

The

PSO Pileated



December 2009

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Volume 20, Number 4

From the President's Desk....

The passing landscape on the way home from our November 21 board meeting in Boalsburg was far less interesting than it was on the way out. Miles of bare, brown trees interspersed here and there with evergreens can only hold your attention for so long. And bird sightings when you're traveling at high speeds are sporadic at best. My total trip bird list for the 370 miles driven this day was only five species – Turkey and Black Vultures, Red-tailed Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and European Starling.

But even at that I'm guessing my six hours on the road were more interesting than those of most of the cars passing me. Birders are always looking for something – anything – as they travel from one place to another.

Every time I go to a board meeting near State College, I'm struck by the vastness of our state. I find myself wondering what kind of and how many birds are out there in inaccessible places, but I know that's really a good thing rather than a bad one. We birders never think of ourselves as intruders on nature, but sometimes we are. The older I get the more I like the thought that there are places never touched by human footprints and that some of them are in Pennsylvania.

I've also come to think that same thing about my own property, although I doubt there's a place here that hasn't been stepped on through the years by hunters, naturalists, birders, gardeners, or friends walking just for the sake of walking. I've been fortunate to have seen more than 200 bird species here and have had more than my share of rarities, but I'm not bragging. There are other bigger and better private land tracts in the state. And there's a

definite down side to this "notoriety," if you will. Just like birding at the various hawk watches, I have far more "almost nothing seen" days than ones in which I've found something interesting or unusual. And that's how it should be. The habitat is for birds and wildlife, not for my entertainment. Wildlife habitat protects and shelters wild creatures as it provides sustenance for them. So if birds don't respond to pishing or come out when we desire, well, so be it.



This Western Kingbird is just one of the rarities that have appeared at the Koch farm.

But I'd be lying if I didn't admit that Christmas Bird Counts can be extremely frustrating when you know a lot of birds are around but they just don't come out to be counted. And the Christmas Bird Counts are just around the corner. So if you don't participate, you should. There's bound to be one near you. And then, after that later in the winter, go out to count raptors for Greg Grove's annual raptor census.

A lot of ground was covered at our board meeting. We were asked to participate in the second annual birding festival at Bald Eagle State Park on May 8, 2010. We discussed wind power at length, a contentious topic that will be covered more in future newsletters. We voted to support Delaware Valley Ornithological Club's move to rename a part of Cape May Point State Park after Witmer Stone. We also voted to officially include the PA Young Birders Club as part of our annual meeting that will be held May 14-16, 2010, at Presque Isle. The details about that meeting, which is sure to be a great one, will also be forthcoming in future newsletters. So until then, stay well, good luck with the Christmas counts, and keep on birding.

Arlene Koch, President
Easton, PA
Northampton County

Mother Carey's Chickens

by Arlene Koch

Recently one of my friends took a Caribbean cruise on which he got a life bird even though he wasn't on a bird trip. He became the unofficial bird guide on the ship when other passengers saw him on deck with binoculars in hand. Soon he found himself identifying Tennessee Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, and other passerines 200 miles out at sea. But the highlight bird for him was a Leach's Storm-Petrel that was unable to take flight from where it had landed on the bow of the ship. So Dennis picked it up and successfully launched it into the air, and it flew out over the ocean where it belonged.

I've only been on a few pelagic trips because I basically hate them. I've never been sick, and of course seeing new birds is a great high; but when the boat's engine is thrown into top speed, everyone's head snaps back as land disappears behind you, and all you see ahead is open water, I have to quell the urge to jump off and swim back to shore. So I guess I'll never get to see a Leach's Storm-Petrel.

But when Dennis told me this story I started wondering how this bird got its name. So I opened my well worn copy of "The Audubon Society's Encyclopedia of North American Birds," and I quickly learned that the bird was named for William Elford Leach, a 19th century British zoologist. I also found out that Leach's Storm-Petrels are often called Mother Carey's chickens so, since I had absolutely no idea why, off I went to the "Folklore" page, followed by a visit to an entry that actually was named "Mother Carey's Chickens."

The name Mother Carey is a bastardization of *Mater cara*, meaning the Virgin Mary, the protector of sailors. Superstitious sailors believed, and probably some still do, that storm-petrels are the souls of drowned sailors endlessly flying around looking for help from human prayers. Others believe them to be devil birds flying over the corpses of dead comrades. And still others believe them to be reincarnated nasty sea captains destined to fly around over the water forever. But after reading all of this, all I could think was, "Geez, who knew?"

There are all kinds of interesting facts in the Folklore section of this book, some of which made me laugh out

loud because they were ones my mother, who had no love of the outside world, believed. If a bird flew into the house, especially a blackbird, it meant death. And if you heard the tremulous call of a screech-owl somewhere

around the same time, it meant death for three people. My mother, of course, had absolutely no idea that a tiny owl was making the sound. And in our family as I was growing up, both of these beliefs were proven to be true even if it took years between the original event and the deaths.

It's funny, however, how even though I know these death warnings are only superstition, the "death is coming" thought still pops into my mind every time I hear a screech-owl, and I'd like to think that I'm at least somewhat knowledgeable about birds. So it's not hard to understand why sailors who spend their lives alone on a ship dealing with the elements believe what they do.



