The Syrinx

Voicebox of the Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club, Vol. 43 No. 1 January to March 2024

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<u>Dues</u> payable beginning January unless you joined after Sep. 1. \$15 Family or Individual. Supporting, optional -\$30, must be paid by the July issue.

"I think having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art that anybody could ever want."

---Andy Warhol, Artist

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What Do Frogs Do in Winter? By AAron Capouellez and Maria Manon



Female Wood Frog Photo by AAron Capouellez

Did you know? Frogs and toads go dormant during the colder months by digging deep underground to burmite. In Pennsylvania, frogs and toads prepare themselves for brumation between October and November, and they usually come out of brumation in March. During brumation, frogs and toads become inactive and rest to lower their metabolism. This state lasts until spring. They can survive without food for several months.

Wood frogs are the northernmost frogs in the world and have an interesting way of surviving the winter season - they freeze solid under logs and rocks. On the other hand, American bullfrogs, northern leopard frogs, northern green frogs, and pickerel frogs brumate underwater in ponds or deep bodies of water.

American and fowler's toads are well-known for their exceptional ability to survive harsh winters by digging deep underground, below the frost line. As the temperature drops and the ground freezes, they have the instinct to dig even deeper to find a safe spot for brumation.

The season's temperatures are changing - above average winters or below average springs are becoming more common. As a result, this could cause the breeding and brumation seasons to become unpredictable. Later winter and spring could greatly impact the timing of these animals and be

detrimental to the seasonal cues these animals need to determine activity.

Want to help our frogs and toads in Pennsylvania?

Visit pawoodsandforests.com to learn more about helping frogs and toads. Contact us by email to volunteer: pawoodsandforests@gmail.com.

This article was written at the request of WBNC for The Syrinx newsletter. I thank both AAron and Maria for their great article and welcome their input. Tom Moser

Bio-Sketch of Authors: https://www.pawoodsandforests.com/about-1

AAron Capouellez grew up in a suburb of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown with a bachelor's degree in communications and a minor in biology. AAron is currently a graduate student at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania in the biology department. He specializes in herpetology (the study of reptiles and amphibians). AAron's favorite target species are American toads, wood frogs, eastern gray tree frogs, pickerel frogs, purple pitcher plants, and American giant millipedes.

Maria Manon is from Johnstown, PA, and an alumna of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. She has a bachelor's degree in communications, specializing in public relations and marketing. Her favorite PA Woods and Forests species is, by far, the Gray Tree frog. Maria says she is "attracted to their different shades of brown and olive greens, small bodies, and rapid trills."



Field Trips & Outings

NOTICE

All outdoor activities involve some risk, including falling trees and branches, wet or slippery conditions, and interactions with animals and insects, and other unforeseen risks. In attending any of our outings or events, you agree to assume those risks and to hold harmless Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club for those risks.

2023/2024 Programs and Outings

As always, we would like to thank all our members who led or attended WBNC events in 2023. Your active participation makes our outings and programs more informative and enjoyable for everyone! A quick review provided the following stats for our thirty events in 2023:

- Four major multi-site bird counts (Bushy Run Christmas, Great Backyard, Spring Migration, and October Big Day).
- Four member social gatherings. These included the Evening Vespers Dinner, the Club Picnic, and the spring and fall Donohoe Barn Member Meetings. Average member participation was 22 for these events.

• Twenty-Two outdoor nature walks. Average participation was 12 members for these outings, with a low of 2 and a high of 20.

