



Naturally

The Newsletter of the Wyncote Audubon Society

Wyncote Audubon Society
1212 Edge Hill Road
Abington, PA 19001
wyncoteaudubon.org

The Wyncote Audubon Society is a Chapter of the National Audubon Society serving Audubon members who reside in major portions of Montgomery County and in Philadelphia including Chestnut Hill, East Falls, Manayunk, Mt. Airy, Roxborough and North, Northeast, and Northwest Philadelphia.

BIRDING BACKPACKS FOR KIDS! Wyncote Audubon's 2019 Birdathon Success!

Last spring, on Saturday, May 11, 2019, (*International Migratory Bird Day*), Wyncote Audubon's Birdathon Team, the Swifts, took to the field to bird in selected areas as part of the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association's annual Birdathon event. The Birdathon is a fun and friendly competition. However, every team "wins" because the Birdathon is also a fundraiser. Teams compete to raise money for bird conservation.

Wyncote Audubon's Birdathon team raised funds to provide young people access to Birding Backpacks. Birding Backpacks contain binoculars, field guides and local birding information. The backpacks will be donated to the libraries in our Audubon Adventures Schools and area nature centers. Young people can borrow and "check out" the Birding Backpacks as they would books or other items.

The 2019 Birdathon raised funds to create 35 Birding Backpacks to engage young people in bird watching and bird conservation. Nearly half of the funds raised were due to the initiative of Alice Rogerson, of Normandy Farms. Alice convinced the ACTS Retirement to support the Birdathon and they did so in a big way with a contribution of \$2,250. George Armistead, DVOC President, donated his speaker's fee to the cause as well as 35 copies of his book, for the backpacks. The National Audubon Society donated 35 Audubon backpacks we will use for the project.

The initial "kick start" for our "Backpacks for Kids" project came from an Audubon Collaborative Grant successfully authored by Judy Stepenaskie. Many thanks also are due to Janet Starwood, Wyncote Audubon's Birdathon "Captain," for organizing our 2019 Birdathon.

In This Issue

Birding Backpacks for Kids!

Wyncote Audubon Society raises funds to provide birding resources to our Audubon Adventures Schools!

New Dates Set for Our Colombia Adventure!

Our exciting trip with Rockjumper to the Santa Anna Region of Colombia is now scheduled for July 16 -23, 2020.

Annual Calendar Insert

The 2019-2020 Schedule of Programs and Field Trips

Wyncote Member Survey Results

Wyncote Audubon's members & friends shared their perspectives on setting priorities for programs and advocacy.

Militia Hill Hawk Watch

MHHW celebrates 30 years at Fort Washington State Park

Keep in Touch With Wyncote Audubon!

Check our Website and Facebook Pages and Sign Up to Receive our Monthly Wyncote Audubon "UPDATES"
<http://wyncoteaudubon.org>

Join Wyncote Audubon In Colombia! Santa Marta, Colombia – July 16 – 23, 2020

The Wyncote Audubon and Rockjumper Birding Tours trip to Colombia has been shifted to July 2020. This is an eight-day, mega-diverse, exciting birding adventure to the Santa Marta Mountains of Colombia! George Armistead, Chief Network Officer for Rockjumper Conservation Tours, had suggested we consider the change having completed a trip to the region this summer. **George wants to return and will join Wyncote Audubon for the Trip!**

Our first international trip will be to the most biodiverse region on the planet, the Santa Marta Mountains of Colombia! This snow-capped mountain range along the Caribbean coast (the highest coastal mountain range in the world) is home to no less than 36 endemic birds. Throughout this adventure we will be birding at nearly every altitudinal band of habitat, from the coastal Caribbean and dry forest into the lush heights of the mountains. Stops include Isla Salamanca on the coast, El Dorado Reserve in the cloud forest, and high-elevation birding atop the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

This is an “Impact Adventures” collaboration between Rockjumper Birding Tours and The National Audubon Society. Audubon has been a key player in the establishment of the Northern Colombia Birding Trail, providing on-the-ground resources to train local bird guides and support habitat conservation. We'll be lead by an Audubon-trained local guide as well as a Rockjumper guide. Robin Irizarry serves as our Wyncote Audubon host, helping organize this trip. In the link below you'll find the full trip itinerary, pricing information and the Rockjumper booking form. We are looking for a party of 8-12, so space is limited. Direct any questions or need for information to robin@ttfwatershed.org, or to George Armistead at info@rockjumperbirding.com.



We can expect to find the Vermilion Cardinal on our spectacular trip to the Santa Marta Region!



Join George Armistead, Robin Irizarry, and Leigh Altadonna on Wyncote Audubon's First International Adventure and see this White-tailed Starfrontlet.

A MESSAGE FROM GEORGE ARMISTEAD!

Just back on August 4th, and already, I can't wait to go back! Maybe it was the chubby yet charming Santa Marta Antpitta that came bouncing into view and then fed in front of us for about 10 minutes. Maybe it was retina-burning Vermilion Cardinal. Maybe it was the electric dawn up on the San Lorenzo Ridge, where nearly every bird you see is a rare endemic. I'm not sure. But the Santa Martas have claimed their piece of me, and I sure look forward to sharing them with other Wyncote members during one week next July. We're putting together a great crew and we really hope it'll include you. The trip is in support of Audubon's International Alliances Program. If you'd like more info, please contact me. The Santa Martas are arguably the most biodiverse place on the planet. And, I can tell you from personal experience that the July sunsets from El Dorado lodge cannot be beat. Especially when you're toasting sightings of antpittas, blossom crowns, and endemic brush-finches!

