

The Gnatcatcher

Newsletter of Juniata Valley Audubon

Vol. LVII, No. 4 September - October 2024

Published bi-monthly (except for July and August)

as a benefit for members of the

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY



www.JVAS.org

PRESIDENT'S CORNER by Michael Kensinger

Dear Friends of JVAS,

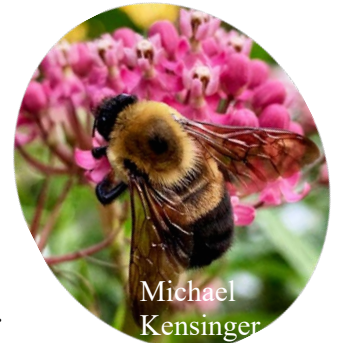
As summer's warmth begins to fade, I hope you've had a chance to relax, recharge, and reconnect with nature's splendor. Perhaps you've spotted a few fledglings taking their first flights or marveled at the vibrant blooms in our beautiful Pennsylvania landscape. Aren't we lucky to live here? Sure, not everyone appreciates the phenology of our ever-changing seasons, but if you are reading this, chances are you do. In this short life we live, it is my belief that every day and every season is a gift to be enjoyed.

As we resume our regular monthly meetings and field trips, I'm excited to share the promise of a new season with all of you! Autumn, winter, and spring will bring fresh opportunities to explore, learn, and make a difference in our community. Remember that by participating in field trips and events, you help seal a bond of fellowship with like-minded people who care about our planet and will fight to protect it.

Together, let's:

- Delight in the fall migration's spectacle!
- Discover winter's serene landscapes and secret spots
- Welcome spring's vibrant renewal and new life

As per usual, one can expect our field trips, meetings, and conservation efforts will be filled with camaraderie, education, and inspiration. (Not to mention a bit of humor!) I invite you to join us, share your ideas, and help shape our chapter's impact. Without you, there is no Juniata Valley Audubon Society.



Brown-belted Bumble Bee on Swamp Milkweed

As we move forward, expect updates regularly on our Facebook page, including pop-up field trips that may not be mentioned in this newsletter. If you do not use Facebook, check our website for updates!

Here's to a wonderful year ahead, filled with wonder, growth, and a deeper connection to the natural world around us! Please enjoy the newsletter and thank you for your support.

Warm regards,

Michael

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Message.....Page 1	Conservation Crossroads.....Page 8
Lenca Coffee.....Page 2	Family Fun Day, Special Events....Pages 9,10
Evening Programs.....Pages 3, 4	Fungal Fight Club.....Pages 11,12
August Picnic Recap.....Page 4	Welcome Dr. Justin Merry.....Page 12
Field Trips.....Pages 5,6,7	JVAS Chapter Membership.....Page 13

Juniata Valley Audubon Society (JVAS) is a chapter of the National Audubon Society and is

dedicated to the conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity.

Juniata Valley Audubon accomplishes its mission through advocacy, science, land stewardship, and education – working directly with Audubon Mid-Atlantic, the district office of the National Audubon Society.

The JVAS is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit, educational organization as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Gifts are deductible for income tax purposes (Tax ID # 25-1533496).

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WHY PROMOTE SHADE-GROWN COFFEE?

It's simple – it's healthy for birds and for you!



Most coffee that you buy is **SUN COFFEE**– all native plants are destroyed, and the coffee shrubs are grown in big fields where they are sprayed with pesticides, and often irrigated and fertilized. Just like a corn field! Since the natural habitat has been destroyed there are very few insects to support birds. Most of the coffee sold in grocery stores is **SUN COFFEE** and is often poor quality.

SHADE-GROWN coffee farmers like Emilio Garcia don't use pesticides and often create compost to naturally fertilize the coffee shrubs. Emilio plants his coffee shrubs on the forest floor, under the canopy of native trees. This means there are a lot of insects for birds to eat. Researchers have found that many of our songbirds spend the winter in **SHADE-GROWN** coffee farms because they are able to find abundant insects to eat and abundant cover for protection.