Based on a request for more speaker and program events, we included the following among the 2023 total with an average attendance of 15:

- Jim Kellam St Vincent Programs on Woodpeckers and other birds
- Lisa Meadows "Wild About Ducks" at Yellow Creek State Park
- Gabrielle Marsden Paw Paws and Zebra Swallowtails at our Spring Member Meeting
- Barb McMillan Stillwater Farms Tour and Gardening Presentation
- Chris Kubiak Todd Nature Reserve Audubonled Hike
- Sue Miller Murrysville Community Park -Bears and Purple Martins
- Harrison Hills Park Rangers-led Hike
- Annie Lindsay Powdermill Nature Reserve Bird Banding Demo

So, what's in store for 2024? Well, the Board has approved 31 events, including 11 that are different from 2023, with 6 brand new ones. Our planning approach is always to provide both geographic and ecological diversity in and around Westmoreland County, provide some new venues year-to-year, and keep the classic events that everyone enjoys. Please stay tuned to the future newsletters, our Facebook page, and email reminders.

Here are the events scheduled for the 1st Quarter 2024. Happy Holidays to everyone!

Saturday, January 20 -Pittsburgh Aviary/Montour-Panhandle Trails

Date & Time:, times to be determined

Leader: Alex Busato, <u>busatoalex67@gmail.com</u>, 724-963-6612

Directions: The National Aviary is located at 700 Arch Street, Pittsburgh, PA. 15212. Most direct routes from the east are either via Rt 28 or 376 (Parkway). Restaurant directions will be provided. To the Montour Panhandle Connector, proceed on the 376 (Parkway West) exiting on I 79 South past Carnegie. The address is Montour Panhandle Connector, Montour Trail, McDonald, PA. 15057.

Description: This is a dual-venue outing helping us to shed those winter blues. We will start with a midday visit to the National Aviary on Pittsburgh's north side. We will tour this historic facility taking advantage of any special programs and group discounts. After a stop for a late lunch, we will proceed to the intersection of the Montour and Panhandle Trails near the airport. Here, we will enjoy a late afternoon search for winter birds and an early evening owl prowl. Specific times and additional details will be provided prior to the event. **Please RSVP to Alex by January 6,** so we can plan for appropriate reservations and perhaps organize carpooling.

Saturday, February 3 - <u>Loyalhanna</u> <u>Dam Site - A Gathering of Eagles</u>

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the office parking lot.

Leader: Dale Matuza, 724-327-0826, dmmatuza@comcast.net

Directions: The site is located a few miles east of Saltsburg, PA off routes 286 and 981. The address is 440 Loyalhanna Dam Road, Saltsburg, PA, 15681-9302. GPS Coordinates are 40 degrees, 26' 49.16" N, 79 degrees, 26' 40.34" W.

Description: We will hopefully be viewing several Bald Eagles and other waterfowl from the crest of the

dam. In addition, we may walk the short trail from the parking lot down to the lake. There are modern restroom facilities. Dress for the season and weather conditions.

Saturday, February 17 - Armchair Bird Outing at the Home of Georgia Shalek / Great Backyard Bird Count

Meet at Georgia's between 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Leader: Georgia Shalek, 724-887-9210, gshalek@gmail.com / Steve Manns, 724-309-3312, psuloon@yahoo.com.

Directions: 1481 W. Pittsburgh St., Scottdale, 724-887-9210. Take the Scottdale Exit off 119 South. Make a left off the exit ramp onto 819 South toward Scottdale. Take a right at the light onto w. Pittsburgh St. and follow it through the 2nd light for 2 miles to the bottom of a large hill where you'll cross a small cement bridge. Turn left immediately after you cross the bridge between the guard rail and fire hydrant. If you come to Creek Road, you've gone 5 feet too far.

Description: Georgia Shalek has once again invited us to her home for a feeder-watch get together. Time: 8:00 - 3:00 with a walk around the grounds and lunch. Throw some boots into your car if you want to do the walk. Bring any drinks or snacks you want to share. Arrive and depart at your convenience. No rain date. Bad weather – still on for those who can make it.

If you can't make Georgia's, do your own armchair birding as part of the Great Backyard Bird Count. Count the maximum number of each species at your feeder at any one time from Feb 17-20. Walk the neighborhood to add non-feeder species. Count on as many of the four days as you wish. Turn data in to Steve Manns.

