

PSO PILEATED



June 2010

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Volume 21, Number 2

From the President's Desk....

Doubting that I could come up with anything truly profound or moving, I thought my first president's message would be directed to you, the membership, about our organization. Held just several weeks ago, the 2010 annual meeting at Presque Isle is still on my mind, but I am sure it will be well documented by others in this newsletter, so I'll include just a bit from my perspective. During the meeting I was busy with my VP/Chairman of the Awards Committee duties. Of course there was the work of the nomination and selection process, but the special part was contacting the winners, sharing their thrill (and/or surprise) of being the award winner, talking and meeting with them to prepare for the banquet, and sharing the moment of the award presentation with their families and with their many birding peers from across the state. I have seen firsthand how much the winners appreciate the recognition of others for their many years of bird conservation work. It's a bit early for next year's process, but we have an endless list of deserving award winners, so please keep that in mind and nominate someone in November when the process begins for the 2011 awards.

The meeting was also a reminder of those carefree years when all I had to do was to show up and enjoy the meetings. That brings to mind the team of people who conduct PSO operations, so it would be appropriate to take you into the PSO board room to give you some insight about the proceedings. The board meets twice a year and conducts business in the interim in spurts of, at times, voluminous e-mails. The president is a migrant, establishing a territory for a brief two-year term, and then moving on to let someone else perpetuate the PSO species.



One of this year's meeting highlights was a White Pelican found at Beach 11 on Saturday, May 15.

Photograph by Mark McConaughy

However, the rest of the board officers (please note that I am being humorous here) are like the Pope and the Supreme Court justices – they serve lifetime terms, although unlike the Supreme Court justices, they do not have the option to resign. Roger Higbee, our secretary, records the board meeting minutes and carries the burden of researching past actions that now become critical to a current matter. Margaret Higbee has the demanding job of editing four newsletter a year, and Frank Haas, our treasurer, keeps the books and performs an endless

number of other duties as webmaster and purchasing manager. For each annual meeting, Shonah Hunter has the untitled position of managing all the facility arrangements and organizing the silent auction – I see an “Event Coordinator” title for her at the next board meeting. Too many more contribute to PSO to mention everyone in this message, but I thank these persons and all the others whenever the opportunity arises. And Arlene, thanks for carrying the torch for the last two years!.

And oh, I almost forgot to mention the birds! I have not been to Presque Isle or Magee Marsh for far too many spring migrations, so being so close to Palm Warblers that I could see the red marks on their backs was a treat. And I now have Connecticut Warbler on my life “heard” list, although not on my ... arhggg ... life “heard and seen” list.

I'm sorry more members were not along on Sunday for the field trip to Pymatuning and Custards/Geneva Marsh. Watching a pair of Prothonotary Warblers set up house-keeping and hearing singing Brown Creepers were real treats – thanks Mike Fialkovich!

– Tom Kuehl

The Raven Reporter



Tales of Discovery about Pennsylvania Birds

Statewide Osprey Nest Survey

As recently as 1986, only one Osprey nest could be found in the state. Today, we have nesting pairs in more than 20 counties! I am writing with the hope that you will help us investigate this remarkable recovery. The Osprey is one of the most charismatic of the state's raptors, truly the "people's fish hawk." And, it may indeed benefit somewhat from some human activities because many pairs nest on human-made structures and catch their fish at our reservoirs.

For many years following the state's reintroduction program (1980-1996), we conducted annual surveys of nest sites. However, with limited funding available and the Atlas preoccupying us for six years, these annual surveys were no longer feasible or practical. We now are seeking the help of dedicated volunteers to assess the current Osprey population. As the "eyes and ears" of birds in the state, we are hoping that you will be willing to give us a hand with our 2010 Osprey nest survey.

Thanks to many of you, the results of the 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas were remarkable. We are eager to learn more about the number and distribution of the nest sites that will add more detail to the nest map produced by the recent Atlas. We also would like to learn what type of nest support structure birds are using, what types of water bodies they are favoring, etc. This follow-up effort to the 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas, whose records spanned 6 years, will give us a current "snapshot" of Ospreys statewide. The distribution and number of pairs may have expanded even during the recent Atlas project period. This information will be used to update the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program database and also enable us to better understand the extent of the Osprey's recovery and its current status. Ospreys were counted in many blocks, but we do not know how many nesting pairs these blocks represent. Ospreys do

tend to be clustered in areas with good resources, so some blocks may support several nesting pairs where food and nest sites are plentiful.

If you are willing to personally survey nests or know other birders in your area who would likely help with this effort, please let us know. Cathy Haffner is acting as our project coordinator and is managing the data we receive for the surveys. We have a form for the Osprey survey for your use or dispersal to volunteers. Please let us know if you will help us or know of somebody who keeps an eye on Osprey nests. For more information, please contact Cathy Haffner at cdhaffner@yahoo.com.

This survey, although thorough and extensive, comes under the "low hanging fruit" category when it comes to our Threatened and Endangered bird species surveys. The Osprey is charismatic and easily observed and identified. Many Osprey nests can be seen and monitored from a distance.

