

PSO Newsletter



The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

December 1997

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'TIS THE SEASON!

December is now underway, and the season for winter birding has just begun. The waterfowl migration is tapering off, and trip lists are no longer two-page affairs. Dark-eyed Juncos and American Tree Sparrows have arrived in numbers. Already reports of White-winged Crossbills, Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks have enticed birders out into the field. Congregating in cornfields and other manured fields with the Horned Larks are Snow Buntings and a few Lapland Longspurs. 'Tis the season!

Winter birding can be boring, but it doesn't have to be that way. Add some spice to the holiday season by taking part in a Christmas bird count.

This year marks the 98th year for the Christmas Bird Count. The count period runs from Friday, December 19, 1997, through Sunday, January 4, 1998. We would like to encourage all our members to take part in at least one count. To help facilitate this goal, we are publishing a list of counts being held in Pennsylvania. This list follows on page 2 of this newsletter.

What better way to end the year than with an entire day in the field. Or even better--begin the new year with a Christmas bird count. Get a good start on your 1998 list.

Good birding!

Bird Related Web Sites

Those of you who have access to the internet might be interested to visit a few of the web sites listed below. More will be listed in your next newsletter.

African Bird Club

<http://www.netlink.co.uk/users/aw/abchome.html>

American Ornithologists' Union

<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/AOU/>

Association of Field Ornithologists

<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/AFO/>

Backyard Birding page

<http://www.bcpl.lib.md.us/~tross/by/backyard.html>

Bjoenness, Tor Ivar homepage and links

<http://home.sol.no/tibjonn/>

Baltimore Bird Club

<http://www.bcpl.lib.md.us/~tross/baltbird.html>

Banff National Park, Alberta

<http://www.worldweb.com/ParksCanada-Banff/birding.html>

Bird identification page--Patuxent

<http://www.mbr.nbs.gov>

Bird On! European birds

<http://birdcare.com/birdon/>

Birds of North America (Academy of Natural Sciences)

<http://www.acnatsci.org/bna>

Birdnet

<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET>

Bluebird Box

<http://users.aol.com/jimmcl/index.html>

Breeding Bird Survey (National Biological Survey)

<http://www.mbr.nbs.gov/bbs/bbs.html>

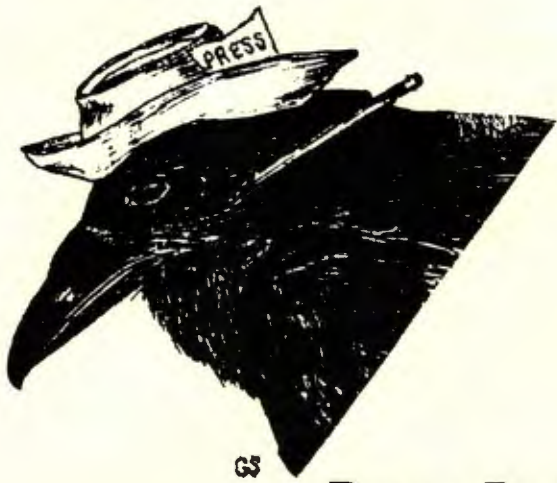
(continued on page 5)

Christmas Bird Counts

<i>Name of Count</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Compiler</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>	<i>Date</i>
Audubon	Montgomery	*Tony Fernandes		
Bald Eagle S.P.	Centre	Gene Zielinski	814-353-8212	1/1/98
		Harry Henderson	814-867-0733	
Beaver	Beaver	John Cruzan	412-846-5342	12/20
Bedford Co.	Bedford	*Janet Shaffer	814-356-3553	
Bethlehem/Easton	Northampton	Elaine Mease	610-346-7754	12/27
Bernville	Berks	Ed Barrell	610-926-2962	1/3/98
Bloomsburg	Columbia	Bob Sagar	717-925-6461	12/21
Buffalo Creek Valley	Butler	George Reese	412-353-9649 (h) 412-856-6400 (w)	12/20
Bushy Run S.P.	Westmoreland	Dick Byers	412-327-6189	12/27
Butler	Butler	Suzanne Butcher	330-759-1945 sarbie@msn.com	12/20
Central Bucks Co.	Bucks	Ken Kitson	610-847-2968	
Chambersburg	Franklin	*Edith Lindsell		
Clarion	Clarion	Margaret Buckwalter	814-782-3925 buckwalter@mail.clarion.edu	12/27
Clarksville	Greene	Ralph Bell	412-883-4505	12/27
Culp	Blair	Bill King	814-942-7673	12/27
Curtin	Dauphin	Scott Bills	800-228-0791	12/29
		Deuane Hoffman	717-564-7475	
Dallas Area	Luzerne	Ed Johnson	717-675-3376	12/20
Dingman's Ferry	Pike	*Kate R. Monahan		
DuBois	Clearfield	*Marianne Atkinson		
Elverson	Chester	Bob Cook	610-286-9919	12/27
Emporium	Cameron	*Bob Martin	814-486-1990	
Erie	Erie	Joan Howlett	814-734-1765	1/3
Gettysburg	Adams	Art Kennell	717-642-6995	12/27
Glenolden	Delaware	Skip Conant	610-544-0871	12/20
Hamburg	Berks	Laurie Goodrich	610-756-6961	12/28
Harrisburg	Dauphin	*Bill Tripp		
Huntingdon	Huntingdon	Dave Kyler	814-643-6030	12/21
Indiana	Indiana	Roger & Margaret Higbee	412-354-3493 bcoriole@twd.net	12/26
Johnstown	Cambria	Tom Dick	814-266-6412	1/4/98
Lake Raystown	Huntingdon	Greg Grove	814-667-2305	1/1/98
Lancaster	Lancaster	Ed Pederson	717-284-4502	12/27
Lebanon Co.	Lebanon	*Fritz Heilman		
Lehigh Valley	Lehigh	Dennis Miller	610-759-7514	12/20
Lewisburg	Union	Dick Nickolson		12/21

