

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

Waxwing Associates  
Hollidaysburg, PA  
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**Waxwing Associates**  
140 Queen Ann Drive  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648



## Alleghenies Adventures

This spot in our quarterly newsletter is 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, some of them free others have a cost associated with them. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the trip leader. The list is in date order of occurrence..

### June 28—Heritage Festival

Canoe Creek State Park is sponsoring an afternoon and evening of activities celebrating the history and heritage of the area. Performances will include singing railroad songs, storytelling about quarry workers, and a folk concert. All activities will be held at the park day use area near the beach beginning at 2:30 PM and ending about 8:00 PM. Contact 814-695-6807.

### July 11- Nature Journaling

Canoe Creek State Park enjoy a friendly approach to outdoor writing in a journal format with basic drawing and writing skills to be taught by the Park Naturalist. Pre-registration required with a \$10 fee. Bring a bag lunch and clothing for the outdoors. Contact 814-695-6807 or email [CanoeCreekEEPrograms@state.pa.us](mailto:CanoeCreekEEPrograms@state.pa.us)

### July 26– Bats and more

Join Waxwing Associates for afternoon birding and an evening bat program as 20,000 bats exit the Canoe Creek Church bat sanctuary. Transportation, expert guide and dinner included with meeting place in Altoona. Call for costs and reservations: 814-693-6563.

### August 10-Tom Snyder Memorial Ride

Enjoy a leisurely bike ride on the Lower Rail Trail to remember one of Altoona's great volunteers. Meet at the Flowing Spring Trail Head 2 PM near Canoe Creek. Trip leader Larry Bilotto contact 814-942-2382

### August 16-Full Moon Bike Ride-Williamsburg Trail Head 7:30 PM

Enjoy the twilight and night sounds along the Lower Trail. Remember a flashlight in case the clouds appear. Trip leader Bill Taafe contact 814-312-0349.

### August 16-Raystown Eagles

Join Waxwing Associates for a day of birding at Raystown Lake in Huntingdon County with a special search for bald eagle fledglings at the dam area. Day trip includes transportation, lunch, and expert guide with a stop for some famous Meadows custard ice cream before the day ends. Call for costs and reservations: 814-693-6563

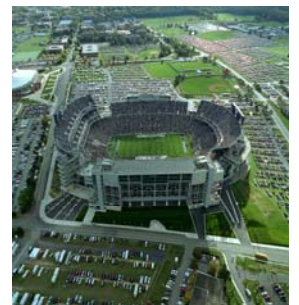
### September 6-Elk Bugling

Final Waxwing Associates trip for the summer season to witness the eerie mating call of the bull elk near Benezette in Elk County. Early afternoon departure from Altoona includes transportation, dinner, and an expert guide. Call for costs and reservations: 814-693-6563



Gray Catbird

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



Beaver Stadium  
Penn State Campus



Screech Owl



# Waxwing Newsletter

WAXWING  
ASSOCIATES LLC

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## Bats and More

### Natural History:

Bats are the only true flying mammal in the world. The other mammals, flying squirrels, glide on flaps of skin attached between their sides and legs. Bats wings are thin skin membrane stretched from fore to hind legs and from hind legs to their tail that allow them to fly. Bones in bats wings are essentially the same as in humans arms and hands; thus, the scientific order Chiroptera meaning "hand wing". Mammals by definition give live birth to their young.

Eleven species of bats occur in Pennsylvania and range in size largest (hoary bat) about 6" long with wingspan of 16" to smallest (pipistrelle) about 4" long with wingspan 10". 39 species in the U.S.; over 1000 species in the world. Largest wingspan 6 feet.

Most common species in Pennsylvania are the Little brown bats with second the Big brown bats.

Eyes of bats are very small, but ears are quite large. Therefore a bats sight is relatively insignificant compared to its ability to hear.

Of course there are those scary large sharp teeth to chew food into tiny, easily digested pieces.

Reproductive potential of bats is low with only 1 or 2 pups born each year. Bats mate late summer, now, and sperm is stored in female's reproductive system until spring when fertilization occurs.

Young are born in summer are naked, blind, and helpless. They are nursed by their mothers and by 6 weeks old are self-sufficient and nearly adult in size.

Bats roost during the day and fly at night to gather food.

Bats are true hibernators and go to secure caverns to take a long winter's nap or migrate to warmer climates. They survive the winter on fat reserves built up during their 3 seasons of activity.