We are primarily interested in the location of each active nest and, if possible, the number of chicks in each nest along with basic information, including the type of structure on which the nest was built and to what type of

water body the nest is most proximate. Two site visits (sometime in the next few weeks to see if there's activity and then a second visit between late June and mid-July to count chicks) should be all that's needed. Since Ospreys and their nests are fairly visible during the nesting season and since they are relatively easy to identify, this broadens the potential for participation in this project.

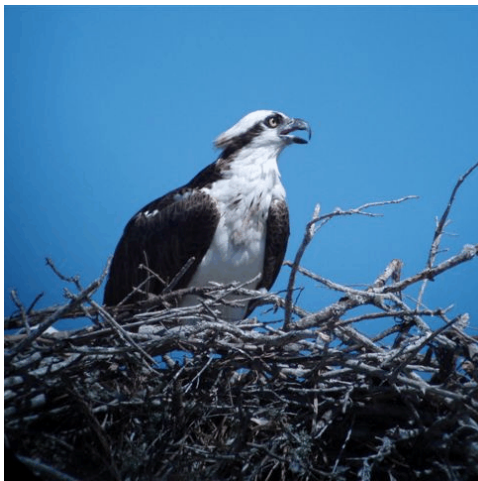
We will also make other appeals to possible partners in this project and to the general birding community. But, first we thought we would ask our bird monitoring leaders – that's

you – for your cooperation and local leadership. We intend to do a thorough canvassing of the state for Ospreys and will need all the help we can get.

For more information about the Osprey project, please visit the PGC Endangered and Threatened species pages.

New PGC "Endangered and Threatened Species" Section

A new section on the PGC website is designed to help educators, students, contractors, environmental planners, writers, and wildlife watchers learn more about these



We hope that you will give us a hand with our 2010 Osprey nest survey.

Photo by Margaret Higbee

species of greatest conservation need. Pennsylvania has its own story to tell about these rare birds, many imperiled in the state as breeding populations. There is a series of species accounts for those birds designated currently as either Threatened or Endangered.

Each of the species accounts is in a downloadable format as stand-alone Portable Document Format (PDF) documents. The set of accounts acts as a booklet. Each account provides the detailed natural history of the species, color photos, a range map, recommendations for further reading, and source information. The section also reviews why species become endangered and what the public can do to reverse their declines. We encourage partnerships.

It is one of the great hopes of the agency that the recoveries of species such as Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Osprey can inspire more successful conservation programs.

The writing team for the bird accounts included Cathy Haffner, Doug Gross, Joe Kosack, Art McMorris, and Dan Brauning. Photographers who donated photos to this effort were Bob Moul; Chuck Gehringer; Noppadol Paothong, Missouri Department of Conservation; Rob Criswell; Glen Tepke; Jake Dingel; Mike Lentz; Ivan Petrov; Dave Hawkins; Alice Van Zoeren; Greg Lavaty; Ken Catania; Tom Robbins; Dr. Lloyd Glenn Ingles' photos from the Manzanita Project at California Academy of Sciences; Megan Simon; John White; Jim Fenton; National Parks Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior; Smithsonian Institute, Book of Mammals; Roger Barbour Collection; Richard Webster, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and Dick Young. It was truly a team effort!

To find out more, please check out the website (www.pgc.state.pa.us/). It should inspire you to discover more locations where these birds can yet be found.

Bald Eagle Nest Monitoring

The Bald Eagle nesting season is well underway with most active nests in nestling phase. Last year, we had at least 174 territorial nesting pairs in Pennsylvania. Breeding territories were found in 48 counties. The nests produced at least 244 eaglets, an all time high. This year, we anticipate passing the 180 mark with the total nest count, and who knows how many eaglets? We are adding counties to our list with pairs building nests in new locations near Pittsburgh. We found out about that nest from a very watchful eBird participant. We now are protecting the area because we know the location of the new nest (no eggs, but the pair seems bonded). Other birders have told us of new nests in other locations

including Mercer and Armstrong counties. Thanks to those of you that have contributed.

Please check out the new eagle etiquette page on the PGC website for some guidance on enjoying eagle nests responsibly. We appreciate reports of any new Bald Eagle nests and results of those nests to PGC (see my contact information below). Often a persistent and skilled birder can solve the puzzle of how many eaglets a nest has produced. Leaves can hide a lot of big, dark eaglets.

Thanks to Joe Kosack for providing some of the text for the new T&E website pages. And thanks to Cathy Haffner for writing most of the Osprey request.

Please submit your Bald Eagle observations and comments to:

Douglas A. Gross, Endangered Bird Specialist
Pennsylvania Game Commission
PA eBird and PSO Special Areas Project
106 Winters Road, Orangeville, PA 17859
Phone: 570-458-4109 (or 570-458-4564)
E-mail: dogross@state.pa.us or dagross144@verizon.net

PSO Bird Quiz

How well do you know your Pennsylvania birds? (This issue's quiz is based on our newest regional guide, *Birds of Central Pennsylvania* by PSO members, Nick Bolgiano and Greg Grove.)