Various species of birds like this Eastern Screech-Owl are associated with superstitions.

Photo by Howard Eskin

PSO Quiz

How well do you know your Pennsylvania birds?

1. A much-loved shorebird genus is named in Latin for the new moon. Which genus, and why?
2. The Black Hawk, *Archibuteo sancti-johannis*, "is generally found sailing at a low flight over the Delaware and other large rivers," according to William P. Turnbull in 1869. What is this hawk called today?
3. You're looking at either a Le Conte's Sparrow or a Nelson's Sparrow. Based on its white median crown stripe, which is it?
4. In our second breeding bird atlas compared to our first atlas, Cerulean Warbler and Kentucky Warbler decreased in total number of blocks with possible, probable, and confirmed breeding. Which species decreased by a greater percentage?
5. Of our five nesting *Empidonax* flycatchers, which would you expect to see first in the spring? Which would likely be last to arrive?

(See Answers on page 12.)

The Raven Reporter



Tales of
Discovery about
Pennsylvania
Birds

Cook Forest State Park Bird Checklist Completed

Margaret Buckwalter can rest easy now. The Cook Forest bird checklist is finally finished and ready for distribution.

We would like to give a special “tip of the field cap” to Margaret and the Seneca Rocks Audubon for running field trips, collecting the bird data, and sending the data to the SAP office. Dale Luthringer of Cook Forest State Park contributed his own field observations and assisted with finishing the checklist.

Cook Forest is one of the very few places you can find old growth forest in Pennsylvania. Some of the largest and most majestic trees in the state are found in Forest Cathedral, a Registered National Natural Landmark. I count 19 different wood warblers as summer residents there. That must be one of the longest warbler lists for any of the state’s parks. The tall hemlocks are home to many Blackburnian and Magnolia Warblers in summer. You can hear songs of Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown Creepers, and Winter Wrens. The “yank, yanks” of Red-breasted Nuthatches are never far away. The big conifers also provide lots of food for Red and White-winged Crossbills as well as other winter finches. Then, there is the matter of the Clarion River. That stream is getting to be a regular place to see Bald Eagles. And, big woods like the ones in this park can be good places to see other rare raptors. It is a very important place for birds and an inspiration to all of us. No wonder it is considered a PA Important Bird Area. Make that an important *birding* area, too.

You may get a copy of the Cook Forest State Park checklist by visiting the park, then go birding and add more data for the list by logging your observations into eBird.

2010 Annual Mid-Winter Eagle Survey

Each year we go out to count the eagles that visit or spend the winter near our waters. It is a great excuse to bird in the winter after the Christmas counts and before the spring migration. For 2010, the Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey is scheduled from Wednesday, 30 December 2009, to Wednesday, 13 January 2010. The target dates are 8 and

9 January. The winter eagle survey targets bodies of water and other locations where Bald Eagles are commonly found in winter. Pennsylvania participates in a national survey. The 2009 winter totals were a record 185 Bald Eagles (108 adults and 77 immature or unknown aged eagles). A record 137 hours were spent in the field.

Participation in the winter eagle survey has been enthusiastic and gratifying. We have had even more volunteers this year than previously. Coupled with the PSO Winter Raptor Survey, we have a great one-two punch for getting data on our birds of prey. Pennsylvania is an important wintering ground for eagles and other diurnal raptors. There is an increasing body of evidence that our state is important for species like Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, and a surprising number of Golden Eagles. The tracking data for the Golden Eagle project shows that more of them visit us in the winter than anyone imagined. If you look, you can find.

We would like to establish new routes in more locations and reestablish eagle surveys in former locations as well as run the same routes as last year. In the last few years we added several new locations including Penn’s Creek, Juniata River, Conodoquinet Creek, Brandywine Creek, and French Creek (to name a few). Some locations we are targeting for adoption: Harvey’s Lake, Huntsville Reservoir, Pike’s Creek Reservoir, Lake Scranton, Pocono Lake, Lake Naomi, Tioga River, John Heinz NWR (Tinicum)/Darby Creek, Lower Schuylkill River, Tullytown/Van Skiver Lake, Lake Luxembourg, Core Creek State Park, Nockamixon State Park, Peace Valley Lake, Lake Redmond/Lake Williams, Lake Ontelaunee, Marsh Creek Lake, and any other places that have open water in January. We also would like to get more information about eagle roosting areas. If you are interested in participating in the winter eagle survey, please contact me.

Not only do we look at winter population trends, but the winter survey allows us to scout for new nests and check established pairs to see if they are renovating their old nests or building new ones. In the last few years, the winter surveys have revealed a few new nesting pairs.

If anyone sees a new eagle or Osprey nest being built, please contact me at the addresses listed below. Eagles can start new nests in winter. Many are incubating in February. An eagle carrying a stick is an eagle that is either refurbishing an old nest or building a new one. Follow that eagle!

Enjoy your Birding Adventures!