**IT IS VERY CRITICAL NOT TO DISTURB BATS FROM THEIR WINTER'S HIBERNATION BECAUSE THERE IS NO FOOD AVAILABLE AND FAT RESERVES HAVE TO LAST THEM UNTIL SPRING.**

### Echolocation:

Bats favorite food is mosquitoes and one bat is capable of devouring up to 5,000 insects each night.

Food is found thru echolocation which is a sense of sonar used to zero in on insects as they are flying. Bats emit a high pitched sound that only they can hear and the echo bounces back to their ears from objects allowing them to zero in on their target.

Each bat species operates on a different frequency and the sound and number of emissions changes as they get closer to their target.

Bats can be identified with a device called a "bat detector" that can pick up various pitches specific to different bat species.

## Waxwing Nature Tours for Summer

Waxwing Associates is offering complete Nature Tour packages in the Alleghenies Region of Central Pennsylvania.

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.

**All tours are by reservations and must be fully paid in advance. Call today for prices!**

### HERE'S WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA:

**July 26- Canoe Creek Bats  
Witness emergence of 20,000 bats from an abandoned church.**

**August 16- Raystown Eagles  
Look for bald eagle fledglings as they test their flying skills.**

**September 6- Elk Bugling  
Visit Benazette and hear the eerie mating call of the bull elk.**

**All trips include transportation and an expert guide.  
Leave from Altoona for a full day of activities.**



Cooper's Hawk

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Red Bat

**PLEASE NOTE: GUIDES DO NOT PROVIDE BINOCULARS PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN BINOCULARS AND BIRD IDENTIFICATION FIELD BOOKS**

**Coming in next issue  
September 2008:  
Home of the Elk  
Aliens are here**



## Composting: A brief look

Almost any organic material is suitable for a compost pile. The pile needs a proper ratio of carbon-rich materials, or "browns," and nitrogen-rich materials, or "greens." Among the brown materials are dried leaves, straw, and wood chips. Nitrogen materials are fresh or green, such as grass clippings and kitchen scraps.

Mixing certain types of materials or changing the proportions can make a difference in the rate of decomposition. Achieving the best mix is more an art gained through experience than an exact science. The ideal ratio approaches 25 parts browns to 1 part greens. Judge the amounts roughly equal by weight. Too much carbon will cause the pile to break down too slowly, while too much nitrogen can cause odor. The carbon provides energy for the microbes, and the nitrogen provides protein.

Leaves represent a large percentage of total yard waste. If you can grind them in a gas or [electric chipper shredder](#) or mow over them, they will reduce in size making them easier to store until you can use them in the pile, and they will decompose faster - an issue with larger leaves. They are loaded with minerals brought up from the tree roots and are a natural source of carbon. A few leaf species such as live oak, southern magnolia, and holly trees are too tough and leathery for easy composting. Avoid all parts of the black walnut tree as they contain a plant poison that survives composting. Eucalyptus leaves can be toxic to other plants. And avoid using poison oak, poison ivy, and sumac.

Some materials good for composting: **pine needles**-need to be chopped because they decompose slowly; **grass clippings**-break down quickly and contain lots of nitrogen; **kitchen refuse**-recommend using only vegetable and fruit peelings, meats and dairy products will smell; **wood ashes**-do not use coal ashes because they contain large amounts of sulfur & iron; **garden refuse**-most all kinds good to use; **manure**- some of finest material that can be used. More info at Compost Guide.

## Birding Guides Available

Waxwing Associates has a staff of expert birders available to seek out any of the bird species in the Alleghenies. 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

For detailed information contact :

#### Waxwing Associates

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Steam Locomotive EBT  
Orbisonia-Huntingdon County

## Spotlight on Central Pennsylvania

### EAST BROAD TOP RAILROAD (EBT)

Take a trip back to the 1900's when steam ruled the rails. Hear the whistles blow as the train makes its way down the track where coal was king. With its truly unique shop complex, over 100 year old station and early 1900's equipment, the EBT is a must see.

The EBT operates tourist trains on weekends from June thru October. Railroad equipment ranges from passenger cars built in the 1880's to steam locomotives from the 1910's to 1920's.

Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964, the EBT is the most complete narrow gauge historic railroad in North America. See:

[www.ebtrr.com](http://www.ebtrr.com)



Terry Wentz, Owner  
Waxwing Associates