

# PSO PILEATED



December 2005

*The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology*

Volume 16, Number 4

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK....

*Annual Meeting to be at Powdermill, May 19-21, 2006.*

The officers and board members of PSO met on November 19, 2005, in Boalsburg, Centre County. We welcomed new board members Sandy Lockerman and John Fedak. Our principal topic of discussion was the annual members meeting.

The 2006 meeting will be held May 19-21 in Westmoreland County where our local host organization will be the Powdermill Nature Preserve, celebrating its 50th year of operation in 2006. Activities will be divided between Powdermill and nearby Ligonier and, of course, various field trip locations.

For those who come early, the weekend will begin with one or more Friday field trips. On Friday evening, registration, a brief business meeting, socializing, and field trip sign-ups will be at the Ramada Inn Historic Ligonier. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Ramada for those who wish to lodge there.

As always, Saturday and Sunday mornings will feature field trips led by local birders. Included will be the opportunity to visit the banding operation at Powdermill in the full swing of spring migration.

Saturday afternoon talks will be held at Powdermill's conference facility. In honor of Powdermill's milestone anniversary, one or more presentations will focus on Powdermill's history and contributions to ornithology. The Saturday evening banquet will be back at the Ramada Inn in Ligonier.



President Greg Grove called our recent board meeting to order.

There will be one significant change in the usual schedule. This change is inspired by the fact that we put in a very long day Saturday beginning with the early morning field trip, followed by afternoon talks and finally, the evening banquet. Then, we are up again early Sunday morning for another field trip. Therefore, we decided to "shorten" Saturday a bit by moving our keynote speaker to Saturday afternoon and reduce the total number of talks by one. Saturday evening we will have the banquet as usual along with the reading of the checklist for the day's sightings and the presentation of the Poole and Conservation awards. Then it's off to bed in anticipation of another early rise on Sunday!

In addition to the Ramada Inn, other lodging possibilities include the cabins at Powdermill, camping at Linn Run State Park, and motels and Bed and Breakfast establishments near Ligonier and to the west at Latrobe and perhaps at Greensburg. The Ramada at Ligonier will open its restaurant at 5:30 a.m. both Saturday and Sunday mornings to allow time for a good meal before our field trips.

Registration forms and additional details, including field trip destinations, will be available in the next newsletter.

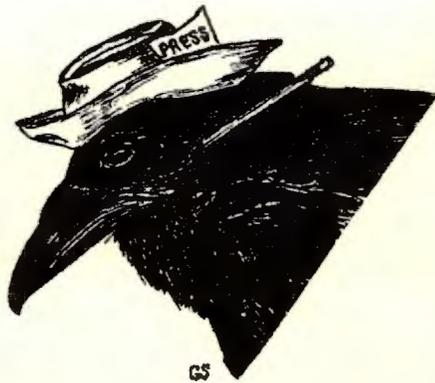
One more bit of business – looking ahead, our 2007 meeting will be held in the Harrisburg area.

I hope to see you in May. In the meantime, good luck and have fun on your various Christmas Bird Counts.

Greg Grove  
PSO President  
gwg2@psu.edu

# The Raven Reporter

## Tales of Discovery from the Special Areas Project



### Special Areas Project Update

Several SAP volunteers now are working on bird checklists for state parks where they have collected bird data. There still are several locations for which we seek cooperators who will help convert bird population data into checklists. For a list of parks in need of checklists, please see the previous version of the Raven Reporter.

It is getting a bit easier to finish this task. The Bureau of State Parks is sending the file template of the checklist so volunteers can fill out the phenograms (the time charts showing bird seasonality). Please let me know if you are interested in making this project a success. By completing these checklists, we will educate many people about the occurrence of birds at these locations, advancing the knowledge and appreciation of birds in Pennsylvania.

### Bald Eagle Recovery Proof of ESA's Effectiveness

We are celebrating the great success in the recovery of the Bald Eagle in Pennsylvania. Thanks to everyone for making the recovery of Bald Eagles possible. At one time, the Bald Eagle was fairly widespread and relatively common in the young Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Until around 1890, the Susquehanna River was a "kingdom" for the Bald Eagle. They nested along our large rivers and in our large wetlands. Its populations were decimated by the "five P's:" persecution, pesticides, pollution, poor food supply, and practically no big habitat. But, as a result of the Bald Eagle Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act, the Bald Eagles went from a persecuted "hopeless cause" to a beacon of hope for Pennsylvania wildlife.

The Endangered Species Act enabled the recovery of the Bald Eagle in Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the continental United States. By putting the Bald Eagle on the Endangered species list, the ESA *enabled and empowered* the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the state's wildlife

agency, to get things going. In a nutshell, the Endangered Species Act:

- Conserves the listed species
- Avoids jeopardization of the species
- Avoids destruction of critical habitat – a critical issue for protecting nests
- Avoids takings of the species or its habitat

The ESA made the recovery of Bald Eagles in Pennsylvania a high priority for PGC. The recovery of the Bald Eagle shows how determination and cooperation can bring back a bird from the brink of regional extirpation. This happened because of great teamwork. If we can do it with Bald Eagles, we can do it with other species.

In early 1980s there were only 2 or 3 Bald Eagle nests in PA, confined to the northwestern Crawford County wetlands. One could say it was a hopeless situation:

- Bald Eagles were very few and very local – really "critically endangered" in our state.
- It seemed like it was a species at the edge of its range, a bad scenario for recovery.
- As a large raptor, it had a bad public image.
- Bald Eagles require large areas for foraging and a good food source, so space and good nesting habitat may be a limitation for successful nests. They need big trees on which to nest and lots of fish for food. That can be hard to find in parts of populated PA.
- Bald Eagles were fairly intolerant of human disturbances at their nests. There are lots of people in Pennsylvania.