Douglas A. Gross, Endangered Bird Specialist
Pennsylvania Game Commission
144 Winters Road, Orangeville, PA 17859
dogross@state.pa.us or dougross@sunlink.net
570-458-4109 (or 458-4564)

Time for Award Nominations

Do you know a person or organization whose contributions to the Pennsylvania birding community is worthy of recognition? If so, now is the time to put pen to paper (or fingers to the keyboard) and submit a nomination to the PSO Awards Committee. The Committee is now taking nominations for PSO's Earl L. Poole Award and the Conservation Award. The awards will be presented at the 2010 Annual Meeting at Presque Isle. Award winners will be notified well in advance of the annual meeting so that they may have the opportunity to plan to attend and arrange for family and friends to share in the thrill of being recognized by the Pennsylvania birding community. So while nominations can be submitted at any time, the sooner the better to assure your nomination is given consideration.

The Earl L. Poole award is presented annually to a person or persons who have made significant contributions to Pennsylvania's ornithology. This may be in the form of volunteer efforts, publications, field work, or any other pursuit that has furthered the knowledge, documentation, sharing, and or interest in birdlife in Pennsylvania. The professional as well as the amateur is equally deserving of consideration.

The Conservation Award is presented to an individual or organization that has had a positive impact on bird conservation in Pennsylvania. And yes, there can be some overlap, so don't let that interfere with your nominating an individual or organization deserving of recognition. See the PSO website for a list of past winners.

A short letter or email is all it takes to submit a nomination. Nominations should be submitted to me either via e-mail or the USPS.

– Tom Kuehl, Vice President
Award Committee Chairperson
3615 Hilty Road
Export, PA 15632
tjkuehl@comcast.net

Annual Meeting 2010

The 2010 annual meeting will be held May 14-16, 2010, at the Bel-Aire Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Erie, PA. Information and registration materials will be available on the PABIRDS web site in early 2010 and in the March newsletter.

Ornithological Literature Notes

Avian research in other regions by Pennsylvanians and former Pennsylvanians received international attention at the joint meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society and Association of Field Ornithologists in Pittsburgh in April 2009. This is the last in a series of articles summarizing these scientific presentations. Complete abstracts of the presentations are available on the Three Rivers Birding Club website www.3rbc.org.



Ted Floyd confirmed by field observations in Colorado that adult Chipping Sparrows in the interior West molt during migration as do those in the East – indicating that currently recognized relationships among Chipping Sparrow subspecies may need to be reassessed.

Photo by Bob Moul

Researchers from Pennsylvania are involved in diverse research outside the state:

! Jason Hill of Penn State University is studying movement and habitat use of adult female Saltmarsh Sparrows in Connecticut after their young fledge. Along with Chris Elphick of the University of Connecticut, he discovered that their behavior at this time differs strikingly from behavior during other periods of adult females' life.

! Nathan E. Thomas of Shippensburg University, along with David L. Swanson at the University of South Dakota, is analyzing habitat availability and shorebird use of natural and human-created wetlands in the Midwest. The results suggest that properly managed wetlands can provide a reliable habitat supplement in the absence of natural wetlands across a highly degraded landscape.

! Joshua B LaPergola and Robert L. Curry of Villanova University are studying the natural history and especially breeding ecology of the Black Catbird (*Melanoptila glabrirostris*) in Quintana Roo, Mexico.

Former Pennsylvanians working elsewhere are undertaking a variety of studies:

! Ted Floyd, a Pittsburgh native who received his doctorate at Penn State and is the editor of *Birding* magazine, confirmed by field observations in Colorado that adult Chipping Sparrows in the interior West molt during migration as do those in the East – indicating that currently recognized relationships among Chipping Sparrow subspecies may need to be reassessed.

! Felicity Newell, formerly of Pittsburgh and now studying at Ohio State University, is researching effects of various types of forest canopy structure on the density of canopy-nesting species in southeastern Ohio. Her goal is to help guide forestry management practices, especially of oaks, for conservation of many species including the Cerulean Warbler.

! Amanda Rodewald, associate professor of Wildlife Ecology at Ohio State University, who received her doctorate at Penn State, is advising researchers who examine post-fledging survivorship of Northern Cardinals and Acadian Flycatchers in central Ohio. She is also advising Newell in the forest-habitat research described above.

! Timothy O'Connell, assistant professor of natural resource ecology and management at Oklahoma State University, who received his doctorate at Penn State, is advising P. van Els in a study of microhabitat preferences of wintering birds in central Oklahoma.

– Paul Hess

Certificates of Appreciation

The Board of Directors for PSO has voted to send the Certificates of Appreciation to the following persons who hosted the indicated bird or birds:

Peter and Denise Reinhart	Varied Thrush
Mrs. Leslie Ducharme	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Mrs. Leslie Ducharme	Harris's Sparrow
Steve Zook	Western Meadowlark
Fred Hite	Snowy Owl
Jim and Joan Moore	Sora and Virginia Rail



This Snowy Owl visited the Hite farm in Cambria County this past winter. The Hites received a Certificate of Appreciation for allowing birders onto their property to view the owl.

