



BULLETIN

WINTER 2024



HOW DO BIRDS
SURVIVE THE WINTER?

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BULLETIN

— WINTER 2024 —

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Birds and other animals have adapted over time to deal with winter weather conditions. Learn how they get through the winter and how you can support them.



Blue Jay

The Bulletin is published four times a year by Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, 614 Dorseyville Road, Pittsburgh PA 15238-1618. Address correspondence to Rachel Handel, Editor. The editor reserves the right to edit or reject all copy. The Bulletin is received as a membership benefit. Nonmember subscriptions are \$9.00 per year. For membership, subscriptions, or address change, contact ASWP. Printed on recycled paper.



THIS AUDUBON VIEW

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

If you've received a membership card from us recently, you may have noticed something new—we have a new logo! We've just begun the process of rolling out the new logo across all of our programs, projects, and places. This is not the first time ASWP has changed its logo. Since 1916, we've been represented by a Ruffed Grouse, Northern Cardinal, and a Baltimore Oriole. In 1985, a Great Horned Owl family (mom and two fledglings) took over our logo—the rendering represented the famous Larry Barth wooden owl carving still on display at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve. Finally, in 2004, a stylized version of a Great Horned Owl was added to become the logo you've seen for the past 20 years.

Rather than trying to select which bird should be featured in the newest incarnation of our logo, we opted to go in a different direction. We chose a feather. Not only did it save us the challenge of picking just one bird species, it's also a visible representation of the one thing that is unique to birds. Other animals lay eggs, fly, or have beaks. But only birds have feathers. Look closely and you'll see that the feather also contains elements demonstrating our mission to connect people to birds and nature. On the right of the feather, there are family members exploring nature. They're hiking on a trail with a forest behind them and a meadow in the front. A bird soars above, provoking the child to point excitedly.

Finally, you may notice something missing. To reduce the number of words in our logo and keep the focus on what we do (and where we do it), we've dropped "Society of" from our logo. Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania will continue to be our formal name.

Over the next few months, you may see both logos as we make the transition. We have a large supply of envelopes featuring the old logo that we want to use before ordering new ones. We may be moving on to a new logo, but one thing that hasn't changed is our responsibility to reduce, reuse, and recycle whenever possible!

—Jim

OUR RESERVES, NATIVE PLANT NURSERY, AND NATURE STORES

BEECHWOOD FARMS NATURE RESERVE

614 Dorseyville Road in Fox Chapel, Pittsburgh, PA 15238
Audubon Nature Store & Native Plant Nursery / Dogs not permitted on trails

BUFFALO CREEK NATURE PARK

154 Monroe Road, Sarver, PA 16055
Audubon Nature Store / Dogs on leash are welcome

SUCCOP NATURE PARK

185 W. Airport Road in Penn Township, Butler, PA 16002
Audubon Nature Store / Dogs on leash are welcome

TODD NATURE RESERVE

367 Kepple Road, Sarver, PA 16055
No restrooms or other facilities / Dogs not permitted on trails

Accessibility Information: For accessibility needs or questions about any of our sites, please contact Brian Shema at (412) 963-6100 or at bshema@aswp.org. For accessibility needs or questions about any of our programs, please contact Chris Kubiak at (412) 963-6100 or ckubiak@aswp.org. All other questions regarding accessibility or inclusion can be directed to Jim Bonner at (412) 963-6100 or jbonner@aswp.org.

Tufted Titmouse





*Black-capped
Chickadees*

SUPPORTING BIRDS IN WINTER

Supporting a diverse mix of avian species comes down to one element that's very familiar to bird-friendly gardeners—native plants. These plants and birds have developed complex, mutually-beneficial relationships over thousands of years so that the plants provide food and shelter year-round for birds and insects.

Birds seek different food sources at different times of the year. In Spring, the prolific explosion of insect availability (thanks to increase in warmth) offsets the burden of migration—there's more food available to feed the birds' young than can be found in overwintering sites. And when it comes to insects to snack on, western Pennsylvania is right in the sweet spot for birds. Our location has a rich mixture of Southern and Northern adapted native plants that support the various insects birds eat.

With so much to feed on, hundreds of species can be seen in our area during early spring. Some grab a snack as they pass through and others raise their young here before heading south for winter. Those birds that stay year round are fully adapted to the perils of winter. When the cold weather arrives, it's easy to think that the birds still here are suffering. However, these creatures have some interesting ways to beat the cold. Like us, they are warm-blooded, but their metabolism and body temperature are much higher. They also possess winter plumage that is highly insulative—much more so than your puffer jacket!