1. What small pond in Centre County once had a fallout of 250 Horned Grebes during an April snowstorm?
2. Which species, formerly a rare breeder, disappeared perhaps because of competition from House Wrens or Carolina Wrens?
3. What Important Bird Area along the Blair/Huntingdon County border is considered to be "one of Pennsylvania's most important Cerulean Warbler breeding areas"?
4. Two species in the family Rallidae, both extremely rare visitors in our state, have been reported once in Central Pennsylvania. Which are they?
5. A Dark-eyed Junco subspecies "similar to the Oregon type and thus likely to be unrecognized" was identified at a State College feeder in 2008. Which subspecies?

(See Answers on page 12.)

2010 Annual Meeting Revisited

by Mark McConaughy

The PSO 2010 Annual Meeting was held from May 14 through 16 at the premiere spring birding spot in Pennsylvania, Presque Isle. Presque Isle acts as a trap for migrating birds heading north in the spring. The birds are funneled onto this narrow peninsula where they make their last feeding and refueling stop before jumping over Lake Erie to Canada. Because this meeting was at the best spring birding locale in Pennsylvania, the PSO board decided to have field trips on the peninsula all day on Saturday to take advantage of the location. People were also free to wander around Presque Isle on their own or to visit the Tom Ridge Environmental Center, located near the entrance to Presque Isle State Park. A workshop was planned for Saturday afternoon for anyone who did not wish to bird all day. A dinner was set for Saturday evening with Jerry McWilliams as the dinner speaker.

I arrived at Presque Isle on Friday and birded with other early arrivals during Friday afternoon. Fortunately, the weather was perfect, and various warbler species were flitting around the shrubs, bushes, and trees along the Fry's Landing and Pine Tree Trails. Yellow Warblers, Palm Warblers, and Pine Warblers were seen in good numbers along with Magnolia Warblers, Black-and-white Warblers, and a Blackburnian Warbler. A Connecticut Warbler had been heard singing at the entrance to the Pine Tree Trail on Friday morning but was not singing when I walked down the trail. Nevertheless, this boded well for the Saturday and Sunday morning outings.

The Friday night social was held at the Bel-Aire Clarion Hotel, located close to the entrance to Presque Isle. A short PSO business meeting followed to elect the new president and board members. Tom Kuehl was elected the PSO president for 2010-2011; John Fedak, Vice President; Roger Higbee, Secretary; and Frank Haas will continue as Treasurer. Ramsay Koury was elected to fill a vacancy left by the departing Jack Solomon, and Carmen Santasania was reelected as a board member. The outings planned for Saturday and Sunday were announced so members could sign up for the one(s) they wished to attend. Workshop plans for Saturday were announced so

those who did not wish to bird Saturday afternoon could attend a talk about hummingbirds given by Arlene Koch and/or my nature photography workshop for beginners.

Dawn broke on Saturday to a clear sky and cool temperatures. Mike Fialkovich led a group to Gull Point; John Fedak and Tom and Janet Kuehl led folks on different portions of Fry's Landing Trails; Deuane Hoffman and Ramsay Koury took other groups to different places on Presque Isle. I went with Tom and Janet Kuehl to Fry's Landing where we saw a Wood Thrush, a good number of American Redstarts, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and a number of other species. All of the field leaders were connected by cell-phones. A call came in that an American White Pelican was seen in the bay from Beach 11. All of the groups converged on Beach 11 to view the pelican.

While we were observing the pelican, a Warbling Vireo was singing in the trees behind Beach 11, and flocks of Cedar Waxwings flew overhead. Most of the attendees



At the bird banding station, a nice variety of species were banded.

Photo by Mark McConaughy

got to see the American White Pelican, which turned out to be the best bird of the meeting. Just as the groups were starting to break up again, Greg Grove arrived and said he had heard a Connecticut Warbler calling in the marshy area behind the Beach 11 parking lot. Everyone then rushed to that area hoping to hear and see the Connecticut Warbler. Unfortunately, it was not as cooperative as the pelican. It sang on only a few rare occasions

throughout the day. A few lucky people were able to be there when it actually sang. As the groups were waiting to hear it, the pelican took off and flew over the parking lot.

The Kuehl group then went to the Pine Tree Trail. A Great Crested Flycatcher was seen at the head of the trail as well as several different species of warblers. As we proceeded down the trail, Black-and-white Warblers sang in the pine trees, and a thrush jumped out into the trail. I thought it was a Wood Thrush since its back looked rufous in color when it first jumped out, but it may have been a Swanson's Thrush since another person thought he saw a buffy eye-ring. A nice variety of bird species were seen as we walked along the trail including Least Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee (a first of the year for me), Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Pine Warbler, Palm

Warbler, and a Hooded Warbler. A white-tailed deer with its antlers just starting to bud was also seen along the path. At least one and probably two Prairie Warblers were found at the far end of the Pine Tree Trail.

We ended the morning with a visit to the bird banding station located at the Brig Niagara pier. We watched as several Yellow Warblers and a female Brown-headed Cowbird were banded. The birds were sexed, measured, weighed, and checked for fat before being banded and released.

A list of species banded Saturday morning included Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, House Wren, Gray Catbird, Yellow Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, American Redstart, Mourning Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, and American Goldfinch. After viewing the banding operation, we broke for lunch, and I returned to the hotel for the afternoon workshop.