Some JVAS members visited Emilio's coffee farm near Marcala, Honduras to verify that it is organic-practice, shade-grown coffee and we saw many species of songbirds on his farm. Emilio is now working toward getting **Bird-Friendly** certification for his coffee, which is the gold standard for quality and environmentally healthy coffee. We are proud to support Emilio and his efforts to produce healthy coffee and a healthy environment for birds, such as the (L to R) Black-and-White Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, and Kentucky Warbler.



**Celebrate Earth Day Every Day
Drink Shade-grown Coffee**

Emilio Garcia, our partner who produces shade-grown coffee on his farm in Honduras, has expanded his coffee sales to include sustainably harvested, shade-grown coffee from other countries. You can order freshly roasted coffee (ground or whole bean) from **Lenca Coffee Roasters**: <https://lencacoffeeroasters.com> Order the Honduran coffee if you want Emilio's single origin, direct trade coffee.

Fair Trade shade-grown **decaf coffee** from Colombia is also available.

Emilio sells his green coffee beans through <https://lencafarms.com>

Remember, shade-grown coffee is good for you and good for our birds!

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY EVENING PROGRAMS

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM: Tuesday, September 17, 2024 @ 7 pm

Join us at the Bellwood-Antis Library, 526 Main St. Bellwood, PA

6 PM FREE DINNER: Mushroom bisque, salad, mushroom cream sauce over baked chicken and pasta, rolls, apple spice cake, and banana split fruit salad. Gluten free and vegetarian options. Honduran shade-grown, organic hot coffee will also be served.

7 PM PROGRAM: “Fabulous Fall Fungi” with Michael Kensinger

Join outdoor writer, artist, and naturalist Michael Kensinger as he describes the wonderful world of Pennsylvania’s fall mushrooms. Kensinger’s articles on wild mushroom hunting have appeared in the Pennsylvania Outdoor News, and his photos have appeared on MushroomExpert.com. Explore everything from delicious edibles, deadly look-a-likes, and an interesting scenario where two mushroom species are battling it out.



A successful day of foraging for “shrimp of the woods” in Blair Co., along with a few honey mushrooms and asters.

OCTOBER PROGRAM: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 @ 7 pm

Join us at the Bellwood-Antis Library, 526 Main St. Bellwood, PA

6 PM FREE DINNER: Vegan chili, a white chicken chili, ham and corn chowder, corn muffins, salad, apple crisp and pumpkin pie. Gluten free and vegan options. Honduran shade-grown, organic hot coffee will also be served.

7 PM PROGRAM: “Ditch Memory: Poems from along the Allegheny Front” Reading by Todd Davis



“In an age when many find themselves disconnected from the natural world, celebrated poet Todd Davis offers the possibilities of reconnection, of listening to the earth’s labored breathing, to the thoughts of other-than-human animals and the languages trees speak. In thirty new poems, and with ample selections from his previous seven books, Davis’s roots run deep in Rust-Belt Appalachia, attending to the harmed but healing landscape, the people whose lives are too often neglected, and the looming threat of climate collapse and extinction.” - Michigan State University

Todd will bring books to sell – please bring only cash or check.

Todd is the author of eight books of poetry, most recently *Ditch Memory: New & Selected Poems* and *Coffin Honey*, both published by Michigan State University Press. He has won the Midwest Book Award, the Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Bronze and Silver Awards, the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Prize, the Chautauqua Editors Prize, and the Bloomsburg University Book Prize. He is an emeritus fellow of the Black Earth Institute and teaches environmental studies and creative writing at Pennsylvania State University’s Altoona College.

NOVEMBER PROGRAM: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 @ 7 pm
Join us at the Bellwood-Antis Library, 526 Main St. Bellwood, PA

6 PM FREE DINNER: Pasta bar, salad, rolls, carrot cake and cookies. Gluten free and vegan options. Honduran shade-grown, organic hot coffee is also served.