However, Bald Eagles had a few things going for them:

- The Bald Eagle is our national symbol, inspiring patriotism.
- Bald Eagles are large, handsome, striking birds that symbolize wilderness for many people, symbols of power and majesty. They're "a little bit of Alaska" in Pennsylvania.
- Many impediments (or limiting factors) were removed – water pollution, pesticides in the environment (DDT and others), low fish populations, the stigma of being a raptor.
- As a result of the removal of some limiting factors (mentioned above), the Bald Eagle already had some positive momentum in the early 70s before ESA implementation. The population already was swinging back after hitting bottom.
- Public support for environmental issues and wildlife was growing. The number of wildlife enthusiasts, birders, and conservationists grew in part because of the work of organizations like Hawk Mountain, Audubon, and various bird clubs.

- Game Commission provided leadership for the species' recovery. There was and is grassroots and upper management support for the program.
- The ESA provided the prioritization of our resources to implement a recovery plan in Pennsylvania.
- The ESA also gave us more power to protect nest sites as eagle *habitat*.
- Due to many issues mentioned above, there's been tremendous cooperation between PGC, other agencies, and organizations with Bald Eagles – PA Fish & Boat Commission, PA DCNR (Bur. of Parks), municipalities, Audubon & bird clubs, hunting clubs, etc.
- Many states enthusiastically began to implement their own recovery plans so the eagle population grew regionally and each state's population contributed to another's.

#### What did we do to bring them back from the brink?

- The PGC obtained funding support from U.S. Fish and Wildlife through ESA Section 6 and from the Richard King Mellon Foundation. The Wild Resource Conservation Fund also provided funding.
- We reintroduced Bald Eagles through a hacking program using birds from Saskatchewan, Canada, and Patuxent Wildlife Refuge. PGC released 88 eaglets mostly at Haldeman Island in the Susquehanna River, and Shohola Falls area of the Poconos in the 1980s. There were experiments in hacking eaglets at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area and Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area.
- We protected both the birds and their nest sites from human interference.
- We educated the public about Bald Eagles through public programs and outreach. Many programs were given by biologists and conservation officers.
- We worked with everyone we could to bring back eagles. Many partnered in this success. Volunteers watch nests and inform officers of crimes.
- We have kept track of nest sites, success, and productivity with a network of observers – Game Commission employees, other agency employees, public utilities, private landowners, and volunteers.

#### How far have we come in Pennsylvania?

- We have experienced a veritable explosion of success. We now have about 95 known nests in Pennsylvania and at least 8 more territorial pairs. New York has about 90 nests; Ohio, about 125 nests; New Jersey, more than 50 nests. These successes feed into each other as eagles are very mobile and adopt good sites in nearby states. It has been a regional and national phenomenon.
- Nests are known for at least 26 counties. Nests are somewhat clustered in the NW wetlands, the lower Susquehanna, and the Pocono Mountains/upper Delaware. Eagles are spreading into gaps where

there is good habitat but no eagle nests. This includes quiet areas around reservoirs and wooded streams in our busy suburbs.

- The nests are producing more than one eaglet per nest.
- There now are pairs occupying territories where we don't know about nests – that probably brings our total nesting population to more than 100 territorial breeding pairs.
- There is widespread public support for Bald Eagle protection. Many actively seek out viewing locations for eagles along our major rivers, lakes, and reservoirs. Wildlife watchers love eagles and flock to see them, especially in winter and migration.
- The Bald Eagle acts as an “umbrella species” for conservation of wetland and riparian forest species. By protecting Bald Eagle nest areas, we are protecting critical habitat for other species not so well known but nevertheless protected.
- The Game Commission is having similar success with its Peregrine Falcon program, returning that handsome and charismatic raptor to the Pennsylvania landscape, including its cities. The public has embraced the peregrine's return thanks to a concerted conservation program by the Game Commission, PA DEP, and many other parties. It is another endangered species flying back into prominence in our state.
- The conservation community is moving toward All Bird Conservation, based on habitat and embracing a diversity of birds, including rare and sensitive species as well as game species. Bald Eagle recovery showed us the great possibilities for success. If we did it with the Bald Eagle, we can do it with other species, too. It would not have happened without the Endangered Species Act and the support and framework for teamwork that it provided.

Thanks to Dan Brauning, Paul Schwalbe, and Joe Kosack for contributing information for this article through PGC manuscripts and publications.

For more information on the PSO Special Areas Project or PGC volunteer bird projects, please contact:

Douglas A. Gross  
Wildlife Biologist, Endangered Bird Specialist, PGC  
Coordinator of the PSO Special Areas Project  
144 Winters Road, Orangeville, PA 17859  
Phone: 570-458-4109 (or 458-4564)  
E-mail: [dogross@state.pa.us](mailto:dogross@state.pa.us) or [dougross@sunlink.net](mailto:dougross@sunlink.net)

Wild beasts and birds are by right not the property merely of people today, but the property of the unborn generations, whose belongings we have no right to squander. — *Theodore Roosevelt*

