

# Northeast Pennsylvania Audubon Society

## Eco~Notes

Spring 2011

Volume 39, No. 1

Photo by Georgette Pascotto

### The Music of Spring

Our Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, BIRDING BY EAR program at

1 p.m. at the PPL Environmental Learning Center will be a great opportunity to become more familiar with the sounds birds make. Spring is when birds become most vociferous, trying to

be noticed by their mates and rivals as they set up their territories, and trying not to be noticed by humans or other predators. So, as they can be quite elusive, most serious birders identify birds more by ear than by eye. Our expert birders will help you become more in tune with the sounds that birds make. This program is free and open to all ages.

Since practice makes perfect, we will have three birding events in May—the height of birding season when you can practice your new-found skills:

- Saturday May 7<sup>th</sup> all day—International Migratory Bird Day. You can be part of a team to count birds; call Barbara at 570-253-2364.
- Saturday May 14<sup>th</sup> at 8 a.m.—Birds & Blooms walk at our own Browning Beaver Meadow. Call Joan at 570-228-1704.
- Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 8 a.m.—Bird Walk at Jadwin Dam. Call Barbara at 570-253-2364.

### Eco-Notes by E-mail

Eco-Notes is available by e-mail. It appears in the same colorful, easy-to-read format as the paper version, but without the cost, the paper, or the ink. Go to our Web site, [nepaaudubon.org](http://nepaaudubon.org), to sign up.



### Snowshoe Hike

Fourteen people enjoyed a snowshoe hike at Varden Conservation Area on Sunday, February 6<sup>th</sup>. The outing was co-sponsored by Audubon and Promised Land State Park, which provided snowshoes to those who needed them. With the hard crust, few wildlife tracks were seen, except for some deer tracks and what we thought might be bear tracks (sometimes male bears come out of slumber during the winter to wander). The noise made by fourteen snowshoers was not conducive to hearing or seeing wildlife, but getting outside for exercise and camaraderie made the day a success. Thanks to Brian Flores, assistant manager at Promised Land State Park, and Pete Snyder for leading us.

**Good exercise, good fellowship, good food, and a good feeling**—what more could you ask? Join us to pick up litter along Route 191 near Lake Ariel, PA, on Saturday, April 30, at 9 a.m., and enjoy a delicious breakfast afterwards. Call Marge at 570-253-9599 to sign up.

### Our Mission Statement

Our goal is to conserve and restore our environment to benefit humanity as well as birds and other wildlife through education, action, and advocacy.

# Letter Sent by NEPAS to the Delaware River Basin Commission

The following comments are made regarding the newly proposed draft regulations on gas drilling within the Delaware Basin.

The Board of Directors of the Northeast PA Audubon Society has reviewed the proposed regulations and commends you, your staff and the Commission members with presenting a thorough and complete document which has incorporated Best management practices for drilling, as well as strict adherence to requirements set forth in the Compact, Comprehensive Plan and SPW goals administered through and by the DRBC.

We believe that the document meets and addresses our concerns for water withdrawals and waste treatment, reuse and recycling of “frac” fluids, the containment of backflow and monitoring of final disposition. We are in agreement not only with the use of monitoring wells around the drill site but also the required notification of landowners and municipalities prior to any drilling activity. The inclusion in section 7.5 of the Post Construction Report is a breath of fresh air for residences of our region, since Pennsylvania has limited requirements in this regard.

There are a few recommendations that the Board feels appropriate with respect to wildlife and habitat protection as follows:

-Sec. 7.5 (3) (iv) makes clear that best management practices must be included and considered within the NGDP and is consistent with limiting the amount of fragmentation created in forested areas.

-Of greatest concern is allowing well pads within 500 feet of wetlands. The geography and hydrology of the region contains numerous wetlands of greater or lesser degree widely distributed throughout. These setbacks should be increased at least to a minimum of 1000 feet. The pad construction should be under constant monitoring by an independent engineer (chosen from a DRBC roster) contracted with the gas driller, whose sole purpose is to see that no mistakes are made by the construction crew and that all requirements for construction are met.

The immediate drilling of a maximum of 6 wells per pad should take place soon after the pad is constructed prior to drilling another site. This will reduce any ongoing and future disturbance of the surrounding landscape and it will minimize future accidents from occurring.

