

# Valley Views

GREATER WYOMING VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY


P.O. Box 535 Dallas, PA 18612

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*What's Inside?*

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# Valley Views

Spring 2023

March, April, May

Newsletter of the Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society

## From the President by Bonnie Yuscavage

### Joyful Risings and Tragic Falls

At this writing, the Chinese spy balloon is one of the big topics of news. And rightfully so. The possible ramifications of a foreign power having access to important information about our military, infrastructure and people and, our being in a delicate diplomatic situation with that country, are large.

But there are other balloons that aren't making CNN or Fox News. I am talking, of course, about those red, yellow, green and blue inflated bunches that bring joy to children, celebrate the life of loved ones and decorate our events. It seems an inconsistency that what we think is bright and beautiful is a form of torture and death to wildlife. The lasting memories from a balloon launch is actually a lasting contribution to our litter problems.

The direct effect on wildlife has been documented for decades and

yet little has been done about it. A balloon's color and shape often mimic the prey of ocean creatures and, when consumed, cause them to be unable to digest enough food to survive. They starve to death. Birds, land mammals and sea creatures all become entangled in string causing infections, amputations and drowning and strangulations.

While honoring the life events of humans, the reality is that balloons don't romantically rise to the heavens taking our best wishes and memories with them. They come down. They are litter. Conservation groups pick up tons of balloons on beaches alone which is only a fraction of what goes into oceans and fields.

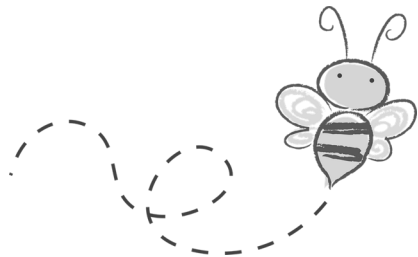
Yet, there are those who feel it is their right to endanger wildlife with this practice. It isn't..

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## Pollinator's Patch

Gardeners have already received seed catalogs in the mail and will begin planning their gardens. Vegetable, herb and flower gardens can all be beneficial to native insects and birds without making major impacts on the plants. For instance, Black Swallowtails feed on nectar from a variety of flowers, including milkweed, thistles, and purple coneflower. But the larva require host plants which include the carrot family: dill, parsley, fennel, celery, caraway, and carrot. Borage, sage, mints, chives, and thyme all attract pollinators.

Granted, not all of these plants are native plants but most of our vegetable garden plants are not. Plant your edible, pollinator gardens in coordination with native pollinator plants to make your yard the place to be for bees, butterflies, moths, other bugs and birds.



### Welcome New Members!

The GWVAS family invites all new members to join us at our membership meetings, field trips, and special events. All of these events are designed to be fun and educational, especially for those just starting to learn about birds.

Linda Paluck  
George Barilla  
John Simpson  
Jeannette Denmon  
Maria Augustine  
Jean Scott  
Delphine Mattei  
J Peter Crynes

Renee Mathur  
Audrey Wylie  
Teresa Metcalf  
Jone Hughes  
J P Crynes  
Pauline Makowski  
Jordan Riley  
Amanda Begley  
Lynda J Jenceleski

Chris Arasteh  
William Terzaghi  
Kathy Kautter  
Kristle Kalinowski  
Michele Stochla  
Susan Jones  
Kaitlyn Stochla  
Carla Brutko

*Continued from page 1*

It is cruel and unnecessary and balloon launches do not honor the life of our loved ones. They do quite the opposite. There are options to balloon releases. A tree planted in someone's memory lasts for generations. A native plant garden benefits birds and bugs, helps pollinators who provide us with food and brings joy with the same reds, yellows, blues and greens.

There is more that can be done. In 2022, legislation was introduced to the Pennsylvania House to make balloon releases illegal. While the punishment seemed light, it was a move in the right direction. However, it died in committee. I assume there was no large balloon lobby trying to stop its passage. Word in environmental circles is that groups are rallying to the cause. We'll keep you in the loop on our website. In the meantime, call or write your legislators to show your support of wild-life. The more they hear about it, the more they will understand the importance of a future bill.

*Bonnie*



*"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter."*

*- Rachel Carson*

### GWVAS ONLINE



Visit our website [www.gwvas.org](http://www.gwvas.org) for information on birding hot spots and sightings, a calendar of events, environmental position statements, and a list of officers, directors and committee chairs.



Follow our group's Facebook page @ [gwvas.org](https://www.facebook.com/gwvas.org) to keep up on current information and bird news.



Have a great shot of a backyard bird or a stunning sunset? We're on Instagram @[gwvas.audubon](https://www.instagram.com/gwvas.audubon) and we'd love to share your photos.

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To learn about new memberships, visit our website [gwvas.org](http://gwvas.org) and click "Membership."

You can renew as a sustaining member and never have to worry about expiration dates. Visit [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), click "Membership."

## GWVAS ANNUAL BANQUET

AppleTree Terrace  
4 Newberry Estates  
Dallas, PA

Phone: 570-674-5529

June 14, 2023. Doors open at 6 p.m.

All are invited. Non-members are welcome. Bring your children and friends.

Buffet menu includes:

Hors d'oeuvres table	Chicken Francaise
Pork loin with cocktail rolls and butter	Cheddar mashed potatoes
Stuffed fished with lemon butter sauce	Stuffed cheese shells
Meat-free vegetable (chef's choice)	

Dessert buffet includes: Assorted pastries, cookies, ice cream  
Coffee, hot tea, iced tea, soda, fruit juices.

