



Birding Guide to South Mountain

Northern Region

Driving along the roads of the Michaux State Forest in June, you can hear bird songs drifting out from the interior forests. These singing birds are secretive species that require large blocks of mountain woodlands to breed like the Wood Thrush, Veery, or Ovenbird.

Or, walking the trails, you may catch a glimpse of the vibrant yellow and black of a Hooded Warbler or the startling crimson of the Scarlet Tanager. You may hear the distant call of the large Pileated Woodpecker,

Though the high breeding densities of these "core-forest" species is the reason South Mountain was designated as one of the Audubon Society's "Important Bird Areas" of Pennsylvania, there are a great diversity of other types of ecosystems throughout the South Mountain area that offer a wonderful array of birdwatching in brushy, field, wetland or open-water habitats.

There are always birds to watch somewhere in South Mountain any time of the year!

Note that this is one of two maps covering 21 suggested birding sites around the South Mountain region.



Scarlet Tanager is a species found nesting in undisturbed parts of Michaux State Forest.



Black-crowned Night-Heron



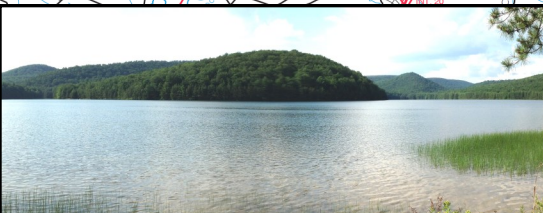
Red-shouldered Hawk



Eastern Towhee



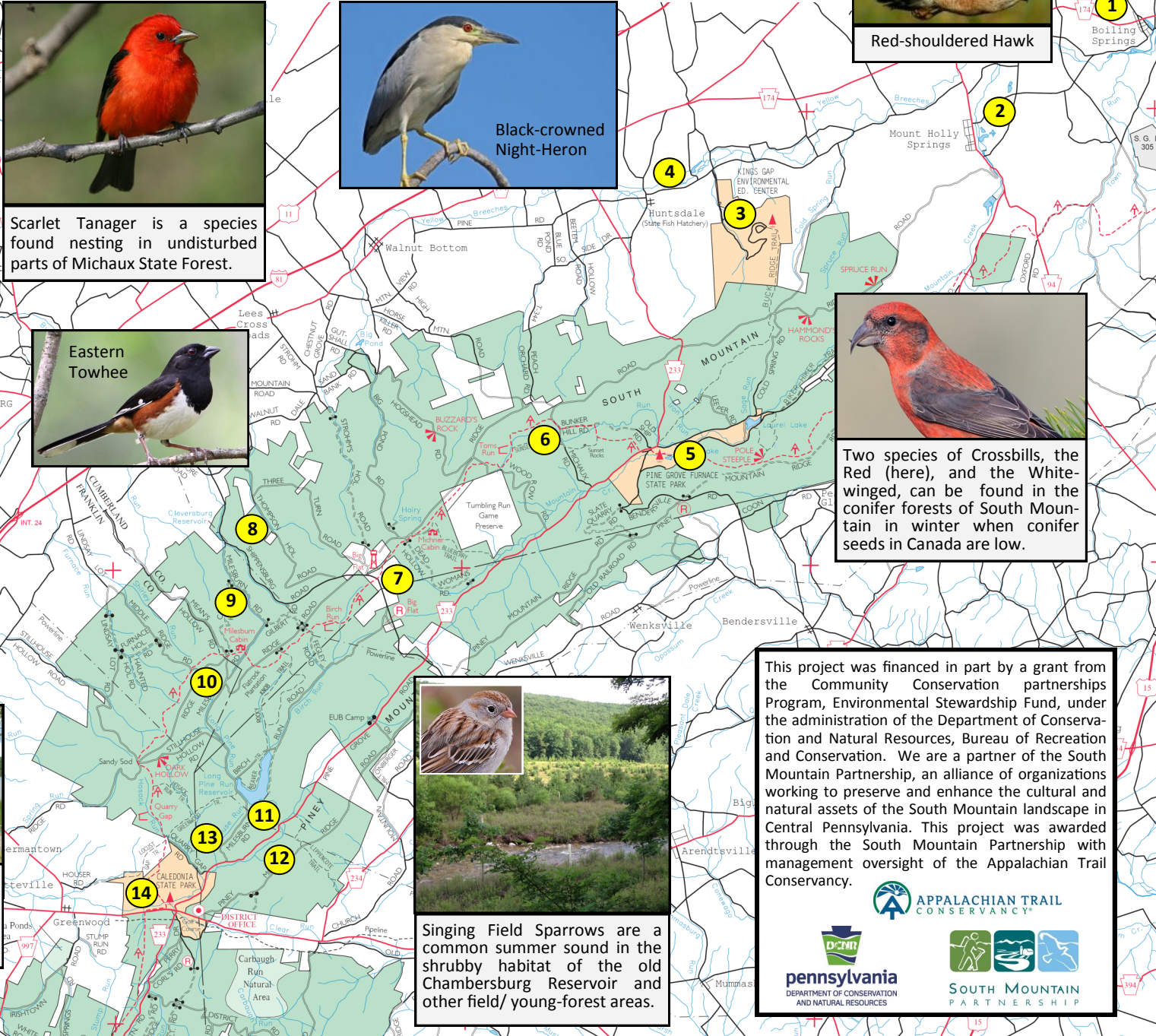
Two species of Crossbills, the Red (here), and the White-winged, can be found in the conifer forests of South Mountain in winter when conifer seeds in Canada are low.