-We believe that all activity associated with gas extraction in the floodplain should be prohibited. Pennsylvania has no regulations to restrict the gas drilling industry in this regard. We believe it should, especially with a recent history of major flooding in the area. The proposed new regulations allow drilling in the floodplain and we are opposed to such activity even though the DRBC Compact allows various operations in those areas.

-To lessen habitat fragmentation and impacts to wildlife, well-pad siting should be on already existing open areas and limits placed on access roads built into forested areas. Gathering lines should follow roads already created and compressor stations should be shared by drilling operators in the area.

-Very close monitoring for the introduction of invasives, both plant and animal, must be continual and habitat restoration must be in keeping with the area prior to gas drilling disturbance. This may not be in keeping with the wishes of the landowner; with the large numbers of wells projected for the area in the next 10 years, if the character of the region is to be maintained, then restoration should be as close as possible to its original state.

One final comment concerns the ability to monitor the operations as described in the regulations. Pennsylvania is clearly not equipped to monitor increased drilling activity and the legislative requirements are very minimal. It is our hope that the DRBC will have or contract with independent inspectors to monitor those aspects required in the regulations.

Thank you for your diligence and professionalism in managing the many issues and voices in producing a well balanced document for future implementation.

—Barbara Leo, Conservation Chair

## Welcome New Members

Robert Arnold	Virginia Dutton	Joseph MacLalek	Kendal Parker	Nancy Stowell
Judith Arrison	Vanessa Ellsworth	Frederick C. Keihn	Abigail K. Peck	Stacey N. Strongin
Rita Bagatta	Robert Essex	Linda O. Leary	James and Mary Pierce	Betty J. Sturek
William L. Baltess	Debbie Fargo	Candance Marino	John Portonova	Susan Thomes
Lois Berry	Kathryn Fuller	J. and M. Marlowe	Paula Puchalski	Virginia Thompson
Janet Bisset	Lynne M. Girard	Kevin F. Martinell	Rose E Raub.	Doris Vasky
Garvin Bixler	John Goldman	Ann Maslousky	Grace Reifler	Judith M. Vasquez
Luann Bixler	Paul Gregorski	Sharon McCormick	Ruth Richter	Mr. and Mrs. David Wacker
Rene Bodt	Carolyn Gregorski	Anne C. Meehan	Roger Rick	Jo Ann Washko
Andrew Brandt	Lorraine Haenggi	James Mennen	Joan Rothrock	Russel I. Weller
Denise Bright	Robert Haftel	Catherine Menning	Andrea J. Sable	James Wetherill
Paul Capezza	Sharon Hedden	Bethany Miller	Carol Allen Sarao	Margaret White
Robert Clark	Carrie Hiemenz	Judy Millett	Mr. & Mrs. Phillip Schuller	Tom Elaine Wilbur
Catherine Corse	Margaret L. Hofsommer.	Ray Morgan	Mary Sedorovitz Ann	Gay Williams
Mary Curley	Evelyn Hoops	Leo Moskovitz	Natalie Shinn	Eleanor E. Young
Nancy M. Cush	Irv Hunsberger	Elizabeth Novack	John L. Singleterry	
Louis Darocy	Eva Jakubek	Pam Oravec	Evleyn D. Smith	
Eileen Downard	Barbara J. Jones	Mary B. Palmer	Daniel Soos	

## Volunteers Needed for 2011

The 2011 Pennsylvania Migration Count will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2011. Similar to a Christmas Bird Count in many ways, the Pennsylvania Migration Count is county-based. We are presently seeking volunteers to help cover Wayne County. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. While observations can be made over a 24-hour period, it's up to you to decide how much time you want to contribute. Results from the count are compiled across the state and published in *Pennsylvania Birds*, our state ornithological journal. If you are interested in participating, please contact Chris Fischer at [cfischer17@gmail.com](mailto:cfischer17@gmail.com) for more information.

## Rick Mikula, That Butterfly Guy



Rick Mikula is an award-winning author, photographer, rain-forest tour guide, and butterfly farmer. He has appeared on *Animal Planet*, The Discovery Channel, and *Pennsylvania Outdoors*. On Saturday, March 26, at 2 p.m., Rick will present a free program at the Honesdale Chamber of

Commerce building, sponsored by NEPAS. He will show how to organically increase the number of butterflies in your garden and how to nurture them once they are there. Rick's programs are fast paced, high energy, and loaded with laughs and humorous anecdotes. It should be a fun, informative afternoon!

