Natures Yearly Gift to Humanity

If the planet's biota—a- all the plants and animals and microorganisms—sent a bill for their 1997 services, the total would be $2.9 trillion, according to an analysis by biologists at Cornell University. (See table at left.)

For the U.S. the tab for economic and environmental benefits of biodiversity would be $319 billion as reported in the journal BioScience. (Vol. 47, pp.747-757.)

"When you compare our spending (to preserve biodiversity) to the benefits we reap, we're really getting a bargain," said David Pimentel, a professor of ecology at Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences who arrived at what he terms a conservative estimate.

The Cornell study counted natural services of a diverse biota, such as organic waste disposal, soil formation, biological nitrogen fixation, genetic resources to increase food crop and livestock yields, biological control of pests, plant pollination, pharmaceuticals and other nature-based products, ecotourism, and sequestration of carbon dioxide that otherwise would contribute to global warming.

It would be worth more, the Cornell biologists observed, if human society took full advantage of nature's genetic offerings. For example, cultivating perennial cereal grains that can be harvested continuously for 4 to 5 years without tilling and replanting— in place of annual grains whose energy-intensive spring and fall tilling exposes soil to wind and water erosion — could reduce erosion as much as 50 percent, saving $20 billion worth of soil and $9 billion in tractor fuel every year in the U.S., according to the analysis. Genes for perennial cereal grains already exist in wild plant species, they said, estimating the worldwide value of a perennial grain system at $170 billion a year.

"We hope assessments such as this," Pimentel said, "can serve as a foundation to develop strategies and policies to preserve biological diversity and maintain ecosystem integrity."

Source: David Pimentel, Christa Wilson, Christine McCullum, Rachel Huang, Paulette Owen, Jessica Flack, Quynh Tran, Tamara Saltman, Barbara Cliff, of Cornell University. Submitted by: Bill Shepherd.

Next Snipe deadline is March 15th.

ASCAS needs volunteers in several key positions. Please contact any board member and volunteer today!!

Free-ranging cats are abundant and widespread predators. They often exist at much higher densities than native predators. They prey on large numbers of wild animals, some of which are rare or endangered. They compete with native predators, and they harbor a variety of diseases. Yet, cats are popular pets. In order to have and care for our pets—and still protect our native wildlife—we must make an effort to limit in a humane manner the adverse effects free-ranging cats can have on wildlife.

- If at all possible, for the sake of your cat and local wildlife, keep your cat indoors. Confinement will eliminate unwanted reproduction, predation on wild animals, and the spread of disease. Bells are mostly ineffective in preventing predation because, even if the bell rings, it's usually too late for the prey being stalked. Declawing may reduce hunting success, but many declawed cats are still effective predators. Keeping your cats indoors helps protect the wildlife around your yard and prevents your cat from picking up diseases from strays or getting injured. The two most common causes of death for rural cats in south central Wisconsin are disease and being struck by automobiles. If cats must be al-
Welcome New Members

Cabot: Crissy Hazellip, Elmer I. Mahoney, Daniel Newell
Roland: Tom James.
Mabelvale: Delorise Garringer.
Arkadelphia: Becky Lambert
Lonoke: Lonoke Public Library

Little Rock: John Martha Tenney, ABSH, Mr-Mrs Edward A. Carle, Mr-Mrs Thomas F. James, K Butler, John Dunn, John York, Janice Harris, Mary McKewen, Amber Smith, Glen and Becky White.
North Little Rock: Robert Whitmore, Keith Purifoy.
Benton: Judith Pokorney, Mr Billy Abercrombie.

The Rare Bird Alert: The Trumpeter Swans are still at Magness Lake, and there are seventeen of them, as well as one Tundra Swan. Magness Lake is east of Heber Springs. At Millwood Lake near Texarkana a Rock Wren has been seen and off since October.

Audubon Society of Central Arkansas

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Mat White, 7277 Richardson Road, LR 72207.
Gail Toyn, 1013 Valley View Lane, LR 72205.

National Geographic Field Guide - $20
Enjoying Birds More (articles about feeding birds, using binoculars, identifying birds and many more) - $3
Ark Breeding Bird audio cassette tape - $8
Entertainment '98 coupon books (good through December 1998) - $25
Niger Seed - 1/4 bag @ $4 or 1/2 bag @ $5
Maxi Tube Feeder - $22
Cling-A-Wing (round feeder) - $11.50

Squirrel Baffle - $18

GIFTS FOR BIRDERS

Asca Rare Bird Alert: 753-5835. Learn what unusual birds have been seen locally. Have a question about Audubon? Then leave a message here, or ASA@arkistele.net.

Audubon Society Hotline: 202-861-2124. Ask a question about unusual birds have been seen locally. Have a question about Audubon? Then leave a message here, or ASA@arkistele.net.

National Audubon Hotline: 202-861-2124. Ask a question about unusual birds have been seen locally. Have a question about Audubon? Then leave a message here, or ASA@arkistele.net.


Congressional Reference Service: 202-225-1772. Learn status of any Federal Bill, have number or title of bill mailed. 9 A.M. to 6 P.M.

SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES SEN. Dale Bumpers: 202-224-4835, 324-2626, E-mail: senbumpers@senate.gov.
SEN. Tim Hutchinson: 202-224-2553, 324-6336.
REP. Jay Dickey: 202-225-3772, FAX: 516-3321
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HOTLINES

Asca Rare Bird Alert: 753-5835. Learn what unusual birds have been seen locally. Have a question about Audubon? Then leave a message here, or ASA@arkistele.net.