7 PM PROGRAM: “Meet the Marvelous Marbled Salamander” with David Hand

Schuylkill nature photographer, David Hand, will present incredible still pictures and videos of the magnificent Marbled Salamander and its life cycle. David has devoted many hours to finding and examining salamander nests and eggs. He has documented every stage of the salamander's development from embryo to adult. His article on the subject appeared in an issue of Reptile Magazine. Sit back, relax, and visit the watery, wonderful world of this interesting species.



The JVAS Annual Picnic at Canoe Creek St. Park on August 20, 2024, was really “COOL!!”



Originally scheduled for June, the picnic was postponed due to excessive heat and rescheduled for August 20 – an evening that turned out to be exceptionally cool for August, making it perfect for a picnic. About 30 people attended, enjoying camaraderie and delicious food, followed by a nature walk in Canoe Creek State Park, and a visit to the Frank Felbaum Bat Sanctuary to view the bats exiting the church at dusk. Heidi Mullendore, Environmental

Education Specialist, explained via email after the viewing, that there are about 900 little brown bats (endangered) and big brown bats (now the most common bat in Pennsylvania) roosting in the church, which is owned by Canoe Creek State Park. The Pa. Game Comm. conducts regular surveys and removes bat guano from the church every year.



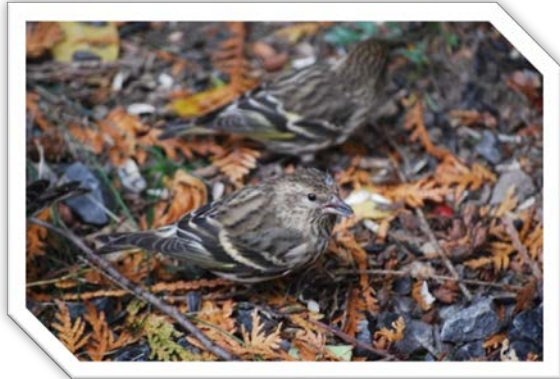
JVAS FIELD TRIPS Fall 2024

Greetings JVAS,

Contact Field Trip Chair Michael Kensinger if you have any suggestions for field trip locations, questions about a trip, or would like to lead a trip. Contact him at (814) 505-3410 or MichaelKensinger@gmail.com.

***In the event of inclement weather or dangerous conditions, Field Trip Chair Michael Kensinger reserves the right to cancel. Feel free to call or text Michael at (814) 505 – 3410 to check on the status of a field trip. You can also email Michael at MichaelKensinger@gmail.com**

FIRST TUESDAY WALK: Sept. 3, Oct. 1, Nov. 5, and Dec. 3 from 10 AM to NOON **Birding the Ray Amato Memorial Nature Trail** **behind the Northern Blair Rec Center (NBCRC)**



Pine Siskins – Michael Kensinger

to the myriad of habitat choices. Even the NBCRC’s soccer field boasts Killdeer, Canada Geese, Eastern Bluebirds, and others that like a more open area.

Address for Northern Blair Rec Center:
4080 E Pleasant Valley Blvd, Altoona, Pa.

Join JVAS Secretary Connor Schmitt to peruse the nature trail that runs behind Northern Blair Recreational Center in Tipton, PA. Enjoy an easy-grade hike, where you will enjoy a variety of habitats including streamside (Little Juniata River), wetland (Robert P. Brooks Wetland), meadow, and forest. This location is always a great choice for birding due

What to bring: Please wear clothing suitable for weather conditions. Snack/drink. Binoculars if you have them. No dogs permitted on the nature trail.

BLACK MOSHANNON STATE PARK Sunday, September 1, 2024, from 1 – 3 PM **Address:** Meet at the Park Office at 4216 Beaver Rd, Philipsburg, PA 16866



Bullfrog - Michael Kensinger

Join Angie Spagnoli at Black Moshannon for an easy walk into a wetland habitat, from the safety and comfort of a boardwalk that puts you right in the middle of the action. We will observe birds, special plants, and other wildlife of the area. This walk will be a PERFECT kick-off to September, as many fall migrants should be passing through. This easy-paced adventure is sure to be filled with wonderful experiences to those who attend for all levels of experience.

