

# The Gnatcatcher

## Newsletter of Juniata Valley Audubon

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as a benefit for members of the

JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY



[www.JVAS.org](http://www.JVAS.org)

### President's Message: Embracing Spring's Promise



JVAS President  
Michael Kensinger

Dear Friends of Juniata Valley Audubon Society,

As we step into the season of renewal, we are reminded of the beauty and resilience of the natural world. The transition from winter to spring is always a time of wonder—birds are beginning to return from their wintering grounds, and the landscape around us begins to shift as the earth stirs with new life. You might already notice the sturdy skunk cabbage jutting from the snow, or perhaps bright buds appearing on trees, signaling that warmer days are just around the corner.

Yet, as much as we celebrate these signs of spring, we also know that nature's rhythms are unpredictable. Weather shifts, sudden storms, and the ebb and flow of seasons all remind us of the delicate balance that sustains life. These changes bring both challenges and opportunities, encouraging us to stay adaptable and aware of our shared responsibility to protect the habitats that so many species—ourselves included—depend on.



Pink Lady Slippers-  
Michael Kensinger

While we face unpredictable times in the conservation world, with regulations being relaxed and protections removed, I want all of us to take heart in the knowledge that every action, no matter how small, contributes to the collective effort to preserve the places we love. I want us to remember the resilience that occurs in nature occurs also in ourselves. That is why our commitment to birdwatching, habitat restoration, and simple acts of environmental stewardship makes a massive difference sending ripples through our community.

The smallest bird song, the fluttering of wings, and the bright splash of new green are constant reminders that nature is resilient—and so are we. And so, now more than ever we should share our stories, photographs, artwork and experiences in the wild wonders of nature. In using our combined talents to communicate this wonderful world to others, we might just be able to embolden or educate people who otherwise haven't a clue of how important conservation issues are. It is my belief, and I'm sure most of you will agree that these issues are more important now than they've ever been.

As the days grow longer and the weather grows warmer, let us take joy in a season of renewal. Let us make an unwavering promise for a future where our efforts, united, can help ensure that our natural world continues to thrive. The spring season is a time to embrace possibility, to gather hope, and to know that, together, we will continue to make a difference.

May the road rise to meet your every step in the coming season.

**DID YOU RENEW YET? See page 12**

**MEMBERSHIP RUNS PER CALENDAR YEAR**

President's Message.....Page 1  
Lenca Farms Coffee.....Page 2  
Evening Programs.....Page 3  
Honduras Birding Tour.....Page 3  
Field Trips.....Pages 4-7

Earth Week Birding Classic .....Page 8  
Conservation Crossroads.....Page 9  
Letter to the Editor.....Page 9  
Oil and Birds Don't Mix.....Pages 10-11  
SPRING BANQUET .....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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**Congratulations to the Garcia Family: Emilio, brother Carlos and sister Doris, whose coffee farms in Honduras are now Smithsonian-certified Bird Friendly®. Their coffee is certified organic and grown under the native tree canopy, providing food and a safe habitat for birds. The new label for the Smithsonian certified coffee is, “Los Robles,” which means, “The Oaks.” Emilio is the only farmer who is also certified as a roaster in the program.**

#### WHY WE PROMOTE SHADE-GROWN COFFEE

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**.

**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, feasting on insects and protected by native vegetation.

#### Celebrate Earth Day Every Day - Drink Bird Friendly® Coffee

**Emilio Garcia**, our partner who produces bird friendly 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 the single origin, direct trade coffee that is certified Bird Friendly®.

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

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



**Tuesday, MARCH 25, 2025:** Note this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of March – a week later than usual!

## 6 PM: Free Dinner

Menu: pasta bar, salad, bread, meatballs, chicken, white and red sauce, cheese cake and pumpkin pie. Gluten free and vegan options.

## 7 PM: Evening Program “Exploring Dreibelbis Birding Area and Soaring Eagle Wetlands”

presented by Mark Nale

Join us for an engaging presentation by Mark Nale, a seasoned photographer, outdoor writer, and retired biology teacher, as he showcases the remarkable conservation efforts at Dreibelbis Birding Area and Soaring Eagle Wetlands. Mark will highlight the vital work to protect these unique ecosystems, complemented by his award-winning photography of the birds, plants, and wildlife that inhabit these thriving wetlands. Don't miss the opportunity to explore these habitats through the lens of a true expert.

