

Wissahickon Nature Club

Guest Speaker

On March 19, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. **Bob Allnock** will present **Purple Martins**. Purple Martin are the largest swallows in North America. They eat thousands of insects daily and they nest in compact colonies. Eastern populations are almost entirely dependent on man-made birdhouses and thousands of birders including Bob Allnock become Purple Martin "landlords".



Purple Martins by Bob Allnock

Announcements

TREASURER'S REPORT

ACCORDING TO TREASURER
DIANNE MACHESNEY:
CURRENT BALANCE: \$848.72

WE NEED IDEAS

WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT INTERESTS **YOU**, OUR MEMBERS MAY HAVE FOR OUR **CLUB**. IS THERE A PARTICULAR **SPEAKER** WHO WOULD SUIT OUR MEETINGS? CONTACT **SUSANNE** 412-771-4737 OR MYWINTERMOON@VERIZON.NET DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR AN **OUTING**, OR WOULD LIKE TO LEAD OR CO-LEAD ONE? CONTACT **JUDY** 412-363-0462 OR STARKJ2@AOL.COM

IN MEMORIAM

THOMAS GOLIGHTLY IN AUGUST 2014
CHERYL PREPELKA IN MARCH 2015

WORTH REPEATING

NO MATTER HOW LONG THE WINTER, SPRING IS SURE TO FOLLOW. PROVERB

BRU RANDALL SAID "PLEASE GIVE MY BEST TO FOLKS".

Don't miss our next program. On April 9, Thursday, **Terry Lobdell** will present **Bats and Bat Houses**. Bats are helpful creatures. They are safe and beneficial to have in your backyard. Bat houses provide a safe home for bats and are educational and fun for the whole family. Bats significantly reduce the amount of pest insects in your backyard and help farmers and gardeners by eating insect pests. An individual bat can eat thousands of insects in just one night! More bats eating insects mean less pesticide use in our environment.

Bloggers & Websites

Bald Eagle Cam
<http://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/hays-bald-eagle-cam/>
Steve Gosser <http://home.comcast.net/~sgosser/>
Bobby Greene bobbygreene.com
Amanda Haney <https://www.flickr.com/photos/61181150@Noo/sets/>
Peregrine Falcon Gulf Tower Cam
<http://www.pixcontroller.com/falcons/gulf.htm>

Kate St. John <http://www.wqed.org/birdblog/>
Snowy Owl [http://michiganradio.org/post/you-can-follow-three-satellite-tagged-snowy-owls-visiting-michigan-right-now?](http://michiganradio.org/post/you-can-follow-three-satellite-tagged-snowy-owls-visiting-michigan-right-now?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=Social&utm_campaign=FBMichiganRadio4968)
Chuck Tague, Nature Observer <http://ctague.pairserver.com/Natureobserver/Welcome.html>
Don Weiss www.donweissphotography.com



Gray Catbird by Chuck Tague

Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania

Loree Speedy 724.518.6022
mousemapper@verizon.net

[http://www.botsocwpa.org/Meeting](http://www.botsocwpa.org/MeetingOuting)

March 27, Friday, Ohio Botanical Symposium, Villa Milano • Columbus, OH. Online registration is now open for the 2015 Ohio Botanical Symposium. To register online visit <https://www.cmnh.org/obs>. Or download this [brochure that includes the registration form](#) if you prefer to send your payment by mail. *Pre-registration is required and space is limited.*

Environmental Book Club
Kim Metheny

kmetheny@hotmail.com

Chriss O'Lare colare@comcast.net

Meet at the Panera on McKnight Road.

Upcoming Book

April 20, Monday, 7:15 p.m. *Grass, Soil, Hope*; by Courtney White

Three Rivers Birding Club

Bob VanNewkirk, President

412-366-1694

www.3rbc.org

March 22, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. **Lake Arthur Moraine State Park.** Meet at the Moraine State Park day use area (south shore) in the first parking lot on the right.