"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks."

-- John Muir, Father of the National Parks

<u>Saturday/Sunday, March 2 and 3 -</u> <u>Overnighter to Middle Creek Wildlife</u> <u>Management Area for Snow Geese</u>

Specific times and other logistics to be determined.

Leader: Alex Busato, <u>busatoalex67@gmail.com</u>, 724-963-6612

Directions: Address of Visitor Center is 100 Museum Road, Stevens, PA 17578.

Description: We will celebrate the snow goose migration season with a trip to the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area in Lancaster County. The best times for viewing are sunrise before they leave to feed in neighboring fields, and sunset, when they return from feeding to roost. Other species of waterfowl including tundra swans, Canada geese, and many species of ducks can be viewed throughout the day. Additional birding venues may be included. **Please RSVP to Alex by February 17 if you plan to attend.**

<u>Saturday, March 9 - St Vincent</u> <u>Wetlands & Winnie Palmer Nature</u> <u>Reserve.</u>

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Gristmill parking lot off Beatty County Road. After wetlands hike, drive to Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve and park in front of barn.

Leader: Regina Gaison, <u>rgaison1@gmail.com</u>, 724-853-7715

Directions: Located on and adjacent to the St. Vincent College campus just north of Route 30 near Latrobe, PA. For the Gristmill, from the Arnold Palmer airport crossroads, turn north on Route 981. Turn left at the first traffic light, go straight through the small traffic circle, and keep bearing right turning right at a paved road just before the gristmill. Drive around back to the parking lot. For Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve, return to Route 981, and turn right. Turn right on Old State Highway 981, and right on

Walzer Way. The address is 744 Walzer Way, Latrobe PA. 15650

Description: On the beautiful St Vincent College campus near Latrobe, we will tour 3 separate but connected wetlands, originally set up to treat iron oxide pollution. There are also flows to lakes and streams. Waterfowl, shorebirds, and sparrows predominate. Next at Winnie Palmer, we will tour varying ecosystems with all sorts of wildlife along connecting trails which include a picturesque wetlands boardwalk. There are also a number of bird feeders behind the barn for close up viewing.

<u>Saturday, March 23 - Yellow Creek</u> <u>State Park – Migrating Waterfowl</u>

Meet at Dragonfly Pond parking lot at 8:30 a.m..

Leader: Denny McCarthy,

dennymccarthy@comcast.net, 412-913-9064

Directions: Yellow Creek State Park is along Rt 422 between the towns of Ebensburg and Indiana. The address is 170 Route 259 Highway, Penn Run, PA, 15765. GPS Coordinates are 40°34'41"N, 79°0'2'W.

Description: This is primarily a Waterfowl outing and should be near the peak of the spring migration. Binoculars are a must and spotting scopes are appreciated. It is easy walking to various points around the lake, including an observatory. Yellow Creek State Park covers 3,140 acres containing varied ecological areas and has been designated as Important Bird area #23. Its close proximity to Chestnut Ridge allows for viewing of large numbers of waterfowl and gulls stopping to use the lake. There are 219 total birds verified on the park checklist, with 87 of those seen in March.

<u>Saturday, March 30 - Morosini</u> <u>Reserve – Woodcock Stalk</u>

Meet at 6:00 p.m.

Leader: Alex Busato, <u>busatoalex67@gmail.com</u>, 724-963-6612

Directions: From Rt. 22, follow Rt. 66 North to the second stop light in Delmont and turn left onto Old Route 22. Follow Old Route 22 and take the 2nd right onto Ringertown Road. Follow Ringertown Road for about a mile and turn left onto Morosini Farm Road. Once you drive under the RR overpass, the Morosini Reserve begins on your right. Continue straight ahead past the curve to a paved upper parking lot.