In case you are wondering where these wonderful wetlands are located, they are just about a half-hour drive north of the Bellwood-Antis Library along Old 220 (South Eagle Valley Road). **Soaring Eagle Wetlands** is on the right and well-marked with a board walk. Just a bit further north is the **Dreibelbis Birding Area**, also well-marked. Both are easily accessible and very easy walking.

Red-winged Blackbird Photo by Mark Nale

←—————→

**If you'd like to venture farther afield, consider participating in a Honduras Birding Tour, led by Emilio Garcia (our coffee farmer partner) and David Hernandez (longtime leader of the Marcala Bird Club).** They have organized a wonderful 11-day trip to celebrate birds and coffee, scheduled from July 16 – 26, 2025. Click below to see all the details.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n1Zs5IucZgmv3BrrOLR2Fj1LoRtuThp8/view>



In 2016, JVAS Past President Mark Bonta led a similar trip to Honduras, so those of us who went on that trip can attest that it's a fantastic opportunity to experience tropical

birding, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (the Maya site of Copan), great coffee, and impressive scenery. We stayed at many of the locations that are part of this 2025 birding tour. We can vouch that the accommodations will be top-notch and the food very delicious. This tour will have just eight participants, so it will be very personal, and travel will be quite comfortable.

Of course, the birding will be over the top exciting – especially if a **Resplendent Quetzal** cooperates (photo on right)!!



## JVAS FIELD TRIPS Winter/Spring 2025

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](mailto: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](mailto:MichaelKensinger@gmail.com)**

\*The Field Trip Chair also reserves the right to cancel any field trip last minute in the interest of safety of our participants. We encourage you to call or text us if you are ever in doubt that a field trip is taking place.



*A male Purple Finch at Ray Amato by Connor Schmitt.*



*A male Wood Duck by Susan Braun*

### ***FIRST TUESDAY WALK: March 4, April 1 from 10 AM to NOON***

**Birding the Ray Amato Memorial Trail behind the Northern Blair County Recreation Center**

**Address for Northern Blair County Rec Center (NBCRC):**

4080 E Pleasant Valley Blvd, Altoona, Pa.

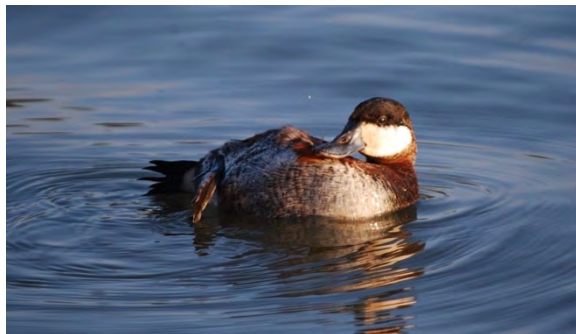
Join JVAS Secretary Connor Schmitt to explore the nature trail that runs behind Northern Blair Recreational Center in Tipton, PA. Enjoy an easy-grade hike, where you will enjoy a variety of habitats including streamside (Little Juniata River), wetland (Robert P. Brooks Wetland), meadow, and forest. This location is always a great choice for birding due to the myriad habitat choices. Even the NBCRC's soccer field boasts Killdeer, Canada Geese, Eastern Bluebirds, and others that like a more open area.

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



We hope you are providing food, cover, and water to our feathered friends this winter! Research shows that Northern Cardinals prefer **black oil sunflower seeds** over any other birdseed. No wonder! Those seeds are full of fat and protein, which birds really need during this cold winter weather. Photo- Laura Jackson

## JVAS FIELD TRIPS Winter/Spring 2025



*Male Ruddy Duck preening by Michael Kensinger.*

**Saturday, March 15, 2025: 9 AM - NOON**  
**Waterfowl Watch @ Prince Gallitzin State Park**  
**Address:** We meet in the parking lot of the Prince Gallitzin Marina, 197 Gibbons Rd, Patton, PA 16668.