The vast majority of people returned to Presque Isle after lunch, indicating the PSO board was correct in believing most would take advantage of this unique opportunity to bird in the best spring locale in the state. Only one person, besides the vendors, Arlene Koch, and me, showed up for the workshop session. Arlene and I gave our presentations on hummingbirds and photography. Those that were there appeared to enjoy them.

A social before the annual dinner provided time for folks to unwind from the day's birding and to get final bids on the annual silent auction held to raise money for the PSO. A compilation of bird species seen through that evening was made and produced a total of 160 species. This is a record Saturday evening count for a PSO meeting. The hotel's chef provided a wonderfully delicious dinner of prime rib, chicken, and vegetarian lasagna for the attendees.

Following dinner, outgoing PSO president Arlene Koch made announcements about the day's birding and what was planned for Sunday. Arlene also presented A J Lassick with the PSO Youth Scholarship award.

Bob and Ruth Cook were recognized for attending every one of our PSO annual meetings since our beginnings in 1990.

Tom Kuehl, acting PSO Vice President and the new PSO president, then presented the Conservation Award to the Sea Grant organization. Dave Skellie accepted the award for Sea Grant.

Tom Kuehl then presented the Poole Award to Jerry McWilliams for his contribution to bird study in Pennsylvania. Jerry, one of the editors of the original

Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas, has conducted many studies of birds in northwestern Pennsylvania.

Jerry McWilliams was also our dinner speaker. He presented an enjoyable lecture titled, "Presque Isle Bird Surveys." The talk included information about the International Shorebird Survey, Waterbird Count, and information about the Presque Isle Hawk Watch. Jerry ended his talk telling us a bit about his bicycle ride from Erie to Arizona.

We awakened on Sunday to a partly cloudy, cool morning, very enjoyable for those who returned to the park to bird. The meeting ended with a lot of satisfied birders.



Outgoing president Arlene Koch presents A.J. Lassick with the PSO Youth Scholarship Award, and A.J. thanks the group for making him feel welcomed. Photograph by Mark McConaughy



Jerry McWilliams receives the Earl Poole Award from our incoming president Tom Kuehl.

Photo by Mike Fialkovich

Meeting Field Trips – Another Take

by John Fedak

Unconventional, unprecedented, and unpredictable are a few words to describe the birding field trips to Presque Isle during the annual meeting. As Arlene Koch said, “This is Presque Isle!” Various trips were loosely led on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday to various locations on the isle. If you have ever been to Presque Isle, or if you were present this weekend, you will recognize Sidewalk Trail, Fry’s Landing, Pine Tree Trail, Gull Point, Beach 11, and many other locations. Birders familiar with the glory of Presque Isle – one of the best spots to bird in the state – grudgingly admit that the birds were not “dripping” from the branches, but the weekend provided a nice variety of birds for PSO members to find.

A Friday evening trip yielded American Woodcock and Whip-poor-will. On Saturday morning a calling Common Nighthawk and Chimney Swifts darting above the convention center started the bird fest. Deuane Hoffman located an American White Pelican in the bay off Beach 11, and because of the cell phone connections, the various groups arrived and enjoyed good looks before the pelican took flight. A Sandhill Crane was seen soaring high above Sidewalk Trail. Prairie and Tennessee Warblers were observed on Pine Tree Trail. Most of the other more commonly seen warblers were found as well. Willow and Great Crested Flycatchers seemed abundant. The cooperative nesting Great Horned Owls were present at the nest, and I heard lots of “oohs” and “ahhs,” both from PSO members and passersby with whom members shared their scopes and binoculars for their first birding experience. The most observed birds had to have been Yellow and Palm Warblers and Baltimore Orioles! My group of birders had more than 100 species on Saturday while Saturday’s total compiled at the banquet was 160. Without the usual afternoon speakers, most people stayed on the isle to bird during the afternoon. A few attended the afternoon programs presented by Arlene and Mark. But as Arlene said, “This is Presque Isle!” – so the majority of people chose to bird.

On Sunday, the field trips started on Presque Isle. Before we left the parking lot, a nice male Cape May Warbler gave us great looks as well as letting us connect its song with its beauty! At A Trail, a Wild Turkey gobbled many times. Bay-breasted Warblers made their appearance. In fact, there seemed to be more variety and more singing than on the previous day. Red-breasted Nuthatches, a male Blackpoll Warbler, and a scruffy-looking Indigo Bunting were observed near A Trail, and a Cooper’s Hawk’s nest with an attending parent was relocated.

Mourning and Connecticut Warblers were found, and a lucky few were able to see as well as hear them. Bobolinks, Bank Swallows, Merlin, and Common Loons were observed flying over the Isle. Black-billed Cuckoo, Red-headed Woodpecker, White-eyed Vireo and Prothonotary Warbler were located on Marsh Trail. An Eastern Screech-Owl was present at the junction of Marsh and Sidewalk Trails.

At about 11 a.m., trips to Pymatuning, and Geneva Marsh departed, allowing birders to record additional species that were not seen at Presque Isle. Ramsay Koury, Rudy Keller, and Mike Fialkovich in three separate groups noted Common Moorhen, Sora, Virginia Rail, Pied-billed Grebe, Black Tern, Brown Creeper, Ruddy Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, a flock of Sandhill Cranes, Least Sandpiper, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Northern Shoveler, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Acadian Flycatcher, Brown Creeper, Savannah Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and Purple Finch. The trips were quite successful for the birders who attended.