## Christmas Bird Counts Held in Pennsylvania

<b>Map Key</b>	<b>Name of Count</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Compiler</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>E-mail Address</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Audubon	Montgomery Delaware Chester	Edie Parnum	610-964-8331		
2	Bald Eagle	Centre	Bob Snyder	814-863-6168	<a href="mailto:rhs2@psu.edu">rhs2@psu.edu</a>	1/1/06
3	Beaver	Beaver	Rick Mason	724-847-0909	<a href="mailto:rdmason@ccia.com">rdmason@ccia.com</a>	12/17/05
4	Bedford	Bedford	Janet Shaffer	814-356-3553	<a href="mailto:jgshaffer@yellowbananas.com">jgshaffer@yellowbananas.com</a>	12/17/05
5	Bernville	Berks	Ed Barrell	610-926-2962		1/1/06
6	Bethlehem-Easton	Northampton	Elaine and Donald Mease	610-346-7754	<a href="mailto:measede@enter.net">measede@enter.net</a>	12/31/05
7	Bloomsburg	Columbia	Diana McFadden	570-784-8035		12/18/05
8	Buffalo Creek Valley	Butler Armstrong	George Reese	724-353-9649		
9	Bushy Run S.P.	Westmoreland	Dick Byers	724-593-3543	<a href="mailto:otusasio@lhct.net">otusasio@lhct.net</a>	1/1/06
10	Butler	Butler Lawrence Mercer	Suzanne Butcher	330-759-1945 724-794-3534	<a href="mailto:sarbird@hotmail.com">sarbird@hotmail.com</a>	12/17/05
11	Central Bucks	Bucks	Diane Allison	610-847-2085	<a href="mailto:dalliso@mail.ptd.net">dalliso@mail.ptd.net</a>	1/1/06
12	Chambersburg	Franklin	Joan Bowen	717-264-9493	<a href="mailto:pjschaff@innernet.net">pjschaff@innernet.net</a>	12/17/05
13	Clarion	Clarion	Margaret Buckwalter	814-782-3925	<a href="mailto:buckwalter01@alltel.net">buckwalter01@alltel.net</a>	12/17/05
14	Clarksville	Greene	Terry Dayton	724-627-9665	<a href="mailto:tdayton@alltel.net">tdayton@alltel.net</a>	12/26/05
15	Culp	Blair	Heidi Boyle	814-949-9302	<a href="mailto:hboyle@state.pa.us">hboyle@state.pa.us</a>	12/17/05
16	Curtin	Dauphin	Scott Bills	717-896-8859	<a href="mailto:sbills@state.pa.us">sbills@state.pa.us</a>	12/28/05
17	Dallas Area	Luzerne	Jim Hoyson	570-696-4925 570-696-4483 (w)	<a href="mailto:birdder@aol.com">birdder@aol.com</a>	12/17/05
18	Dingman's Ferry	Pike	Mike Brubaker Patrick Scheuer	570-828-2319	<a href="mailto:mikebru@ptd.net">mikebru@ptd.net</a>	12/18/05
19	DuBois	Clearfield	Harold Webster	814-375-0709	<a href="mailto:webs@adelphia.net">webs@adelphia.net</a>	
20	Elverson	Chester	Robert Cook	610-286-9919		12/26/05
21	Emporium	Cameron	Bob Martin	814-486-1990	<a href="mailto:bmartin@adelphia.net">bmartin@adelphia.net</a>	
22	Erie	Erie	Chuck Gehringer	814-746-6299	<a href="mailto:chuckg58@hotmail.com">chuckg58@hotmail.com</a>	12/17/05
23	Gettysburg	Adams	Art Kennell Russell Ryan	717 642-6995 717-334-5171		12/17/05
24	Glenolden	Delaware	Nick Pulcinella	610-583-3201	<a href="mailto:nickpulcinella@comcast.net">nickpulcinella@comcast.net</a>	12/17/05
25	Hamburg	Berks Schuylkill	Laurie Goodrich	610-756-6961 570-943-3411 x106	<a href="mailto:goodrich@hawkmtn.org">goodrich@hawkmtn.org</a>	1/02/06
26	Harrisburg	Dauphin	Deuane Hoffinan	717-564-7475	<a href="mailto:corvuscorax@comcast.net">corvuscorax@comcast.net</a>	12/17/05
27	Huntingdon	Huntingdon	Dave Kyler	814-643-6030	<a href="mailto:davidkyler@pennswoods.net">davidkyler@pennswoods.net</a>	12/18/05
28	Indiana	Indiana	Roger & Margaret Higbee	724-354-3493	<a href="mailto:bcoriole@alltel.net">bcoriole@alltel.net</a>	12/26/05