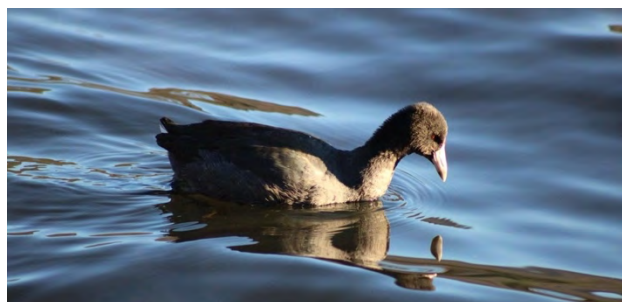
Join President Michael Kensinger for our annual waterfowl watch at Prince Gallitzin's Marina. Waterfowl migration should be kicking off by this point and it is a great time of year to see waterfowl that only briefly pass through our state! We expect to see many waterfowl species such as Scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, Redheads, Tundra Swans, various grebes, loons, gulls and

terns and many others that are arriving or passing through the State Park. March is full of unexpected surprises in the waterfowl watching world, so dress accordingly and let's see what we can find.

**WHAT TO BRING:** March is UNPREDICTABLE as we all know! Please judge weather accordingly and wear appropriate clothing. Bring your own snacks or drink as you deem appropriate. We suggest bird field guides, binoculars, and cameras. JVAS will bring a scope to reach out to observe birds at a distance. Please call Michael at (814) 505 - 3410 with any questions or in case of inclement weather.



**Saturday, March 22, 2025: 9 AM – NOON Waterfowl Watch @ Canoe Creek State Park**  
**Address:** We meet in the parking lot beside Pavilion 2 (where our JVAS picnic is reserved annually). Canoe Creek State Park is located at 205 Canoe Creek Road, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.



*American Coot at Canoe Creek SP by Michael Kensinger*

Join President Michael Kensinger for our annual waterfowl watch at scenic Canoe Creek State Park. Waterfowl migration should be kicking off by this point and it is a great time of year to see waterfowl that only briefly pass through our state! We expect to see many waterfowl species such as Scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, Redheads, Tundra Swans, various grebes, loons, gulls and terns and many others that are arriving or passing through the State Park. March is full of unexpected surprises in the waterfowl watching world, so dress accordingly and let's see what we can find.

**WHAT TO BRING:** March is UNPREDICTABLE as we all know! Please judge weather accordingly and wear appropriate clothing. Bring your own snacks or drink as you deem appropriate. We suggest bird field guides, binoculars, and cameras. JVAS will bring a scope to reach out to observe birds at a distance. Please Field Trip Chair Michael Kensinger @ (814) 505 - 3410 with any questions or in case of inclement weather.

**Kristin Joivell's PA Master Naturalist Service Project 2025**  
**Exploring Natural Areas—First of Three Field Trips for JVAS Led by Kristin Joivell**

**Sunday, April 27, 2025: 1 PM – 4 PM Exploring Little Juniata Natural Area**

**Meeting Place: Mid State Trail Barree Trailhead on Mountain Road**

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/bzjVN2ZoahmmwZfl9>

- ❖ A state forest natural area is a protected area in a Pennsylvania state forest that is managed to preserve its natural state. These areas are set aside to protect unique plants, animals, scenic beauty, geological, and historic features. They provide places to observe distinctive plant and animal communities and showcase outstanding examples of the state's forest communities. There are over 60 state forest natural areas in Pennsylvania!
- ❖ Located at a water gap in Tussey Mountain in Huntingdon County, the 624 acre Little Juniata Natural Area is of specific geologic interest for its talus slope of hard, white, Tuscarora sandstone and a horizontal thrust fault.
- ❖ On this 2.5-mile leisurely walk, participants can expect to observe streamside plants, waterfowl, and rock outcrops next to the Little Juniata River. The trail is mostly flat with a few short up and down hill sections. Come prepared with proper footwear, food, and water. Hiking poles are recommended.
- ❖ Contact PA Master Naturalist, Kristin Joivell, at [kristinjean@hotmail.com](mailto:kristinjean@hotmail.com) or (814) 386-6267 with questions.