Audubon Membership Application

NAME (Please print) ..........................................................
ADDRESS ..................................................................
CITY ............................................ STATE ................. ZIP ..................................................................
INTRODUCTORY (USA) ........................................... $20
INTRODUCTORY (FOREIGN) ................................ $30
INTRODUCTORY STUDENT/SENIOR ................ $15
BASIC ANNUAL ......................................................... $35

Asca Rare Bird Alert: 753-5835. Learn what unusual birds have been seen locally. Have a question about Audubon? Then leave a message here, or ASA@arkistele.net.

The Snipe is published monthly by the Audubon Society of Central Arkansas.

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Audubon Membership Application

Make check to NATIONAL AUDUBON, and mail to Barry Hunt, ASA, Trushet, 3900 Deton Drive, Little Rock AR 72212-3282.

It is important for new members to join through ASA to a larger portion of your dinner support local activities. Send address changes (not new memberships) to both NAS, PO Box 510, Boulder CO 80302-1001 and to AUDUBON PARISH盲目

Suite #10, Little Rock AR 72205 so you will not miss AUDUBON magazine or The Snipe which are both included in your subscription.

7XPR B50
Family / individual = basic rate. Senior = 62 years or older. Student = full time student.
FIELD TRIPS

February 21st 2 p.m. Meet at War Memorial Stadium by the collection bins to car pool to Lonoke. War Memorial Park and Stadium can be found off I-430 in Little Rock close to the Zoo. Take the Fair Park exit. We have a farmers permission to bird some of his fields that he has made attractive to birds. Come with boots for tromping in muddy wet areas, and expect to see large numbers of waterfowl. Lyndal York will be leading this one.
Call 663-2192 or 686-5191

WINTER NOTES

We meet at the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission Building, #2 Natural Resource Drive, Little Rock. Take West Markham Street west until just before it crosses I-430 and turn right onto Natural Resource Drive and follow the AG&F signs. We'll be looking forward to meeting you, and bring a friend. You don't have to be Audubon members to attend.

Thursday February 12th. 7p.m. Board meeting at AG&F building. Carol Smith will talk on her plans to open a Wildlife Rescue Center here in central Arkansas. She needs a building and volunteers. She is a licensed rehabilitator of wildlife.

Thursday March 12th. 7 p.m. The speaker for this month had not been finalized at this writing.

(Continued from page 1)

- Don't dispose of unwanted cats by releasing them in rural areas. This practice enlarges rural cat populations and is an inhumane way of dealing with unwanted cats. Cats suffer in an unfamiliar setting, even if they are good predators. Contact your local animal welfare organization for help.
- Eliminate sources of food, such as garbage or outdoor pet food dishes, that attract stray cats. Don't feed stray cats. Feeding strays maintains high densities of cats that kill and compete with native wildlife populations. Cat colonies will form around sources of food and grow to the limits of the food supply. Colonies can grow to include dozens of animals. Maintenance of colonies of free-ranging or feral cats through supplemental feeding benefits no one. The cats suffer because of disease and physical injury; native wildlife suffers from predation and competition, and colonies can be a source of disease for animals and humans. Those concerned with the welfare of animals can improve the lives of the many native species that suffer from lack of food and shelter by protecting and improving the habitats they require.

Taken from Cats and Wildlife
A Conservation Dilemma
by
John S Coleman, Stanley A. Temple and Scott R. Craven

The Presidents Message

Becoming your president is an emotional experience. First, I lack sufficient clarity of expression to describe what birding has meant to my life. I started birding with a childhood friend who is a hemophiliac. He had difficulty romping with us country kids so he needed a more sedentary activity that was also stimulating.
Our fourth grade teacher had us do a book report on John James Audubon and encouraged us to set up bird feeders so we could watch birds from my friend's bedroom. We also went into the field as often as my friend's condition would allow. It was a great way to grow up.
After roaming together in college, we don't see each other nearly as much as we should. He now battles the AIDS virus and I just battle. And our fourth grade teacher lost her job when a large bottle fell out of her purse and broke on the classroom floor. It was a fifth of vodka—she was drinking one daily. I used to think the story was amusing, which it is, but I learned that even the deeply troubled can touch a young life. One constant that has run through our lives is our love of birds.

Excuse the personal digression, which I threw in at no extra charge. Birding and this chapter mean an immense amount to me and I intend to make this chapter a major focus of my personal energies.
The beginning of each year is a time of personal and professional goal setting for me. Interestingly, national Audubon's marching orders to me list goal setting as a primary duty, too. I have a number of goals in mind and I want input from each of you. I work for you as your president and I expect comments, criticism and suggestions. Firstly, I want to visit with as many of you as possible early this year. I am especially interested in listening to those of you
You care, right? That is why you joined ASCA because you care about wildlife, the birds or the environment. Carol Smith also cares about wildlife, and she will be our speaker at the next meeting on February 12th at 7 p.m. She is a licensed rehabilitator of wildlife, and plans to open a Wildlife Rescue Center here in Central Arkansas. She needs a building and volunteers to help her run the program. Come and meet her and find out what you could do to help.

Every second Thursday of the month ASCA holds a meeting and invites interesting speakers such as Carol Smith to talk on various wildlife/environmental related subjects. Please consider attending these meetings and supporting Audubon in some volunteer capacity. We have several opportunities for you to use your skills to help promote the conservation of birds and our environment.

Another advantage of becoming more involved with ASCA is that you can learn so much from the more experienced birdwatchers in our group. They can help with tips on identification and with song and call recognition too.

We are looking forward to meeting you on February 12th.

Note that Birdwatching with the Stokes is on AETN at 1130am on Sundays.