29	Johnstown	Cambria	Tom Dick	814-266-7912	<a href="mailto:thomasd@aol.com">thomasd@aol.com</a>	12/18/05
30	Lake Raystown	Huntingdon Blair	Greg Grove Dave Kyler	814-667-2305 814-643-6030	<a href="mailto:gwg2@psu.edu">gwg2@psu.edu</a> <a href="mailto:avidkyler@pennswoods.net">avidkyler@pennswoods.net</a>	12/26/05
31	Lancaster	Lancaster	Chris Pederson	717-295-2607	<a href="mailto:pederson@epix.net">pederson@epix.net</a>	12/17/05
32	Lebanon	Lebanon	Fritz Heilman	717-273-0487	<a href="mailto:ftl1vw@aol.com">ftl1vw@aol.com</a>	12/18/05
33	Lehigh Valley	Lehigh/Berks	Mark Boyd	610-432-0170	<a href="mailto:mrboyd@rcn.com">mrboyd@rcn.com</a>	12/17/05
34	Lewisburg	Union Northumber- land	Richard Nickelsen	570-524-9833	<a href="mailto:nickelsn@bucknell.edu">nickelsn@bucknell.edu</a>	12/18/05
35	Lewistown	Juniata	Linda Whitesel	717-436-8048	<a href="mailto:lkwhitesel@acsworld.com">lkwhitesel@acsworld.com</a>	12/17/05
36	Linesville	Crawford	Ronald Harrell	814-332-5344 (w) 814-337-5445	<a href="mailto:rharrell@allegheny.edu">rharrell@allegheny.edu</a>	12/18/05
37	Lititz	Lancaster	Bruce Carl	717-859-4179	<a href="mailto:carls@dejazzd.com">carls@dejazzd.com</a>	1/1/06
38	Lock Haven-Jersey Shore	Clinton Lycoming	Wayne Laubscher	570-748-7511	<a href="mailto:wlaubsch@cup.kcnet.org">wlaubsch@cup.kcnet.org</a>	12/17/05
39	Mansfield	Tioga	Robert Ross	570-376-5394 570-724-3322 x239	<a href="mailto:rossr@usgs.gov">rossr@usgs.gov</a>	12/17/05
40	New Bloomfield	Perry	Ramsay Koury	717-761-1871	<a href="mailto:rkoury123@aol.com">rkoury123@aol.com</a>	12/26/05
41	Newville	Cumberland	Bill and Linda Franz	717-776-4463	<a href="mailto:wlf Franz@earthlink.net">wlf Franz@earthlink.net</a>	1/02/06
42	Pennypack Valley	Philadelphia	Peter Kurtz	215-342-3638 215-685-0470		12/17/05
43	Pittsburgh	Allegheny	Jim Valimont	412-828-5338	<a href="mailto:valimont@verizon.net">valimont@verizon.net</a>	12/31/05
44	Pittsburgh South Hills	Allegheny Washington	Bill Judd	412-571-2057	<a href="mailto:wmrjudd@earthlink.net">wmrjudd@earthlink.net</a>	12/17/05
45	Pleasantville	Venango	Russ States	814-676-6320	<a href="mailto:russs@csonline.net">russs@csonline.net</a>	1/1/06
46	Pocono Mt.	Monroe	Chris Turn		<a href="mailto:birder@ptd.net">birder@ptd.net</a>	12/18/05
47	Potter County	Potter	Dave Hauber	814-274-8946	<a href="mailto:haubers3@penn.com">haubers3@penn.com</a>	1/02/05
48	Raccoon Creek	Beaver	William B. Smith	724-375-9613	<a href="mailto:bersmith@comcast.net">bersmith@comcast.net</a>	12/27/05
49	Reading	Berks	Bill Uhrich	610-371-5090		12/18/05
50	Rector	Westmoreland	Len and Linda Hess	724-593-3236		12/17/05
51	Ryerson	Greene	Marjorie Howard	724-852-3155	<a href="mailto:birdwatcher@alltel.net">birdwatcher@alltel.net</a>	12/17/05
52	Scranton	Lackawanna	William Speare			
53	Southeastern Bradford	Bradford	Bill Reid	570-836-2734 570-822-8433		12/26/05
54	Southern Bucks	Bucks	Robert Mercer	215-785-1177	<a href="mailto:ramercer@co.bucks.pa.us">ramercer@co.bucks.pa.us</a>	12/18/05
55	Southern Lancaster County	Lancaster	Bob Schutsky	717-548-3303 (10 a.m. to 9 p.m.)	<a href="mailto:info@birdtreks.com">info@birdtreks.com</a>	12/18/05
56	State College	Centre	James Dunn Bob Fowles	814-238-2122 814-238-1990	<a href="mailto:jwd6@psu.edu">jwd6@psu.edu</a> <a href="mailto:rbf@psu.edu">rbf@psu.edu</a>	12/18/05
57	Thompson	Susquehanna				

58	Tunkhannock	Wyoming	Rick Koval	570-829-4381 570-696-1691 (w)	<a href="mailto:koval@nblt.org">koval@nblt.org</a>	12/23/05
59	Upper Bucks	Bucks Montgomery Lehigh	Bill Etter	215-964-3613	<a href="mailto:better@netcarrier.com">better@netcarrier.com</a>	12/18/05
60	Warren	Warren	Michael Toole	814-723-4714	<a href="mailto:toole@kinzua.net">toole@kinzua.net</a>	12/17/05
61	Washington	Washington	Roy Ickes	724-228-3532	<a href="mailto:rickes@washjeff.edu">rickes@washjeff.edu</a>	12/17/05
62	West Chester	Chester	Barry Blust	610-458-5616	<a href="mailto:BarryBlust@comcast.net">BarryBlust@comcast.net</a>	12/17/05
63	Western Chester	Chester	Larry Lewis	610-518-7242	<a href="mailto:Earlybirdtours@aol.com">Earlybirdtours@aol.com</a>	12/18/05
64	White Mills	Wayne	Voni Strasser	570-226-1460	<a href="mailto:sawwhet@ptd.net">sawwhet@ptd.net</a>	
65	Wild Creek- Little Gap	Carbon Monroe	Joshua Nemeth		<a href="mailto:allroy1313@rcn.com">allroy1313@rcn.com</a>	12/18/05
66	Williamsport	Lycoming	Dave Ferry	570-323-1590	<a href="mailto:dferry@wasd.org">dferry@wasd.org</a>	12/18/05
67	Wyncote	Montgomery	Martin Selzer	215-233-9090	<a href="mailto:mseizer@janus.inj.com">mseizer@janus.inj.com</a>	
68	York	York	Bill Del Grande	717-854-6728	<a href="mailto:yorkies17403@yahoo.com">yorkies17403@yahoo.com</a>	12/17/05

## Request for Award Nominations

PSO presents two awards in recognition of contributions to ornithology and bird conservation in Pennsylvania. The Earl L. Poole Award is given annually to an individual, either amateur or professional, who has made significant contributions to PA ornithology, usually over the course of many years. Award criteria are broad to allow consideration of a wide range of candidates. Previous winners of this award include Margaret Buckwalter, Dan Brauning, Paul Hess, Phillips B. Street, Frank and Barb Haas, Bill Reid, Ed Fingerhood, Ralph Bell, Paul Schwalbe, Bob Leberman and Jean Stull Cunningham.