Lewistown	Mifflin	*Linda Whitesel		
Linesville	Crawford	Ron Harrell	814-337-5445	12/28
Lititz	Lancaster	Bruce Carl	717-859-4179	12/28
Lock Haven/Jersey Shore	Clinton	*Wayne Laubscher		
Mansfield	Tioga	Bob Ross	717-376-5394	12/20
			rossr@epix.net	
Mount Davis	Somerset	John Tilley	814-662-4372	12/21
			814-662-4005 (w)	
			thetilleys@gcnet.net	
New Bloomfield	Perry	Ramsay Koury	717-761-1871	12/27
Newville	Cumberland	Don Henise	717-776-6550	1/3/98
			deheni@ark.ship.edu	
Pennypack Valley	Philadelphia	*Peter Kurtz		
Pittsburgh	Allegheny	Jim Valimont	412-828-5338	12/27
			jvalimont@ppg.com	
Pleasantville	Venango	Russ States	814-676-6320	1/4/98
			russs@csonline.net	
Pocono Mt.	Monroe	Chris Turn	717-588-6850	12/21
			birder@postoffice.ptd.net	
Raccoon Creek S.P.	Beaver	Bill Smith	412-375-9613	12/30
Reading	Berks	Bill Uhrich	610-373-8109	12/21
Rector	Westmoreland	Bob Mulvihill	412-593-7521	1/4/98
Scranton	Lackawanna	Rosann Bongey	717-698-8266	12/27
Southeastern Bradford Co.	Bradford	Bill Reid	717-836-2734	12/27
Southern Bucks Co.	Bucks	Robert Mercer	215-785-1177	12/20
Southern Lancaster Co.	Lancaster	Bob Schutsky	717-548-3303	12/21
			FAX 717-548-3327	
			birdtrek@epix.net	
State College	Centre	John Peplinski	814-238-6541	12/21
Susquehanna Co.	Susquehanna	Jerry Skinner	717-278-3384	1/3/98
			jskinner@epix.net	
Thompson	Susquehanna	*Katherine Cameron		
Tunkhannock	Wyoming	Rick Koval	717-829-4381	12/21
Upper Bucks Co.	Bucks	Hart Rufe	215-348-6709	12/21
Warren	Warren	*Michael Toole		
Washington	Washington	Roy Ickes	412-223-6118	12/20
West Chester	Chester	Barry Blust	610-458-5616	12/20
White Mills	Wayne	Voni Strasser	717-226-1460	12/20
			FAX 717-226-9856	
			sawwhet@ptd.net	
Wild Creek/Little Gap	Carbon/Monroe	Joel Silfies	610-826-3817	12/21
Williamsport	Lycoming	Mark Cline	717-323-4008	12/21
Wyncote	Montgomery	Martin Selzer	215-233-9090	12/20
York	York	*Bill DelGrande		

*Compiler of the indicated count in 1996; no current information concerning this year's count.



Raven Reporter

News of the Special Areas Project

Celebrate the New Year with a Field Trip

Don't be a couch potato; get out of the house and do some birding on New Year's Day. Sure, I know there's a football game or two on TV. But you can't start your year's list or add to your SAP list by sitting around watching somebody else play football.

Think of all the calories you can lose, or at least avoid gaining, by taking a walk in the woods and looking at a few birds.

Of course, a visit to your favorite SAP would help the project, add some winter birds, and help get the year off to a feathery start. You don't absolutely have to start at the break of dawn. (Yes, I know you are tired and have a bit of a headache.) Wintertime birding can be good even in afternoons.

On New Year's Day I have watched ravens perform their acrobatic courtship flights and listened to crossbills crunch hemlock seeds. Find some blooming witch-hazel or fox tracks on the first day of the year.

Want to start the New Year off on a good foot? Go birding.

Let's see how many species we can get in our SAPs on New Year's Day. Please report your results to Doug for a total SAP New Year's Day list.

Be Careful Out There . . . with Your Bird Reports

The integrity of the Special Areas Project data can only be as strong as its weakest link. It is very important to be careful about the quality of information that enters the SAP database and our common bird records. Therefore, it is always good to be careful about identifications. When you submit your reports, please resist the temptation to include birds that have not been positively identified.