Photo from JVAS Trip in 2015

**Kristin Joivell's PA Master Naturalist Service Project 2025**  
**Exploring Natural Areas—Second of Three Field Trips for JVAS**

**Saturday, May 10, 2025: 1 PM – 4 PM Exploring Rocky Ridge Natural Area led by Kristin Joivell**

**Meeting Place: Rocky Ridge Trail Head on Frew Road**

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/7mCpCstxxJfsYF856>



Photo from JVAS Trip in 2014

- ❖ A state forest natural area is a protected area in a Pennsylvania state forest that is managed to preserve its natural state. These areas are set aside to protect unique plants, animals, scenic beauty, geological, and historic features. They provide places to observe distinctive plant and animal communities and showcase outstanding examples of the state's forest communities. There are over 60 state forest natural areas in Pennsylvania!
- ❖ The Rocky Ridge Natural Area is in Huntingdon County, south of Martin Gap. These 150 acres of rich, mixed oak woodland support numerous wildflowers among exposures of Oriskany sandstone.
- ❖ On this 2 mile leisurely walk, participants can expect to observe spring wildflowers in bloom among large sandstone boulders. The trail winds around and through rocks of all sizes with a short but steep uphill at the beginning of the route and a gradual downhill at the end of the route. Come prepared with proper footwear, food, and water. Hiking poles are highly recommended.
- ❖ Contact PA Master Naturalist, Kristin Joivell, at [kristinjean@hotmail.com](mailto:kristinjean@hotmail.com) or (814) 386-6267 with any questions.

## JVAS FIELD TRIPS Winter/Spring 2025

**Sunday, May 11: 9 AM – NOON 4th Annual Mother's Day Walk at Blair County Game Fish and Forestry Assoc.**  
**Address:** 301 Riggles Gap Sportsmen Rd., Altoona, PA



Join Michael Kensinger for a slow hike meandering through a variety of bird habitats to record and observe birds and wildlife on the trails of the Blair County Game Fish & Forestry Association. We will begin our birding at the parking area, recording our data into eBird as we explore and see what makes this a great birding location. We will look for birds around the different habitats on the property which consists of mossy streamside forested trails, views across open country power lines and fields, as well as mixed hardwood forests. There is also a small, stocked trout pond which has attracted a variety of

species of fish-eating birds. If you enjoy photography, feel free to bring a camera as we peruse the trails, which are stunning and peaceful, cloaked in moss along a native brook trout stream.

**WHAT TO BRING:** binoculars, comfortable hiking shoes, bug repellent, drink, and snack as desired.

If you have any questions, please call/text Michael at (814) 505-3410 or email him @ [MichaelKensinger@gmail.com](mailto:MichaelKensinger@gmail.com).

## **Kristin Joivell's PA Master Naturalist Service Project 2025 Exploring Natural Areas—Third of Three Field Trips for JVAS**



Photo from JVAS Trip in 2012

**Sunday, June 1, 2025: 1 PM – 4 PM**  
**Exploring Alan Seeger Natural Area**  
**Led by Kristin Joivell**  
**Meet: Old Seeger Picnic Area Parking Lot on Seeger Road**

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/e38JtbzYCQCD9ixQ9>

❖ A state forest natural area is a protected area in a Pennsylvania state forest that is managed to preserve its natural state. These areas are set aside to protect unique plants, animals, scenic beauty, geological, and historic features. They provide places to observe distinctive plant and animal communities and showcase outstanding examples of the state's forest communities.

There are over 60 state forest natural areas in Pennsylvania!

- ❖ Named after a famous WWI poet, the Alan Seeger Natural Area includes 390 acres north of Greenwood Furnace State Park. The forest contains old growth hemlock, white pine, and yellow birch along with huge colonies of great rhododendron near Standing Stone Creek.
- ❖ On this 1-mile leisurely walk, participants can expect to observe an old growth forest ecosystem. Although very flat, the trail crosses the stream multiple times over bridges and can be a bit muddy in some locations. Come prepared with proper footwear, food, and water. Hiking poles are recommended.
- ❖ Contact PA Master Naturalist, Kristin Joivell, at [kristinjean@hotmail.com](mailto:kristinjean@hotmail.com) or (814) 386-6267 with any questions.