The Conservation Award is presented to an individual, individuals, or group for projects that have resulted in significant bird conservation in PA. It is a monetary award that was first presented in 2005, the winner being Seneca Rocks Audubon Society for their work in helping preserve the Piney Tract, a reclaimed strip mine in Clarion County that supports many grassland breeding birds. This award may not necessarily be presented annually.

Award winners are selected by an awards committee chaired by the PSO vice-president, and they must be approved by the PSO board of directors. Anyone may nominate an award candidate, and the committee encourages such nominations from the membership. The deadline for nominations for 2006 awards is January 9, 2006. When submitting a nominee, be sure to include detailed qualifications to help the committee make its

decision. For further information or to submit a nomination, contact the current PSO vice-president, Rudy Keller, 71 Lutz Road, Boyertown, PA 19512; <[rkeller@temple.edu](mailto:rkeller@temple.edu)>.

– Rudy Keller

### A Great Christmas Idea for the Birder for only \$7

#### The Annotated List of the Birds of Pennsylvania

Under the auspices of the Ornithological Technical Committee of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey, Barb and Frank Haas have revised and updated the *Annotated List of the Birds of Pennsylvania, Second Edition*, the first edition of which was issued in 1992. This new list is available from PSO. Cost is \$7 including tax and postage. Check our website to see a sample ([www.pabirds.org](http://www.pabirds.org)).

Send your order with a check made out to the "Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology" to PSO, 2469 Hammertown Road, Narvon, PA 17555-9730.

## Nominate a Youth

At our November 2005 board meeting, we decided to continue the scholarship program, granting a scholarship to a student 18 years of age or younger so that this young person can attend our annual meeting. PSO will pay for the student's food and lodging, but the person nominating the youth will be responsible for transporting him or her to the meeting and be responsible for him or her during the meeting. You may nominate the student of your choice by sending the following form to Shonah Hunter ([shunter@lhup.edu](mailto:shunter@lhup.edu)) by April 15, 2006.

Name of Student Being Nominated \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Youth's Involvement with Birding (Please describe providing as many details as possible.) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Nominating Youth \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship (if any) to Youth \_\_\_\_\_

In nominating this youth and signing below, I understand that I will be responsible for the youth and his or her transportation to and from the meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

## Silent Auction Planned

Three years ago when the annual meeting was held in Indiana, PSO held a spontaneous silent auction because a beautiful Wild Turkey print had been donated. Several other items were donated and PSO raised \$223. Last year we planned a silent auction, and everyone enjoyed it. Again it was a success with \$154 raised.

This year, we would like to try again. If you have any "birdy" items that you no longer want but think someone else would enjoy, please consider donating it/them to our auction. Please e-mail me describing the item and an estimated value. Also indicate if there is a minimum bid for

the item you are donating. You should then bring your item to the annual meeting at Powdermill (or send it with someone who will be attending if you can not). I am looking forward to having a variety of items to fuel the bidding frenzy for the benefit of PSO.

Shonah Hunter [shunter@lhup.edu](mailto:shunter@lhup.edu); (570) 893-2062.



Artwork by Christie Gregg

# Avian Influenza: H5N1

by Carmen T. Santasania

With widespread interest in avian influenza or “bird flu,” I am providing this information from the National Audubon Society as a resource for those who may be concerned about avian influenza, as well as about how birds are involved. Also included are some general precautions for protecting both human and bird health.

## Background on Avian Flu

There are more than 144 different strains of avian influenza virus. Most strains circulate in low levels within wild bird populations. Though they usually cause only mild illness in wild birds, some strains may cause lethal outbreaks in domestic poultry. A few avian influenza strains are more virulent and can cause high mortality in both wild birds and poultry stocks.

Most avian influenza strains do not normally infect species other than birds though a few subtypes can be transmitted from birds to humans. Avian influenza viruses become much more dangerous if they mutate to allow easy transmission from one human to another, not just from birds to humans. The most devastating avian influenza epidemic occurred in 1918 when a highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza mutated allowing people to infect other people. An estimated 40 to 50 million people died worldwide as a result.

## The Current Strain of Avian Influenza: H5N1

Since 1997, a highly pathogenic strain, H5N1, of avian influenza has infected more than 100 persons and has caused at least 65 deaths in East and Southeast Asia. While any human infection is cause for concern and action, this current avian flu outbreak has affected a relatively small number of people and has very limited ability to be transmitted from person to person. Rather, the virus appears to be transmitted to humans through direct contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces. More than 150 million domestic birds have been culled to contain outbreaks. There is no evidence that the virus has mutated to spread widely from person to person.