Mike and Laura Jackson photographed the American White Pelican as it took flight.

It was fun to watch all the birders with their pants tucked into their socks. It was great to see people that you like to be around but haven’t seen for at least a year. It was also nice to be around people to help you identify that song you just can’t place or to help you when you misidentify or totally miss hearing a song or seeing a bird. It was wonderful having so many pairs of eyes and ears at one of the best locations to bird in migration. It was nice being with persons who share a common interest. The weather cooperated – no rain, the temperature was comfortable, and the wind did not blow as hard as predicted.

So even though the branches were not “dripping” with birds, I think everyone enjoyed finding what was there. We listed a lot of species and a large number of birds. My groups alone found 123+ species while other groups went to Pymatuning and Geneva Marsh!

Unconventional trips, unprecedented afternoon birding, and unpredictable weather and migration – in the words of Rudy Keller, “Don’t count your ticks before they’re attached!” The total list of birds seen was 174! What may have seemed slow to birders familiar with Presque Isle was a huge success, and the weekend went by too fast. See you all next year, and bring all your birding buddies with you! (By the way, you did check yourself for ticks, didn’t you?)

A Lot to Learn

by Arlene Koch

On Memorial Day weekend I walked around the Rough and Tumble Kinzers fairgrounds in Lancaster County with my husband David, our two sons, daughters-in-law, and 6-year-old grandson Brandon. Through the years I've spent countless hours in the dirt and dust of tractor-pulling sites, hoping to see a few birds while the men in the family looked at, admired, and discussed tractor parts and tractors.

After leaving the fairgrounds we went to eat at a nearby diner, and on the way my grandson Brandon entertained us by reading bird information from an old National Geographic guide that I had given his father. Frankly, I was more than a little surprised to see him locating and reading about different species in the book, but this sudden interest no doubt came from the fact that his class recently went to the Rachel Carson building in Harrisburg to see the banding of two of the Peregrine Falcon chicks there. And I learned a lot from him. I learned that Golden Eagles are called golden because "they get the gold prize for being the biggest and strongest." And I also learned that if you have a pet Bald Eagle you have to feed it fish.

Brandon's still too young to understand that you can't have wild birds as pets. That talk will come later, and I'm sure that as he grows his interests will change. Next week he may want to be an astronaut. I'm not so naïve as to think that my passion will become his anymore than it did for my two sons. But I can hope.

This unexpected ornithological interlude among the dust and dirt made me think of how much I enjoyed the recent PSO meeting at Presque Isle, specifically being with those who are willing to both teach and learn.

Birding is about knowledge – acquiring it, putting it to use, and then passing it on to others. That premise was demonstrated over and over again by the experienced field trip leaders and by our banquet honoree, Jerry McWilliams. My thanks to all of them for making my job as outgoing president easier and also to all the other board members, especially Shonah Hunter and Mark McConaughy. Shonah always deftly handles the thankless job of acquiring accommodations and arranging the banquet, registration, and silent auction. Mark stepped in at the last minute with a program on digital imaging when the scheduled artist's workshop fell through.

Tom Kuehl is our new president; John Fedak, the new vice president; Frank Haas continues as treasurer, as does Roger Higbee as secretary; so we're in good hands. Margaret Higbee continues as newsletter editor, and I want to thank her for the great job she does for which she gets little recognition. As our family walked together into the diner David said to Brandon, "So, you've been

teaching Grandma about birds." And Brandon, who insisted on taking the Geographic guide in with him, replied, "Yeah, Pop-Pop, but she's got a lot to learn." And he was so right.

Ornithological Literature Notes

Raptors were the subjects of two presentations by Pennsylvania researchers at the 127th annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in Philadelphia last August.

* Nest site selection by Peregrine Falcons was discussed by Robert Wasilewski of the Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society, and F. Arthur McMorris and Daniel W. Brauning of the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

The authors noted that Peregrines historically nested mostly at natural cliff sites and seldom on human-made structures, but the pattern is now reversed in much of the U.S. A possible explanation is imprinting on the type of structure from which the parental birds fledged, perpetuating the pattern from post-DDT reintroductions when releases were primarily from human structures.

In one notable case, a Peregrine pair nested successfully on a bridge for two years, then on a natural cliff ledge 3.5 kilometers away for two years, and then on the original bridge for two more years. The example was discussed in overall contexts of Peregrine Falcons' nest site selection, site fidelity, and ongoing recovery in their historic U.S. range.

* Migration monitoring of Ospreys was discussed by Christopher J. Farmer, David R. Barber, and Keith L. Bildstein of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Kamran Safi of the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology in Germany, Ian Newton of the Monks Wood Research Station in the United Kingdom, and Mark Martell of Audubon Minnesota.

The team used satellite tracking of 61 Ospreys captured on their North American breeding grounds to estimate how well the species' populations are sampled by migration monitoring. Statistical analysis of the tracked birds' paths southward produced estimates of the probability of detecting migrants at continental and regional levels, as well as the likelihood that migrants' paths intersect with watch sites during southward migration.

