles,

Red-tailed or Red-Shouldered Hawks, vultures, Common Ravens, woodpeckers, Cedar Waxwings and Eastern Meadowlarks.

Participants will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Murphy Farm parking lot (at the Route 340 light at Harpers Ferry, turn into the National Park entrance, Longshore Drive, but make an immediate right-hand turn toward the KOA campground; at the stop sign, turn left onto Murphy Road.)

No pre-registration is required. For more information or to check on possible cancellation because of weather, contact trip leader Deb Hale at [debhale72@gmail.com](mailto:debhale72@gmail.com) or 304-535-1528 or Sandy Sagalkin at [monsansagalkin@myactv.net](mailto:monsansagalkin@myactv.net) or 240-291-6465.

**Friday, March 9: Special evening trip to Back Creek Valley to observe the display flight of the American Woodcock.** Spend an evening enjoying the *peents* and aerial displays of the American Woodcock with expert Wil Hershberger.

Because the trip destination is private property with limited parking, participants should plan to meet at the Eagle Plaza shopping center on Route 9 (just north of the Hedgesville High School) and carpool from there. The trip group will depart from there at 5:45 p.m. and arrive back around 8:00 p.m., depending on the display activity.

Be sure to wear clothing appropriate for brushy habitats. In the event of rain the trip will be rescheduled to March 10.

No pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Wil at [wil@natureimagesandsounds.com](mailto:wil@natureimagesandsounds.com).

**Sunday, March 11: Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve in Berkeley County.** Formerly marshy farmland, the preserve property was restored as a wetland by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the 1990s. It was the first USDA wetland restoration project in the state of West Virginia.

The property was donated to PVAS last year by Stauffer and Elinor Miller, of Charlottesville, Virginia.

The preserve is only 46 acres in size, so the distances to be walked are not great. However, the terrain will include wet meadows and marshlands, as well as dry areas, so waterproof footwear is strongly recommended.

Possible species to be sighted include Bald Eagles, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered hawks, several woodpecker and sparrow species, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Great Blue Herons, Northern Mockingbirds, Blue Jays, possibly a Virginia Rail and other varieties.

The Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve is located in Back Creek Valley in Berkeley County, one-half mile south of Shanghai, on the east side of Back Creek Valley Road (County Route 7).

Participants can meet at the marsh at about 8:00 a.m. or, if they wish to carpool, meet at 7:45 a.m. at the Eagle Plaza parking lot on Route 9 (about 1 mile east of Hedgesville, between Hedgesville High School and the Food Lion shopping center).

No pre-registration is required. Sandy Sagalkin will lead this trip. For more information or to check on possible cancellation because of weather, contact him at the email address or telephone number shown above.

**Wednesday, March 21: Shenandoah River sites in Jefferson County.** This trip will last about three hours. It will mostly involve driving from place to place by car, with little walking. It will focus on ducks, grebes, gull, terns, and any other birds encountered.

Participants should plan to meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot in front of the Martin's Supermarket in the Jefferson Crossroads Shopping Center off Route 340 in Charles Town.

No pre-registration is required. Sandy Sagalkin will lead this trip. Contact him for more information or to check on possible cancellation because of weather.

**Saturday, March 31: The campus of the National Conservation Training Center outside Shepherdstown.** The Center's 538-acre campus is not normally open to the public, so this is a good opportunity to visit. The campus contains a mix of fields and forestland, and provides good habitat for a rich variety of bird species.

This trip will last about three hours and involve walking about two miles over moderate terrain. It will focus on winter visitors, such as Bald Eagles, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered hawks, several woodpecker species, Dark-eyed Juncos, Eastern Bluebirds, waterfowl on the Potomac River, and year-round birds.

Participants should plan to meet at 8 a.m. at the visitor's parking lot in front of the Center's Main Building.

Please note that because the Center is a federal facility, pre-registration will be needed to enter the grounds. To pre-register, contact trip leader Sandy Sagalkin at the email address or phone number shown above no later than Monday, March 26.

**Wednesday, April 4: C&O Canal bird walk at Harpers Ferry.** The walk will cover about four miles of level terrain along the towpath.

Participants should plan to meet at 8 a.m. outside John Brown's Fort, where Potomac and Shenandoah Streets meet in Harpers Ferry National Park. Parking is available along Potomac Street near the train station.

The walk will start at the Point, proceed over the footbridge and continue about two miles northwest along the C&O Canal towpath and back. Possible species to be sighted include Bald Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, vultures, migrating waterfowl, woodpeckers, kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Winter Wrens, Brown Creepers and other species.