## Do Wild Birds Transmit H5N1 to People?

In the summer of 2005, the virus spread to Central Asia and China where it was detected in both domestic birds and wild birds. By October 2005, the virus was detected in domestic ducks and poultry in Turkey and Romania and in a wild Mute Swan in Croatia. While there is no evidence of wild birds being able to transmit H5N1 directly to people, laboratory studies indicate that domestic ducks, as well as Mallards and perhaps other wild species, may be able to carry and transmit the virus to other birds without showing

signs of illness. While there is strong circumstantial evidence that wild birds may be able to spread the disease along their migratory paths, more testing of healthy waterfowl and other birds is needed before we can be certain that migratory birds are the source of the H5N1 virus infections reported in Eastern Europe. Global testing of both domestic waterfowl and wild birds is urgently needed in order to monitor the extent and spread of the virus in domestic flocks and wild bird populations.

Leading experts including the World Health Organization, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, and World Organization for Animal Health all emphasize that culling wild bird populations is highly unlikely to stop the spread of the disease and would only divert resources away from more important disease control measures. (See statements by UN Food and Agricultural Organization <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2004/48287/index.html>)

## Has H5N1 Been Found in North America?

The H5N1 avian influenza virus has not been found in wild birds in North America. There is a remote chance that infected wild birds from Asia could bring the virus with them during fall migration to North America. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey (USGS), Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and public health agencies are working together to test thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds for the virus in Alaska, and field sampling is being integrated with surveillance programs throughout the United States and Canada.

## What You Can Do

- 1) While the possibility of contracting the H5N1 virus from wild birds is very unlikely, people who have close personal contact with wild birds should take measures to protect themselves by practicing animal handling and sanitary practices recommended by the USGS National Wildlife Health Center Wildlife Health Bulletin #05-03 ([http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/WHB/WHB\\_05\\_03.html](http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/WHB/WHB_05_03.html)).
- 2) People who feed birds are not at high risk of contracting avian influenza from birds in their yards or at their feeders. However, since birds can transmit other diseases to humans (e.g. salmonellosis), people who feed birds should routinely clean their feeders and bird baths as recommended by Audubon ([http://www.audubon.org/bird/at\\_home/SafeFeeding.html](http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/SafeFeeding.html)) and the USGS National Wildlife Health Center ([http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/whats\\_new/fact\\_sheet/fact\\_birdfeeder.html](http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/whats_new/fact_sheet/fact_birdfeeder.html)). People who come into contact with wild bird excreta should thoroughly clean up with soap and water.

**See Additional Resources on page 9.**

## PSO to Adopt a Hurricane Birder in Need

Are you looking to spread holiday cheer and help a fellow birder at the same time? With the recent events in Louisiana and Mississippi during the 2005 hurricane season, many of our southern birding brethren are in serious need. While the greatest needs of shelter, food, water, medical, and emotional support are a bit beyond most of our abilities, we still can help out.

Through a project started by LSU professor Dr. Van Rensen and emulated in Mississippi by Gene and Shannon Knight, they have created the "Adopt a Birder" program. The goal of the project is to team up willing groups across the country, like the PSO, and partner them with a birder who is in need of replacing birding items lost and or destroyed by the storms.

In an e-mail from Shannon Knight the following statement presents an idea of the situation. Shannon writes, "So far we have been trying to help the ones that are in the need of the most gear and/or books. Some only need 4 or 5 books. Some may need only a few books, \$150 worth. Some folks need more. We have one person that lost an entire library of some 40 years of birding."

If you are willing to donate items from your collection, duplicate copies of books, little used field bags or an old pair of usable binoculars, please contact me. I will keep an e-mail group list of all willing participants. Once we have our adopted birder and an idea of his/her needs, I will contact the group and we will see what can be provided.

Anyone interested in donating may contact me, Deuane Hoffman, at [corvuscorax@comcast.net](mailto:corvuscorax@comcast.net). If you have an item to donate, send it to my home. Later, PSO will box the items and ship them to our recipient.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this project. I hope to be contacted by a large number of our ranks willing to help. Let us make the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology a memorable organization in the minds of Gulf Coast birders!

Deuane Hoffman  
3406 Montour St.  
Harrisburg, PA 17111-1827  
[corvuscorax@comcast.net](mailto:corvuscorax@comcast.net)



## PSO Bird Quiz

How well do you know your Pennsylvania birds?

1. An unstreaked back is usually a good field mark to distinguish this "confusing fall warbler" from two close relatives. Which warbler is it?
2. Bones discovered at an ancient Native American rockshelter in Huntingdon County in 1959 may be those of a bird never confirmed as occurring wild in Pennsylvania. Name the species.
3. Of 17 gull species on our state list, the adults of only two have entirely-black bills year-round. Which two?
4. A plump little bird with the strange scientific name *Alle alle* has been found in this state on a handful of occasions. Which species, and for a bonus what is the name's derivation?
5. Four Killdeer relatives in the genus *Charadrius* are listed in Pennsylvania. What are they?