## **Join the Earth Week Birding Classic 2025!**

Attention bird lovers and conservation champions! The Earth Week Birding Classic 2025 (EWBC-25) is just around the corner, and we'd love for you to be part of this exciting, nature-filled challenge. Whether you're an experienced birder or a beginner who simply enjoys the thrill of spotting feathered friends in the wild, this event is a fantastic way to celebrate birds while supporting conservation.

Below is a summary of the Rules & Guidelines. Contact Catherine Farr for the Registration form if you're interested! **Registration is free** and open until **Wednesday, April 9**. The competition wraps up with a celebration in the U.S. Hotel Tavern on **Saturday, April 19 at 5:30 PM**, where we'll announce the winners and swap stories from the field.

Whether you aim to break records or just enjoy a peaceful day with binoculars in hand, we welcome you to join us for this unforgettable birding adventure.

Let's celebrate Earth Week with the joy of birds—sign up today!

**For more details or to register, contact Catherine Farr ([catiegk5059@gmail.com](mailto:catiegk5059@gmail.com)).**

Happy Birding! 🦉 ✨



### **Summary of the EWBC-25 Rules & Guidelines**

1. **WHEN:** Each Team chooses one 24-hour period to count birds some time from 12 noon on April 11 to 4 pm on April 19. You must register before April 9 and submit your start time.
2. **WHERE:** Teams can bird anywhere in Blair, Centre, Clearfield, Cambria, Bedford, and Huntingdon Counties. If your team chooses to only bird on the Penn State Altoona Campuses, you'll get a special map and specific rules.
3. **TEAMS:** There are **SEVEN** team categories ranging from **COOT** (birders over 65 years young) to **PHOEBE** (family teams) to **TOWHEE** (a team birds in only one county). All teams must have at least 3 members, except **COOT AND PHOEBE**.  
Get the complete rules to see the other teams and all the details.
4. **PLEDGES for CONSERVATION:** Teams are encouraged to get donations or pledges to support conservation. All donations are used for bird conservation and education projects in central PA.
5. **TEAM RULES:** Stick together, at least 75% of the team must correctly identify a bird, no recordings or playback are allowed. Domestic or pet birds don't count.
6. **CLOSING EVENT:** Join us for the **wrap-up celebration at U.S. Hotel Tavern on April 19 at 5:30 PM**. Winners will be announced at **6:00 PM**. **Reserve your spot at the table!!**

Contact Catherine Farr ([catiegk5059@gmail.com](mailto:catiegk5059@gmail.com)) to obtain the complete Rules & Guidelines before you register!!!



**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](http://www.JVAS.org) then click on the Conservation tab.



**This letter was submitted to local papers after the Rutter's development was approved by DEP and Smithfield Township.**



Dear Editor,

As President of the Juniata Valley Audubon Society, I feel compelled to express my profound dissatisfaction with the recent approval of the Rutter's near the Old Crow Wetland. Despite overwhelming public outcry, with many concerned citizens attending the DEP hearing to voice opposition, the project was approved, and this decision threatens to irreparably damage one of our community's most valuable ecosystems. The decision to build a gas station and truck stop so close to this precious wetland flies in the face of our responsibility to protect the environment for future generations.

Despite significant risks, the approval was granted, even after the public expressed its clear opposition at the DEP hearing with a massive attendance. It was like nothing I'd ever seen before, and yet, our voices were not heard.

The decision to move forward with Rutter's project prioritizes short-term commercial interests over long-term environmental and community well-being. We see what you've done, and it will be a notoriously poor decision that we will tell our grandchildren one day.

The lesson here is that money talks. And clearly, it talks louder than the congregations of wood frogs that call from the smaller pools around the wetland. And it talks louder than the beautiful spotted salamander, that breathes through its skin and will undoubtedly be breathing in more than just oxygen in due time. The dollar bill is louder than the first congregating flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds alighting the fluffy cattails and reaches deeper in the pocket than those of us who use Old Crow to better our mental health.

**WE. MUST. DO. BETTER.**

At the Juniata Valley Audubon Society, we are committed to the preservation of our wild spaces. We will not accept the approval of this project without acknowledging the harm it will cause to Old Crow Wetland and its surrounding environment. As community protectors, we will not accept approval of this project without acknowledging the harm it will cause to our community and the blatant overlooking of massive public outcry.