An occasional Common Loon can be found visiting the reservoirs of South Mountain, along with the usual variety of ducks and other water birds.



Singing Field Sparrows are a common summer sound in the shrubby habitat of the old Chambersburg Reservoir and other field/ young-forest areas.



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Southern Region



The crow-sized Pileated Woodpecker makes large, oval holes in dead and living trees which can be seen throughout the mature forests of South



Louisiana Waterthrush are usually found along the same high quality, headwater streams as brook trout.



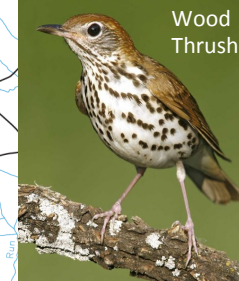
Old fields near wetlands are ideal places to watch the March courtship displays of the American Woodcock.



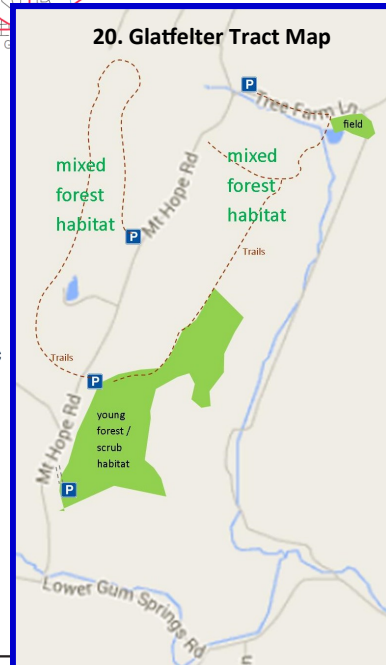
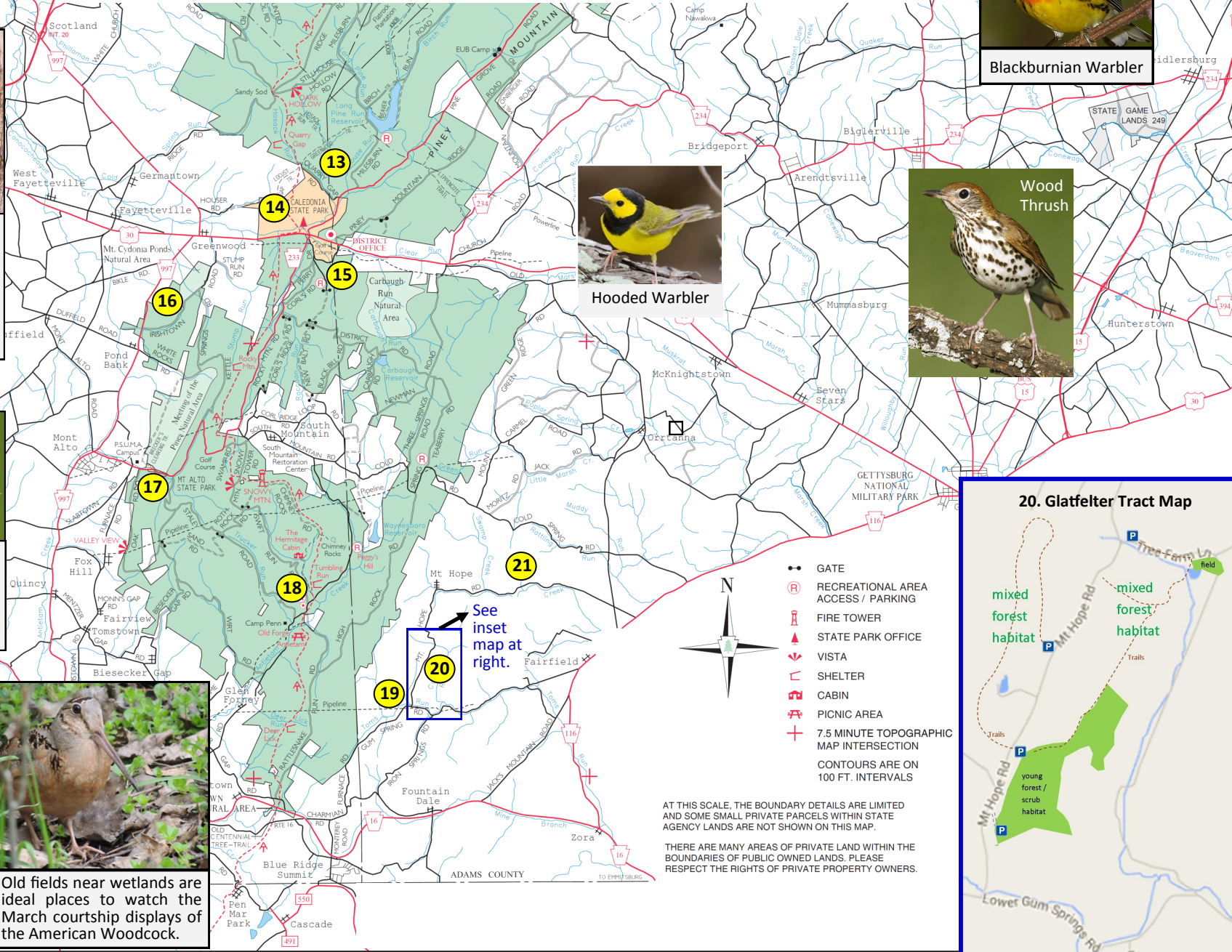
Blackburnian Warbler