March 25, Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. **Woodcock Walk,** Meet **Tom Byrnes** at the Ladbroses (now The Meadows) parking lot behind the Primanti Brothers restaurant off the Harmar exit 11 of Route 28. Carpool a short distance to a field in Harmar Township. Be prepared for a muddy walk and bring a flashlight.

March 28, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. **Pymatuning Area** by **Bob Van Newkirk.** Pymatuning Wildlife Learning Center (Waterfowl Museum). Lunch will be arranged in the morning for those who wish to eat at the Spillway Inn.

The Day the Catbird Sings

By Chuck Tague

I look forward to it every year. It's never on the same date, but it always comes around the last couple of days in April, or the first days of May. This is the day the Gray Catbird first sings in my neighborhood.

It's not that I miss the catbird's song. The catbird is a mimic and its song consists of a random jumble of imitated songs of other birds, punctuated with an occasional harsh, cat-like Me-eww.

I anticipate the first catbird song because it signals a change.

This is a drastic change, both in the progression of the bird migration and in the composition of the songbird population in western Pennsylvania.

The songbird migration began in early March with the arrival of the grackles and the Red-winged Blackbirds. Each week another species or two arrived or passed through. The pace picked about the middle of April, but when the catbird sings, it's a different world.

The day the catbird sings is a magical time. It's the day many new species of songbirds arrive in western Pennsylvania. These are the active, colorful birds that live in the brushy edges and the forest understory. These are the birds I have been waiting for all winter.

Birding is very exciting on the day the catbird sings. I can expect to see the first Indigo Bunting. A brilliant blue, it sings its series of clear, musical couplets from the top of a tree, its iridescent feathers glistening in the sunlight.

Along the edge of the forest the bright Yellow Warblers flit about, singing SWEET - SWEET- I'm so SWEET. In the forest a Hooded Warbler crosses in front of me, pausing momentarily before disappearing into the underbrush. An emphatic "teacher - teacher - teaCHER" tells me there is an Ovenbird close by. In the distance I hear the flute-like song of a Wood Thrush. The trees come alive with color as flocks of foraging migrants pass over head. American Redstarts, Blackburnian Warblers and Scarlet Tanagers move around me. My list grows.

Least Flycatchers, Warbling Vireos, Blue-winged Warblers, Magnolia Warblers, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green Warblers, Magnolia Warblers, Cerulean Warblers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. It's hard to believe that I am in western Pennsylvania and not in a tropical jungle.

Not all of the new arrivals are songbirds. Spotted Sandpipers teeter-totter along the edge of the creek. Green Herons grunt and flee as I approach a marshy area, and, with a little luck, I will spot a Ruby-throated Hummingbird investigating the fresh leaves and blossoms in the tree tops.

The birds that arrive on the day the catbird sings have something in common. This is the first wave of long distance migrants. These are the birds that left their breeding grounds last autumn for the more favorable conditions of the tropics. Now, traveling from the West Indies, southern Mexico, Central America and South America, they are returning to breed.

The day the catbird first sings is a day of enchantment, when the woods and fields are full of colorful and active birds, birds that were nowhere to be seen a day or two before. The beauty of their songs and the brilliance and diversity of their plumage make it difficult to remember that they are only here for a few short months. They are here to share our spring, to breed and raise their young. Then again, they'll vanish, gambling their future on the dubious success of a treacherous journey that will take them to distant and scattered parts of our hemisphere.

from the Nature Observer News archives

Wissahickon Nature Club Officers

Vice President: **Monica Miller** 412-835-6783

Treasurer: **Dianne Machesney** 412-366-7869

Secretary: **Nancy Madeoy** 412-364-0195

Recruiter: **Marlow Madeoy** 412-364-0195

Hospitality: **Joel Platt** 412-521-5244

Outings Coordinator: **Judy Stark** 412-363-0462

Program Coordinator and Wissahickon Nature Club bulletin by **Susanne Varley** 412-771-4737

Wissahickon 2015 Outings
***Joint with Botanical Society**

Please check our website
www.wissahickonnatureclub.com
for directions, changes or weather-related postponements.