⚠ WE MEET AT THE PARK OFFICE. Please note that it is unlikely that you will have cell phone service.

What to bring: Please wear clothing suitable for weather conditions. Snack/drink. Binoculars if you have them to watch wildlife from a distance. If not, we will share.

JVAS FIELD TRIPS FALL 2024

***In the event of inclement weather or dangerous conditions, Field Trip Chair Michael Kensinger reserves the right to cancel. Feel free to call or text Michael at (814) 505 – 3410 to check on the status of a field trip. You can also email Michael at MichaelKensinger@gmail.com**

BEAR MEADOWS NATURAL AREA WALK Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024, from 1 – 3 PM Bear Meadows Natural Area, Petersburg, PA – see suggested directions below*

Join us at Bear Meadows Natural Area, located in Centre County just four miles south of Boalsburg, within

Rothrock State Forest. On this walk, you will be guided by Angie Spagnoli as you peruse trails around the bog, which is surrounded by steep mountains and hiking trails. Angie will keep the pace fairly slow and take trails that are not too extreme for our membership. This unique area deserves your attention as you meander and take in the flora and fauna of this treasured wildlife habitat.

What to bring: Please wear clothing suitable for weather conditions. Bug repellent. Boots, in case your feet get wet. Snack/drink. Binoculars if you have them to watch wildlife from a distance. If not, we will share.

***Suggested Directions from Altoona:**

1. I-99 north from Altoona (about 35 miles)
2. Keep right at the fork to 322 East (7 miles)
3. Turn right on to Bear Meadows Road (4.5 miles)
4. Turn right on to North Meadows Road (0.7 miles)
5. Bear Meadows parking area is ahead on the right



Red Eft - Karen Smith

GLENDALE MARINA WATERFOWL WATCH ***Sunday, Oct. 6, 2024, from 9 AM – NOON***

Address: 197 Gibbons Rd, Patton, PA 16668

Join JVAS President Michael Kensinger at the Glendale Marina to take in the sights and sounds of autumn migration. Together we will tally ALL bird species but put a special focus on waterfowl and birds using the lake. JVAS will provide a spotting scope to view birds at a great distance. Enjoy the challenge of identifying waterfowl in non-breeding plumage in addition to those who have just attained breeding plumage.



Ring-billed Gull - Michael Kensinger

What to bring: Comfortable shoes, drink, snacks, and binoculars/camera or items you would typically bring for birding.

JVAS FIELD TRIPS FALL 2024

***In the event of inclement weather or dangerous conditions, Field Trip Chair Michael Kensinger reserves the right to cancel. Feel free to call or text Michael at (814) 505 – 3410 to check on the status of a field trip. You can also email Michael at MichaelKensinger@gmail.com**



Shaggy Mane Mushrooms - Michael Kensinger

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2024, RESERVOIR PARK MUSHROOM WALK from 10 AM – NOON

Address: 901 West 15th Street, Tyrone, PA 16686

Join JVAS President and members for a slow saunter around Reservoir Park in Tyrone to explore and identify wild mushrooms, in addition to wildflowers, birds, and other inhabitants. This is a fairly easy hike, with one area where we cross a stream by stepping on stones. We will look for different groups of mushrooms, from gilled mushrooms, polypores, boletes, and coral fungi. Consider bringing a packed lunch and we can snack afterward at a pavilion.

What to bring: Light lunch/snack/drink. Comfortable shoes.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2024, MILLBROOK MARSH NATURE CENTER 1 – 3 PM

Address: 548 Puddintown Rd, State College, PA 16801



Goldenrod and Cattails – Michael Kensinger

Let's check out Millbrook Marsh's new vernal pool project with Angie Spagnoli and Courtney Kissel, experiencing nature and fellowship with our fellow conservationists! Take note of the new vernal pool areas as they fill with autumn rain, as we will return next year to see how things progress for the wildlife that rely on these vernal pools in order to reproduce!