When weather is especially severe, birds will seek cover. The toughest time for birds is when there is freezing rain because ice coats seeds and other food sources, making it difficult or impossible for the birds to access it. Fortunately, icy situations generally don't last for long periods of time and things will thaw out once the sun appears.

While there are insects present year round, there are fewer out and about during cold weather. Birds also prepare for these situations by collecting and storing food prior to the onset of winter. In the fall, Blue Jays can be seen flying about with acorns in their beaks. These nutritious nuts are hidden over a miles-wide area for later meals. Chickadees also hide thousands of pine and hemlock seeds and can remember the location of each one. Other important seeds for birds include goldenrod and spruce. Just one spruce tree can support multiple species of birds as they occupy different feeding niches.

As the global climate warms, we can expect more birds to overwinter in our area. Supporting them is as easy as making sure that your backyard provides food and shelter year-round. Insects, seeds, and berries will bring in birds while the flowers and stems attract insects year-round. Remember that a bird feeder is basically a snack bar and that while birds will happily visit a feeder, most of their calories are provided—directly or indirectly—by the plants growing nearby.

By protecting existing stands of native plants and adding new ones, we can turn entire human communities into giant bird feeders. As you plan for next season's gardening, remember to plant natives, create multiple vegetative layers, and plant for diversity in color, height, and bloom times. The birds will thank you!

FEEDING THE BIRDS; NOT THE SQUIRRELS, RACCOONS + DEER

Is your backyard flock missing out on a meal? Our Nature Store staff are experts in squirrel-proofing and beyond, visit us for assistance with setting up your perfect bird feeding station!

WINTER

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

REGISTER FOR PROGRAMS AT ASWP.ORG OR CALL (412) 963-6100

Events take place at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve (BFNR), Succop Nature Park (SNP), Todd Nature Reserve (TNR), Buffalo Creek Nature Park (BCNP), or online via Zoom. Select programs take place at Renziehausen (Renzie) Park, Eden Park Boulevard off of Walnut Street, McKeesport, PA 15132; and Freeport Community Park, 115 Community Park Road, Freeport, PA 16229.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Winter Survival Camp for Adults

Wednesday–Friday: January 10, 11 & 12, 9am–3pm / SNP

For adults 18 years or older. These are the skills you need to know now to survive in the wilderness! Learn to recognize the best plants to use when building proper shelters and fires, then build them! Secure your shelter with knots using natural fibers, and cook over an open fire like a pro. Orient yourself with just nature as your guide. This is an all day camp from 9am to 3pm. Participants must provide their own lunches. \$125 member; \$150 nonmember.

Great Backyard Bird Count Walk

Saturday, February 17, 10am–12pm / BFNR & BCNP

Saturday, February 17, 2–4pm / SNP

Saturday, February 17, 10am–12pm / Renzie Park Senior Center

Join the ASWP naturalists for our annual Great Backyard Bird Count walk on Audubon's trails. Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online community-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time. Free.

Maple Madness

Saturday, March 9, 10am–1pm / BCNP

Saturday, March 16, 10am–1pm / BFNR

Saturday, March 23, 10am–1pm / SNP

Maple isn't just something you put on your pancakes—there's so much more to maple sugaring! Experience the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of Maple Sugaring as you take a trip through time. You'll tour our maple sugar demonstration trail and discover the history and science of maple syrup—and how to collect and make your own. This event will take place completely outdoors. This event does not include a pancake breakfast. Please dress for the weather! Registration required. \$6 member; \$12 nonmember.

Kids Night Out: Yoga for Little Bunnies & Egg Hunt

Tuesday, March 19, 6–7:45pm / BCNP

Buffalo Creek Nature Park and Sol Power Yoga Sarver have collaborated for a special kids' night out—yoga bunny and egg activities! We will have child floor mats and bunny ears and tails available to get you in character! This event is open for children grades K-5. Parents are welcome to stay onsite or drop off. PS: the Audubon Nature Store will be open during this event! \$6 member child; \$10 nonmember child.

Sweetest Season Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, April 7, Seatings at 10am, 11:30am, 1pm / BCNP

Sunday, April 14, Seatings at 10am, 11:30am, 1pm / SNP

The sweetest season is coming to an end, but that means we have the rest of the year to enjoy the product of that season—maple syrup! Join us for a pancake breakfast—pancakes, sausage, fruit and, of course, real maple syrup! We'll even have a fun activity for when you are done! Spaces are limited; registration required. \$12 member; \$15 nonmember; under 3 are free.