Photo by Wayne Laubscher

I would like to remind all county compilers and other interested parties that PSO is still awarding Certificates of Appreciation to persons who allow birdwatchers on their properties to view a reported and confirmed rare bird. Please email me the dates the bird was present (First Day, Last Day), the full name of the host, and the host's snail mail address.

– John Fedak [jlfedak@atlanticbb.net]

New Online PA Site Guide

The PSO is pleased to announce a new online birding guide to Pennsylvania with more than 300 sites to date. Go to the PSO web site, www.pabirds.org, and click on Birding Locations.

The next page will display a map of the state. Click on the county in which you are interested, and you will be presented with a map of that county with numbered birding locations. Click the corresponding number on the list on the right, and information about that site will be displayed.

The site page includes a description of the site, directions, and a link to a Google Map of the location. In addition, some sites have simplified maps, photos, and/or links for more information.

The county page lists county-wide information such as bird clubs and demographics.

In addition to the existing sites, we are looking for new sites to add to the list. If you are familiar with a site that is not on the list, please submit it for inclusion. This can be done online by clicking on the New Site link.

We also are looking for corrections and updates for existing sites. Please look at the sites with which you are familiar and send any corrections or updates. This also can be done online by clicking on the Update/Correct Site link.

A birdlist feature is under construction and will allow users to see the birdlist for a county or birding site. It will also allow users to update the birdlists.

So, please look at the site and send us your stuff!

– Frank Haas

Silent Auction to Support Youth Scholarship Program

Each year we have a silent auction at our annual meeting to generate funds to support the Youth Scholarship Program. Hang on to those gently used books and items that might be better suited to someone else's home, and bring them to the annual meeting when you attend. They don't have to be only bird-related items.

There will be more information on the PABIRDS website in early 2010 and in the March newsletter concerning the auction.

The form for nominating a youth to attend our 2010 meeting in Erie is on page 11 of this newsletter.

Christmas Bird Counts Held in Pennsylvania

	Name of Count	County	Compiler	Phone Number	E-mail Address	Date
1	Audubon	Montgomery Delaware Chester	Edie Parnum	610-964-8331	eparnum@comcast.net	12/26/09
2	Bald Eagle	Centre	Bob Snyder	814-863-6168	rhs2@psu.edu	1/03/10
3	Beaver	Beaver	Rick Mason	724-847-0909	richarddmason@gmail.com	12/19/09
4	Bedford	Bedford	Janet Shaffer Mike Jackson	814-356-3553	jgshaffer@yellowbananas.com mljackson@hughes.net	12/19/09
5	Bernville B	erks	Ed Barrell	610-926-2962	hawkman501@yahoo.com	01/02/10
6	Bethlehem-Easton	Northampton	Elaine & Donald Mease	610-346-7754	measede@enter.net	12/26/09
7	Bloomsburg	Columbia	Cathy Haffner	570-271-1244	cdhaffner@yahoo.com	12/20/09
8	Buffalo Creek	Washington	Larry Helgerman		bobolink1@earthlink.net	12/20/09
9	Buffalo Creek Valley	Butler Armstrong	George Reese	724-353-9649	g.reese@gaiconsultants.com	12/19/09
10	Bushy Run S.P.	Westmoreland	Dick Byers	724-593-3543	otusasio@lhtot.com	12/19/09
11	Butler	Butler Lawrence Mercer	Suzanne Butcher	330-759-1945 724-794-3534	sarbird@hotmail.com	12/19/09
12	Central Bucks	Bucks	Diane Allison	610-847-2085	dalliso@mail.ptd.net	12/27/09
13	Chambersburg	Franklin	Joan Bowen	717-264-9493	pischaff@innernet.net	12/19/09
14	Clarion	Clarion	Ruth Schurr		karu@penn.com	12/19/09
15	Clarksville	Greene	Terry Dayton	724-627-9665	tdayton@windstream.net	12/26/09
16	Culp	Blair	Heidi Mullendore	814-695-6807	hmullendore@state.pa.us	
17	Curtin	Dauphin	Scott Bills	717-896-8859	sbills@state.pa.us	12/29/09
18	Dallas Area	Luzerne	Jim Hoyson	570-696-4925 570-371-6581 (w)	birdder@aol.com	12/19/09
19	Dingman's Ferry	Pike	Chris Turn (PEEC)	570-588-6850	birder3@verizon.net	12/20/09
20	DuBois	Clearfield	Marianne Atkinson		marianne5@windstream.net	1/02/10
21	Elverson	Chester	Robert Cook	610-286-9919	dunlin@dejazzd.com	12/27/09
22	Emporium	Cameron	Bob Martin	814-486-1990	bmartin@adelphia.net	12/20/09
23	Erie	Erie	Chuck Gehringer	814-490-4748	chuckg58@hotmail.com	12/19/09
24	Gettysburg	Adams	Art Kennell	717 642-6995	maddogobrien@gmail.com	12/19/09
25	Glenolden	Delaware	David Eberly		david.eberly@gmail.com	12/19/09
26	Hamburg Be	rks Schuylkill	Laurie Goodrich	610-756-6961 570-943-3411 x106	goodrich@hawkmtn.org	12/27/09
27	Harrisburg	Dauphin	Deuane Hoffman	717-564-7475	corvuscorax@comcast.net	12/19/09
28	Huntingdon	Huntingdon	Dave Kyler	814-643-6030	davidkyler@verizon.net	12/20/09
29	Indiana	Indiana	Roger & Margaret Higbee	724-354-3493	bcoriole@windstream.net	12/26/09