Deb Hale will lead this trip. For more information or to check on possible cancellation because of weather, contact her at the email address or phone number shown above, or contact Sandy Sagalkin.

## March Program at NCTC Will Focus on "Rat Island" Book

Our March program at the National Conservation Training Center will feature author William Stolzenburg discussing his new book, *Rat Island: Predators in Paradise and the World's Greatest Wildlife Rescue*.

The program will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 14, in Room 151 of the Instructional West Building.

Admission is free and anyone is welcome to attend.

Stolzenburg's book examines the complex issues that surround efforts to restore indigenous habitats by exterminating introduced predators. In particular, it focuses on a recently successful effort to rid an Aleutian island of brown rats that were introduced by shipwreck centuries ago.

Stolzenburg is one of the nation's leading natural-history writers. A 2010 Alicia Patterson Journalism Fellow, he has written hundreds of magazine articles about the science and spirit of saving wild creatures.

He is also the author of the 2008 book *Where the Wild Things Were*, and was a screenwriter for the 2009 documentary *Lords of Nature: Life in a Land of Great Predators*. He lives in Shepherdstown.

## The Hummers Are Coming!

Want to know when hummingbirds are about to arrive in our area? According to data from [hummingbirds.net](http://hummingbirds.net), our area saw its first ruby-throated hummingbirds around April 12 last year.

So clean out those feeders and get ready to mix-up the sugar water for the little guys!



*Ruby-throated hummingbird* by: Steve Maslowski-USFWS

Hummingbirds get the energy they need to maintain their astonishing metabolism primarily from flower nectar and the sugar water they find at feeders. For protein and other nutrients, they also eat soft-bodied insects and spiders. According to Bob Sargent, expert and author of the wild bird guide *Ruby-Throated Hummingbird*, "Hummers need nectar to power the bug eating machine that they are." Think of them as miniature flycatchers, and sugar is just the fuel for getting their real nourishment. You might try setting out some overripe fruit—banana peels are good—to attract flies for your hummers.

### Filling the Feeder

The sugar water we use to fill hummingbird feeders is only a supplement to the birds' natural diet. It's not necessary to buy a commercial "nectar" mix that includes additional vitamins, protein, or other substances, because the birds get all they need from the flower nectar and insects they consume. All they want from us is the quick energy they get from ordinary white cane sugar. It's just fuel for chasing bugs.

Here's the recipe for artificial nectar (syrup):

- Use one part ordinary white cane sugar to four parts water.
- Boil the water if you wish, but it's not necessary. The microorganisms that cause fermentation don't come from the water; they are transported to the feeder on hummingbird bills.
- Store unused syrup in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

This mixture approximates the average sucrose content (about 21%) of the flowers favored by North American hummingbirds, without being so sweet it attracts too many insects.

## Reminder for Landscape Gardening Conference

Potomac Valley Audubon Society has joined a variety of other area organizations in cosponsoring a landscape gardening conference that will be held at Shenandoah University in Winchester, Virginia, on April 14.

This one-day conference is entitled "Tomorrow's Landscapes: More Birds, Butterflies, and Bees for YOUR Garden" is organized by the Piedmont/Blue Ridge Horticulture Society and Shenandoah University's Environmental Studies Department.

Experts will provide valuable advice on ways homeowners can improve birds and butterfly habitat with plant choices suited to the mid-Atlantic climate and soils.

Space will be limited and preregistration is required. The registration fee will be \$99, which includes lunch and drinks. For more information and to register, go to [www.tomorrowlandscapes.org](http://www.tomorrowlandscapes.org). If questions remain, contact Genie Cate at [info@pbrhs.org](mailto:info@pbrhs.org) or call 540-877-2002.

## Nature Writing Group Announces Selections for 2012

The Potomac Valley Nature Writing Group promotes the art and appreciation of nature writing. Members meet monthly for book discussions. The selections for 2012 include *The Trees in My Forest* by Bernd Heinrich, *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature* by Linda Lear, *Tinkering with Eden* by Kim Todd, and *My Summer in the Sierra* by John Muir. PVNWG welcomes new members who love reading, writing, and nature! For more information, check out the PVNWG blog at <http://potomacvalleynaturewritinggroup.blogspot.com> or email [pvnaturewriters@gmail.com](mailto:pvnaturewriters@gmail.com).