BIRDING + HIKES

Birds & More Naturalist Led Morning Walks

BCNP: Every Tuesday at 9am (Starting 1st Tuesday of March); Free

BFNR: Every Wednesday and Sunday at 9am; Free

SNP: Every Thursday 9am; Free

Renzie Park, McKeesport: First Friday of each month; Free**

Christmas Bird Count (CBC) - Recap and Bird Walk

Saturday, January 13, 10am–1pm / Renzie Park

Join ASWP and CBC participants to explore the results of the Mon Valley's first official Christmas Bird Count. This will be a time to share your experiences, discuss birds, and then go for a bird walk around Renzie Park. Light refreshments will be served. Free.**

SHIRTS ARE BACK IN STOCK!

From onesies to XXL t-shirts—Audubon Nature Stores have got you covered—literally!



Moraine State Park Bird Walk

*Saturday, January 20, 9am–12pm / Moraine State Park
Meet at McDaniel's Boat Launch*

Join us at Moraine State Park as we bird during the height of winter. We will focus on overwintering species, residents and other interesting birds. We will meet in the parking lot at McDaniel's Boat Launch and bird several locations at Moraine. Bring your optics, water, and a snack and dress for the weather. *Registration required. Email Chris Kubiak at ckubiak@aswp.org for more details. \$6 member; \$10 nonmember.*

Full Moon Hike

Thursday, January 25, 6–7:30pm / SNP

There's nothing like a hike on a crisp winter night under a full moon. Join us for a walk along the trails at Succop Nature Park during the full moon. Please dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes that can get wet. We will end the hike around a fire and have some hot cider to enjoy. This program will be held weather permitting. It will be cancelled in the event of rain, heavy snow, or total cloud cover. *\$6 member; \$10 nonmember.*

Early Signs of Spring

*Saturday, March 2, 10–11:30am / BFNR
Saturday, March 2, 2–4pm / BCNP
Saturday, March 9, 10–11:30am / SNP*

What's coming? When will it get here? It may already be here! Let's look for the first glimpses of the return of spring on our trails. *Free for ASWP members; \$6 nonmember.*

Trail of Geology at Moraine State Park

Saturday, March 16, 10am–5pm / Moraine State Park

This outing is guided by an ASWP naturalist, but participants will be driving short distances between sites of interest. We will meet at the McConnell's Mill Parking lot, explore the area and then depart for Hell's Hollow. Afterwards, we will travel to Cleland Rock, and then finish at the Jacksville Esker/Tamarack Lake site. The landscape will reveal its violent past before our eyes. Pack a lunch and bring along sturdy footwear! *\$12 member; \$20 nonmember. Email rstauffer@aswp.org for more information.*

Pymatuning Bird Outing

*Saturday, March 23, 8am–12pm / Pymatuning State Park
Meet at the Spillway Parking Lot*

Pymatuning State Park represents one of the best places in Pennsylvania to observe migrating waterfowl and raptors like Bald Eagles. Participants will meet at the parking lot at the spillway (Linesville Side). *Contact Chris Kubiak at ckubiak@aswp.org for more information. Registration required. \$6 member; \$10 nonmember.*

Succop Nature Park Tree Tour

Saturday, April 20, 10–11:30am / SNP

The grounds at Succop Nature Park Boasts over 95 species of trees. While some of these are non-native, we will personally visit and identify well over 50 species of native trees. *Free for ASWP members; \$6 nonmember.*

Birds and Bogs: Pine Swamp Natural Area

Saturday, April 27, 12–3pm / Pine Swamp Natural Area

On this edition of Birds & Bogs we will meet at the Pine Swamp Natural Area to visit two naturally occurring bogs. One is a raised bog and is rare in our state. We will observe plants and animals that can tolerate the wet, acidic conditions around these wetlands. Along with observing this unique ecosystem we will also look at the avian fauna home to Pine Swamp. Bring your water-resistant boots and binoculars as we venture into this mysterious realm. *\$6 member; \$10 nonmember. Email rstauffer@aswp.org for meeting location and more information.*

NATURE CONNECTIONS

Animal Tracks in Winter

*Saturday, February 3, 10am–12pm / BFNR
Saturday, February 3, 2–4pm / SNP
Saturday, February 10, 12–2pm / BCNP*

Animals can be secretive and oftentimes can be difficult to see in the wild. By learning to identify tracks and other signs that animals leave behind, you can become a nature detective to learn what animals are in the area. Join us for this indoor program covering all things tracks! We will discuss how to go about identifying animal tracks you might find in Western PA. We will also have a hands-on demonstration of how to make a plaster cast of an animal track that you can take home. *\$6 member; \$10 nonmember.*

Winter BioBlitz

*Saturday, February 17, 12–2pm / BFNR and SNP
Saturday, February 24, 12–2pm / BCNP*