30	Johnstown	Cambria	Sally and Tom Dick	814-266-7912	thomasd102@aol.com	
31	Lake Raystown	Huntingdon Blair	Greg Grove	814-667-2305	gwg2@psu.edu	12/27/09
32	Lancaster	Lancaster	Barbara Hunsberger	717-393-4091	phunsberger@comcast.net	01/03/10
33	Lebanon	Lebanon	Fritz Heilman	717-273-0487	volks5@verizon.net	12/19/09
34	Lehigh Valley	Lehigh/Berks	Mark Boyd	610-432-0170	mrboyd@rcn.com	12/19/09
35	Lewisburg	Union, Snyder, Northumberland	Allen Schweinsberg	570-524-0432	aschwein@bucknell.edu	12/19/09
36	Lewistown	Juniata	Elmer Petersheim Chad Kauffman	717-535-5926 717-994-6715	chadkauffman@earthlink.net	12/19/09
37	Linesville	Crawford	Tom Nicolls	814-587-6395	tenicolls@windstream.net	12/20/09
38	Lititz	Lancaster B	ruce Carl	717-859-4179	carls94@ptd.net	
39	Lock Haven-Jersey Shore	Clinton Lycoming	Wayne Laubscher	570-748-7511	wlaubsch@kcnet.org	01/02/10
40	Mansfield - Wellsboro	Tioga	Gary Tyson	570-724-5789	_gnats3@ptd.net	12/19/09
41	New Bloomfield	Perry	Ramsay Koury	717-761-1871	rkoury123@aol.com	12/26/09
42	Newville	Cumberland	Bill and Linda Franz	717-776-4463	wlf Franz1@yahoo.com	01/02/10
43	Northern Lycoming	Lycoming	Dave Ferry	570-323-1590	dferry@wasd.org	01/03/10
44	Pennypack Valley	Philadelphia	Peter Kurtz	215-342-3638 215-685-0470	peter.kurtz@phila.gov	12/19/09
45	Philipsburg	Centre Clearfield	Greg Kojadinovich	814-237-5964	ninthstreet1@yahoo.com	12/26/09
46	Pittsburgh	Allegheny	Jim Valimont	412-828-5338	valimont49@comcast.net	12/26/09
47	Pittsburgh South Hills	Allegheny Washington	Nancy Page	412-221-4795		12/19/09
48	Pleasantville	Venango	Russ States	814-676-6320	pabirder@verizon.net	1/03/10
49	Pocono Mt.	Monroe	Brian Hardiman		bhmccd@ptd.net	12/20/09
50	Potter County	Potter	Dave Hauber	814-274-8946	haubers3@penn.com	01/03/10
51	Reading B	erks	Ken Lebo	610-856-1413	klebo@dejazzd.com	12/20/09
52	Rector	Westmoreland	Len and Linda Hess	724-771-5133	lnlhess@lhtot.com	1/02/10
53	Ryerson	Greene	Marjorie Howard	724-852-3155	birdwatcher@windstream.net	12/19/09
54	Scranton	Lackawanna	Paul Mundy		Pmraptors@aol.com	12/19/09
55	Southeastern Bradford	Bradford	Trudy Gerlach	570-746-9270	tgswoods@epix.net	12/26/09
56	Southern Bucks	Bucks	Robert Mercer	215-785-1177	ramercer@co.bucks.pa.us	12/19/09
57	Southern Lancaster County	Lancaster	Bob Schutsky	717-548-3303 (10 a.m. to 9 p.m.)	info@birdtreks.com	12/20/09
58	State College	Centre	Jim Dunn Bob Fowles	814-863-8625 814-238-1990	jwd6@psu.edu rbbf@psu.edu	12/20/09
59	Thompson	Susquehanna	Stuart Slocum			
60	Tunkhannock	Wyoming	Rick Koval	570-829-4381 570-696-1691 (w)	koval@nblt.org 12/19/	09

61	Upper Bucks	Bucks Montgomery Lehigh	Bill Etter	215-964-3613	billetter01@gmail.com	12/20/09
62	Warren	Warren	Michael Toole	814-723-4714	m t toole@verizon.net	12/19/09
63	Washington	Washington	Tom Contreras		tcontreras@washjeff.edu	12/19/09
64	West Chester	Chester	Barry Blust	610-458-5616	BarryBlust@comcast.net	12/19/09
65	Western Chester	Chester	Larry Lewis	484-340-7672	earlybirdtours@comcast.net	1/03/10
66	Western Schuylkill	Schuylkill	Dave Krueel	570-622-3704	accip@infionline.net	12/19/09
67	White Mills	Wayne	Voni Strasser	570-226-1460		
68	Wild Creek– Little Gap	Carbon Monroe	Joshua Nemeth Dustin Welch	610-753-8577	allroy1313@rcn.com	12/20/09
69	Williamsport	Lycoming	Dave Ferry	570-323-1590	dferry@wasd.org	12/19/09
70	Wyncote	Montgomery	Andy Fayer		AndyFayer@aol.com	12/19/09
71	York	York	Bill DelGrande	717-854-6728	Yorkies17403@yahoo.com	12/19/09

New Young Birders Club Active in Pennsylvania

by Rob Blye

The Board of Directors of PSO recently became aware of a new birding organization in Pennsylvania. The PA Young Birders Club (PA YBC) is a non-profit organization in the process of getting its 501c(3) designation. This designation will qualify it as a federal non-profit to which one can donate and receive a federal tax deduction.

