

Valley Views

**Potomac
Valley
Audubon
Society**

Volume 22, Issue 2

October 2003

WVDNR Seeks Information on Barn Owls

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources is interested in determining the status of barn owls in the state, according to Kieran O'Malley, wildlife biologist with DNR's Wildlife Resources Section. Although barn owls are declining in the eastern United States, WVDNR biologists located six new breeding sites in the eastern panhandle during 2001-2002. "These new nesting sites have been very productive and we are interested in determining where all the young owls are going," said O'Malley.

Barn owl nesting records in West Virginia and surrounding states suggest that the large open agricultural areas such as those found in the **eastern panhandle**, Teays and Ohio River valleys and the southeast counties represent excellent habitat. "These owls are very beneficial to have around open fields and barnyards because they eat a lot of mice and rats," O'Malley said. "We need help locating owls because their habitat exists mostly on farms and other private land."

Barn owls commonly nest and roost in barns, silos, and abandoned buildings. "Two to three inch long pellets or large white/light brown feathers on the floor of a building indicate you may have barn owls living there," said O'Malley. "Many farmers discover they have owls on their property in late summer when they are preparing their barns and silos for filling. If an owl nest conflicts with a landowner's activities, we would definitely encourage you to contact us so we can help protect the owls without impeding your business."

Please report barn owl sightings to West Virginia Division of Natural Resources in:

Romney at (304) 822-3551

Elkins at (304) 637-0245



Dolly Sods – Weekend of Bird Banding and Nature Hikes

We will be experiencing one of the most unique and expansive natural areas of the state on October 4 and 5 when we assemble at Dolly Sods for a wonderful weekend in magnificent natural surroundings. We will meet at 8 a.m. on Saturday morning at the parking area across from the Red Creek Campground. From there it's a short walk out a graveled path to the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory. We will observe the bird banding operation that has been in operation since 1958 as a fall migration census station.

Bob Dean will be banding then and he will give us the lowdown on how the operation works and what data they gather on the migrants that they capture. You can stay until the banding ends at noon, or you can go off on a hike on your own. Then join Bob on a field trip to a natural area near Bear Rocks at the north end of Dolly Sods. There we will experience first hand the many interesting plants of the heath barrens and the emerging red spruce forest.

Dolly Sods continues on Page 3...

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

News from the *Yankauer Nature Preserve*...

Third Annual "This Race is for the Birds!"

Registration has begun! The race, walk and "fun run" is set for October 25, the same day as the NCTC Open House! Check out our website, www.potomacaudubon.org view the flyer and to register on-line. Spread the word and post it where you can! We are looking for volunteers to set up, register runners/walkers, serve as course marshals, help at the finish line, and take down the course. Volunteers should arrive at NCTC between 7 and 7:30 and stay until 10:30-11. To volunteer, contact Diana Gaviria, race co-director at jpikester@adelphia.net or 304-274-2690. This is our fall fundraiser, so please help make it a success!

For mail in registration, the form is below.

Program Volunteers Needed!

The phone has started to ring requesting fall (and even spring) programs at the Preserve! The demand is ever increasing, plus we're going to be piloting programs for grades K to 6 this year!!! If you are interested in becoming a trained program volunteer, please contact Kristin at PVASmail@aol.com or 304-676-3397. If you know others who may be interested, please pass the information on to them!

Another Successful Day of Caring

Once again, Yankauer was the beneficiary of a wonderful cadre of hard working volunteers on the United Way's Day of Caring. Please go out and observe the handiwork of volunteers from the Eastern Panhandle Native Plant Society, Jefferson High School, Master Gardeners, PVAS, United Way, and Shepherdstown Rotary. A hearty thank you also goes to the Gardener's Exchange Group who served a delicious homemade lunch to the 40+ volunteers. This crew has become famous for their lunches and in an informal poll, was voted best lunch served at Day of Caring! Thank you to everyone involved, especially Jean Neely who coordinated this year's event.

PVAS Presents at Chesapeake Bay Conference

Potomac Valley Audubon Society is on the program to present our Watershed Education Initiative at the third Biennial Chesapeake Bay Education Summit in Chevy Chase, Maryland on September 23. The Summit provides the opportunity for attendees to share their experiences and learn about new, innovative programs aimed at providing meaningful outdoor experiences to students throughout the Bay watershed. The conference is co-sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Chesapeake Bay Office.