## Bedrock Environmental Laws and the EPA Itself Are Under Attack

Forty years ago, under President Nixon, Congress passed one of America's strongest environmental laws, the Clean Air Act. The Act gives the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the responsibility to assess new dangers from air pollution, protecting the health of our families. As we go to press, some members of Congress are working with big polluters in an effort to attack this piece of legislation. They also want to prevent the EPA from closing loopholes in the Clean Water Act. This would jeopardize the drinking water for 117 million Americans. Big polluters would rather not have to deal with regulations that get in the way of their profits over the health and welfare of us, the taxpayers.

Why should you care? Because you have a right to clean air and water. The air you breathe and water you drink directly affect your health. Dirty air and water make more people sick, and that affects your pocketbook, and, I hope, your moral outrage.

And now there are calls from some in Congress to completely abolish the Environmental Protection Agency!

Why should you care? Because we are more in need than ever of strong oversight to guard our health and safety in the face of catastrophic climate change, and government in the pockets of polluters.

### What You Can Do:

#### **Contact your members in Congress:**

Senator Robert Casey: DC Phone: 202-224-6324

DC Fax: 202-228-0604, Scranton Phone: 570-941-0930

Email Address: <http://casey.senate.gov/contact/>

Senator Pat Toomey: DC Phone: 202-224-4254

DC Fax: 202-228-0284

Email Address: [http://toomey.senate.gov/contact\\_form.cfm](http://toomey.senate.gov/contact_form.cfm)

Representative Tom Marino (10<sup>th</sup> District):

DC Phone: 202-225-3731, DC FAX 202-225-9594,

Tunkhannock Phone: 570-836-8020

E-mail Address: <https://marino.house.gov/contact-me/email-me>

#### Tell them that:

- you want Congress to stop attacking the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the EPA. Tell them you want these laws to be fully enforced for the benefit of all.
- you want the EPA to remain a strong and fully funded agency fulfilling its mission "to protect human health and the environment."

#### **Send a message to President Obama:**

Pollution from burning oil and coal produces a host of serious, life-threatening health problems for our families and communities. Urge him to stand up for our families' health by supporting strong EPA standards for clean air and water!

**Go to:** <http://stoppolluters.org> to sign a petition.

**Or call the White House: Switchboard: (202) 456-1414, Comment Line: (202)456-1111**

—Katharine Dodge

**NEPA Audubon Society**  
**PO Box 711**  
**Honesdale, PA 18431**  
**Phone: (570) 253-9250**



**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Phone: (570) 253-9250**  
**E-mail: [audubonworks@gmail.com](mailto:audubonworks@gmail.com)**  
**Web: [www.nepaaudubon.org](http://www.nepaaudubon.org)**

The date on the address label is the date your national and/or local chapter Audubon membership expires. National Audubon will send you reminders well before your national membership expires.

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### *Mark Your Calendars*

**Saturday, March 26, 2 p.m.** BACKYARD BUTTERFLIES. Butterfly expert Rick Mikula will show you how to attract butterflies to your garden. Chamber of Commerce building, Honesdale. Call 570-253-9250 for more information.

**Sunday, April 3, 1 p.m.** BIRDING BY EAR. A short program of slides and songs will teach you to recognize a bird by its song. Kids and adults welcome. At the PPL Environmental Learning Center, Route 6, Hawley. Call Barbara at 570-253-2364.

**Saturday, April 16, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.** EARTH DAY CELEBRATION. Programs for all ages, including short bird walks by Audubon. We will even provide the binoculars. PPL Environmental Learning Center, Route 6, Hawley. Call Audubon at 570-253-9250 for information.

**Saturday, April 30, 9 a.m.** NEPAS ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY LITTER PICK-UP. Beautify your world! Join us in a clean-up along Route 191 near Lake Ariel, PA. Free breakfast afterwards. Call Marge at 570-253-9599 to sign up.

**Saturday, May 7, 8 a.m.** INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY. Join a team to look for returning migratory birds. You don't need to be an expert to participate. Call Barbara at 570-253-2364.

**Saturday, May 14, 8 a.m.** BIRDS AND BLOOMS. Explore Browning Beaver Meadow, our sanctuary in Lookout, PA. Bring binoculars and sturdy shoes. Call Joan at 570-228-1704 for information.

**Saturday, May 21, 8 a.m.** BIRD WALK AT JADWIN DAM. An undisturbed habitat for nesting song birds. Just north of Honesdale. Call Barbara at 570-253-2364.