I would like to implore all who value this wetland to document and record every occurrence there. Let us carefully observe and record every change we notice, as well as continue to bring this wetland to the forefront of our community's mind. Let us communicate the rumble of construction equipment and integrate every candy bar wrapper and soda bottle into our work. Let us build exhibits of artistic sculpture from the litter that will blow into the wetland (and has already). Perhaps that way, we can show people that in life there are things more important than having options for over-priced junk food, tobacco, lottery tickets, and gasoline.

I stand with Old Crow.

Michael Kensinger

# CONSERVATION CROSSROADS, continued

## Oil and Birds Don't Mix by Laura Jackson, Conservation Chair

We've all seen pictures of dirty birds covered with black gunk when offshore oil pipes burst in the **Gulf of Mexico** or when ships like the *Exxon Valdez* spew their toxic plume into Alaskan waters, only to kill thousands of birds. You might be too young to remember the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, but I remember it very clearly: on March 24, 1989, the ship ran aground in Prince William Sound, Alaska, spilling 11 million gallons of crude oil.

The Valdez spill affected over 1,300 miles of shoreline, killing an “estimated 250,000 seabirds; 2,800 sea otters; 300 harbor seals; 250 Bald Eagles; as many as 22 killer whales; and billions of salmon and herring eggs.” It was one of the largest environmental disasters in our history.<sup>1</sup>

I've visited Prince William Sound two times since the accident and learned that some bird populations might be irreversibly harmed. Even now, many years later, Pigeon Guillemots, Marbled Murrelets, and Kittlitz's Murrelets still face a long road to recovery.

Since 1972, Pigeon Guillemots have declined by 85% in Prince William Sound, with an estimated current population of less than 2,000 birds.<sup>2</sup>

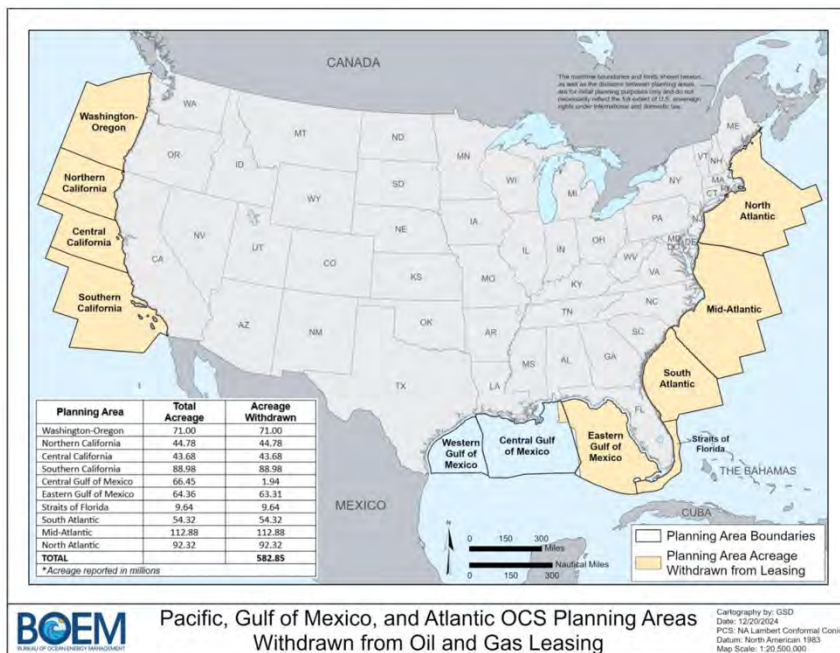
Maybe you do remember the largest oil spill in U.S. history? The Deepwater Horizon spill from a blown out well began on April 20, 2010, and released 206 million gallons of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico over 87 days. According to The Center for Biological Diversity, “the spill likely harmed or killed about 82,000 birds of 102 species, including black skimmers, brown pelicans, clapper rails, common loons, laughing gulls, northern gannets and several species of tern; about 6,165 sea turtles; as many as 25,900 marine mammals.