These tracking data also enabled the team to analyze the geography of Ospreys' southbound migration. Results showed that the migrants' paths were concentrated on narrow fronts and that the Ospreys preferred to fly over land corridors rather than make large water crossings.

– Paul Hess

Conservation Corner

Gulf Coast Catastrophe – Congress Should Blame Itself

The recent oilrig explosion off the Louisiana coast, which claimed 11 lives and continues to spill 200,000 gallons of oil daily into the Gulf of Mexico, is jeopardizing not only the wildlife habitats and coastlines throughout the region, but also putting our fragile economy in great peril.

While officials from British Petroleum and government authorities work on the cleanup, talking heads and pundits are ramping up the blame game and are pointing fingers to score political points. Whatever the cause of the actual disaster, we should be pointing our fingers at the real culprit: the policy makers making energy policy that has left us dependent on fossil fuels for the past 30 years, even when we knew better. It's increasingly clear that this tragedy could have been prevented if Congress would simply have passed one piece of legislation that weaned America off fossil fuels and instead moved us toward cleaner energy sources.

For decades, environmental and energy experts have sounded the alarm on not just the dangers of offshore drilling, but on our unending dependence on fossil fuels which pose a clear and present danger to the United States' economic, environmental, and national security. Each time, these warnings have fallen on deaf ears. So in light of the latest catastrophe, how many \$20 billion oil spills does America have to witness before Congress puts our nation's interests ahead of big oil and passes a comprehensive climate and clean energy bill? Every day that Congress refuses to act on clean energy legislation, we miss the opportunity to create clean energy jobs for Americans that stay in America. That just hurts our economy, helps our enemies, and puts our security at risk.

In short, the real cause of the Gulf Coast oilrig disaster is our addiction to oil. Our continued reliance on 19th century, dirty energy sources like oil only increases the chance of another disaster like the one in the Gulf. Keep in mind that there are thousands of oilrigs off our coastline, and just one rig explosion is wreaking economic and environmental havoc, profoundly affecting the entire country. The birding, fishing, and tourism industries, vital to communities well beyond just the Gulf Coast, will feel the immediate impact of this man-made disaster, while the ripple effects will be felt globally and domestically.

While Congress debated climate and clean energy legislation over the past year, big polluters have often hyped the supposed increase in costs to taxpayers and damage they say clean energy legislation would do to our economy. However, Big Oil and their lobbyists are now conspicuously quiet as the price tag for cleaning up the mess they created steadily climbs from \$12 billion to \$20

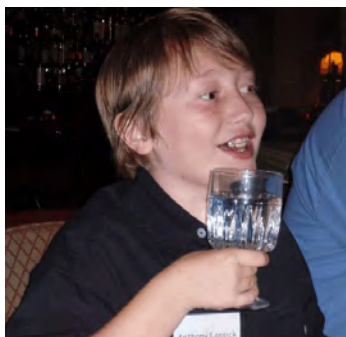
billion to who knows how many billions of dollars when all is said and done. That staggering price tag doesn't even take into account the countless number of jobs lost and other economic impacts in the wake of this oil spill. The economic costs are spreading like an oil slick itself.

Even as cleanup crews work to limit the devastating impact of this massive spill, lawmakers in Washington continue dithering when the long-term solution for preventing these types of disasters is right in front of their faces: pass climate and clean energy legislation. We just need more courage, conviction, and leadership from senators and members of Congress.

In the wake of the oil spill off Louisiana's coast, Big Oil will undoubtedly continue to fight energy reform with an army of well-compensated lobbyists and special interest groups. The question is will Congress show the backbone to buck them and do what is in the best interest of all Americans by passing comprehensive climate and clean energy legislation now? Will they learn a lesson from this and other dirty energy disasters and work together toward a stronger, more secure, and cleaner national energy future? America continues to wait for an answer to this vital question.

– Mark Henry

Youth Scholarship Awarded to AJ Lassick & Colter Johnson



AJ Lassick enjoys conversation at the banquet.

This year the Youth Scholarship Award was given to two young birders. Anthony (AJ) Lassick, 10 years of age, from Saltsburg, PA, joined us for the weekend at Presque Isle with his grandparents Gary and Theresa Adams. AJ was nominated by Roger Higbee of the Todd Bird Club in Indiana. AJ added many life birds to his list, and he especially enjoyed his visit to the banding station where he saw birds up close and was even given the

opportunity to release several of them after they had been banded.

He has been regularly attending Todd Bird Club meetings and the occasional outing for the past year. An active soccer player, AJ's Saturday mornings have been consumed with games and practice – a conflict for many of Todd's Saturday morning outings.