(Answers on page 12)

## Additional Resources (continued from page 8)

Centers for Disease Control  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>

United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization  
[http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/subjects/en/health/diseases-cards/special\\_avian.html](http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/subjects/en/health/diseases-cards/special_avian.html)

ProMED-mail Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases  
<http://www.promedmail.org>

USGS National Wildlife Health Center  
[http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/avian\\_influenza/avian\\_influenza.html](http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/avian_influenza/avian_influenza.html)

BirdLife International Statement on Avian Influenza  
[www.birdlife.org/action/science/species/avian\\_flu](http://www.birdlife.org/action/science/species/avian_flu)

Wetlands International Statement on Avian Influenza  
[http://www.wetlands.org/IWCA/Avianflu/AI\\_position.htm](http://www.wetlands.org/IWCA/Avianflu/AI_position.htm)

World Health Organization online, available at:  
[http://www.who.int/csr/don/2005\\_08\\_18/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2005_08_18/en/index.html)

USGS National Wildlife Health Center, online, available at:  
[http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/avian\\_influenza/avian\\_influenza.html](http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/avian_influenza/avian_influenza.html)

Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences  
<http://www.cas.psu.edu/docs/biosecurity/ANIMAL/AI/default.html>

## Conservation Corner

It would be nice if this issue of Conservation Corner could report that Congress and the Administration has "seen the light" and reversed their harmful conservation and environmental policies. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

One of the latest Congressional proposals could lead to one of the biggest corporate public land grabs in American history. And once again, Rep. Pombo from California and his pals, the same ones who are trying to significantly weaken the Endangered Species Act, are pushing provisions in the House Budget Reconciliation bill that could lead to millions of acres of public lands being sold to mining companies at "bargain basement" prices. This in turn would degrade and fragment wildlife habitat and likely limit or eliminate birding and other recreational opportunities on those lands.

Specifically, the bill lifts a Congressional ban on the sale of public lands to mining claim holders of which there are approximately 5.5 million acres of lands with existing claims that would be for sale if this bill is passed. This includes over 2 million acres of claims inside or within 5 miles of national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests and wilderness areas.

The bill makes new provisions for selling public land under the mining law allowing mining claim holders to buy land which contains or once contained valuable minerals as well as adjacent land. This provision could potentially open up nearly 300 million acres of western public land for sale.

Another part of the bill allows for mining claims of up to 20 acres to be bought outright by claimants for \$1,000/acre or fair market value, whichever is greater. The catch is that fair market value is defined as the value of the surface land and doesn't consider the value of the minerals under the surface. Once again, taxpayers would be "ripped-off."

And to add insult to injury, the bill doesn't require that the land purchased be actually used for mining! This could open up millions of acres to not only mining companies but real estate developers, resort developers and others. All at the expense of our public lands.

What can PSO members do? Contact your Congressman and urge him to not support the Budget Reconciliation bill as currently proposed. Urge him to either have these harmful provisions removed from the bill or vote against it. We have until early next year to express our concerns, so please do so. Letters may be sent to your Representative at the U.S. House of Representatives Washington D.C. 20515 or if you prefer e-mail, you can go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov), find your Representative and e-mail him.

– Mark Henry, Conservation Chairperson

## PA IBA with Critical Habitat for Shorebirds Enrolled in International Survey

by Stacy Small, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Pennsylvania

Re-printed with permission from Audubon PA  
newsletter, Winter 2005

Audubon Pennsylvania is pleased to announce the enrollment of The Conejohela Flats (Important Bird Area #56) in the International Shorebird Survey (ISS), coordinated by Manomet Conservation Science ([www.shorebirdworld.org](http://www.shorebirdworld.org)). This program examines continental shorebird migration patterns and wetland use by these birds during spring and fall migration.

The Conejohela Flats on the Susquehanna River provide critical inland habitat for shorebirds in both migration seasons. The Flats are located within Lake Clarke, a river impoundment created by Safe Harbor Dam. Fluctuating water levels create exposed mudflats for feeding and resting shorebirds. This site is arguably the most significant stopover site for migrating shorebirds in Pennsylvania, annually hosting an estimated 15-20,000 individuals of an average 27 species. Regularly observed shorebirds include Semipalmated, Black-bellied, and American Golden-Plovers; Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs; Solitary, Least, Semipalmated, White-rumped, Baird's, Western, Spotted, Pectoral, Stilt, and Buff-breasted Sandpipers; Wilson's Snipes; Ruddy Turnstones; Dunlins; and Sanderlings. Occasional visitors include American Avocets, Whimbrels, Willets, Red-necked Phalaropes, and Long-billed Dowitchers. Spotted Sandpipers nest on the vegetated portions of the islands, and Killdeer breed in nearby agricultural areas.

The Conejohela Flats is an exemplary IBA success story that illustrates the power of collaboration and cooperation. In the mid-1990s, Safe Harbor Water Power Corporation



Long-billed Dowitcher is just one of the many shorebirds that migrate annually through our state.

Photo by Geoff Malosh

(SHWPC) sought to raise water levels to increase power production, to levels that would have inundated the mudflats and made them unavailable to shorebirds. Audubon Pennsylvania and Lancaster County Bird Club negotiated with SHWPC, Lancaster County Planning Commission, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to maintain water levels low enough to expose the mudflats during spring and fall migration periods. An agreement was eventually reached to protect the Flats as shorebird habitat through the year 2032, including vegetation control on mudflats to maintain ideal shorebird foraging conditions. In addition, SHWPC is funding additional shorebird surveys.



A flock of Semipalmated Sandpipers stop to feed on their northward migration.

Photo by Roger Higbee

But water regulation wasn't the only issue to contend with, according to **Jerry Book** of the Lancaster County Bird Club. For years, jet skis and airboats frequently ran across and along the exposed flats, flushing shorebirds and creating adverse conditions for migration rest and refueling. In 2000, Jerry successfully petitioned the Fish and Boat Commission to establish a "No Wake" zone around the islands. According to Jerry, who has been monitoring and keeping shorebird records for the site since 1985, "The facts that The Conejohela Flats were designated as an Important Bird Area and that volunteers had monitored and kept careful records of the site since the 1950s were the two main reasons that FERC responded to the situation and acted to protect shorebird habitat."