A vast number of fish also perished, from the great bluefin tuna to our nation's smallest seahorse — plus oysters, crabs, corals and other creatures. Actual mortality is estimated to be at least 10 times higher than reported.”<sup>4</sup>



Pigeon Guillemot — Becky Matsubara.<sup>3</sup>

### Pacific Gulf Atlantic Withdrawal (January 6, 2025)



Sadly, there have been hundreds of oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico. Millions of gallons of oil remain in the Gulf today, continuing to poison wildlife for generations. Oil spills also continue to pollute inland Alaska, as well as waters off America's coasts in addition to the Gulf of Mexico. Although tanker spills have decreased, the risks of inland pipeline spills and deepwater catastrophic spills have increased.

That's why January 6, 2025, brought some good news for birds and other wildlife at risk to oil spills. Using his authority under section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, President Biden issued memoranda to withdraw

Map available at: <https://www.doi.gov/media/pacific-gulf-atlantic-withdraw-map>

## Oil and Birds Don't Mix, continued

significant portions of the Outer Continental Shelf from future oil and natural gas leasing, including the entire U.S. Pacific and Eastern Atlantic coasts, the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, and the remainder of the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area offshore Alaska. The withdrawal areas announced today encompass more than 625 million acres – and represent the largest withdrawal in U.S. history. The map on the preceding page shows the tan areas along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts that are now off-limits to oil and gas drilling.

Of course, there was the fear that the Trump administration would reverse this protection, since the pledge to, “Drill, baby, drill” is in direct opposition to protecting our coastal beaches, wildlife, and economies. So, it was no surprise, that Trump issued an illegal Executive Order revoking President Biden’s protection on January 20, 2025 – his first day in office.

The good news is that on February 19, 2025, conservation groups filed the first environmental lawsuit against the Trump administration. Conservation groups are challenging the illegal order by Trump to revoke former President Biden’s withdrawal from oil-and-gas leasing. It is clear that the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act does not allow a president to revoke withdrawals of prior presidents.

You may be wondering how Biden’s action will impact gas prices and oil production. Under the Biden Administration, leases and drilling increased oil production so that the U.S. is now the top country -ever- in oil production and exports to countries around the world. Thanks to other areas of oil production in Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico, there is a steady supply of oil. Many of the withdrawn areas have poor oil resources, leading one expert to state that this order will have very little impact on oil production or gas prices.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, Biden’s efforts to increase industrial wind turbine projects in the Gulf of Mexico threaten many species of migrating birds and come with a caveat that at least three lease sales in 2025, 2027, and 2029 must be allowed for oil drilling in order to lease for industrial wind projects in the Gulf. Furthermore, under the terms of a 2022 climate law, at least 60 million acres of offshore oil and gas leases must be offered in any one-year period before any offshore wind leases can be offered.<sup>6</sup>

Wildlife is caught in the middle of energy development – whether it’s renewable energy such as large wind turbine projects or offshore fossil fuel development. Our greed for energy fuels the threat of extinction. Research findings published in 2019 showed that we’ve already lost 3 billion birds since 1970 – how many more birds have been lost in the past six years?

To end on a positive note, “President Biden conserved more than 670 million acres of US lands, waters, and ocean – more than any president in history.”<sup>7</sup> That is something to remember as we face the many environmental challenges over the next four years.

1. <https://darrp.noaa.gov/oil-spills/exxon-valdez>
2. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c030a214acf14012bbe0656c6d0867b0>
3. "Pigeon Guillemot (breeding adult)" by Becky Matsubara is licensed under CC BY 2.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/?ref=openverse>.
4. [https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/public\\_lands/energy/dirty\\_energy\\_development/oil\\_and\\_gas/gulf\\_oil\\_spill/a\\_deadly\\_toll.html#:~:text=As%20many%20as%2025%2C900%20marine%20mammals%20may%20have%20been%20harmed,headed%20whales%20and%20sperm%20whales.](https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/public_lands/energy/dirty_energy_development/oil_and_gas/gulf_oil_spill/a_deadly_toll.html#:~:text=As%20many%20as%2025%2C900%20marine%20mammals%20may%20have%20been%20harmed,headed%20whales%20and%20sperm%20whales.)
5. <https://www.newsweek.com/why-trump-probably-cant-undo-bidens-offshore-drilling-ban-2010604>
6. <https://www.offshore-energy.biz/activists-go-toe-to-toe-with-big-oil-in-court-to-challenge-trump-era-gulf-of-mexico-drilling-allowance/>
7. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/01/biden-bans-new-offshore-drilling-coastal-waters/>