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

Details and registration available at

[www.PotomacAudubon.org](http://www.PotomacAudubon.org)

- March 7, 8am: Bird walk at the Harpers Ferry
- March 11, 8am: Birding trip to Stauffer's Marsh
- March 14, 7pm: PVAS program at NCTC
- March 17, 10am: Wildlife Signs walk at Cacapon State Park
- March 21, 8am: Birding trip along Shenandoah River
- March 25, 9am: Hike to Jefferson Rock at Harpers Ferry
- March 31, 8am: Birding trip at NCTC (registration required)
- March 31, 9am: Workshop on Edible Wild Plants (registration required)
- April 1, 2pm: Children's Egg Hunt at Yankauer (registration required)
- April 4, 8am: Bird walk on the C&O Canal near Harpers Ferry.
- April 5, 7pm: Birding 101 Kickoff (registration required)
- April 11, 7pm: PVAS program at NCTC
- April 14, 11am-4pm: Wildflower Festival at Yankauer
- April 14: Landscape gardening conference at Shenandoah University
- April 21: "This Race is for the Birds" at NCTC

## JOIN PVAS TODAY!

ALL of your dues will stay here to support local PVAS efforts and help us grow! And here's what you'll get:

- Access to a wide variety of PVAS programs and events for adults and children, including field trips, special events, workshops and courses, and environmental projects.
- A subscription to Valley Views, the PVAS newsletter
- E-mail alerts about events and programs of special interest
- Satisfaction of supporting conservation efforts, youth and adult nature education, individual and family recreation, and a wide array of programs in your community.

To become a local member, send in the form below and enclose a check for \$20 (\$15 for seniors and students). Make the check out to "PVAS." This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year.

### Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (optional): \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*To save postage costs, PVAS regularly sends its newsletter by e-mail. You can be assured that we do not share email addresses with anyone. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by U.S. mail check here: \_\_\_\_.*

**Clip and mail this form to:**

**Membership Chair, PVAS  
 PO Box 578  
 Shepherdstown, WV 25443**

**Thank you for your support!**

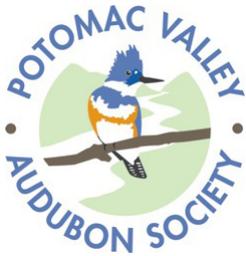


## If you'd rather join the National Audubon Society:

Some people prefer National Audubon Society membership, which includes a subscription to the Society's Audubon magazine. To become a National member, go to the Society's website at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org) and click on "join." If you join National Audubon and reside in Berkeley, Jefferson or Morgan counties in West Virginia, or in Washington County Maryland, you will automatically become a member of PVAS and have access to our events, an e-mail copy of newsletter and e-mail alerts. However almost all of your dues payments will go to the National Audubon Society; only a small percentage will go to PVAS.

### RED TEXT - DOT ALERT

If red text or a red dot appears on your mailing label, your membership may have expired and this could be your last issue of Valley Views. Take action to renew your Local membership. If you are a National Audubon Society member, the National Society will notify you directly when your membership is up for renewal.



Potomac Valley Audubon Society  
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 Shepherdstown, WV 25443  
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DATED MATERIALS

A proud partner of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Combined Federal Campaign.

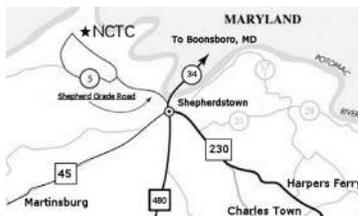


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The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April, at the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, WV, in the Instructional West Building. 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://www.potomacaudubon.org>. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

**PVAS BOARD**  
 The PVAS Board meets every other month on the first Thursday of the month (Sept.-June). Meeting location will be announced prior to meetings. These meetings are open to all PVAS members.

**PVAS Officers and Board Members**

- President: Peter Smith 304 876-1139 .....pvsmith@frontiernet.net
- Vice President: Bob Reynolds ..... robert.reynolds40@gmail.com
- Secretary: Mina Goodrich ..... larrymina@peoplepc.com
- Treasurer: Lex Miller ..... pamandlex@frontiernet.net
- Board Development: Wayne Braunstein 304 728-7181 ..... wbraun@frontiernet.net
- Board Members-at-Large: Don Briggs ..... ldonaldbriggs@gmail.com
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- Leigh Jenkins ..... jenkinsleigh@hotmail.com
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- Jesse Morgan ..... jmorgan@a-zoneenvironmental.com
- Kathy Stolzenburg ..... kstolzenburg@gmail.com
- Jane Vanderhook ..... janehook@frontiernet.net

**Ex Officio Board Members**

- Diana Mullis 304 267-3482 ..... dianamullis@aol.com

**Emeritus Board Members**

- Jean Neely ..... jeaneely@comcast.net

**Special Contacts**

- Executive Director: Kristin Alexander 304 676-3397 ..... kaemail730@aol.com
- Web Master: Kathy Bilton ..... kathy@fred.net
- PVAS Wildlife Rescue Coord: Diana Mullis ..... 304-267-3482