AJ writes, "I enjoy helping my grandparents... turn their yard into a bird paradise. I help choose food, plants, and feeders that will attract birds that are regulars to the area

(continued on page 9)

Summary of Results of Annual Mid-winter Bald Eagle Surveys Conducted in the Pittsburgh District between 1979 and 2010

Over the 32 years that the Pittsburgh District of the US Army Corps of Engineers has participated in the Annual Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey, wintering Bald Eagle populations have dramatically increased in the Allegheny, Monongahela, and upper Ohio River basins (including western Maryland, southwestern New York, northeastern Ohio, western Pennsylvania, and northern West Virginia). The Pittsburgh District's survey results for the period 1979-2010 clearly document the regional recovery of this "special status species." For the first 16 years of the survey (1979-94) the total numbers of Bald Eagles recorded annually in the Pittsburgh District numbered in single digits, ranging from no eagles observed in 1979, to a high of six in 1987. The numbers increased significantly in 1995 when a total of 15 were reported. During the period 1995-2001, totals ranged from 11 to 17 eagles recorded annually. The numbers increased even more dramatically in 2002 when 30 eagles were observed, followed by totals ranging from 36 in 2004, to as many as 70 in 2008 (the high count for the Pittsburgh District). A total of 60 eagles were recorded in 2010.

Another trend documented over the period of record is the increased distribution of wintering eagles around the Pittsburgh District from 1979 to 2010. This trend is reflected in the increased numbers of facilities in the Pittsburgh District recording eagles over this time period. During the first 16 years of the survey (1979-1994), Bald Eagles were recorded at only one to three projects in any given year. Eagles were recorded at five to seven projects per year during the period 1995-2001. Since 2002, eagles have been recorded at 10-17 projects per year.

– Mike Fowles, Fish and Wildlife Specialist

We Extend a Warm Welcome to Ramsay Koury



Ramsay Koury, our newest board member, elected on Friday, May 14, at Erie, was one of the Presque Isle field trip leaders.

Photo by Marge Van Tassel

Ramsay Koury from Camp Hill, PA, was elected to the board at our annual members' meeting on Friday evening, May 14, at Erie.

Ramsay began birding in the third grade. He has traveled extensively, both in the U.S. and abroad, but his favorite birding spots are still the Susquehanna River and Presque Isle State Park. He particularly enjoys the spectacle of migration, especially warblers, both spring and fall.

Currently on a leave of absence from the practice of dentistry, he now gets to spend most of his time enjoying what he loves most – birding. Ramsay has participated in many organized birding projects including Christmas Bird Counts, the Pennsylvania Migration Count, both Breeding Bird Atlases, and the Breeding Bird Survey, to name a few. A past president of Appalachian Audubon, he writes that he "looks forward to working with the great people at PSO."



Youth Scholarship Awarded

(continued from page 8)

and some items to bring in more exotic birds." They had a wonderful time during the weekend, and we all enjoyed meeting and birding with AJ. Thanks to Gary and Theresa for making it possible for AJ to join us.

Colter Johnson, 18 years of age, from Warren was nominated by John Fedak, his teacher. Colter grew up on

a farm and has had many opportunities to go birding. He says, it has now become a large part of his life. He is currently in the ornithology class in high school and is on the top Eco Team which completes well in the state Envirothon every year. In the fall, he plans to attend Alfred State College to major in biological sciences to become a wildlife biologist. Colter was not able to attend the weekend meeting, but we wish him well in his future birding pursuits.

Birds Listed at 2010 PSO Meeting at Erie

Canada Goose	Upland Sandpiper	Purple Martin	Blackburnian Warbler
Mute Swan	Least Sandpiper	Tree Swallow	Pine Warbler
Wood Duck	American Woodcock	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Prairie Warbler
Gadwall	Bonaparte's Gull	Bank Swallow	Palm Warbler
American Wigeon	Ring-billed Gull	Cliff Swallow	Bay-breasted Warbler
American Black Duck	Herring Gull	Barn Swallow	Blackpoll Warbler
Mallard	Great Black-backed Gull	Black-capped Chickadee	Cerulean Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Caspian Tern	Tufted Titmouse	Black-and-white Warbler
Greater Scaup	Common Tern	Red-breasted Nuthatch	American Redstart
Lesser Scaup	Forster's Tern	White-breasted Nuthatch	Prothonotary Warbler
Long-tailed Duck	Rock Pigeon	Brown Creeper	Ovenbird
Red-breasted Merganser	Mourning Dove	Carolina Wren	Northern Waterthrush
Ruddy Duck	Black-billed Cuckoo	House Wren	Connecticut Warbler
Wild Turkey	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Winter Wren	Mourning Warbler
Common Loon	Eastern Screech-Owl	Marsh Wren	Common Yellowthroat
Pied-billed Grebe	Common Nighthawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Hooded Warbler
American White Pelican	Whip-poor-will	Blue-gray Kinglet	Wilson's Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Eastern Screech-Owl	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Canada Warbler
American Bittern	Great Horned Owl	Eastern Bluebird	Scarlet Tanager
Great Blue Heron	Chimney Swift	Veery	Eastern Towhee
Great Egret	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Swainson's Thrush	Chipping Sparrow
Green Heron	Belted Kingfisher	Hermit Thrush	Field Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Red-headed Woodpecker	Wood Thrush	Savannah Sparrow
Osprey	Red-bellied Woodpecker	American Robin	Song Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Downy Woodpecker	Gray Catbird	Lincoln's Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Mockingbird	Swamp Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Northern Flicker	Brown Thrasher	White-throated Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Pileated Woodpecker	European Starling	White-crowned Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Eastern Wood-Pewee	American Pipit	Dark-eyed Junco
American Kestrel	Acadian Flycatcher	Cedar Waxwing	Northern Cardinal
Merlin	Alder Flycatcher	Blue-winged Warbler	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Peregrine Falcon	Willow Flycatcher	Golden-winged Warbler	Indigo Bunting
Sora	Least Flycatcher	Tennessee Warbler	Bobolink
Virginia Rail	Eastern Phoebe	Orange-crowned Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
Common Moorhen	Great Crested Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler	Eastern Meadowlark
American Coot	Eastern Kingbird	Northern Parula	Rusty Blackbird
Sandhill Crane	White-eyed Vireo	Yellow Warbler	Common Grackle
Black-bellied Plover	Yellow-throated Vireo	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Semipalmated Plover	Blue-headed Vireo	Magnolia Warbler	Orchard Oriole
Killdeer	Warbling Vireo	Cape May Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Greater Yellowlegs	Red-eyed Vireo	Black-throated Blue Warbler	Purple Finch
Lesser Yellowlegs	Blue Jay	Yellow-rumped Warbler	House Finch
Solitary Sandpiper	American Crow	Black-throated Green	American Goldfinch
Spotted Sandpiper			House Sparrow