## Exploring and Protecting Nature in Central Pennsylvania

President: Michael Kensinger  
Vice-President: Catie Farr

Secretary: Connor Schmitt  
Treasurer: George Mahon

Address: P. O. Box 1013 Altoona, PA 16603

## JOIN JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Your continued support will make a difference in our work to protect birds, their habitats, and the natural world we love. Even if you can't attend any of our activities, your membership provides important financial support. Please consider joining or renewing your Chapter-only membership in Juniata Valley Audubon Society.

### Renewing members will continue to enjoy:

- 5 digital issues of our newsletter, *The Gnatcatcher*.  
**The March issue of *The Gnatcatcher* is the last issue if renewal is not paid by April 15.**
- Local birding and community events
- A voice in the fight to protect birds and their habitats

**If you join as a new member in June – December, your membership is good for the next year, too! Chapter members who renew on Sept. 1 or later are carried over for the entire following year.**

Sincerely,

Michael Kensinger  
Michael Kensinger

----- ✂ -----Cut here and return bottom portion-----

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

### Check the appropriate box:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership, \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend of the JVAS, \$55    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership, \$25     | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Membership, \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Membership, \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership, \$500      |

**Membership Year runs from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>**

Make your check payable to the JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail to:

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



Point your phone's  
camera at  
this QR code to join online.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

(needed so we can send you *The Gnatcatcher*)



**JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF BIRDS,  
CONSERVATION & COMMUNITY!  
JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
SPRING BANQUET 2025**

📅 **Tuesday, April 15, 2025**

📍 **Evangelical Lutheran Church  
1200 4th Ave, Duncansville, PA 16635**



**An Evening to Connect, Learn & Celebrate**

**5:00 PM** – Silent Auction (Bring an item to donate & support JVAS!)

**6:00 PM** – Delicious Buffet Dinner featuring baked chicken & gravy, baked potatoes, broccoli, tossed salad, and homemade cake! (plus iced tea, coffee, and water.)  
Gluten-free (except gravy & cake). Vegan: salad & potatoes

**7:00 PM** – JVAS Business Meeting (Stay informed & get involved!)

**7:30 PM** – **Presentation: “Ornithology Over Fifty Years: A Retrospection and Lessons for the Future”**  
*Presented by Dr. Andrew Mack, Conservation Biologist & Ornithologist*

**Our Speaker: Dr. Andrew Mack** is a conservation biologist and ornithologist with a Ph.D. from the University of Miami. Since 1979, he has worked for the Academy of Natural Sciences, Conservation International, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, and Penn State Altoona, where he retired in 2024. His research has spanned numerous topics, especially cassowaries and tropical rainforest ecology in Papua New Guinea (PNG). He has authored more than 60 peer-reviewed publications and a book while also developing a major conservation program training PNG national biologists and mentoring conservation leaders. Now residing in Pennsylvania, he manages an 85-acre conservation property and serves on the boards of the Westmoreland Land Trust and the Society of Conservation Biologists Oceania.

**Reserve Your Spot by April 8!**

🔪 **\$22 per JVAS Member \$24 for non-members** – Mail or sign up online

**TO REGISTER:**

✅ Fill out the form below and mail with payment to:

**Catie Farr, 1201 Meadow Lane, Duncansville, PA 16635**

✅ Or sign up at the **March 25 JVAS meeting**

✅ **Questions?** Email [catiegk5059@gmail.com](mailto:catiegk5059@gmail.com) or call **570-651-3839**

✅ **Prefer to register online?** Scan the QR code:



✂ **CUT HERE & MAIL BY APRIL 8** ✂

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**# of Tickets:** \_\_\_\_\_ x \$22 (JVAS members) \_\_\_\_\_ \$24 (non-members) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Make checks payable to JVAS**

**DON'T MISS THIS SPECIAL EVENING!** Come for the birds, stay for the stories! Whether you're a long-time member or new to JVAS, we'd love to see you there!