What to bring: Please wear clothing suitable for weather conditions. Snack/drink. Binoculars if you have them to watch wildlife from a distance. If not, we will share.

CONSERVATION CROSSROADS is a section of *The Gnatcatcher* that features environmental issues across a spectrum of local, national, and global concerns. Contact Conservation Chair Laura Jackson if you know of an issue that deserves our attention and subsequent action. More information on conservation concerns is found at www.JVAS.org then click on the Conservation tab.



1. Proposed Rutter’s Gas/Convenience Store upslope from Old Crow Wetland near Huntingdon, Pa. DEP approved Rutter’s application, and we expect Smithfield Township to approve their application at the township level sometime this fall.



JVAS members have repeatedly expressed their concerns and opposition at Smithfield Township meetings. We encourage you to attend the monthly township meetings and express your concerns. Township meetings are the first Tuesday of each month, at 6:00 pm. The location is the township building in Smithfield, on the corner of 13th Street and Mt. Vernon Avenue, or 2 blocks south of Rt 26 (Pennsylvania Ave.).

Please consider joining the Coalition to Save Old Crow Wetland FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/271112655092285>

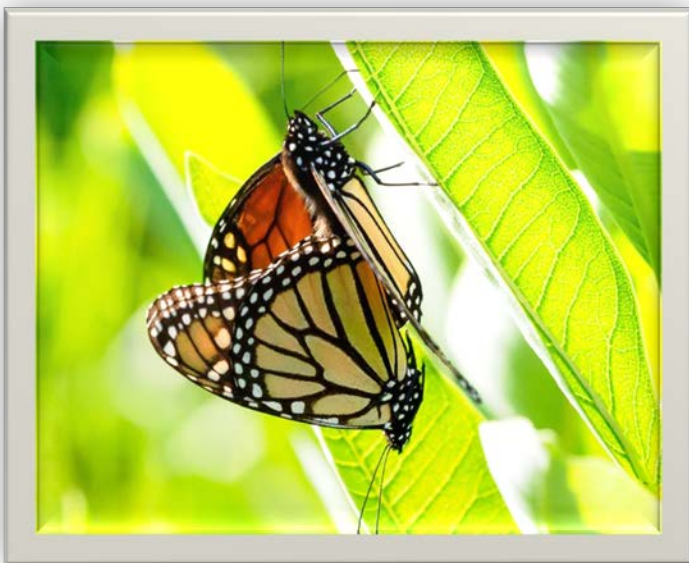
Coalition leaders - who are also JVAS members - appealed DEP’s permit approval to the Environmental Hearing Board and hired noted Environmental Law Attorney Ken Kristl to represent us. In August, several members testified before Rutter’s and DEP attorneys: Coalition President Clair Holzner, Coalition member and JVAS Conservation Chair Laura Jackson, Coalition Vice President Greg Grove, and Coalition member Gary Miller all testified under oath regarding their concerns about potential pollution issues if Rutter’s is allowed to construct their truck stop adjacent to Old Crow Wetland. The next step in the appeal process will be to hire several experts to testify before the Environmental Hearing Board. Expert testimony is expensive so donations to the Coalition are critical in order to continue the appeal.

To donate to the legal fund, send a check made out to Coalition to Save Old Crow Wetland and mail to: Coalition to Save Old Crow Wetland, P.O. Box 7, Huntingdon PA 16652, or donate to fundrazr.com/saveoldcrow Any donation would be much appreciated.

2. GOOD NEWS FOR PENNSYLVANIA NATIVE HABITATS AND POLLINATORS:

House Bill 797 was passed in July 2024 that mandates the planting of native species in the 41,600 miles of PennDOT roadways across Pennsylvania. There are also pending initiatives, including HB 2470, which would require state agencies to plant insecticide-free native plants in landscaping around state facilities and properties.