The PA YBC website features this information prominently:

“No Kids Left Indoors....

This title is taken from the book by Jane Kirkland, author of the Take A Walk series of books. Visit her site at TakeAWalk.com for more information.

The title is appropriate as this is our desire – to get all the kids outside, away from the video games, to explore, enjoy, and reconnect with nature.

Although birds will be our focus, we will never ignore bugs, butterflies, dragonflies, flowers, trees, mushrooms... whatever piece of nature that piques the interest of those who have joined our group!”

What a great idea! Kevin Loughlin, who owns Wildside Nature Tours, started PA YBC to encourage birding and other nature related outdoor activities for young people in Pennsylvania and adjacent states in the Delaware Valley area. In 2007 Kevin purchased the PaYoungBirders.org,

.net, and .com domain names with the hope of getting things off the ground. The final push came from Kim and Kenn Kaufman’s invitation to participate in the Ohio Young Birders Conference in November 2008. Inspirational! The first official meeting of the PA Young Birders Club was held appropriately at the Mill Grove Audubon Sanctuary in Audubon, Pennsylvania, on March 21, 2009.

I wish I would have had the opportunity to join PA YBC when I was a fledgling (pardon the pun) birdwatcher in the mid 1950s. When I started, the popular use of the term “birding” had not been coined, but I did have the benefit of a mentor. However, my birding was on her schedule and without the benefit of interacting with other people my age and with similar skill level.

I was very lucky to have been introduced to bird watching and nature study by my Great Aunt Marion. She was a prototypical “little old lady in tennis shoes” except she was not that old (about my age now), and she certainly was not little. Aunt Marion, a Philadelphia socialite who moved to a gentleman’s farm in Paoli, PA, after she married, was the mother of three grown children in the mid 1950s. I had become interested in nature at an early age, and my great aunt was looking for a birding companion after her children were out of the house. I was given a copy of Peterson’s *Field Guide to the Birds*, and I borrowed my father’s binoculars. My aunt would pick me up at my parents’ house in Exton, and we would drive in her big Ford station wagon to Tinicum, now known as Heinz National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Hawk Mountain (before the crowds had become so evident), Brigantine (now Forsythe NWR) and the Pine Barrens in New Jersey. We were quite a pair, a 6-foot tall 60-year old woman in a cotton house dress and “tennis shoes” and a 6-year-old

little boy birding the great sites in southeastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

These early experiences afforded me exposure to places that I would never have visited, people whom I would have never met, and birds and nature experiences that I would never have had until much later in life, if ever.

The PA Young Birders Club offers similar opportunities to young people from age 8-18 today. PSO has placed a link on our website to the PA YBC and we are actively looking for volunteers to get involved by:

- mentioning the new club in newsletters and other media
- helping to lead a field trip
- having a go-to representative from the PSO so that there is a clear communication channel

If you or someone you know wants to learn more about the PA Young Birders Club contact :

PA Young Birders
610-564-0941
info@PaYoungBirders.org
www.PaYoungBirders.org

PSO T-Shirts and Hats Available

Short-sleeved PSO T-shirts are now available in light blue, pale green, and yellow. A few cream colored shirts are still available, but those are being phased out. Please check the www.pabirds.org website for availability. Cost, including handling and shipping, is \$19.50 each for these 50% cotton, 50% polyester shirts.

In addition, we have long-sleeved light blue T-shirts, which are 100 percent cotton, available for \$23, including handling and shipping.

Each shirt bears the PSO emblem on the front. Across the back is an outline of our state with the Pileated Woodpecker, complete with red crest, emblazoned across it. Above in bold letters is "Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology."

Beige PSO hats with forest green bills are also for sale for \$23 each. Our emblem is centered on the front with "Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology" curved around it.

These shirts and hats make great Christmas presents. To order, go to our website, www.pabirds.org and click on "PSO Sales."

Conservation Corner

In the summer issue of *Fish & Wildlife News*, PSO members may be interested in the articles on migratory birds. Included in the News are articles on "How Our Birds Are Faring" and "Monitoring Waterfowl Populations" as well as other articles that may be of interest. The complete News may be downloaded from http://www.fws.gov/news/pdf/News_Su09_web.pdf.