Have you ever wanted to play biologist? Well come on out for our Winter BioBlitz where we will be going around our natural areas conducting biological surveys trying to identify all the plants, animals, and fungi we can find. This informal inventory will go over various survey techniques used by biologists, proper use of field guides, and how to use apps like iNaturalist and Seek effectively. *Free.*

Winter Tree Identification

Saturday, March 9, 10–11:30am / Renzie Park Senior Center

Identifying trees without their leaves is a fun and challenging activity to do in the winter. Join ASWP for a walk to discover the ways to identify a tree using buds, bark, and other fascinating features. *Free.***

Backyard Habitat Springtime Show Off

Tuesday, March 19, 6–8pm / BFNR

Spring is finally here, and it is time to start thinking about all the new growth coming to Backyard Habitats across southwestern Pennsylvania! Tonight will be all about showing off Certified Backyard Habitats, sharing tips and tricks for success, and enjoying some like-minded company. Light refreshments will be provided. *Registration is required so that we can plan accordingly. Free.*

Friends, Not Foes: The Life History and Importance of Wasps

Tuesday, March 26, 7–8pm / BCNP

Wasps often get a bad reputation, but they are important parts of our environment. Despite their occasional aggression, they provide an important ecological role and can be as important as bees and other beneficial insects. Wasps are predators of garden pests and while they're not as fuzzy as bees, they can pollinate. Join Audubon to learn about the unsung contributions that wasps provide to the ecosystem around you. *Free.* Also offered online!*

Improving Streamside Habitat: An Easy, Low-Cost Solution

Saturday, March 30, 10am–12pm / BCNP

From small streams to large rivers, the presence of vegetation along a waterway—also called a riparian buffer—can improve water quality, provide habitat, reduce erosion, and beautify a landscape. We'll discuss a process called live staking—a low-cost, easy way to establish riparian buffers—in the program which starts in the classroom then moves into the field at Buffalo Creek Nature Park. *Free.**

Signs of Spring

Saturday, April 13, 10–11:30am / Renzie Park Senior Center

What's blooming? What's coming? When will it get here? It may already be here! Join ASWP to explore birds, mammals, and plants around the park in early Spring. *Free.***

Geocaching

Saturday, April 27, 10am–12pm / BFNR

Saturday, April 27, 2–4pm / BCNP

Sunday, April 28, 10am–12pm / SNP

Geocaching is a fun treasure hunt using your cell phone, but the "treasure" is real, not virtual. Learn to find physical caches hidden all over the world, and hundreds hidden locally. *Free.*

MAKE + TAKE

Winter Firecraft

Saturday, January 13 12–2pm / BFNR

Saturday, January 27, 10am–12pm / SNP

Saturday, January 27, 2–4pm / BCNP

Cold weather can make it difficult to get a fire going. However, frozen conditions make for very dry tinder! In this program we will learn how to find natural fire making materials in winter and make ferrocerium rod fire kits for you to take home. The kit includes a pouch, charcloth, a ferro rod, and a striker. If the sun is out we can use lenses to ignite our fires! S'mores to follow the educational portion. *Limit is 12 people, one week advance registration is required. \$20 member; \$35 nonmember.*

Fur, Feathers, Mittens and Scarves: Keeping us Warm in the winter

Saturday, January 13, 1:30–3:30pm / BCNP

Join local artist and long-time Sustainable Systems explorer Maritza Mosquera for an art making workshop, as we pay attention to how animals, birds and we keep ourselves warm in the Winter. We will use collage, painting and screenprinting media to make a unique beautiful art piece to take home. *Ages 8+ with an adult. \$15 member; \$20 nonmember.*

Growing Native Plants from Seed: Winter Seed Sowing Workshop

Thursday, February 8, 1–2:45pm / Carnegie Library of McKeesport

Unlike common vegetable and herb seeds that we typically sow in spring, late fall and winter are the best time to plant native perennial seeds for spring germination. Join us for a basic lesson on collecting, cleaning, and sowing with some of the Pittsburgh area's classic native landscape plants. Participants will get to sow 6 different high-wildlife value native species to take home. Registration is required. *Free.***

Growing Ferns from Spore

Saturday, February 17, 10am–12pm / BFNR

Saturday, February 24, 10am–12pm / BCNP

Saturday, February 24, 2–4pm / SNP

Ferns are primitive plants basically remaining unchanged for millions of years, creating soft, flowing texture in a shaded landscape. Participants will get expert tips on collecting and sowing fern spore to grow from their own homes. *\$6 member; \$10 nonmember.*