Long-term data for the International Shorebird Survey will be collected by volunteers coordinated by **Deuane Hoffman** of the Pennsylvania Society of Ornithology, in cooperation with Audubon Pennsylvania and Manomet Conservation Science. Current and historic data from the site, collected by three generations of dedicated birders, will serve as the foundation of Audubon Pennsylvania's IBA shorebird database. This site will be the second Pennsylvania site to be enrolled in the program, following the lead of **Jerry McWilliams** of the Presque Isle Audubon Society, who surveys Presque Isle's Gull Point shorebirds and is an active advocate for protecting that site as shorebird habitat. The ISS protocols for monitoring are straightforward and user-friendly, making for an enjoyable birding experience while collecting important data that will contribute to statewide, national, and international conservation science efforts.

*To get involved in shorebird monitoring on The Conejohela Flats, contact Stacy Small, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon PA: [ssmall@audubon.org](mailto:ssmall@audubon.org).*

## **Christmas Shopping!!!**

### **PSO T-Shirts Still Available**

*Get yours while supplies last!*  
*This is the perfect Christmas gift for the birder!*

PSO T-shirts are available for sale in either pale green, light blue, or off-white. Sizes range from small to XXL, but check with Linda Wagner for size availability ([lwagner342@msn.com](mailto:lwagner342@msn.com)).

The fabric is a blend of 50% cotton, 50% polyester. These shirts feature the PSO Pileated logo in a three-inch diameter circle on the left front. On the back is an outline of the state with the counties outlined as well. Superimposed on the state is the flying Pileated Woodpecker, complete with red crest. Bold letters

above the state declare "Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology."

These great shirts cost \$19.50 which includes postage and handling. See ordering instructions in the next article below.

## **Field Checklists and Patch for Sale**

This tri-folded Field Checklist is printed on card stock and is 3.85" W X 6.25" H when folded. It lists all of the species recorded in Pennsylvania (most current printing May 2000) and highlights those species requiring documentation. It has six columns per species (for 6 trips, 6 months, 6 years., etc.). It also has spaces for recording locations, weather, totals, and notes. They are available in packs of 10, 50, and 100. Binders are also available.

- \* Pack of 10 Checklists \$3.25
- \* Pack of 50 Checklists \$12.50
- \* Pack of 100 Checklists \$22.00
- \* Binder \$7.00
- \* Binder/30 Checklist Combo \$12.00

Patch, pictured on the right, is \$3 which includes postage.

Send your order with a check made out for the appropriate amount to "Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology" and mail to:

PSO  
2469 Hammertown Road  
Narvon, PA 17555-9730.



## 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

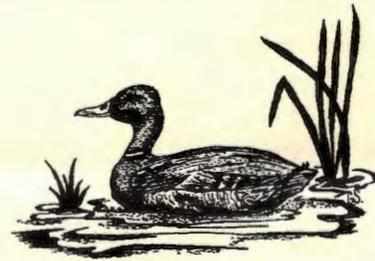
### PSO Officers and Directors

Greg Grove – President [gwg2@psu.edu](mailto:gwg2@psu.edu)  
Rudy Keller – Vice President [rkeller@temple.edu](mailto:rkeller@temple.edu)  
Roger Higbee – Secretary [rvhigbee@alltel.net](mailto:rvhigbee@alltel.net)  
Frank Haas – Treasurer [fchaas@pabirds.org](mailto:fchaas@pabirds.org)

Nick Pulcinella – PSO Editor [nickpulcinella@comcast.net](mailto:nickpulcinella@comcast.net)  
Margaret Higbee – Newsletter Editor [bcoriole@alltel.net](mailto:bcoriole@alltel.net)  
Doug Gross – Past President [dougross@sunlink.net](mailto:dougross@sunlink.net)  
Rob Blye – [rblve@normandean.com](mailto:rblve@normandean.com)  
John Fedak – [jlfedak@atlanticbb.net](mailto:jlfedak@atlanticbb.net)  
Deuane Hoffman – [corvuxcorax@comcast.net](mailto:corvuxcorax@comcast.net)  
Shonah Hunter – [shunter@lhup.edu](mailto:shunter@lhup.edu)  
Arlene Koch – [davilene@aol.com](mailto:davilene@aol.com)  
Sandra Lockerman – [lockerman@paonline.com](mailto:lockerman@paonline.com)  
Mark McConaughy – [TimeTraveler@email.msn.com](mailto:TimeTraveler@email.msn.com)  
Flo McGuire – [fmcguire1@verizon.net](mailto:fmcguire1@verizon.net)  
Carmen Santasania – [ctsantasania@cs.com](mailto:ctsantasania@cs.com)  
Linda Wagner – [lwagner342@aol.com](mailto:lwagner342@aol.com)

## Answers to PSO Bird Quiz on page 5

1. Pine Warbler. Its Bay-breasted and Blackpoll relatives typically have streaked backs, although some first-year birds may lack visible streaking.
2. Trumpeter Swan. Two experts identified the bones, but a question remains whether they were from a large Tundra Swan.
3. Bonaparte's and Ross's. Some Little Gulls have a dark reddish-brown bill, and Sabine's black bill has a yellow tip.
4. Dovekie. "Alle" is the bird's Swedish name.
5. Snowy, Wilson's, Semipalmated, and Piping Plovers.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Creekside, PA 15732  
PERMIT NO. 2

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