

Book step on guides, motor coach, birding, and wildlife tours now by contacting:

Waxwing Associates

Hollidaysburg, PA

814-693-6563

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140 Queen Ann Drive

Hollidaysburg, PA 16648



Alleghenies Adventures

This new spot in our quarterly newsletter will be used to list the great variety of guided adventures in the Allegheny Tourism Region sponsored by Waxwing Associates and our partners. This list brings you a wide range of activities your family or group may enjoy. All adventures listed are open to the general public, most of them free. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the trip leader. The list is in date order of occurrence.

December 15—Annual Christmas Bird Count

Join Juniata Valley Audubon members for this annual tradition of bird counting and covered dish dinner. Contact Stan Kotala 814-946-8840.

January 15—Finding Nature on the Web

Multimedia presentation by Dave Bonta on nature blogs, photo-sharing sites, nature identification resources, and more. Program meeting of Juniata Valley Audubon, Alto Rest Chapel, Altoona—across from Wal-Mart 7 PM.

January 19—State College Manure Chase & Barrens

Look for horned larks and northern harriers around State College farmlands with a stop at Scotia Game Lands on the way back to Altoona. Meet at Uncle Joe's Woodshed Parking Lot, Altoona 9 AM.

February 19—Birding Veracruz

Photos and stories by Mike & Laura Jackson about their fall visit to Veracruz, Mexico where they witnessed the river of raptors during fall migration. Program meeting of Juniata Valley Audubon, Alto Rest Chapel, Altoona—across from Wal-Mart 7 PM.

February 23—Pittsburgh Phipps & Aviary

Visit the National Bird Aviary with special live show on a bird's flight, followed by a stop at the large greenhouses to view plant exhibits and artistic glass displays. Meet Uncle Joe's Woodshed Parking Lot, Altoona 8 AM for carpool to Pittsburgh.

March 18—Moonrise Over the Little Juniata

Award winning poet Todd Davis will read from his first 2 books of poetry and discuss their origins in the woods and rivers of Central Pennsylvania. Program meeting Juniata Valley Audubon, Alto Rest Chapel—across from Wal-Mart 7 PM.

March 22—Migrating Waterfowl

Join Stan Kotala to witness the great variety of waterfowl that lake hops their way north during annual spring migration as ice leaves area lakes. Meet Canoe Creek State Park Education Center, near Hollidaysburg 9 AM.

Visit Waxwing web site: www.waxwingassociates.com for packaged tour itineraries in the Alleghenies. New tours are being added for 2008. Check back often!



Snow and Fog
Quehanna Wilderness Area
Clearfield County, PA.

**Get out and enjoy
Central
Pennsylvania
through out the
seasons. The
Alleghenies has lots
to offer.**



Bedford Springs Resort
Bedford Pennsylvania



Waxwing Newsletter

WAXWING ASSOCIATES LLC

Volume 2, Issue 4

Dec 07/January/February 2008

Animal Tracks

Follow that footprint, paw print, hoof print...Have you ever tracked someone's footprints in the sand or snow? It can be kind of a mystery figuring out where someone was going and what they were doing. By looking carefully at animal tracks you can learn more about their comings and goings too.

Winter is the perfect time to put on your detective hat and follow some animal tracks. You can do this in your yard, at a local city park, or for a real adventure, head out to a state park or forest. Pick a day right after a snowfall and see how many different types of tracks you can find.

Here are some hints to get you started.

Think about what kind of animals live in the area. This will help you narrow the field of identification. It's a pretty good bet that if you're looking in your backyard you'll find squirrel, bird, and maybe rabbit tracks.

Four toes on each of the front and hind feet means you're looking at a track from the dog family (fox, wolf, coyote, neighborhood dog), the cat family (bobcat, lynx, neighborhood cat) or the rabbit family (cottontail or snowshoe hare). Does the paw print have small triangular marks in front of it? If yes, those are claw marks. Raccoons, skunks, coyotes, foxes, and dogs will often leave claw marks. Cats, on the other hand, retract their claws when they walk or run. So, you won't usually find claw marks with bobcats, lynx, or house cats.

Four toes on the front foot and five toes on the hind foot means it's a rodent (mice, voles, chipmunks, squirrels, woodchucks).

If the track has five toes each on the front and back feet, it's from the raccoon and weasel families (weasel, mink, skunk, otter, bear, beaver, muskrat, porcupine, opossum).

If you find a two-toe track, it's probably a deer or elk.

Is the track made by a "hopper?" Squirrels leave interesting tracks. As they bound along, their larger hind feet land ahead of their smaller front feet. It looks like the front feet are side by side. Rabbit tracks look a little different. The hind feet still land ahead of the front feet, but the front feet are not found right next to each other.

(cont'd page 2)

Waxwing Nature Tours Coming Spring 2008

Waxwing Associates will be offering complete Nature Tour packages in the Alleghenies Region of Central Pennsylvania beginning in April 2008. Packages will be all inclusive with hotel accommodations, lunches, transportation, and escorted by an expert guide. Initially these weekend tours will be offered once a month with a wide variety of topics and opportunities to observe and learn about wildlife.