And good news on federal funding for wildlife was issued by the National Audubon Society. In a report issued by National Audubon, fiscal year 2010 will be a good year for federal funding of conservation priorities. The National Wildlife Refuge system is scheduled to receive \$503 million for operations and maintenance which is up from \$463 million in 2009. Other programs receiving increases include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Management program (\$31 plus million), coastal Louisiana restoration projects (\$24 million plus) and Long Island restoration (\$7 million).

Also, several land requests by Audubon groups were approved including: Connecticut – Steward B. McKinney NWR - \$2 million; Texas – San Bernard NWR - \$1.23 million; New Mexico – Sevilleta NWR – \$0.5 million; and South Carolina – Waccamaw NWR – \$0.6 million.

Audubon has also issued a report on birds and climate change. This report states that nearly 60% of the 305 species found in North America in winter are shifting their ranges northward by an average of 35 miles. Audubon scientists analyzed 40 years of citizen-science Christmas Bird Count data, and they concluded that climate change is having a serious impact on natural systems. The complete report can be accessed at <http://birdsandclimate.audubon.org>.

– Mark Henry



Purple Finch is just one of the birds that has not gone as far south in the past 40 years, resulting in a northward movement of more than 433 miles.

Photo by Bob Moul

Don't Let the Winter Doldrums Get You Down!

Yes, winter is rapidly approaching and the amount of sunlight to which we're exposed is decreasing. But that's not a reason to stop birding. There's a lot to do in winter. If you've never participated in a Christmas Bird Count, this is the year to do it. Check pages 6-8 of this newsletter for a count near you. And why do just one? Most compilers are very happy to welcome new participants.

So you want to stay at home? Project FeederWatch runs from November 14 through April 9. It's easy. First you look out your windows and pick your count site. Your site should be an area with bird feeders that is convenient to observe, such as a backyard outside your kitchen or dining room window. Select an area as large as you can consistently observe from week to week. Be sure you can see the entire area from one location. Choose obvious boundaries, such as the border of your yard or an area within a courtyard. Then you count the birds and submit your data. It's easy to sign up; you may do so on line at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/> or by calling 800-843-2473 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Cost of participation is \$15.

If you want to be outside driving around, the Winter Raptor Survey is for you. The tenth annual Pennsylvania Winter Raptor Survey (WRS) will be conducted from January 14 through February 11, 2010. Winter Raptor Surveys are done from a vehicle along a route designed by the participants. In counties with previously established routes, new participants should either join an established route or coordinate with the established counters *to ensure that new routes do not overlap established routes*. Routes should be in open country as much as possible and should be designed with safety in mind. If you wish to participate for the first time or just get more information, contact Greg Grove via e-mail at gwg2@psu.edu.

Then there's the Great Backyard Bird Count scheduled for February 12 through the 15th. Participants in this free event will join tens of thousands of volunteers of all levels of birding experience to count birds in their own backyards, local parks, or wildlife refuges. Each checklist submitted by these "citizen scientists" helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about the status of the birds and how to protect them. Last year, participants turned in more than 93,600 checklists online, creating the continent's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded. See the adjacent article for more details.

So, don't stop birding just because it's cold outside. There's a lot to do, and your data is important. And while you're watching all those chickadees and titmice, a rarity just might surprise you. Good birding!

– Margaret Higbee

Take a Mid-Winter Nature Break with the Great Backyard Bird Count February 12-15, 2010

Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. Birds may be counted in your own backyard, local park, or wildlife refuge.

"The GBBC is a perfect first step towards the sort of intensive monitoring needed to discover how birds are responding to environmental change," said Janis Dickinson, the director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab. "Winter is such a vulnerable period for birds, so winter bird distributions are likely to be very sensitive to change. There is only one way—citizen science—to gather data on private lands where people live and do this across the continent over many years. GBBC has enormous potential both as an early warning system and in capturing and engaging people in more intensive sampling of birds across the landscape."

Populations are always shifting and changing. For example, 2009 GBBC data highlighted a huge southern invasion of Pine Siskins across much of the eastern United States. Participants counted 279,469 Pine Siskins on 18,528 checklists, as compared to the previous high of 38,977 birds on 4,069 checklists in 2005. Failure of seed crops farther north caused the siskins to move south to find their favorite food. What birds will be counted this year?

More information is available at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>.



GBBC data highlighted a huge southern invasion of Pine Siskins across much of the eastern US.

Photo by Steve Gosser

Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology Annual Meeting Scholarship Program

In order to foster an interest in, and appreciation for birding and ornithology in Pennsylvania, each year the PSO will provide a scholarship for a person 18 years of age or younger OR an undergraduate college student who wishes to attend the PSO annual meeting. (You may not nominate someone without his/her knowledge or permission)

- ★ The person must be nominated by a current PSO member.
- ★ If the nominee is younger than 18, the nominating PSO member must be attending the meeting and must be responsible for transportation to/from the meeting and must be responsible for the youth during the meeting (see below) if a parent/guardian is not accompanying the youth.
- ★ The youth's parent/guardian must sign below giving the youth permission to attend the PSO meeting with the sponsor.
- ★ PSO will pay the recipient's meeting registration, food (banquet, lunch, 2 breakfasts), and lodging (up to 2 nights), and transportation costs incurred by the recipient.