Description: The date, time, and place may change, but we would like to take advantage of this event usually hosted by the Westmoreland Conservancy. Although officially a shorebird, the woodcock lives in forests and scrub fields across Pennsylvania. Known for the male's amazing aerial displays, their sky dances are used to attract females. The Morosini Reserve is a 183-acre former farm, with appropriate woodcock habitat and has yielded good results in the past.

Outings Revisited

<u>Saturday, September 23, 2023, Powdermill</u> <u>Nature Reserve – Nature Event</u>

11 members and other visitors thoroughly enjoyed a special program at the Powdermill Avian Research Center. WBNC member and PARC Program Manager Annie Lindsay conducted a 20-bird lab demonstration of how birds are collected, measured and banded. The audience was captivated as each new wriggling bag occupant was revealed and "modeled" from nettings that morning. We learned that:

- 1. In peak seasons, ~200 birds are netted each day.
- 2. The specific attributes documented on each bird included species, sex, wing and tarsus lengths, age, and fat reserves.
- 3. Age is determined based on presence of juvenile feathers.
- 4. Most migrants spend ~1-2 weeks in a Stopover Event at Powdermill as they rest and accumulate reserves to continue their journey.
- 5. There is also a program which tracks local movements using attached transmitters.

As a bonus, we saw some of the birds utilized in the tunnel experiment, used to support industry efforts to develop crash-avoiding window glass. Unfortunately, because of a steady rain, we were unable to hike any of the adjoining trails, but we did pay a visit to the main HQ building, viewing the many wildlife and environmental exhibits. This is clearly a venue we want to include in future outing plans. Thanks again to Annie for the birds we viewed up-close-and-personal: Marsh Wren, Least Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Connecticut Warbler, Eastern Wood-pewee, Northern Water Thrush, Hooded Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Yellowthroated Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Ovenbird, Lincoln Sparrow, Magnolia Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Swainson's Thrush, Blue Jay, Blackthroated green Warbler, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Also, thanks to those who attended and actively participated: Annie Lindsay, Vicky Bromyard, Regina Gaison, Kevin and Marcia Heisey, Dale Matuza, Ken Byerly, Norm Bono, Steve Manns, Tom Moser, Billie Moser, and Denny McCarthy.

Annie Lindsay demonstrates the banding process on



Photo by Denny McCarthy

a Black-throated Blue Warbler at the Powdermill Avian Research Center.

Denny McCarthy

Saturday, October 7 -- 2023, Keystone State Park – "The Big Sit"

The day was cool, overcast with a layer of fog. The observers were dressed for the weather and came prepared. Norm Bono was the first to arrive, trying



The Big Sit Sunrise, Photo by Tom Moser

to hear if owls were present before sunrise. Denny McCarthy had arrived before sunrise early enough to attend another Keystone SP event to observe waterfowl on the back pond (not part of the Big Sit). The Keystone SP event was abruptly cancelled when they were surprised by hunters near them in blinds firing their shotguns. Denny brought another Keystone attendee with him when he arrived. As the

day progressed the clouds diminished. The sun came out and became a delightful day.

The Big Sit started before daybreak at 6:00AM and had continuous observation until 5:00 p.m. totaling



Scoping "Charlie the Cormorant" Photo by Tom Moser

11 hours. The team included both members and non-members. These included Norman Bono, Denny McCarthy, Ken Byerly, Tom Moser, Regina Gaison, Dale Matuza, Kevin Dailey, Marcia Heisey, Kevin Heisey, Vicky Bromgard, Angie Kamenic, Bob Kamenic, Mark Bowers, and "Charlie the Cormorant". Thanks to all who brought food for the team.

The highlights of the Big Sit were the Merlin flyover, the large Red-Winged Black Birds count, the Yellow-rumped Warblers, and the presents of one double-crested Cormorant which stayed in our observation area for most of the time. We named the Cormorant "Charlie"! The comradery is aways special at the Big Sit and it did not disappoint this year.