PennDOT also manages these programs that depend on volunteer efforts: “**Adopt and Beautify**” and “**Keystone Pollinator Habitat**” for communities to adopt, plant, and enhance PennDOT right of ways with native plants. Just Google “PennDOT Adopt and Beautify” for more details.



Mating Monarchs on common milkweed – Laura Jackson

Family Fun Day, Nature Works Park by Denice Rodaniche

On July 13th, JVAS participated in the Family Fun Day sponsored by the Blair County Conservation District at Nature Works Park in Hollidaysburg. Over thirty children and parents took a break from the sun to stop by our tables in the pavilion. JVAS members Carol Taylor, Debbie Decker, and Denice Rodaniche (pictured below) challenged visitors with Bird Bingo and the how-tos of creating a nature journal page.



Children of all ages enjoyed exploring a range of natural materials, from various bees and butterflies, feathers, and native flowers. One popular item to sketch was a perfectly preserved house mouse in a plastic box! After adding watercolor, they labeled their page with words and numbers. Following the model of John Muir Laws, they also generated questions like “I Wonder...? How/why did...?” Their excitement noticing details and their intensity as they worked was so impressive!

It was a pleasure to share the day with other conservation and wildlife groups in planting the seeds of passion for protecting our environment, no matter the age level!

Saturday, September 14, 2024

Two FREE EVENTS:

Enjoy the **PA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING and PLANT SALE** at Shaver’s Creek from 8 AM to 1:30 PM: www.panativeplantsociety.org

Then head over to State College to marvel at the wonders of the **GREAT AMERICAN INSECT FAIR** which ends at 4 PM.

<https://ento.psu.edu/outreach/youth/great-insect-fair>

Tiger Swallowtail on native Garden Phlox – Laura Jackson



Stop by the JVAS Table between 12 noon and 2 PM to play the "Animal Match Game."



Duncansville PAWPAW FESTIVAL



Join us to celebrate, taste & learn about North America's largest native fruit - The PawPaw. We hope to inspire our community to restore native plant habitat and learn to live in harmony with the seasons of our Ecosystem.

Vendors | Food | Music

Pickle Ball Tournament, PawPaw trees for sale, Educational Presentations

(Free Admission ~ RSVP on - Ecotopian Earthcare)



**Duncansville, PA
Memorial Park**



**Sunday
Sep. 22nd
2024**



(9am - 4pm)



**(Vendors Reserve your Spot)
814-227-3815**

Event Sponsored by: Duncansville Community Days & Ecotopian Earthcare/Restoration Landcare



Fungal ‘Fight Club’ of the Autumn Forest - article & photos by Michael Kensinger

Disclaimer: This article is NOT to be used as a comprehensive guide for consuming wild mushrooms. In some cases, toxic look-a-likes can occur, resulting in illness and even death if consumed.

When the first cool rains of late September begin to permeate the forest floor, there is a fruiting of a parasitic mushroom we call the honey mushroom. Though popular among some foragers, many will avoid the honey mushroom due to its habit of growing near-to and looking like the deadly galerina. If you examine your honey mushrooms carefully, you will see that honeys have white-gills, and white spore print with a somewhat shaggy brown or yellow cap. The similar deadly galerina has a sticky cap, rust-colored spores, and spore print. As its name suggests, the deadly galerina is really deadly and should be avoided at all costs. The honey mushroom, however, is said to be tasty, and have anti-tumor properties. That said, honeys are parasitic and cause white rot in many tree species including oaks and conifers.



Above: Honey mushroom (back) with “aborted” form in foreground, having been attacked by the enteloma mushroom.

Right: Enteloma mushroom (background) towering over “shrimp of the woods”, which is a honey mushroom that aborted growth during conflict with the enteloma.