Wildlife topics will take advantage of what's happening at that particular time of the year. Some examples include spring bird migrations, nesting birds, bat observations, elk bugling, and fall foliage.

Keep your eyes posted for the **SPRING 2008 ISSUE** of the **WAXWING NEWSLETTER** for details and reservations.

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PLEASE NOTE: GUIDES DO NOT PROVIDE

BINOCULARS

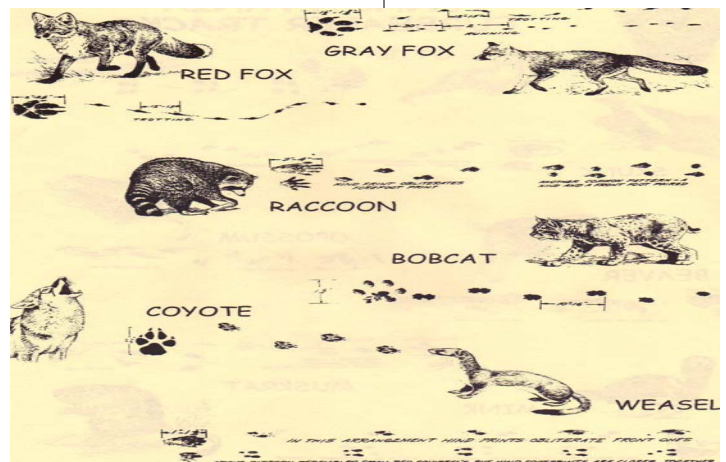
PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN BINOCULARS AND

BIRD IDENTIFICATION FIELD BOOKS

COMING IN NEXT

ISSUE March 2008

- Waxwing Nature Tours
- Return of the Bald Eagle
- Bats & More Bats
- Spotlight on Central PA





Animal Tracks (cont'd)

What direction is your animal going? How can you tell? If your animal has claws it's pretty easy...claw marks point in the direction the animal was going. If there aren't any claw marks, see if you can see where the snow is pushed back by the animal's feet. The pushed back areas shows the direction the animal came from.

You'll need a good tracking guide to help you identify the tracks you see. Here are a couple of suggestions.

- **A field guide to animal tracking in North America** by James Halfpenny.
- **A field guide to animal tracks** by Olaus Murie.

Reprinted: Wisconsin DNR

Natural Decorating

The Christmas holiday is the perfect time to experiment with using natural materials for decorations. If you want nature inside for the holidays you should begin collecting early. For the best decorations keep your eyes open year-round. Items that can be found in wooded areas or meadows include discarded bird's nests; large seed pods; dried flowers and berries; citrus fruits, walnuts and other nuts; pine cones; assorted colorful grasses, twigs, and fragrant herbal plants.

If stringing popcorn, stale popcorn works best and when stringing cranberries, use only fresh berries. A plastic needle tends to keep the berry from turning brown as when using a metal needle. Pine cones can be used plain or spray painted, glittered, or highlighted with fake snow.

Citrus fruits make beautiful home-made stained-glass ornaments.

Simply slice the fruit, place on cookie sheets to dry over a heating vent. Drying fruit in an oven can make the fruit brittle and darker. Sprinkle the fruit with sugar for a sparkling affect or leave undecorated to capture a natural beauty. Large nuts and seed pods can be sprayed gold or glittered to add a welcome sparkle.

Baskets filled with pine cones are beautiful accents around the house or on the dining table. Add a few drops of evergreen or cedar oil that



Pennsylvania Elk
Courtesy: Helena Kotala

can be purchased at any craft store for extra aroma. Go natural this Christmas and enjoy!

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Parker Dam State Park

Spotlight on Central Pennsylvania

This rustic, remote park in the heart of Moshannon State Forest is almost entirely wooded and offers picturesque areas of forest and swamp meadows, pine plantations and mixed hardwoods. The CCC Interpretive Center interprets the Civilian Conservation Corps. Parker Dam is a good base to explore the surrounding state forest. the 968-acre Parker Dam State Park offers old-fashioned charm and character. A scenic lake, rustic cabins, quaint campground and unbounded forest make Parker Dam an ideal spot for a relaxing vacation. For wilderness explorers, Parker Dam provides a gateway to the vast expanses of the Moshannon State Forest. You can walk through a tornado ravaged woods, backpack into the 50,000-acre Quehanna Wilderness, mountain bike to your heart's content or enjoy quiet solitude searching for elusive Pennsylvania elk.



Terry Wentz holding a 3 foot long alligator in New Orleans during vacation July 2005.

Birding Guides Available

Waxwing Associates has a staff of expert birders available to seek out any of the bird species mentioned above. We are able to cater a 2 hour outing to an all day event including transportation from a local motel. We have the capability to plan an entire tour for van size to motor coach size groups including transportation to the Alleghenies motel reservations, meals, and of course expert guides.

RATES BY GROUP SIZE:

Van size groups

Minimum: 10 people / 2hours
\$150 plus transportation & amenities.

Motor coach groups

Maximum:
50 people/ 2 hours
\$350 plus transportation & amenities