The full observation list included Canada Goose (2), Wood Duck (19), Mallard (3), Pied-billed Grebe (1), Killdeer (15), Double-crested Cormorant (2), Great Blue Heron (2), Black Vulture (2), Turkey Vulture (30), Osprey (2), Sharp-shinned Hawk (1), Cooper's Hawk (5), Bald Eagle (4), Red-tailed Hawk (9), Belted Kingfisher (2), Red-bellied Woodpecker (3), Pileated Woodpecker (2), Northern Flicker (3), Merlin (1), Eastern Phoebe (3), Blue Jay (12), American Crow (14), Common Raven (2), Tufted

American Crow (14), Common Raven (2), Tufted Titmouse (1), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2), White-breasted Nuthatch (2), Carolina Wren (3), Gray Catbird (2), American Robin (2), Cedar Waxwing (1), House Finch (3), American Goldfinch (2), Song Sparrow (1), Eastern Towhee (1), Red-winged

Blackbird (279), Yellow-rumped Warbler (4), and Northern Cardinal (2).

Tom Moser

<u>Sunday, October 14 -- Various – eBird's</u> <u>October Big Day Bird Count</u>

This was a slow big day for Westmoreland County. There were a total of 29 species tallied mostly by 3 club members. Alex Busato tallied 18 species, Michelle Carlson tallied 11 and Tom and Billie Moser had 9. Sara Reilly had 11 species in her yard in Ligonier. Philadelphia county tallied the most birds in the state with 108 and we fell to about midway of all the counties in Pennsylvania. Thanx for those of you the participated and we will look for your tallies on the Christmas Bird Counts and Big Day in May.

Steve Manns

Sunday, October 22-: Bridgeport Dam County Park (Jacobs Creek Wetlands) / Jacobs Creek Park (Greenlick Run Lake)

Attendees: Billie and Tom Moser, Angie and Bob Kamenic, Regina Gaison, Norm Bono, Ken Byerly, Vicki Bromyard, and co-leaders Georgia Shalek and Mike Smith.



Photo by Tom Moser

The day started out misty and rainy as we gathered at Greenlick Dam Lake. But we could see a few small rafts of mixed ducks with our naked eyes. As the skies began to clear, we were blessed with a glorious rainbow in the northwestern sky. Soon after that, as the scopes and binoculars were put to use following the rainstorm, we were pleasantly

surprised with an adult male Black Scoter directly in front of us and not more than 45 yards off shore. Black Scoter is a VERY RARE find this far inland at this time of year.



Black Scoter Photo by Tom Moser

After we returned back to earth, following these 2 spectacular events, we loaded-up and drove to Bridgeport Dam. No waterfowl were present, but a short hike along the lakeside produced highlights of 100's of Yellow Rumped Warblers, a few Golden Crowned Kinglets, and surprisingly 10 Pine Siskins.

We then proceeded to Jacob's Creek Wetlands and had difficulty leaving the parking area (remember always bird the parking lot) due to the amount and variety of birds flitting among the conifers, grapevines, and poison ivy vines.

This general area and 1/4-mile hike back to the lake produced 100 more "butter butts", a pair of Yellow Bellied Sapsuckers, a lone Fox Sparrow, a pair of Lincoln's Sparrows, several swamp sparrows, a Common Moorhen, a Great Egret, 19 Wood Ducks, and plentiful other common expected species.

We then utilized the new picnic table beside the parking lot, ate delicious apple/pear crisp with whipped cream and bid farewell to each other following a spectacular morning of weather changes and an amazing 54 species of bird sightings. "Bird is a verb"

George Michael Smith and Georgia Lynn Shalek

Sunday, November 4, 10:30 a.m.: Allegheny Hawk Watch

Weather Southwest wind and overcast in the morning, thus making it feel cold. There were few birds flying during the morning. Once the afternoon sun broke through the clouds, it warmed up and the eagles started flying and it became busy.