Not far off, another parasitic mushroom will often be growing in the autumn woodlands here in Pennsylvania in the same oak forest habitats. The enteloma mushroom, which it is commonly called, generally looks like a smooth grayish white mushroom, with no ring on the stem, and a curved margin on its cap. Once again, due to the potential of toxic look-a-likes, these mushrooms are generally avoided by inexperienced foragers for consumption, though they certainly add beauty to the already captivating fall landscape. Interestingly, it is when the enteloma and the honey mushroom meet one another in the soil, that a unique fungal phenomenon occurs, that creates an EASILY identified form of these fungi that can be cooked and enjoyed.

Picture an old rotting oak stump that has two clusters of very different fungi growing just feet away from one another. One cluster, looking like toasted umbrellas, is a fresh fruiting of honey mushrooms. A yard or two away, ghostly gray entelomas protrude from the damp leaf litter, both fungi working the roots of a dead or dying oak tree.

Continued on page 12

Fungal ‘Fight Club’ of the Autumn Forest - article & photos by Michael Kensinger

These fruitlings tell a story of the mycelium beneath the soil, of both species, competing for the same host. And that is when the mushrooms attack one another.

As the honey mushrooms try to grow, the enteloma mycelium attacks them, causing them to abort development and turn into something unique. Look around such a scenario and you will start to see “aborted” forms of these mushrooms scattered like white popcorn across the forest floor. A closer examination shows they look a lot like little shrimps. This fungal phenomenon is called the “aborted enteloma” or more commonly, “shrimp of the woods”. Pluck one from the soil, and you will find a white mushroom, covered in a thick white coat, then reveals some pinkish or brownish swirls of color inside. They will be soft, and as with all wild mushrooms, must be cooked prior to eating should you properly identify them in full faith.



For many years it was believed that the honey mushrooms were attacking the entelomas, causing them to abort growth; hence the name ‘aborted enteloma’. Sometime in the early 2000’s however, studies revealed it is the enteloma causing the honey mushroom to abort its growth cycle, revealing the true winner in this battle beneath our boots each autumn.

So, whether you’re just an observer, or someone who is truly looking to get into learning and eventually foraging for wild mushrooms – take note of these delectable growths, because once you see them, you’ll often start noticing them in many more places each year. And now, if you’ve read this simplified explanation, you’ll have a little more understanding about what is happening right before your bootlaces.

Mushroom hunting is a great way to make memories with friends and family. Be sure and join a local mushroom hunting club, and remember, when in doubt throw it out.

Ringed honey Mushroom growing in a cluster. White gills, white spore print, white ring on stem, and scaling on the cap help to distinguish it from a deadly look-a-like such as the deadly galerina.



A Warm Welcome to Dr. Justin Merry

We are thrilled that Justin has agreed to serve as Director-at-Large on the JVAS Board. Justin is a Professor of Biology and Chair of the Biology Department at Saint Francis University, where he specializes in sensory ecology and teaches animal behavior, neuroscience, and anatomy & physiology. He is a member of the Animal Behavior Society and the Society for the Study of Evolution.

JVAS has helped him take his lifelong love of birds and birding to a new level, and he looks forward to new adventures with the group. In adding to birding, Justin also enjoys running, beginner guitar, and the nerdy side of baseball. He lives in Duncansville with his wife and two daughters, one of whom recently started college at Penn State.

Dr. Merry exploring the Columbia River Gorge

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON

PO BOX 1013
ALTOONA, PA 16603

Address Service Requested



Become a JVAS Chapter-only member at one of the annual membership categories:

Check the appropriate box:

- Individual Membership, \$15
- Family Membership, \$20
- Supporting Membership, \$35
- Friend of the JVAS, \$50
- Corporate Membership, \$100
- Life Membership, \$500

Membership Year runs from January 1st to December 31st

Make your check payable to **JVAS**

Mail to: Juniata Valley Audubon Society
P. O. Box 1013
Altoona, PA 16603



Point your phone's camera at the QR code above to join online!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____ E-mail Address _____

- Yes, I will accept the digital copy of *The Gnatcatcher*.**
- No, I prefer to receive a paper copy**