In order to complete your nomination, please send this form to Shonah A. Hunter (shunter@lhup.edu), or by land mail to: Dr. Shonah A. Hunter, Department of Biological Sciences, Lock Haven University, Lock Haven, PA 17745 by April 15, 2009. Selection will be conducted by a committee.

Name of Nominee: _____

Address: _____

Age _____ Birth Date _____ Nominee's Phone No. _____

Email address: _____

If a college Undergraduate student, College Attending: _____

Nominee's Involvement with Birding (Please describe, providing as many details as possible. Attach a page, if necessary)

Name of nominating PSO Member: _____ Phone No. _____

Email address: _____ Relationship (if any) to Nominee _____

If the nominee is younger than 18, the nominating PSO member must sign the following statement: In nominating this youth, I understand that I will be responsible for the youth at the annual meeting and for his/her transportation to and from the meeting.

(Signature) (Date)

If the nominee is younger than 18, the parent/guardian must sign the following statement: In allowing my child to be nominated, I understand that PSO is providing the scholarship for my child to attend the annual meeting. The person nominating my child has my permission to transport him/her to and from the meeting and to be responsible for her/him during the annual meeting.

(Signature of Parent/Guardian) (Date)

Pennsylvania Bird Lists Report Form for 2009

Report Totals as of 31 December 2009
Send by 20 January 2010 to:

 Name (Please print)

 Address

 City State ZIP

Peter Robinson pabirder@hotmail.com
 P. O. Box 482
 Hanover, PA 17331

PLEASE include *only* those species included in the Official List of the Birds of PA (see www.pabirds.org) or *The Birds of Pennsylvania* (McWilliams & Brauning), unless you are *very* certain of the bird's ID, and *very* confident that the bird is a wild one, not an escapee. Do not include Black Swan, Mandarin Duck, European Goldfinch, etc. If you can, please send only the numbers that are new or have changed from last year. There is no need to submit any numbers that are the same as last year

PA Life List _____ **PA Life List Unassisted** _____ (Species found on your own. Not "chased" birds.)

PA 2009 Annual List _____ **Highest PA Annual List** _____ **Year** _____

Total Ticks _____ (Total for all life lists for all counties. Blue Jay in all 67 counties = 67 ticks.)

County Life Lists (100 species or more)

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Adams _____ | Delaware _____ | Monroe _____ |
| Allegheny _____ | Elk _____ | Montgomery _____ |
| Armstrong _____ | Erie _____ | Montour _____ |
| Beaver _____ | Fayette _____ | Northampton _____ |
| Bedford _____ | Forest _____ | Northumberland _____ |
| Berks _____ | Franklin _____ | Perry _____ |
| Blair _____ | Fulton _____ | Philadelphia _____ |
| Bradford _____ | Greene _____ | Pike _____ |
| Bucks _____ | Huntingdon _____ | Potter _____ |
| Butler _____ | Indiana _____ | Schuylkill _____ |
| Cambria _____ | Jefferson _____ | Snyder _____ |
| Cameron _____ | Juniata _____ | Somerset _____ |
| Carbon _____ | Lackawanna _____ | Sullivan _____ |
| Centre _____ | Lancaster _____ | Susquehanna _____ |
| Chester _____ | Lawrence _____ | Tioga _____ |
| Clarion _____ | Lebanon _____ | Union _____ |
| Clearfield _____ | Lehigh _____ | Venango _____ |
| Clinton _____ | Luzerne _____ | Warren _____ |
| Columbia _____ | Lycoming _____ | Washington _____ |
| Crawford _____ | McKean _____ | Wayne _____ |
| Cumberland _____ | Mercer _____ | Westmoreland _____ |
| Dauphin _____ | Mifflin _____ | Wyoming _____ |
| | | York _____ |

County Annual Lists _____ _____
 _____ _____ _____

PSO Newsletter

This newsletter is published four times a year by the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology. To renew your membership, send your check made payable to "PSO" to:

Membership Categories:

PSO	Individual	\$ 28.50
2469 Hammertown Road	Family	\$ 32.50
Narvon, PA 17555-9730	Sustaining	\$ 42.50

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Geoff Malosh – PSO Editor pomarine@earthlink.net
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Carmen Santasania – ctsantasania@comcast.net
Jack Solomon – snaggle719@yahoo.com
Linda Wagner – lwagner342@msn.com

Answers to Bird Quiz

(page 2)

1. *Numenius*, the curlews, named for their thin, crescent-shaped bills.
2. Dark-morph Rough-legged Hawk, *Buteo lagopus*, which we don't associate primarily with rivers today. The quotation is from Turnbull's *The Birds of East Pennsylvania and New Jersey*.
3. Le Conte's. (Nelson's central crown is gray.)
4. Based on preliminary results, Kentucky is listed in 29% fewer blocks and Cerulean is listed in 7% fewer.
5. Least Flycatcher first, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher last.

Electronic Newsletter Available

If you prefer to receive the electronic version rather than the printed newsletter, please e-mail Frank Haas at fchaas@pabirds.org.

Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

c/o R. V. Higbee
3119 Creekside Road
Indiana, PA 15701-7934

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