Make a Wooden Whistle

Saturday, March 2, 10–11:30am / SNP

Saturday, March 2, 1–2:30pm / BCNP

Saturday, March 9, 1–2:30pm / BFNR

In this program, we will drill and carve our own whistle. If you have a good pocket knife to whittle with, feel free to bring it along. Once we have a functioning whistle, we will drill a hole and attach a leather lanyard. You can then take your whistle home to use on future excursions! *\$6 member; \$10 nonmember.*

KIDS + SCOUTS

Fledglings Preschool Activities: Ages 3-5

Tuesdays: January 9, February 13, March 12, April 9 / SNP

Wednesdays: January 10, February 14, March 13, April 10 / BCNP

Thursdays: January 11, February 8, March 14, April 11 / BFNR

All dates are 10–11am

Give your 3-5 year old a head start on a lifetime of loving the outdoors. Fledglings programs incorporate stories, a walk, and activities to introduce new and fun nature themes to young participants. January's theme: Who's Awake: Animals in Winter; February: Chick-a-Dee-Dee; March: Down the Maple Trail; April: Spring Peepers. *Parent or caregiver must be present. \$4 member child; \$6 nonmember child.*

Beechwood After-School Series

Wednesdays: January 10 & 24, February 7 & 21, March 6 & 20

Located at BFNR / All dates are 4:30–6pm

Want to get your K-3rd grade child outside into nature this winter? This after-school program at Beechwood Farm Nature Reserve serves as the perfect respite from an overload of screen time. Winter at Beechwood has its own unique features and fascinating encounters with nature. Explore our meadows, forests and ecosystems for animals and their homes with an Audubon educator all the while having fun! *Member: \$10 per session; nonmember: \$15 per session.*

Maple for Scouts

Saturday, March 9, 10am–12pm / BFNR
Saturday, March 16, 10am–12pm / SNP
Saturday, March 23, 10am–12pm / BCNP

Experience the science and history of Maple Sugaring. Groups or individuals welcome; advance registration is required. To make your reservation, contact Scott Detwiler at (412) 963-6100 or sdetwiler@aswp.org. \$10 per scout.

ONLINE PROGRAMS

Ivory-billed Woodpecker: Extinct or Extant?

Thursday, January 11, 7–8:30pm / Online

Known as the Lord God Bird because of its massive size, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker was presumed extinct after the last confirmed sighting in 1944. But is North America's largest woodpecker truly gone? Or has a small population survived only to be recently rediscovered? This program takes a look at this species particular ecology, as well as the controversy surrounding its extinction or continued existence. We will discuss recent reports of sightings in the American South. *Free.*

Lunch and Learn: Salamanders of Buffalo Creek Watershed

Tuesday January 16, 12–1pm / Online

Buffalo Creek Watershed is home to at least 17 different species of salamanders, including PA's state amphibian, the Eastern Hellbender. Salamanders occupy the role of both prey and predator in the food web and are susceptible to small changes in habitat quality, making them excellent bio-indicators. Join us to learn the natural history of some of our more secretive amphibians found in the watershed. *Free.*

Snow Days: Winter Projects

Thursday, January 18, 12–1pm / Online

Winter doldrums dragging you down? Do you miss seeing all the activity in your Backyard Habitat? Well then join us as we discuss some of the Citizen Science projects you can do to stay engaged with your yard and the natural world. We will discuss Project FeederWatch and various iNaturalist Projects you can do during the cold winter months. *Free.****

Climate Watch

Saturday, January 20, 10–11:30am / Online

Climate Watch is a new community science program that explores how North American birds are responding to climate change. Volunteers collect data which Audubon scientists are able to use to document in peer reviewed research that birds are responding to climate change and shifting their ranges. Learn how you can join us in this fight by observing birds in your area, using our specific protocol, and helping us learn about how birds are responding to the changing climate. *Free.*

Owl Ecology in Winter

Thursday, January 25, 7–8:30pm / Online

Our region has a number of interesting owl species. Did you know a local owl starts breeding in January?

How do they hunt and survive the cold, dark, winter months? This program will look at several of our local owl species, their ecology, along with discussing the irruptive Snowy Owl. *Free.*

Community Science: Great Backyard Bird Count Training

Saturday, February 10, 10–11:30am / Online

The Great Backyard Bird Count takes place Presidents' Day weekend and can be done anywhere there are wild birds. Get ready with this training reviewing common species and reporting procedures, then join an ASWP naturalist to count on our reserves on February 18. GBBC.org for details about the count. Great for scout leaders, parents, and others who want to learn about the count and get tips for getting their groups involved. *Free.*

