

# Valley Views

GREATER WYOMING VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 535 Dallas, PA 18612


www.gwvas.org

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## GWAS 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.



# Valley Views

Fall 2023

September, October, November

Newsletter of the Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society

## From the President by Bonnie Yuscavage Yard of Dreams

In 1989, the fantasy drama *Field of Dreams* debuted. Ray was a struggling farmer close to losing his farm and home, and had an unresolved relationship with his father. The fantasy aspect came throughout the movie as he heard faceless voices and that of James Earl Jones say, "If you build it he/ people will come." Viewers ask who "he" and "people" will be. In true Hollywood style, Ray did build something and someone did come in remarkable fashion. It just took him to believe and do.

I'm not writing a movie review. I am writing about believing and doing.

My husband and I have a very small town yard. In it, we have a small patio area, a tiny camper, a shed, and some vegetables in raised bed and pots. That doesn't leave much space for anything else, yet we dedicated the leftover spots to native plants in the last three years.

We started with a few \$7 plugs from our favorite native plant seller and they really took off. We picked up a few abandoned plants off the clearance shelves of big box home stores at half price. (Yes, they sometimes have natives!) There were a few plants that came from friends as well. We "cultivated" a patch of milkweed volunteers. Beans, squash and sunflowers are

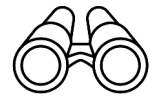
part of the vegetable garden as well as non-native dill. All-in all, there hasn't been a big expense.

The result...we planted them and they came. "Who?" you ask. It was bees, of course. Bees of all types crowd the Bee balm/Monarda and dot the Black-eyed Susans. There are butterflies and moths of all hues. Caterpillars of Black swallow-tails munch on the dill. Monarch caterpillars devour the milkweed and crawl to the fence to transform to butterflies in jade chrysalides. Hummingbird moths pass by late in the day. And birds! Cardinals and wrens find shelter on hot days. Hummingbirds visit the beans and others birds drop by to pick an inattentive bug.

This isn't a testimony to our gardening skills. We have a long way to go and need more free hours to claim to be mediocre gardeners. It is a case study on how a little space, a little money, and a little effort can produce big rewards. None of our neighbors plant natives so we aren't drawing from them. In fact, sadly, only one other property on the block has native plants other than some garden squash.

I have heard a lot of excuses from town gardeners and even those with large lots and acreage about why they don't plant

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

**September 23:** Forty Fort Recreation Fields and River Levee near the airport. This area will give us a good chance to see both migrating songbirds and waterfowl. Over 200 species have been reported from this area. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot adjacent to the levee.

**October 21:** Plymouth Flats. The Flats is probably the most productive birding area in Luzerne County. We will look for both migrating waterfowl and songbirds. The Flats often attracts rare birds so we will keep our eyes out for surprises. Meet at the intersection of Flat Road and Route 11 at 8:30 a.m.

**November 11:** Frances Slocum State Park. The park is always a good place to observe winter birds, including any vagrants such as Redpolls or Pine siskins. Meet in the parking lot by the environmental center at 8:30 a.m.

**December 2:** Harveys Lake. The lake is usually the best place to see ducks in fall migration and, with some luck, we might spot one of the resident Bald Eagles. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Game Commission boat launch parking lot.

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

The monthly programs of the GWVAS will be held virtually at 7 p.m. The Zoom link can be found at [www.gwvas.org](http://www.gwvas.org) under Events and will be posted a week before the meeting.

**September 18:** Details were being finalized at the time of publication, so please see [www.gwvas.org](http://www.gwvas.org) for more information!

**October 16:** "The continental decline of American kestrels: an investigation of possible drivers and future management strategies." Mercy Melo is a PhD candidate at the University of Massachusetts Amherst focusing on the decline of American Kestrels. Through her undergraduate studies, she conducted independent research on kestrel diets, nestling development, and gut microbial diversity, inspiring her to continue her multifaceted study of the species in grad school. Outside of research, Mercy enjoys being connected with nature in any way including volunteer raptor banding.

**November 20:** Vosburg Neck State Park. Vosburg Neck is Wyoming County's new state park and a jewel in the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources system. With canal and railroad historic features, hiking trails, and beautiful scenery, it is a point of interest for many people. Oh, and there are birds, too!

*Valley Views* is published quarterly by the Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society, P.O. Box 535 Dallas, PA 18612. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of February, May, August, and November, and can be mailed or emailed to editor Elisabeth Ford

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."

[elisabethford84@yahoo.com](mailto:elisabethford84@yahoo.com)



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natives. We are no longer at a place where we have an option. Our pollinator population, which is responsible for feeding us, is rapidly declining due to pesticides, invasive pests, climate change, and habitat loss which includes places to reproduce.

Many native plants can be successfully planted in the spring and fall since they are very adaptable and hardy. I challenge you to plant one pollinator in your yard this fall. And while you are at it, buy one for someone you love and help them plant it. Next spring, give a child some sunflower seeds to put in the ground. Picture the results if everyone did even just a little. Envision your neighborhood or your land full of the color and variety of native plants and imagine the life being nurtured within them because... isn't that what we are all about? Nurturing and protecting life! If you plant them, "they" will come.

Bonnie

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.

- |                   |                  |                    |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Theresa Roke      | Carol Schultz    | Marilyn Dehaven    |
| Paul Carlin       | Judy Spadine     | Jo-Ann Kraynack    |
| Martha Bixler     | Linda Sheeler    | Connie Szostak     |
| Steven Friedman   | Lynda Gaipa      | Richard Weber      |
| Marian Lemke      | Leonard Krispin  | Michele Boyle      |
| Pamela Turchin    | Carole Milnes    | Stephen Welitchko  |
| James Maxwell     | Annamarie Hayes  | Lois Hook          |
| Kathleen Boyle    | Barbara Zawatsky | Thomas Moran       |
| Mariellen Sokolas | Lauran Hall      | Natalee Romanowski |

Bear Creek Community Charter School

2023 NATURE CAMP SCHOLARSHIP RECAP

In February 2023, GWVAS received a \$1000 collaborative grant from National Audubon Society to be used for nature camp scholarships for children to attend summer programs. In addition to this grant, our chapter proved an additional \$475 for scholarships. As a result of this investment, GWVAS was able to provide full scholarships to 17 applicants including a full scholarship for a teen girl to attend Wilkes University's Woman Empowered by Science STEM camp and 16 children to attend weeklong programs at Francis Slocum State Park and Bear Creek Camp.

Thank you to National Audubon Mid-Atlantic for choosing us to be a 2023 Collaborative Grand recipient and *thank you!* to our chapter's generous members for your continued financial support. Your help enables us to continue providing educational opportunities to those interested to exploring and learning about nature, birds, and birding. We are proud to provide these scholarships to local youth annually. Our children are the future, and the more they are exposed to nature and learn about it, the more they will value and protect it.

- Deb Petroski, Treasurer