APPLICATION FORM: Tear & Mail to "Race for the Birds," With check payable to "PVAS,"

C/O Jane Lewis, 37 Galloway Rd., Martinsburg, WV 25401. Questions? Call 304-263-8624

Or Register online www.active.com

Name: _____ Address: _____ SVR Runner Yes No

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

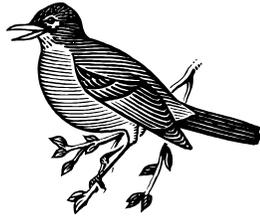
Phone(day): _____ (evening) _____ E-mail: _____ Age on 10/26 _____ Male Female

Waiver: In consideration of my application and permitting me to participate in this event, I hereby take action for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf: (1) Waive, release and discharge from any and all liability for my death, disability, personal injury, property damage, property theft or actions of any kind which might hereafter accrue to me including my traveling to and from this event, THE FOLLOWING ENTITIES OR PERSONS: event coordinator; event director; event committee; Potomac Valley Audubon Society; The Nature Conservancy of West Virginia; the United States Government; including but not limited to the Department of Interior, the Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Conservation Training Center; Jefferson County, WV; Shenandoah Valley Runners; volunteers; event sponsors; their directors, officers, employees; volunteers' representatives, and agents, and the event holders; (2) Indemnify and Hold Harmless the entities or person mentioned in this paragraph from any and all liability or claims made as a result of participation in this event, whether caused by the negligence of releasees or otherwise.

Signature _____ Date _____

(Parents or Guardian's signature if participant under 18 years)

President's Perch



Hope you have been out enjoying Indian Summer, checking out Mars, and looking for all those fall migrants. As I write this I still have hummingbirds at my feeder, but they will probably be gone by the time this newsletter reaches you.

I'm really looking forward to Will Hershberger's program on "Songs of Insects" (October 8), and the field trip on October 11 ... I've always wondered what makes all those sounds in the summer nights.

These cool evenings have me thinking of pumpkins, wood fires, and all those beautiful leaves. Speaking of fall, it's time to think of birdseed, too - you will find this year's order form tucked inside this issue. Orders are due October 15 and delivery is November 1 - with free storage at Gower's in Ranson and Williamsport ... so order your winter supply of our high quality seed ... your order will help PVAS send some kids to summer camp and brighten those winter days with beautiful birds.

We have lots of fun things to do this fall, come join us...
Diana Mullis, President

Dolly Sods continued from Page 4...

If you would like to camp for the weekend Bob will show you a wonderful area just south of the banding station for easy morning access. There are also accommodations at the Canaan Valley State Park Lodge (1-800 225-5982 or email at <http://www.callwva.com> www.callwva.com) about 35 minutes west of Dolly Sods and at the Smoke Hole Caverns Motel (304 257-4442) on Rt. 28 south of Petersburg about 30 minutes east of Dolly Sods. See pages 38-39 in the DeLorme West Virginia Atlas or call Bob for specific directions at 304 754-3042.

October 25 – Owlnet Field Trip

As we did last year, we will join Steve Huy at the Project Owlnet banding operation on Lamb's Knoll on the border of Frederick and Washington counties in Maryland. The owls don't start moving until late in the evening, so we plan on arriving around 9:00pm. Those who went on this field trip last year will remember the beautiful little screech owls that Steve netted and banded. Group size is limited, so if you are interested please call Ken or Patsy Hunter at 304-725-3936 or email at phunter@npca.org. We'll need to know who is coming by Thursday Oct. 23.

October 8 Meeting Program – Songs of Insects-Wil Hershberger

Why are birds silent in late summer? Who are the singers of late summer? Have you ever wondered how and why insects make sounds? How are high fidelity sound recordings of insects made and why? Come to the October meeting to find out!

Join us as we welcome PVAS member Wil Hershberger.

Wil Hershberger – Field Trip Follow Up

A night hike with Wilbur Hershberger and listening for the sounds of the evening—especially insects—will follow Wil's program at the monthly meeting in Leetown on Wednesday October 8. Wil's field trip on Saturday October 11, at 7 p.m., will start from the new C & O parking lot on the Maryland side of Shepherdstown. (Coming from Shepherdstown on Rt 480, go straight, cross the Potomac River bridge, take the first right turn and follow the signs to the parking lot on the left.)

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)
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P.O. Box 578
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

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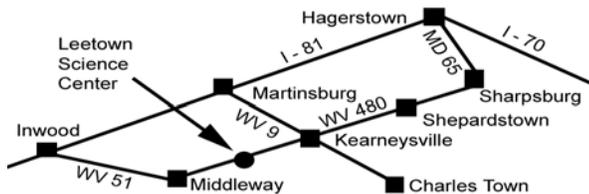
DATED MATERIALS

MAIL TO:

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The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:30PM on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April, in the auditorium at the USGS Leetown Science Center, Leetown/Keameysville, 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 here or see <http://potomacaudubon.org>. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

PVAS BOARD
 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
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 - International: Bill Belton 304 258-3067 wbelton@intrepid.net
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 - Web Master: Kathy Bilton kathy@fred.net
 - PVAS Wildlife Rescue Coord: Diana Mullis 304-267-3482 & 304 724-4500(day)