



Mark Your Calendar:

Saturday Oct. 7, 2006 6:30am - afternoon
The Palmyra Challenge fundraiser. Please pledge!

Monday, Oct. 9, 2006 7:30pm
Meeting, "The Alaskan Wilderness" by Julia Millan Shaw.

Sunday, Oct. 15, 2006
Field trip to Absecon Inlet led by Ed Bruder.



Wilderness League for the past year. Alaska's wild lands -- specifically the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge-- are under attack. This extraordinary treasure trove of lands set aside decades ago to be protected now and in the future for the benefit of the American people, is in severe danger of being destroyed forever by short-sighted politicians and the extractive industries. They want only the resources these pristine areas can provide, regardless of the resulting devastation to the habitat, wildlife, and cultures.

The Alaska Wilderness League is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 1993 to further the protection of Alaska's incomparable natural endowment. The Alaska Wilderness League supports legislative and administrative initiatives to protect Alaska's lands and waters, promotes national and local recognition of Alaska's spectacular environment through public education, strengthens grassroots activism on behalf of Alaska's environment, and provides leadership within the environmental community on selected issues that concern Alaska.

The Alaska Wilderness League's main projects currently include fighting for the permanent protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the sustainable future of Alaska's Rainforests. To find out more visit:

http://alaskawild.org/campaigns_arctic.html



Seeing this Broadwing Hawk on a branch is a treat. I generally see them from underneath as they are migrating South. Photo by Chip Krilowicz.

October Meeting: The Alaskan Wilderness League

On Monday, October 9, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. Audubon Wildlife Society will hold its monthly meeting at the Audubon Senior Center, Oak Street and Oakland Ave. Refreshment volunteers are: John and Marilyn Courtney and Pat Winter. This month's program will feature a presentation by Julia Millan Shaw, the NJ Field Organizer for the Alaska Wilderness League.

As a former resident of Alaska, Julia has a firm commitment to protecting the lands in Alaska. She has worked on protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Alaskan Rainforest for the Alaska

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!
Sunny Thompson
Ruth Dougherty

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Please send news items to Janet Goehner-Jacobs at awspublicity@aol.com

<http://www.audubonwildlifesociety.org>

The Palmyra Cove Challenge Saturday Oct. 7

This year's fundraiser will be a birding event on Saturday Oct. 7th at Palmyra Cove. You can come out and see how many birds you spot, or you can pledge an amount for each bird sighted. Last year approximately 70 species were identified. Raindate is Sunday Oct. 8th. (Please refer to the pledge forms with this newsletter!) For more information contact Merilee Heffron at (856) 854-0173.

Sunday Oct. 15, 2006 9:30am

Field Trip: Absecon Inlet

This field trip will be led by Ed Bruder. We will see migrating water fowl; Black Skimmers, Western Willets, and Marbled Godwits.

Directions: Take Route 30 (White Horse Pike) East to Atlantic City. Go on to Route 187 and then make a LEFT turn onto Route 87. Stay in the MIDDLE lane, go down to the 1st commercial district. Continue across the bridge. Go 1.5 miles and turn RIGHT at the Shell gas station onto Harbor Beach Road (no sign). Continue to Lagoon Blvd. and turn RIGHT. Go 1.5 miles on Lagoon Blvd. to the parking lot. Park outside, do not enter. Allow approximately 90 minutes for the drive. Call Joan Ziegler at 428-1914 with any questions.

Refreshment volunteers

Thanks to all those who signed up to bring refreshments for our meetings. We still have openings for volunteers for February, March, April and May. Please fill out the refreshment sign up sheet at our next meeting or contact Merilee Heffron to volunteer at 854-0173.

Summer Sightings, 2006

A few things that caught my eye:

- A mature red-bellied and an immature downy woodpecker landed high on a broad tree trunk shortly after the rising sun illuminated it. The downy was three feet directly below the larger bird. As if on cue, both birds turned their heads and spread their left wings to catch the light, presumably to rid themselves of parasites. They stayed completely immobile for a couple of minutes.
- A group of small birds sitting on the sand of a remote beach, all facing into a stiff wind. When the "flock" took flight it proved to consist of barn swallows, tree swallows, bank

swallows, semi-palmated and piping plovers, a combination one doesn't see every day.