Changes in the Land: Succop Nature Park

Wednesday, February 14, 7–8:30pm / Online

Based on the classic book by William Cronon, this presentation follows the changes in ecosystems and land usage at Succop over the past 300 years. From the period of use by Native Americans, to later Europeans and Americans farming, timbering, and more. This presentation follows how Succop Nature Park's landscape has changed through human interaction. *Free.*

The Science and History of Maple Sugar

Wednesday, February 28, 7–8:30pm / Online

This program will explore how people learned to get sugar from trees. We will begin with Native American techniques and continue onto the latest maple sugar extraction technologies. You will be able to identify local maple species and understand the science of how/why these trees make sugar. *Free.*

Native Alternatives to Overused Landscape Plants

Saturday, March 9, 10–11:30am / Online

Not all plants are the same when it comes to supporting wildlife. Check out highly functional native plants that share some of the same decorative features as overused introduced landscape plants, as well as plant characteristics to avoid when choosing plants for a habitat garden. *Free.*

The Birds and The Beans: Why Shade Grown Coffee Helps Birds (And Tastes Better!)

Wednesday, March 14, 7–8:30pm / Online

Bird-friendly coffee is shade-grown, meaning it is grown and harvested under the canopy of mature trees, a process that parallels how coffee was historically grown. But with most farms converting to full-sun operations, crucial habitats for migrating and resident bird species are being lost. This program will discuss how shade grown coffee helps birds, where to find it, and why it tastes better. *Free.*

Fern Identification

Wednesday, March 27, 7–8:30pm / Online

Ferns are an interesting group of plants that share a few similarities with flowering plants, but this ancient lineage also has many unique features that separate them.

With a little over 60 species of ferns native to Pennsylvania, learning to identify them all is not as daunting as it seems. Take the first step towards becoming a fern expert during this online talk discussing fern life cycles, natural history, and ID characteristics for some common and uncommon species found in PA. *Free.***

Native Gardens Solutions for Small Spaces

Saturday, April 6, 10–11:30am / Online

Small garden spaces do not mean you have to give up habitat gardening. Many native plants that support wildlife are perfect for small gardens, window boxes and containers. This program will explore garden design concepts and native plants that will support a range of wildlife throughout the season in less than 5' of growing space. *Free.*

Pollinators in the Woods? Exploring the Many Ways Wild Bees Nest and Forage in Woody Habitats

Tuesday, April 9, 7–8pm / Online

Did you know that there are over 4,000 different wild bee species in the United States? Most are solitary, don't live in hives, and don't even make honey. The wild, native pollinators have long evolutionary relationships with our beloved wildflowers. Join Audubon and Pollinator Conservation Specialist Kass Urban-Mead from The Xerces Society for an adventure exploring how wild bees use the woods—from the leafy forest floor to the tippy top of the canopy. *Free.**

Wildlife Biology Today

Wednesday, April 10, 7–8:30pm / Online

The study of wildlife is an ever-evolving field. Advancements in technology including drones, remote acoustics, and cameras have led to some amazing research and discoveries regarding wildlife. Join us online as we look at some of the research being done by wildlife biologists and how their work is helping conservation efforts across the world. *Free.*

Poisonous Pennsylvania

Wednesday, April 17, 7–8:30pm / Online

From rattlesnakes to poison ivy, some organisms of Pennsylvania seem to hold a grudge against humans. We'll review the what, how and why of many of our spiciest nature neighbors. *Free.*

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Beechwood Conservation Corps

Saturday, April 6, 10am–12pm / BFNR

Do you enjoy working outdoors? Want to help the environment on your own schedule? The Beechwood Conservation Corps (BCC) is a dedicated group of volunteers that helps to steward priority conservation areas at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve (BFNR). BCC volunteers adopt an area and work independently with support from Audubon staff. This program will highlight major conservation efforts happening at BFNR, provide an overview of the BCC, and explore priority management zones that would benefit from additional volunteer support.

Garlic Mustard Madness

Saturday April 13, 9am–12pm / TNR

Invasive plants degrade ecosystems and displace native species. It's best to get them under control when they're just becoming established—and even easier with extra hands. Volunteers are needed to help remove garlic mustard at Todd Nature Reserve. All materials will be provided and no experience is necessary. *Registration is requested.*

Spring Invasive ID and Removal

Saturday, April 20, 12–2pm / BFNR

Help us remove some of the invasive plant species on the Beechwood trails. During this workday we will discuss how to identify spring invasive species, and what physical methods can be used to remove these troublesome plants. Gloves and tools will be provided.