Hooded Warbler



Wood Thrush



- GATE
- Ⓡ RECREATIONAL AREA ACCESS / PARKING
- 🗼 FIRE TOWER
- 🏠 STATE PARK OFFICE
- 👁️ VISTA
- 🛖 SHELTER
- 🏠 CABIN
- 🌳 PICNIC AREA
- ⊕ 7.5 MINUTE TOPOGRAPHIC MAP INTERSECTION
- CONTOURS ARE ON 100 FT. INTERVALS

AT THIS SCALE, THE BOUNDARY DETAILS ARE LIMITED AND SOME SMALL PRIVATE PARCELS WITHIN STATE AGENCY LANDS ARE NOT SHOWN ON THIS MAP.

THERE ARE MANY AREAS OF PRIVATE LAND WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF PUBLIC OWNED LANDS. PLEASE RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS.

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1. Boiling Springs Lake

Children's Lake in downtown Boiling Springs is a large, spring-fed lake, that stays open year-round for resident and migrant waterfowl. A healthy flock of resident domestic and cross-breed ducks and geese are present, as are a few Mute Swans and seasonal migrating visitors. Trees surrounding the lake are also used by many species of songbirds for nesting and during migration. The Appalachian Trail runs along the lake through the town, and makes for a convenient and diverse habitat walk south past historic furnace remains, through a small riparian woodlands, and through farm lands.

2. Mount Holly Marsh Preserve

This site is a matrix of wetland, meadow, and upland forest habitats with trails winding throughout. Geese, numerous species of ducks and herons, Belted Kingfisher, and American Woodcock are common. Raptors include Red-shouldered Hawk and an occasional Harrier. For more information and a trail map:

www.ccpa.net/index.aspx?NID=3650

3. King's Gap Env. Education Center

16 miles of numerous trails wind through more than 1,400 acres and many diverse habitats. A great place to see all the species of woodpeckers, as well as most of the species of birds that pass through or nest in the forests of South Mountain. Wood Thrushes and Scarlet Tanagers

abound. Download their *Recreational Guide* trails map as well as the *Common Birds* guide from their maps page. www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/kingsgap/index.htm

4. Huntsdale Fish Hatchery

The historic part of the hatchery has abandoned ponds lined with tall trees; attracting a wide variety of water and riparian species. Dabbling ducks are common, and Wood Ducks nest here. Black-crowned Night-Heron are found roosting in spring and early summer. In migration, look for rails, American Bittern, Osprey, and swallows. It is also a reliable location for Rusty Blackbird in spring. SR 233 to Pine Rd., east to Sheaffer Drive. The current operating hatchery will be on the left. Park on right, and walk around Hidden Pond and wetland areas on the east side of Sheaffer Drive.