Links to the Itinerary & Booking Form!

<https://conservationtours.rockjumperbirding.com/tourinfo/colombia-megadiverse-santa-martas>

**Check out Rockjumper's
On-Line Booking Form Here:**

<https://conservationtours.rockjumperbirding.com/online-booking>

WHAT WYNCOTE MEMBERS HAVE TOLD US!!!

The Wyncote Audubon Society founded as the Wyncote Bird Club in April 1914 and became a chapter of the National Audubon Society in 1967 and has continued its mission to protect birds. While Wyncote Audubon has continued to grow and evolve over the years, we engaged in a strategic planning process to become more intentional about shaping our future role as an effective voice for birds. A recommendation in the strategic plan is to develop a members' survey to seek the opinions and advice of our members and friends. Peter Burns and Connie Sanchez developed the survey and it was made available to all of our members and friends last winter and spring through Survey Monkey. Here are some of the major things we learned:

Communication: It was revealed that nearly two-thirds of the respondents keep posted on events and activities through the Wyncote Audubon website and the Wyncote Audubon UPDATES, sent each month via email. About one-third of the respondents referenced our printed and mailed newsletter, the *Wyncote Audubon NATURALLY* as important and only a quarter of the folks referenced the Facebook Page.

Monthly Programs: Many of the respondents have attended and enjoy the monthly programs. They have been held on Friday evenings for over a century. It was interesting to learn that Friday evenings and Tuesday evenings were identified as the most convenient evenings for most members and friends to attend. Although both of these days of the week were preferred, there are over one-third of the folks who responded who indicated they can or could not attend events on these days.

There was quite a varied response to where Wyncote Audubon programs are best scheduled. This question included monthly meetings as well as the site for other workshops and special programs. Responses were varied and there were no clear alternatives that emerged. First ring areas of eastern Montgomery County received the most preferences with Northwest Philadelphia identified as well.

Advocacy: The results of the survey reflected strong support for advocacy initiatives. Two-thirds of the respondents identified Climate Change as an area for education and advocacy. Most respondents wanted to see a focus on local/municipal issues with less priority given to state and national issues.

Special Programs: In addition to the regularly scheduled monthly programs, there was broad support for programming on Native Plants/Plants for Birds, support for Bird Towns, the Militia Hill Hawk Watch, and our Audubon Adventures and school programs, Citizen Science (especially the CBC and GBBC). All of these were identified as important or very important. Some respondents were not familiar with selected program.

Some Suggestions From the Survey Findings: The survey would have benefited from more and targeted questions as well as with a broader response form members. With only 84 responses, the survey did not provide us with feedback from many of our members. Nonetheless, there are a number of areas to which we need to listen:

- Our regular monthly programs are important but we need to evaluate the benefits of moving the location of the meetings and weigh if changing the day of the week will result in increased participation.
- We need to consider an expansion of special programs and workshops for topics like “native plants” and “plants for birds” and consider repeating these in several venues around our chapter territory including western Montgomery County and different neighborhoods in Philadelphia.
- As we grow our Advocacy initiatives, we need to include actions at the level of the local municipality and establish priorities for what areas are addressed.
- To achieve the results we need to be a “voice for birds,” it is an imperative to work with strategic partnerships to achieve our desired outcomes.

We will post a report with the full survey findings on the Wyncote Audubon Society website later this fall. We currently are undertaking a major redesign of the website and hope we will have a launch by late fall. We will keep folks posted through the Wyncote Audubon UPDATES. If you are not on the email list for the UPDATES, visit wyncoteaudubon.org and sign-up with your email address.



Wyncote Audubon Society

1212 Edge Hill Road
Abington, PA 19001

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Jenkintown, PA 19046
Permit No. 1006

The Militia Hill Hawk Watch: Now In Its 32th Season



The Militia Hill Hawk Watch has been recording raptor migrations at Fort Washington State Park for over three decades. An all-volunteer effort, there is a designated counter at the observation tower everyday from 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM from September 1st through October 31st. The volunteer compilers are there to identify and record the number and species of raptors seen that pass through each day. The data from the Militia Hill Hawk Watch becomes part of the record of data reported by a network of hawk watches throughout the continent via Hawkcount, the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) migratory raptor count database. Visitors to the Militia Hill Hawk Watch are encouraged and welcomed. HMANA's Sixth Annual International Hawk Migration Week is scheduled this year from Saturday, September 14th to Sunday, September 22th and is a great time to visit. The Militia Hill Hawk Watch also hosts school groups in October with the cooperation with Fort Washington State Park staff and the assistance of our Audubon Adventures volunteers. Check out the Militia

Hill Hawk Watch Facebook Page where you can keep apprised of current happenings and sightings. You can also learn more at the Wyncote Audubon website at wyncoteaudubon.org. Rich Conroy is Wyncote Audubon Society's Militia Hawk Watch Committee Chair. If you are interested in visiting the Militia Hill Hawk Watch or becoming a volunteer contact Rich Conroy at ikeconroy@yahoo.com. Or go to wyncoteaudubon.org. For more information about HMANA visit www.hmana.org or www.hawkcount.org