**These programs are offered free of cost by Audubon and the Buffalo Creek Coalition with support from the Pennsylvania Department of Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Environmental Stewardship Fund and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Fund.*

***These programs are offered free of cost with support from Richard King Mellon Foundation and under an assistance agreement from the Environmental Protection Agency's Region III Environmental Education Fund.*

****These programs are made possible by funding from the Fox Chapel Garden Club.*

Connect with nature through these yoga programs offered in collaboration with Sol Power Yoga. A portion of the proceeds from the sessions benefit ASWP.

Yoga in the Park - Winter Series

Sundays: January 21, 28 and February 4, 11, 18, 25 / BCNP
All sessions run 4–5pm

Start your week off with some yoga! Give yourself the space to breathe and stretch so you are ready for the work week. Come yourself, or grab a friend, for this warmed up power yoga program offered through Sol Power Yoga and held in our classroom where you're surrounded by nature, overlooking Little Buffalo Creek. Yoga mats available or bring your own. *\$6 member; \$10 nonmember for each session.*

Forty Days to Personal Revolution

Sundays: January 21, 28 and February 4, 11, 18, 25 / BCNP
All sessions run 5:15–6:15pm

It's a new year—are you ready? Join Sylvia Maxwell, a Tier 3 Certified Baptiste Power Yoga Influencer for a life altering program based on Baron Baptiste's 40 Days to Personal Revolution Program. Experience 40 days of yoga practice, meditation, inquiry, and clean eating and leave the program feeling renewed, giving you access to more vitality, power, and freedom to live your purpose. *\$125 member; \$175 nonmember for the series.*

ASK THE NATURALIST

HOW DO INSECTS SURVIVE THE WINTER?

Different species of insects cope with cold, winter weather in unique ways. A few, like the Monarch Butterfly, migrate to warmer areas. But most ride out the winter right here in western Pennsylvania—albeit in various stages of development. They usually utilize micro-habitats like staying under soil, in leaf litter, inside trees and senescent plants, or under strips of peeling tree bark.

Insects don't truly hibernate—that is something only certain mammals can do—but some scientists use the term hibernate to explain diapause, the winter dormancy state insects go into. Some beetle larvae can accumulate glycerol in their bodies which acts as an anti-freezing agent. Others, like mantids, surround egg masses with a tough case that protects them during winter. The young then hatch once a period of sustained warm temperatures has elapsed.

Mayflies live in water as nymphs during the winter, and then emerge as adults in Spring.

And fireflies spend the winter as larva and live in the leaf litter of forest floors (that's why we ask that you leave the leaves on the ground every fall!)

The acorn weevil burrows into soil to escape the cold (sometimes they stay there for years!) while most flies spend the winter in the pupal stage. You might see tiny snow fleas during the winter, but these are not insects (or fleas). Instead, they are hexapods, which is a subtype of arthropod.

Finally, Snow Scorpionflies regulate their temperature by balancing heat given off and heat absorbed by sunlight. As you can tell, there are nearly as many ways to survive the winter as there are insects in the universe—ok, maybe not that many. But insects have evolved to utilize multiple strategies to make it through cold temperatures and emerge during Spring's warmth.

MEMORIALS + HONORS

MEMORIALS

John Artz

Renee Abrams
Joanne Artz
Jim Bonner
Cynthia Brown
Claiborn Carr
Lynda Conway
Amy Crosson
Ellen DeBenedetti
Pam Goldman
James Holtzman
Yvonne Keairns
John Paul Lehoczyk
Don Leshner
Michelle Meyers
John Myers
Michal Orlikowski
John Owen
Barbara Rennhoff
Will Rogers

Susan Rudzki

Susan Segal
Peg Snyder
Molly Taleb
Thomas Witzemberger
David Zoeller

Karl Frederick Bruch

Margaret Bayless
Alexandra Natsios

Peggy Friday

Ellsworth T. Bowser
Stephen Dubnoff
Alice Jane Jenkins
Martha Leighton
Bernardine Saylor

Hydie Rial Houston

William Houston

Phyllis Mae Jennings

Michael Toth

Evelyn Kepics

Peggy Bent
Marlene Blake
Anthony Fiorillo
Nancy Knauss
Gregory Ulizio
Karen Formosa
Yukevich

Stan Maliszewski

Karl Fred Huemrich

William F. McCrady

Andrea M. McCrady
William (Rusty) McCrady

Paul T. Railsback

Debra Casiraro
Jason Furda
Susan Stollings

Hannah (Nancy) Rierson

Elizabeth B. Owens

Mary Martha Truschel

Frank Greco

Evelyn Zolla

Kari Geary

HONORS

Paquita & Marcie

Maribel Pintado-Espiet

Kevin and Lauren Cannon

Deborah Trinkel

Andrew Kroll

Renata Silva

Walt Leninsky

Betsy Sisley

Andrea McCrady

William (Rusty) McCrady

Betsey Owens

Bunny Armstrong

Ottis P. Reese III

Marko Reese

Tom and JoAnn Succop

Jim and Rebecca Mauch

WINTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR HABITAT GARDENING

Winter is an ideal time to build habitat in your backyard. Whether you're caring for existing plants, planning native plant additions for birds and pollinators, or improving soil health, there are many ways to increase the habitat value of your property in all seasons:

HABITAT SUPPORT

Now that winter is here, you still may have some leaves falling and brush piling up. This may seem like more work but it's actually a great situation for wildlife! Create and expand bird and insect habitats by leaving leaves in place and the stalks of native plants over the winter.

