

Project Feeder Watch Benefits Birds and People

Connection with nature promotes wellness

ITHACA, N.Y. - More than 100 studies have shown that getting closer to nature reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being in children and adults. So, filling feeders and counting the birds that visit may be just what the doctor ordered! For more than 20 years, that's what participants in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch have been doing - benefitting themselves and the birds.

"It is a great winter time activity for the whole family," says Alaska FeederWatcher Nancy Darnell. "If you have children, they will come to love watching the birds. All of this is fun and a chance to contribute to scientific studies, too!"

The 2008-09 season of Project FeederWatch gets under way November 8 and runs through April 3. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each

week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges - a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

"Being a FeederWatcher is easy and fun, and at the same time helps generate the world's largest database on feeder-bird populations," says project leader David Bonter. "We are grateful for the contributions our participants have made for the birds and are proud of the joy they say it brings to their busy lives. Since we started in 1987, more than 40,000 people have submitted observations, engaging with the wildlife beyond their windows."

"Project FeederWatch opened up a whole new world for me," says participant Cheri Ryan of Lockport, Ky. "It's so interesting to watch the ac-

tivities of the birds. I learn something new each time I participate."

Scientists learn something new from the data each year, too, whether it's about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of rarely-seen species. Highlights of the most recent season include the largest southward movement of red-breasted nuthatches in the history of the project - part of an expected influx of northern birds that fly farther south when their food supplies run short. Other northern species showing up in record numbers included Common Repolls and Pine Siskins. Among the rare birds reported was a Streak-backed Oriole in Loveland, Colo. - the state's first report of this bird, native to Mexico. A December nor'easter deposited a Dovekie in Newton, Mass., the first time this North Atlantic seabird has ever been reported to Project FeederWatch.

Long-term data show some species increasing in number, such as the Lesser Goldfinch in the Southwest. Other populations continue a downward trend, such as the Evening Grosbeak throughout their range. Once one of the most common species seen at feeders in the northern half of the continent, the grosbeaks are declining for unknown reasons.

Beyond the benefits to birds and science, however, is the benefit to participants. "Nature is not merely an

amenity; it is critical to healthy human development and functioning," says Nancy Wells, Cornell University assistant professor of design and environmental analysis. Her studies find that a view of nature through the window or access to the environment in any way improves a child's cognitive functioning and reduces the negative effects of stress on the child's psychological well-being. Wells also notes that when children spent time with nature early in life it carries over to their adult attitudes and behavior toward the environment.

Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from Scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors. To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Lab toll-free at 800-843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for lab members) participants receive the FeederWatcher's Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, Winter Bird Highlights.

Many FeederWatchers echo this comment from Mary Strasser of Wisconsin: "The greatest reward for me as a participant in Project FeederWatch these many years has been observing birds and behavior that I might have missed had I not been part of this project."

Memorial 5K Run Winners



Pictured above are some of the winners in the Dale Gordon Memorial 5K Run/Walk sponsored by the Fulton County Community Christian School Saturday in Needmore. Front left is Lacey Beatty, Joni Dunkle, Carol Richards, Bob Messaros, Deanne Baker, Bill Baker, back row: Tyler Nero, Kirk Layton, Dane Tritle, Donnie Gordon, and Ronnie Ward. Winners not pictured are Nick Wolfe, Hunter Miller, Tim Akers, Randy Keefer, Chelsey Hollenshead, Catherine Washabaugh, Kelly Miller, and Jolinda Wilson. Overall winners were Nick Wolfe, first place; Tyler Nero, second place; and third place Bill Baker. Female division first-place winner was Lacy Beatty; second place to Chelsey Hollenshead. Eleven-year-olds Patrick Keefer and Nathan Leedy also participated. Bonnie Gordon again came in with the most sponsors in honor of her husband, the late Dale Gordon. Whitney Schultz, a student at FCCCS, had the second highest sponsorships, and Bob Messaros and Carol Richards, third and fourth place.

Panel Says Assisted-Living Regs Need Revisions

By **MARTHA RAFFAELE**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) - State welfare officials have more work to do as they try to clarify for consumers the difference between personal-care homes and "assisted-living" residences, both of which provide care for the elderly and disabled.

A state regulatory panel said Wednesday that the state's first proposal to license assisted living residences did not eliminate confusion over the term.

"We believe this distinction is vital to potential residents and their families in their evaluation of which path best fits their current health needs, future health needs and ability to pay, and promotes happiness and wellness," the Independent Regulatory Review Commission said in a written opinion evaluating the proposed regulations.

Assisted living facilities are designed to care for people who need services beyond assistance with tasks of daily living - which is already provided by personal-care homes - but who are not sick enough to require 24-hour nursing home care.

The Department of Public Welfare is developing the regulations under a 2007 state law that mandates the state's first-ever licensing

standards for assisted-living residences.