- The piping plover story I wrote for the June newsletter had an even better ending than I reported: after the newsletter was printed, Mass Audubon volunteers found a third pair with one chick on the other side of the tidal river, quite a comeback for a beach that was devoid of breeding plovers for over thirty years.

John Maret
September, 2006

Everything Fits

The tide has about two more hours until full. It has crept in over nearly a half mile of sand flats, insinuating itself into the riffles it made when it flowed out, filling one to the brim then spilling into the next, gently rubbing away the footprints of birds and beachcombers. When finished it will have risen only six feet in all that distance. Small fish swim in the pools that were left at the last ebb, temporarily safe from the underwater predators, such as bluefish and striped bass, which roam the open bay. The tiniest minnows can cruise in water less than an inch deep which also makes them invulnerable to the diving terns but not to a quick-moving gull wading in the pool or a child with a net. Many of those "bait fish" that went all the way out with the tide are now swimming just behind the lip of the advancing water, using the shallows as protection from the larger fish that are also being drawn towards the shore. The terns that haven't migrated yet, including many juvenals, flap above them using the wind like kites when they want to stay stationary. Not every dive they make is successful; some fish are caught, some escape but everyone eats, everything fits.

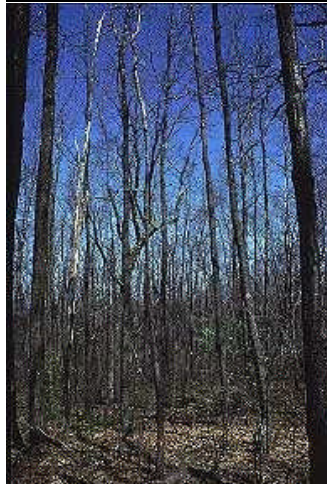
Over near the eel grass beds the few shore birds still left are running out of sand flats. Small peeps, a couple of ruddy turnstones and a scattering of semi-palmated plovers probe the wet edges of the last pools. A larger bird, either a black-bellied plover in changing plumage or a golden plover (I can't make up my mind) stalks a crease on the open flat where a seep has kept the sand moist. A black-bellied plover, seeing the spot as a likely hunting ground, lands but is quickly driven off by the aggressive charge of the first bird. As soon as the interloper is airborne, his adversary turns, scampers a few feet and pulls a long, pinkish worm from the sand. The bird has to rear back and practically stand on tiptoe to extract the full length of its prey. A few slurps and the worm is

gone. The small tide pool that runs into the grass is suddenly filled with ring-billed and herring gulls that flap their wings and, over and over, rise a foot or so and drop into the water, ducking their heads after the abundant minnows. In a minute, the feeding opportunity has vanished (did the fish recede too far into the grass?) and the birds are gone elsewhere. A short walk east reveals a tidal creek reduced to a trickle among tide-formed sand banks. In the gut where the creek reaches the bay is a flock of over 20 black-bellied plovers in various plumages, preening and resting, hidden from predators by the tall eel grass on either side. Just behind them is the incoming flood which has deepened against their sand bar. The creek is still running out, spilling fish into this confined pool and common and least terns are frantically plunging after the harvest. They form a frenetic back-drop to the serene plovers. The fish, which have sheltered from the birds for hours in the dense grasses of the marsh can't resist the pull of the creek towards the bay and the terns know just where to find them. Everything fits.

Walking back along the now wave-washed beach I can see gulls standing or hopping about at the water's edge. Curious as to what they might be hunting, I wade in and suddenly feel a sharp pain in the side of my foot. I've invaded a red crab's space and gotten pinched for my transgression. That, too, is fitting.

John Maret
October, 2006

Devastating Forest Pests: Gypsy Moths



Like invasive plants, insects can and are doing serious damage to our environment both here in NJ and across the nation. Most of you have probably heard of the gypsy moth - the major introduced insect pest of forest and shade trees in the eastern United States.

This species was actually allowed to be brought into the USA by

a private person as he attempted to develop a strain of gypsy moths resistant to disease as part of an effort to begin a commercial silk industry here in the United States. Some accidentally escaped back in

1869. This pest is indirectly responsible for causing mortality of susceptible host trees. Heavy defoliation by the larval stage causes stress to infested host plants. Secondary organisms such as the two lined chestnut borer and shoestring root rot can then successfully attack stressed trees causing mortality.