5. Pine Grove Furnace State Park

A variety of habitats are found here, from streamside forests to lakes to wet woods, to hemlock groves. Find Neotropical migrants, including thrushes, warblers and tanagers, along the rail-trail in the Laurel Lake area. The lakes are a magnet for waterfowl and wading birds. Winter birding is good here due to the conifers; look for winter finches, crossbills, and six species of woodpeckers. Download a park map for parking and trail options: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/pinegrovefurnace/

6. Camp Michaux

At the intersection of Michaux and Bunker Hill roads are the historic remains of a variety of buildings spanning nearly 200 years. Clearings and trails criss-cross this area providing a variety of edge habitat mixed with streams and conifer forests, resulting in a high variety of bird species. Walk the A.T. here, or download a detailed "walking tour" map: www.historicalsociety.com/uploads/CAMPMRevisedWalkingTour.pdf

7. Big Flat

Use Appalachian Trail parking lot along Shippensburg Road. Walk around perimeter of parking lot for open brushy species like Eastern Towhee, American Goldfinch, and Grey Catbird; or walk the A.T. in either direction for forest birds like chickadees, peewees, or tanagers. Toilet facilities are a half mile south on Shippensburg Road at the Recreation Area.

8. Thompson Hollow Road

Half way between Shippensburg and Whitmer roads is a timber cut on the south side of Thompson Hollow Road. Look for Baltimore Orioles and Red-headed Woodpeckers. Pines are attracting a wide assortment of birds.

9. Milesburn Road

Following Burd Run, this stretch of Milesburn Road is a good place to see or hear warblers in spring and fall. Two pull off areas by gates are safe places to park.

10. Flatrock Plantation

A large burn area is slowly growing back on the west side of Milesburn Road at the intersection of Ridge Road. Old field and scrub species abound, along with Common Nighthawks, raptors, and songbird migrants. Look for the yellow gate in the deer enclosure fence to get inside.

11. Long Pine Run Reservoir (Rec. Area)

March and November is the best time to see migrating ducks, geese, and other water birds. In the summer, look for an occasional loon, along with herons, several species of swallows, and Red-shouldered Hawks. Osprey and eagles occasionally appear looking for fish. Trails surround the lake.

12. Old Chambersburg Reservoir

Along 233, this drained reservoir is in the early stages of regrowth, with tree seedlings planted along restored creek. Old field and meadow species abound here, including Field Sparrow, Goldfinch, and Tree Swallow. Park alongside 233 at a pull-off by the bridge over Long Pine Run and follow a scenic, unimproved trail through a hemlock grove to the old reservoir area.

13. Quarry Gap Road

Bordering the northeast side of Caledonia State Park and following Hosack Run, Quarry Gap Road is a great place to see and hear Wood Thrush and Veery, as well as other thrushes during migration. Due to the wet forest area, other Neotropical songbirds abound.

14. Caledonia State Park

With 12 different trails adding up to 10 miles of hiking, you can choose very easy to more difficult terrain. Streams, ponds, and varying forest types offer a great variety of birds any time of the year. A trail guide is available at the park office. Download a park map for information and trails: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/caledonia/#education

15. New Baltimore Road Recreation Area

Parking area close to Route 30 for several trail loops through mixed open and forest habitat. Kiosk signs show trails that are good for general birding year round. Toilet facilities nearby at Caledonia State Park office.

16. Irishtown Road

The north half of the road borders the Mt. Cydonia Ponds Natural Area, where birding is restricted to the road only due to the many protected vernal ponds. This is a great stretch for all-around spring and fall migrants, including Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky and other warblers, many species of Neotropical songbirds.

17. Mt. Alto State Park

A small park with one, short forested trail. Picnic and toilet facilities.

18. Old Forge Picnic Area

Open picnic area along Tumbling Run and the Appalachian Trail. This wet forest area is attractive to a high diversity of birds and creek-side trails make it a great place for birding. Toilet facilities are available.

19. Gum Springs Road

The combination of open fields and wet areas make an attractive habitat for American Woodcock. To watch the courtship display of males in March, park on north end of Gum Springs Road, Walk down haul road across stream and pipeline to large open area. Woodcocks are most actively displaying dusk-to-dark.

20. Glatfelter Tract

This site has diverse habitat areas within a short walking distance. The highlight is several large blocks of shrub/scrub providing nesting habitat for “early successional” forest birds, such as Eastern Towhee, Indigo Bunting, and Ruffed Grouse. A short driveway just north of Lower Gum Springs Road leads to a parking area in a large scrub area. North along Mt. Hope Road are parking areas for trail access to explore old fields, small ponds, and mature forests.

21. Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve

With 10 miles of trails on 609 acres, a diversity of habitats and birdwatching opportunities abound. Find information, directions and a downloadable trail map: www.strawberryhill.org

Thank you to all who helped with the identification of sites and review of the guide: Appalachian Audubon Society, Conococheague Audubon Society, South Mountain Audubon Society, Joe Baker and Mike Wright of DCNR Bureau of Forestry, and specifically Ramsay Koury, Mike O'Brien, Bill Oyler, and Alyssa Cartagena. Note that this version of the guide is a working draft and suggestions for improvement are welcomed. Send to Paul Zeph: pzeph@audubon.org; 717-574-6668.