Porcupine at Allegheny Front Photo by Alex Busato

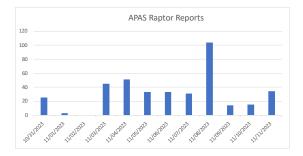
The highlight of the slow birding morning was the observation of a Porcupine sleeping in a tree further down the Allegheny Front slope. While it could be photographed from the summit, carrying his camera, long lens and tripod, Alex Busato walked down the steep slope through the heavy brush to get some shots. The brush was so thick that Alex disappeared multiple times and then popped up in a different location. After about 30 minutes, he returned with some photos. We thought that we lost Alex.

The day's official raptor count included Bald Eagle (9), Sharp-shinned Hawk (3), Red-shouldered Hawk (4), Red-tailed Hawk (17), Golden Eagle (16), American Kestrel (1), Unknown Accipiter (1).

For 11/4, non-Raptor included American Crow, American Robin, Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay, Common Raven, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Phoebe, European Starling, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, White-Breasted Nuthatch

The graph below shows the raptor counts on the day before and the day after our visit. (Blanks did not have observers that day). WBNC observed on 11/4 and had a Southwest wind. On 11/8 the conditions

were perfect with a east-southeast and southeast winds. While we had a good day with 51 raptors, the 11th showed 104 raptors. Better timing luck next year.



Counter Brian M. Wargo Observers Bob Stewart, Dave Darney, Ed Gowarty, Sr, Nancy Ott, Wayne Sierer. WBNC and Ohiopyle State Park group were present as visitors. The WBNC attendees included Tom Moser, Ken Byerly, Norman Bono, Vicky Bromyard, Angie & Bob Kamenic, Kevin and Maian Heisay, Alex Busato, Denny McCarthy, Regina Gaison, Georgia Shalek, and Jaimee & David Greenawalt.

Tom Moser

November 13, 7:00 p.m.: Club Meeting --The Donohoe Barn - Member's Night!



Painted Bunting-male Photo by Tom Moser

The WNBC met to review the state of the club, comment on outings for next year, enjoy member's presentations, and join in a silent auction. There were only 19 in attendance. These included Alex Busato, Georgia Shalek, Tom and Billie Moser, Mike Smith, Xina and Dale Matuza, Denny McCarthy, Vicky Bromyard, Regina Gaison, Janice Davis, Angie and Bob Kamenic, Thomas DeRos & wife, JoEllen Bruno, Jason and Karen Barnhart, and Ken Byerly.

Thanks to all who brought goodies to eat and helped setup/teardown.

Denny McCarthy reviewed the next year's draft outing agenda taking comments and questions.

Alex presented plans for weekend excursions to Erie Presque Isle and to Harrisburg to see the snow geese. Some of the members are really excited about this. Questions to leave Friday and return Saturday or leave Saturday return Sunday.

Georgia Shalek, treasurer reported both the club's income and disbursements. The club has \$6,221.93 on hand.

There are 142 official members with 91% up-to-date with dues. Ten new members have joined this past year with 5 in the past 6 months. The Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club Facebook group has grown from 332 associates to 423. The Facebook group continues to be a pool of prospective members.

Thomas DeRos showed an Oriole's nest that he found with blue tarp threads woven throughout. Tom Moser, Dale Matuza and Alex Busato provided bird photos that they had taken in the past year.

The Silent Auction raised \$60.00 for the club.

Tom Moser

Saturday, December 30: Bushy Run Christmas Bird Count

Information not available at the time of printing

Birds have always had the ability to bring me out of a dark space and provide relief in bad times."