Beer and wine included. Cash bar for mixed cocktails.

Price is \$40 per person. Send checks to GWVAS Annual Banquet PO Box 535 Dallas, PA 18612 and make payable to GWVAS. Payment in advance is required and must be received by June 1. Your check is your reservation. Please include full names of all attending along with a phone number or email address in case we need to contact you.

Special guest speaker is Peggy Hentz, Red Creek Wildlife Center, Schuylkill Haven, who will bring some of her feathered friends from the Center. Pictured is Peggy and Gabby, a Great Horned Owl.



## 2022 Annual Appeal Response

*Thank You!*

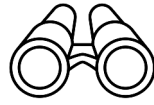
Like birds of a feather, our members and friends flocked together, and appeal responses have come flying in. GWVAS thanks all those who have so generously contributed to this year's Annual Appeal. Over 50 donations so far have totaled \$2,140!

Donations to the Annual Appeal help to support our chapter's educational and conservation efforts. If you haven't yet contributed, but would like to, please send your contribution to GWVAS Annual Appeal, PO.Box 535, Dallas, PA 18612.

At this time, we would like to recognize, *and thank*, the following supporters of our 2022 Annual Appeal:

James W. Strohl	Earl J. Woolard Jr.	Benedict A. Yatko
Phil & Penny Reid	Jane & John Gaudio	Joan M. Hutchinson
Beatriz Glick	Ronald Clapper	Donna R. Schwab
David K. Thomas	Janice Lohmann	JoAnne R. Shaffer
Judy Romanoski	Toni Hockman	Michael A. Shucosky
John Dickinson	Jon Thomas	Deb Petroski
Patricia M. Zaborsky	Alison Flanagan	Richard P. Kozich
Candice Hoffman	Mary Begtrup	George & Carol Daru
Michael Bertram	Patricia Cole	Ruth Jennings
Merry McKeon	Lois Redmond	Jean Eyet
Gary & Jeanette Siegel	John Jakoby	Bernice Manzoni
Aggie Walton	Steve A. Smithonic Jr.	Anne Devaney, RSM
Kay Strickland	Bob & Nancy Houck	Sam Merrill
Scott & Kathy MacGowan		Karen Belli
Eugenie Papatopoli	Gary Lawrence	Eleanor Harding
Lorraine & Patrick Smith		Joe DeMarco
Janine Oliveri	Robin Golden	James Sheridan
Alan Yuscavage	Mike & Mary Jo Shisko	

## FIELD TRIPS



To register, please contact John Dickinson at 570-239-4369.

**March 18:** Plymouth Flats. The flats is an interesting place to bird. We could get a mix of early migrants and overwintering birds.

**April 15:** Nescopeck State Park. Nescopeck is a hot spot for birding in Luzerne County. In mid April, we should find some early migrants. We will meet in the parking lot by the bridge to park headquarters at 8:30 a.m.

### Looking for a Few Good Helpers!

The board needs a few folks to help with the work of the chapter. This is a great way to help the environment while working side by side with some truly great people. Time requirements average about 1 to 3 hours per month depending on the committee.

We are looking for help with:

Publicity - sending news to the papers and some websites.

Programs - gathering ideas for monthly programs and setting them up with speakers.

Events - spending some time at educational tables.

Contact Bonnie Yuscavage at [byuscavage@yahoo.com](mailto:byuscavage@yahoo.com) to assist your chapter with these or other committees or projects.

## MONTHLY PROGRAMS

We don't usually have a May program because we are all napping at night from following migrants all day, but we will see you on Zoom in March and April. The topics? They are in the planning stages as we go to print, so check our website to learn what interesting topics we have lined up. Dates are March 20 and April 17 at 7 p.m. We look forward to seeing you then!

## Off the Science Desk



For the past fourteen years, a group of scientists publish a horizon scan of potential conservation issues that deserve attention. They monitor social media, the scientific literature, and scientific meetings for upcoming threats to biodiversity, as well as opportunities for conservation and the results were published in *Trends in Ecology and Evolution (Vol 38, Issue 1)*. They identified fifteen issues and here I want to bring attention to a few that may affect conservation in Pennsylvania.

One, because of the exponential growth of electronics that require batteries (e.g., electric cars), there will be exponential growth in lithium mining. Currently, 90% of our lithium comes from South America, China and Australia. Two, scientists using genetic engineering to expand the range of plants that have a symbiotic relationship with nitrogen-fixing bacteria. Leguminous plants currently do this and, if expanded to other plants, would reduce the need for fertilizers.

Related to this theme, the third issue is using microbiomes to aid in restoration or help protect ecosystems from some transmissible diseases. One disease to keep an eye on is Perkinsea, a protozoan that infects amphibians. One very positive development is the increasing integration of biodiversity measures in the private investing sector so that investors can make informed decisions.

Lastly, as climate change is long recognized as a growth threat, the fourth issue identified is that coastal ecosystems are not as resilient to climate change as previously thought. So oyster reefs, saltmarshes cannot march inland at the same pace as sea level rise. If there was one issue I would add it would be the growing field of ecological engineering. Environmental engineering is concerned with projects that benefit humans but ecological engineering seeks to mutually benefit humans and biodiversity.

Jeffrey A Stratford, PhD  
Department of Biology and Earth System Sciences