The primary tree affected in NJ is the oak even though the caterpillar will feed on over 300 different tree and shrub species. A normal outbreak pattern for this pest may be described as two years of light infestation with minimal defoliation followed by two years of moderate to severe defoliation with population collapse of the gypsy moth after the second year of heavy defoliation. Infestations may flare up in future years; however, caterpillar density and level of defoliation will probably not be as severe or widespread as encountered during an initial infestation.



Gypsy Moth Larva

From Mary Belko who led our June trip for wildflowers "We had a run in with gypsy moths at Brendan Byrne on the Audubon Wildlife field trip this past spring. The experience could have been magical if it had been monarchs or fritillaries. Instead it was very sad to see the vast # of eggs, pupae, and adults just on 2 trees. Apparently this was a pretty bad year for them."

I found most of the information for this article from the following two web sites which I recommend checking out for more information on control, host species, and to see some pictures:

http://www.gypsymoth.ento.vt.edu/vagm/General_information.html

<http://www.ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/gypsymoth.htm>

Sandra Keller
Barrington, NJ
sandrakeller@verizon.net

ACTION ALERT! NJ Public Question #2

AWS voted in our September meeting to join the Outdoor Recreational Alliance. As AWS members you can also show your support of New Jersey's Parks, Wildlife Management Areas and Natural and Historic Resources by taking action in the following ways:

1) Vote YES for Public Question #2 on Tuesday, 11/7/06. Voter approval of the ballot referendum would create a stable source of funding for capital repairs at state and local parks and natural areas and is a critical step towards reversing the trend of under funding and ensuring the health of our communities.

2) Contact your legislators and encourage them to renew the Garden State Preservation Trust in 2007 and create a stable funding source for operations, maintenance, and stewardship of our natural areas.

3) Sign a statement of support for the ORA Common Ground for Parks Campaign. Go to: <http://www.outdoorrecreationalliance.org/action/actnow.html> (There is a downloadable form available to fill out and fax at the bottom of the page)

4) Send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper highlighting the critical need for funding for capital repairs, maintenance, stewardship, operation and acquisition of natural areas in New Jersey. Example letters and contact information are available on the ORA website. You can check out the Document Library for more useful tools and samples.

5) Make a donation to help further the work of the ORA either by sending a check to:
ORA
c/o NJ Chapter Sierra Club
295 Princeton Hightstown Road, Unit 12 PMB 303
W. Windsor, NJ 08550-3199

Please place "ORA contribution" in the memo field or by purchasing bags and other merchandise with the ORA logo from Café Press.

6) Spread the word! You can help by encouraging your family, friends and coworkers to vote yes in November and organizations and businesses that rely on well-managed natural areas, wildlife and habitat can visit <http://www.OutdoorRecreationAlliance.org> and join ORA.

Other Club Events:

Saddler's Wood's Clean Up Saturday Oct. 7th 9am – 12pm.

25 volunteers are needed for a fundraising clean up event in Saddler's Woods on Saturday Oct. 7th from 9am – 12pm. If you can drop by and lend a hand anytime between those hours it will help Saddler's Woods Conservation Association raise \$500 through Camden County's Clean Communities minigrant program. Volunteers are needed to remove debris, light litter, and other duties such as "holding the fort" at the sign in table. Meet at the trail entrance by the well pump buildings on MacArthur Blvd. Bring work gloves and wear long shirts, pants and bug spray. Refreshments provided. Raindate is October 8th. To sign up or for more information contact Janet at (856) 869-7372, or janet@saddlerswoods.org.

Burlington County Natural Sciences Club, BCNSC presents, "Cranberries and Blueberries in the Jersey Pines" by Mark Ehlenfeldt. October 11, 2006. BCNSC Meets the second Wednesday of the month, September through May at 7:45pm in Lumberton Leas Meeting Room, Lumberton, NJ. For more information on BCNSC go visit:

<http://oldsquaw.tripod.com/index.html>

Nature Programs on TV:

Nature: Animal's Behaving Worse

Airs on WHYY Oct. 22nd at 8:00pm. NATURE'S ANIMALS BEHAVING WORSE explores the wickedly ingenious ways our wild neighbors are staking their claim for territory in an increasingly human-controlled world. Charges of theft, property destruction, disturbing the peace, and even assault are on the rise -- against animals. It's become an all-out turf war, but just who is invading whose territory?

To view a preview go to:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/preview.html>