--- Jason Ward, Naturalist and Birder

For the Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club

Westmoreland County – Sighting-ofthe-Season for Summer Breeding 2023 By PA Birds Compiler Tom Kuehl

The Summer Breeding Season is officially just June and July, and so it generally does not offer as much an opportunity for rarities that the Winter, and the Spring and Fall Migration Seasons do. For 2023 there were several notable reports, however in most cases without photos to add documentation and excitement to the sighting. So, with little deliberation on my part I was able to make the selection from a most opportune late season (7/27) visit to Donegal Lake by Eric Hall, who was able to get photos of both a **Foster's Tern** and **Great Egret**.





Great Egret Photo by Eric Hall

Eric provided the following comments on the sighting – "Some of our - Westmoreland - lakes can be "good" during bad weather.

On this day, the two terns appeared during a windy rain shower. I like to think they were flying

from the Great Lakes to the ocean and Donegal provided "shelter from the storm." "Sort of



Foster's Tern Photo by Eric Hall

romantic." While **Great Egret** are not extreme rarities in *Westmoreland* in migration, they are quite unexpected during the breeding season; and this was the only one reported in *Westmoreland* for the season. Terns, and Gulls for that matter, are generally rare in all seasons so it is not surprising that the two **Foster's Terns** that were reported in Eric's eBird Checklist were the only tern or gull species reported for the season.

The following are some highlights plucked from my full report for the Season:

- On July 15 Richard Chirichiello reported on one Ruffed Grouse at the private SV Ridge location. Sadly, our Pennsylvania State Bird has become a rarity so now a relief when one is reported during a season.
- Annie Lindsay and others making commutes to Powdermill Nature Reserve in darkness are encountering Eastern Whip-poor-wills with some regularly on Weaver Mill Road – there were three documented reports this Summer Season.
- While a breeder in the northern tier and in the Appalachian Mountains across the state of Pennsylvania, and in the Laurel Highlands in *Westmoreland*, **Purple Finch** is a good find in any part of *Westmoreland* in the summer breeding season and certainly of note at lower elevations. Lower elevation sightings were made at the Kuehl's feeders in Murrysville by Janet and me on both 6/8 and 6/14, and on 6/29 Cornell's Merlin App and I heard one singing at Cloverleaf Golf Course in Delmont. At

Spruce Flat's Bog the keen ear of Mike Fialkovich was the first to hear a **Purple Finch** singing on a 6/17 outing of the Three River's Birding Club.

- Now a very hard bird to find, however Yellow**breasted Chat** has been seen with some regularity at the Morosini Reserve this year. Perhaps a holdover from the sightings made there during the Spring Migration Season, there were several reports at the Morosini Reserve this Summer Season, including the highest count of two reported there by Michele Carlson on July 3.
- The Second Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas reported Nashville Warbler in 213 blocks and included breeding confirmed reports Westmoreland, so not impossible, but still unusual that one would be reported during the Summer Season. Alexander Donley, a researcher who spent some time in the Laurel Highlands this summer reported one in the Donegal area on 6/23.

Again, a plug for PSO, my full report and reports for most all the other Pennsylvania counties along with many excellent color photos, the Summary of the Season along with other regular content and articles is available in the Pennsylvania Birds Journal that is available with your membership.

Reading about nature is fine, but if a person walks in the woods and listens carefully, he can learn more than what is in books, for they speak with the voice of God.

> George Washington Carver

WBNC Dues.... Dues.... Dues....

This is a reminder: WBNC dues are due in January.

- \$15 individual/family.
- \$30 supporting membership.
- Donations are welcome!

All Membership Dues are due in January, unless you joined after September 1st. We will catch the new members next year.

Please send check or Money Order, made out to "Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club",

To: Georgia Shalek, WBNC Treasurer 1481 W Pittsburgh St. Scottdale, PA 15683

Please include your Name, address with city and zip code, phone and email address. Also indicate your delivery preference for the newsletter e.g. Email or U.S. Mail. Please Note: Email is more timely & nearly free; Hardcopy costs approximately \$2.00 - \$2.75 + our labor and kills trees.

The Syrinx Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club 197 Dickerson Run Road Vanderbilt, PA 15486