From the start of the project, SAP has intended to maintain the same standards as PORC. This is a challenging task because it is only too easy to misidentify birds. Our eagerness to find rare birds and earn a reputation as a top-notch birder can sometimes affect what birds we report. Please resist the temptation to be a rare bird warrior and get others involved with verifying unusual sightings--the sooner, the better.

If you think you have found a rare species, it is a good policy to contact an experienced birder, perhaps the *Pennsylvania Birds* county editor, as soon as possible to verify the bird's identity. Do it the same day while there is light for bird finding. A second pair of eyes and ears can verify your report. It might seal a great bird sighting.

Twelve Months of Birding in Each SAP

The Special Areas Project takes a long view of the bird occupancy throughout the year. Other projects have a narrow focus on one day of the migratory or the breeding seasons.

By doing a little bit each season, SAP volunteers can get a well-rounded list of birds. It is amazing how many species can be accumulated by just being there on a regular basis. A visit each month is my personal goal for my SAPs in 1998. Who knows what will fly over.

Bad Weather: Good Birds

It's an old birding adage. Bad weather makes good birding. Storms can fling winged creatures many miles off their usual paths. Recent

storms have brought some rarities to the state. Some intrepid birders got out in the wind and rain to check out the possibilities. Odd loons and strange sandpipers have delighted dozens of birders as a result. Of course, it helps to keep an open mind about what species might show up in the Keystone state.

Lately, we received reports of scoters at Marsh Creek State Park. This lake does not have a great reputation for sea ducks, but a coastal storm blew a few inland. Thanks to SAP volunteers, Skip Conant, Rob Megraw, and John Ginaven, more ducks and other water birds (Eared Grebe) have been added to the site list.

I have my parka, skis, and snowshoes ready. Storms can come from any direction and bring in all kinds of birds.

Please send SAP data to Douglas A. Gross, SAP Coordinator, Ecology III, R. R. 1, Box 1795, Berwick, PA 18603.

Web Sites

(continued from page 1)

Brookline Bird Club (Massachusetts)

<http://world.std.com/~jane/bbc.html>

Cape Cod, MA birding info

<http://www.capecodconnection.com/capecod/ccbirds.htm>

Central Park

<http://www.centralpark.org/home.html>

Chicago and Illinois birding information

<http://www.xnet.com/~ugeiser/Birds/Birding.html>

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

<http://www.ornith.cornell.edu/>

Crockette, Don (Virtual Birder plus)

<http://www.grtblue.com/index.html>

Delaware birding (site guide & checklists--also MD and NJ)

<http://www.physics.udel.edu/~barnhill/delloc2.html>

Dick E. Bird News

<http://www.traverse.com/media/dbnews/home.html>

Falcon Project in Montreal (in French)

<http://www.deev.com/falcons/>

Flint Hills Audubon Society (Kansas)

<http://www-personal.ksu.edu/~drintoul/falcon.html>

Houston Audubon Society

<http://www.io.com/~pdhulce/audubon.html>

Internet Flyway (World Birding)

<http://www.netlink.co.uk/users/aw>

Jaramillo, Alvaro home page

<http://www.quake.net/~alvaro/index.html>

Jasper Ridge photos

<http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/1104>

LA Audubon Bookstore Catalog

<http://www.mbi.ucla.edu/people/lesa/laas.html>

Larson, Laurie (compilation of BirdChat reference postings)

<http://pluto.njcc.com/~llarson/>



Jon Dunn to Speak

Noted author Jon Dunn will be speaking to the Todd Bird Club in Indiana, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday, February 3, 1998. Jon, an editorial consultant for *Birding*, served as the chief consultant for the *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* produced by the National Geographic Society. He also co-authored *Birds of Southern California*. His most recent book is *A Field Guide to Warblers*, the newest addition to the Peterson Field Guide series.

The subject will be warblers. Jon will be bringing copies of *Warblers*, for sale that night.

The Todd Bird Club meeting, held at the lodge in Blue Spruce County Park, will begin at 7:30 p.m. Access to Blue Spruce is from Route 110 near the town of Ernest. All PSO members are invited to attend. For further information or directions, contact Roger or Margaret Higbee at 412-354-3493 or e-mail at bcoriole@twd.net.

Annual PSO Meeting

The PSO Board of Directors met recently at State College to continue planning for the 1998 meeting at Mansfield University in Mansfield, PA. The meeting is scheduled for May 15-17, 1998. This year's theme is "Birds of the Northern Tier."

Shonah Hunter has already been busy obtaining prices and planning with the university concerning meals and lodging. One difference this year is that Mansfield does not provide bath linen. Everyone must bring his/her own towels and wash cloths.

Committees have been organized to recruit speakers. The afternoon sessions will once again include a topnotch field identification program.

Field trips will be organized by the local Tiadaghton Audubon Society. Target species will be listed in the next newsletter.

The Earl Poole Award Committee has also been active. Anyone interested in serving on this committee should contact Alan Gregory at 717-788-1425 (home) or 717-455-3636 (work) or e-mail him at meg5@psu.edu.