Build a small winter brush pile that provides winter shelter for small animals and overwintering birds; manage invasive species in winter per DCNR recommendations (dcnr.pa.gov); and prepare new garden beds by sheet mulching or solarization and develop garden plans for next spring.

Additionally add organic soil amendments such as compost during winter; this allows nature to "push" particles down toward the root zone during periods of freeze and thaw. Keep the compost coming—add a compost bin to your household and/or backyard.

WINDOW ON THE BIRD WORLD

Look outside—how are the birds doing? Bird collisions with windows kill millions of songbirds every year. Monitor your windows for bird collisions and if you note they're occurring, use a simple solution like bird tape to make the window visible to our feathered friends. Also, remember that cats are better indoors—both for their own well-being and because they are predators to songbirds.

INCREASE YOUR BIRD + HABITAT IQ

It's cold out—the perfect time to bury yourself in a book or online class about birds and native plants. PS—we have a full list of programs at aswp.org! You can also build bird knowledge with field guides and digital resources such as iNaturalist—or join Audubon for a Citizen Science program that connects you directly with projects that support the natural world. Upcoming Citizen Science programs include the Great Backyard Bird Count and Project Feeder Watch.

ASWP NEWS

RAD WORKS HERE!

In late November 2023, Allegheny Regional Asset District approved its 2024 operating budget, which included a \$40,000 grant to ASWP in support of Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve and our programs in Allegheny County. ASWP is proud to be a RAD Asset and has received over \$650,000 in operating and capital grants since 1995. We thank RAD for its long-time generous support.

NISOURCE/COLUMBIA GAS PROVIDES \$12.5K GRANT TO AUDUBON FOR URBAN POLLINATOR CONSERVATION

Audubon is pleased to announce that NiSource/Columbia Gas has provided \$12,500 to Audubon to expand our conservation efforts in the City of Pittsburgh. This effort will focus on small-space habitat solutions for pollinators, including demonstration projects, educational programming, and the development and distribution of educational resources, focused in the Southside Slopes and Allentown neighborhoods. From container gardens to pocket meadows and native garden alleys, there are a variety of opportunities to make our neighborhoods and business districts pollinator-friendly.

NEXTIER BANK SUPPORTS ASWP EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ASWP has received a \$7,500 Education Improvement Tax Credit Grant from NexTier Bank in support of our education classes. These funds will be used to help provide school field trips, in-class programs, and virtual natural history programs for public schools in Butler and Armstrong Counties.

Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania thanks its generous corporate partners. If you and your company would like to help ASWP connect more people to birds and nature, please contact Jim Bonner at (412) 963-6100.



AUDUBON
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

614 Dorseyville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238-1618

SHOP AUDUBON NATURE STORES

FOR EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO
ENJOY THE BIRDS THIS WINTER!

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

614 Dorseyville Road in Fox Chapel / 412-963-6100
Tuesday–Sunday from 9am–5pm

Buffalo Creek Nature Park

154 Monroe Road in Sarver / 724-295-3589
Tuesday–Sunday from 9am–5pm

Succop Nature Park

185 W. Airport Road in Butler / 724-586-2591
Tuesday–Sunday from 9am–5pm

Downy Woodpecker

JOIN US FOR NATURE STORE SPECIAL EVENTS

Nature Store Post-Holiday Sale

January 2–14 at all three Nature Stores

Save 40% off all remaining holiday
décor and greeting cards!

Spring Art & Vendor Market

*Saturday May 25 from 10am–4pm
at the Nature Store at Beechwood
Farms Nature Reserve*

Shop for eco-friendly goods and
nature-inspired gifts. Interested in becoming
a vendor? Please email sditch@aswp.org
(and place “Beechwood Spring Market”
in your email subject line).

PLANNING AN EVENT IN 2024?

Our reserves are a beautiful backdrop to your wedding, birthday party, graduation party, or family gathering. Call (412) 963-6100 or visit aswp.org to learn more about the spaces we have available.