Total = 174 species

What a great meeting and what fabulous field trips!!! We broke the record on the number of species ever recorded at a PSO meeting. Special thanks to all the trip leaders for sharing their bird-finding talents and knowledge.



2010 Meeting Participants

Adams, Gary
 Adams, Theresa
 Berthoud, Charles
 Bierly, Diane
 Blatchley, Carolyn
 Blust, Barry
 Blye, Robert
 Bolgiano, Nick
 Brauning, Dan
 Burgdorf, Greg
 Cook, Bob
 Cook, Ruth
 Dennis, Jim
 Dennis, Nancy
 Eakin, Richard
 Earle, Jane
 Fedak, John
 Fialkovich, Michael
 Galli, Joan

Gauthier, Vern
 Grim, Deborah
 Grove, Deb
 Grove, Greg
 Guba, Carol
 Higbee, Margaret
 Higbee, Roger
 Hoffman, Deuane
 Howard, Jerry
 Howard, Majorie
 Hunter, Shonah
 Jackson, Laura
 Jackson, Mike
 Kauffman, Chad
 Keller, Rudy
 Kiernan, Nancy-Ellen
 Koch, Arlene
 Koury, Ramsay
 Kuehl, Janet

Kuehl, Tom
 Labar, Sherri
 Lassick, Anthony
 Laubscher, Wayne
 Lynch, Pat
 Lynch, Sherron
 Manlove, Betsy
 McConaughy, Mark
 McWilliams, Jerry
 Mescavage, Betsy
 Petrick, Cindy
 Reigle, Carol
 Rutbell, Margie
 Schaffer, Carol
 Schaffer, Jeff
 Sieminski, Kathleen
 Skellie, David
 Skellie, Fran

Smith, Jim
 Smith, Rita
 Snyder, Donald
 Solomon, Jack
 Solomon, Sue
 Sterrett, Mary
 Tautin, John
 Tirone, Steve
 Turn, Chris
 Van Tassel, Marge
 Verica, Joseph
 Wagner, Linda
 Williams, Fran
 Williams, Jack
 Winslow, Alan
 Winslow, Carole
 Wolf, Ellie
 Wolf, Richard

A Little Bit of PSO History

At our recent 21st annual meeting in Erie, someone questioned where we've met in the past. Below are the locations of our previous meetings and the number of species tallied at each.

Year	Location	Species Noted
1990	Lock Haven	64
1991	Crystal Lake Camp	?
1992	Presque Isle	158
1993	Millersville	122
1994	Powdermill	126
1995	Hazleton	126
1996	Slippery Rock	142
1997	Mont Alto	133
1998	Mansfield	129
1999	Morgantown	115
2000	Green County	103
2001	State College	126
2002	East Stroudsburg	141
2003	Indiana	141 + 1 hybrid
2004	Montour Preserve	157
2005	Clarion	131
2006	Ligonier	166
2007	Harrisburg	170 + 1 hybrid
2008	Pittsburgh	134
2009	Morgantown	134 + 2 hybrids
2010	Presque Isle	174



Bob and Ruth Cook have attended every PSO annual meeting since our very first. They are pictured here at the banquet at Erie.



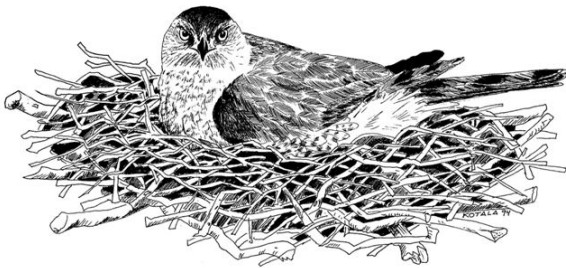
Maybe you were there. Field trip participants wait patiently for the Connecticut Warbler to sing.

Photo by Mike Fialkovich

Answers to Bird Quiz

(page 3)

1. Toftrees Pond
2. Bewick's Wren
3. Frankstown Branch of the Juniata River
4. Black Rail (in Centre County) and Purple Gallinule (in Clinton County)
5. "Cassiar" Junco, the *cismontanus* subspecies



PSO Newsletter

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