Date	Day	Time	Place	Leader	Special Features
March 29	Sunday	1:00	*Cedar Creek	Mark Bowers + Loree Speedy 724-518-6022	Snow Trillium, Twin Flower
April 12	Sunday	1:00	Montour Woods Conservation Area	Sean Brady	Spring Wildflowers, Amphibians
April 19	Sunday	1:00	*Linn Run	Mark Bowers + Loree Speedy 724-518-6022	Spring Wildflowers, Round-leafed Violet
April 25	Saturday	9:00	Indian Creek w Mtn Watershed Assn.	Judy Stark Cell: 412-327-9537	Spring Wildflowers + Ramps
April 26	Sunday	8:00	Enlow Fork	Wheeling Watershed Conservancy	Birds, Creek life, Blue-eyed Mary
April 30	Thursday	10:00	Raccoon Creek	Dianne Machesney Cell: 412-523-0368	Spring Wildflowers
May 2	Saturday	10:00	Wolf Creek	Dianne Machesney Cell: 412-523-0368	Spring Wildflowers
May 7	Thursday	10:00	Butler-Freeport Monroe Rd	Dianne Machesney Cell: 412-523-0368	Spring Wildflowers
May 9	Saturday	1:00	*Roaring Run, Armstrong Co.	Loree Speedy Cell: 724-518-6022	
May 22	Friday	10:00	Hartwood	Marlow Madeoy Cell: 703-509-2827	Trees, summer Wildflowers
June 13	Saturday	10:00	Nichol Road, Raccoon Creek State Park	Judy Stark Cell: 412-327-9537 and Susanne Varley	Summer Wildflowers, Hackberry Emperor
July ?		10:00	?	Sarah Lyle	Spider Walk
August 1	Saturday	10:00	Jennings Prairie	Dianne Machesney Cell: 412-523-0368	Blazing Star, Purple Fringed Orchid
September 14	Monday	10:00	Moraine Park from bike concession	Kim Metheny and Susanne Varley Cell: 412-913-9614	Nodding Ladies Tresses, Asters

Dear Members,

Wissahickon Nature Club would like to provide donations to Wildbird Recovery in Valencia. Please bring your items to FHNC on [April 23](#). [Stacey Widenhofer](#) will shuttle them to Wildbird Recovery. This will not come from the Wisahickon Nature Club treasury, but from your own personal generosity. Thank you very much.

Also another easy way to help and then the items are shipped directly through her are via our amazon wish list. Beth McMasters included some very specific things she needs for this year. [Amazon.com: BETH W. MCMASTER: Wildbird Recovery](#)

Here are a list of some other items that are always needed (the items marked with an * are specific brands/sizes that work best for us):

Gift Certificates

Lowe's
Home Depot
Walmart
Target
Staples/Office Max

Cleaning Supplies

We have chosen these particular supplies because of each company's commitment to environmentally friendly practices as well as no testing on animals. It is a small request to make a huge difference.

- * Seventh Generation Paper towels
- * Method laundry detergent
- * Seventh Generation Disinfecting wipes

Food

- * White Millet
- * fresh and frozen berries (Wymans Wild Blueberries (Walmart)
- * Frozen corn
- * sunflower hearts
- * earthworms
- * waxworms
- * crickets
- * mealworms (In the summer we go thru tens of thousands per month!)
- * mixed wild bird seed

Office Supplies

- * printer paper
- * envelopes
- * stamps

Medical/Veterinary Supplies

- * sterile gauze pads 4x4
- * paper tape 1" wide



Fledglings Red-eyed Vireo and Scarlet Tanager by Chuck Tague