The distinction between personal-care homes and assisted living will be critical for residents who need government assistance to pay for long-term care services. The federal Medicaid program for the poor and disabled does not pay for personal-care home expenses, but it can defray the cost of assisted living in states that have received federal approval for that purpose.

The welfare department has set a goal of making the regulations final by Nov. 30; the rules would take effect July 1. But department spokeswoman Stacey Witalec said officials are willing to extend that deadline, if necessary.

"We may not have gone far enough yet (in defining assisted living), yet we're hopeful we can get there," Witalec said.

Consumer advocates and industry groups have expressed dissatisfaction with the department's initial regulatory proposal. At a legislative hearing in September, both sides argued over whether the new rules would ensure that residents receive safe, adequate care and whether they would impose costly mandates on facility operators.

The department has proposed licensing fees of \$500 per resident and \$105 per bed. Other provisions include minimum square-footage requirements for residential units.

The commission noted that if the cost deters many personal-care homes from upgrading to assisted-living facilities, the resulting assisted-living shortage will force many low-income residents who need medical care to move into nursing homes, which already accept Medicaid.

The department should survey existing personal-care homes to determine the capacity for those facilities to provide assisted-living services under the new regulations, the commission said.

"The department should explain how the limitations and requirements in this regulation will result in availability of (assisted living residences) to Pennsylvanians at a cost they can afford," the commission said.

The regulations must also address how personal-care homes that want to convert a portion of their facilities to assisted living can obtain dual licenses, which the state law also envisions, the commission said.

Pa. Father Jailed, Police Say He Stabbed Son, 19

MCKEESPORT, Pa. (AP) - A Pittsburgh man is jailed on charges he fatally stabbed his son after an argument in the man's home.

Police say 57-year-old Gordon McGowan Sr. was sitting in the kitchen Saturday night with his wife and their son, 19-year-old Gordon Jr. who lives in McKeesport.

As the father went upstairs to go to bed, police say his son followed his father upstairs and said he wanted to talk. That's when the boy's mother says she heard a dispute and her son yelling "he stabbed me."

The Allegheny County Medical Examiner says the victim died from blood loss from stab wounds in the aorta and left lung.

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		7						
	5			1		4		
1	9	6	7					
8	3	5		9		6		
			8					2
				1				
							9	
				2		7		
7	5	3	4					

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Last Week's Solution

4	2	3	5	9	6	7	8	1
1	9	8	7	3	2	4	5	6
7	5	6	8	4	1	9	3	2
6	8	4	1	5	9	2	7	3
2	3	5	6	8	7	1	9	4
9	7	1	3	2	4	5	6	8
3	1	9	2	6	5	8	4	7
8	4	7	9	1	3	6	2	5
5	6	2	4	7	8	3	1	9

PETS OF THE WEEK

Nev is an 8-wk-old female grey long-hair.

Saxton is a 2-yr-old tri-colored beagle.

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Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15				16				
17				18				19				
20				21				22				
23								24				
25	26	27				28	29			30	31	32
33						34				35		
36						37				38	39	
40						41				42		
43						44				45	46	
47										48		
49	50									53	54	55
56						57				58		
59						60				61		
62						63				64		

CLUES ACROSS

- Chief magistrate of Venice
- Cheremis
- Capital of Morocco
- Hollies
- Norse god
- Calypter
- pe: Mexican shawl
- Object worshipped as a god
- Indian instrument
- Monopoly charity
- Frosts
- Tap dancer Miller
- Sports stadiums
- Willy Loman's job
- Not generally occurring
- Indian dresses
- Government language
- Fleur-de-lis plant
- Woodrat
- Clear food wrap
- 1/60 of a min.
- Automotive treads
- Kamarupan
- Expunctions

CLUES DOWN

- Phonograph record
- Butter substitute
- Microbe or bug
- Tests
- Des __, Iowa
- Ababa
- Wild public disorder
- Inwardly
- Heedless

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

H	A	M	A	H	A	N	N	A	W	A	S	H		
A	C	I	D	A	R	O	I	D	A	R	I	O		
R	C	M	P	Z	E	I	N	S	S	I	L	L		
S	R	I	B	B	A	A	L	S	I	T	A	L	Y	
H	A	R	B	O	R	S	S	H	O	E				
				R	A	D	W	O	O	D	B	I	N	E
M	O	N	I	Z	C	H	R	Y	S	A	L	I	S	
A	R	I	D	P	R	I	E	S	S	E	T	S		
R	E	L	A	T	I	O	N	S	S	K	A	T	E	
C	O	L	L	A	P	S	E	M	Y	E	L	I	N	
				M	A	A	S	H	A	L	T			
A	L	D	O	A	L	H	A	Y	L	H	A	H		
B	E	A	N	C	H	A	C	O	H	A	A	S		
E	D	I	T	S	E	D	E	R	M	I	R	I		
D	A	S	H	T	R	E	K	S	O	L	E	A		