



## From the President's Desk....

What an exciting winter! Even though there has been a dearth of winter finches, the Snowy Owls have made up for it with a vengeance. Vast multitudes of Snowies have made it south from the far north. I used to think that they were coming south because of a lack of food. But I was corrected and have altered my viewpoint on that subject. The owls that we have captured have painted a picture of well-fed owls...mostly young, but well fed. PSO had the opportunity to connect with Project SNOWstorm this past winter, and we sponsored the cost of a cellular transmitter. They are fairly costly, but since PSO was able, we decided to spend it on this worthwhile project. If you would like to help offset the costs, feel free to make a donation when you renew your membership!

In January, a transmitter was fitted to a Snowy Owl captured at the Erie International Airport. Much data have been gleaned from this and other owls captured this winter. Our owl was nicknamed Erie for the city in which he was captured. After he was released, he started transmitting data to the researchers. Erie has spent a lot of time on the ice of Lake Erie, presumably hunting gulls and ducks in the little open water that remained this winter. Check out his travels on [www.projectsnowstorm.org](http://www.projectsnowstorm.org), where Erie and the other owls with transmitters are discussed and their travels mapped.



Howard Eskin photographed this striking Snowy Owl near Souderton this past December.

Many items that have caught the attention of the PSO board this past winter. Wind turbine farms are being suggested for locations that would possibly kill migrating raptors, bats, and other bird species. Bills are being proposed that are harmful to the environments that our avian species require to prosper. Money is being cut from valuable programs that benefit birds. We find out about these topics through you, our members. Members are a vital asset to what PSO can accomplish. Members are our network. Without members, we might miss vital issues that PSO should address.

In that vein I am asking that you continue to renew your membership, that you talk to your friends about joining PSO, and that you ask other birders whether they are members. Our membership is strong, but we can be stronger. The board voted to lower the cost of electronic student memberships to \$10. We have kept our membership costs as low as we possibly can. Help us to reach the birders across the state who still ask, "What is PSO?"

PSO is our membership. That is who we are. We get involved in avian/ornithological research and developments. We publish one of the best ornithological journals that I have seen. We conduct field trips for members and nonmembers alike. We try to publicize information about other birding organizations and their trips and accomplishments. If you are a member of a local bird club, send us information about your projects and events. We will

do our best to help you publicize those events. For example, Presque Isle Audubon is having their Birding Festival the weekend of May 10. Presque Isle is an awesome location to bird. Members near Erie that weekend should check this out.

Take a moment to imagine what we could do with more members. Imagine what could be accomplished.

The Pennsylvania Annual Migration Count (PAMC) is coming up quickly on May 10. We have compilers for almost every county. If you can fill a void, please do. Last year we collected data from every county but one. Let's try to fix that this year! I would like to see us collect data from every county. It is doable, so let's do it!

This year's Annual Meeting will be held in Bradford (McKean County) June 6 through the 8<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will include wonderful presentations, great vendors, a raptor show specifically for young birders, and an internationally renowned author who will be our banquet speaker. This event is worth attending and even worthwhile for your family. Suites with more than one bedroom are available if you would like to bring your entire family or even if you would like to have roommates to help lower your cost. Bring your children for the raptor show!

Field trips have been planned. We will be working all spring trying to locate the birds that everyone would like to see. The trips will be limited to 20 persons each, so register for the meeting early and pick the trips you would like to attend. I hope to locate owls for a Friday evening outing, and possibly even the Eastern Whip-poor-will that visited a local game lands in past years!

Vendors will be offering a variety of items from plants to art, to shirts, to collectable Zippo lighters! Bring a little extra spending money to help support our vendors!

As my tenure as president winds down, I want you to know that I enjoyed working with and for you. I hope that I managed to make some improvements, and I hope I managed to accomplish some lasting objectives. Thank you for your confidence in me, and thank you for letting me serve you.

Good birding as always!

– John Fedak, President  
Bradford County  
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## Finding the Mac

by Sue Hannon

Half an hour's wait for a prescription turned into an exciting discovery at Highspire Reservoir Park on November 22, 2013. I arrived planning to merely look at the ducks, geese, and herons on the reservoir, but a glimpse of a Golden-crowned Kinglet lured me onto the trail. As I was trying to get a good shot lined up in my camera viewfinder, I was astonished to see a flash of yellow pass across my view just in front of the kinglet.

Vivid yellow. *Warbler* yellow? I pulled away from the camera just in time to see a brilliant golden undertail disappear around a pile of logs. Yes, it was a warbler, and it was one I had never seen before. And, in late November, it was one that definitely did not belong here! I strained to hear or see where the mystery warbler had gone, determined that I was *not* leaving the park without a usable ID photo or at least a good description of its field marks.



Sue Hannon photographed "her" MacGillivray's Warbler at Highspire, Dauphin Co. in November.

Suddenly I heard a chip and spotted a flash of bright yellow, half hidden behind tangled leaves and vines, on a branch a few inches above the top of the log pile. For half a moment it crept under cover along the branch then darted across a few feet of open air, disappearing under more vegetation at the base of a nearby tree. I could follow its movement as it hopped along under a row of low brush, so I waited. After about

fifteen minutes, it finally popped out into the open and paused, looking around. I squeezed off half a dozen shots with the camera then pulled up my binoculars to get a good look. It sure was a cute little thing; but I had no clue what kind of warbler it was. So I pulled out my field journal and did my best to jot the most thorough notes I could.

This tiny bird was a bit larger than a chickadee, with

olive-toned back and wings, a blue-gray head and throat with a slightly darker smudge of gray where the throat gave way to a brilliant yellow breast and belly. It had a long, pointy bill, subtly broken white eye-ring, pink legs, and a long tail. The undertail was yellow all the way to the end, even brighter yellow than the breast. The bird continued foraging along the ground, constantly chipping as it hopped about. Even after it ducked back under cover and disappeared, I could hear its chip note as it moved farther from the trail.

Even with a pair of excellent field guides, I could not positively ID the bird. It didn't quite match any of the images in Sibley or in the *Stokes Field Guide to Warblers*. But my experience has been that the birds I see do not always exactly match the field guide illustrations, and fall warbler plumages offer even more variation than breeding plumages, so I tried to figure out which of the several similar possibilities was the closest and most likely. The blue-gray head and yellow underside quickly reduced the possibilities to very few birds, and of the options available, I settled on "maybe a Nashville."

Well, I was wrong! Within a minute of posting a photo on Facebook, someone responded that it was definitely not a Nashville; it looked like a Mourning. I googled "Mourning Warbler," and a few of the images that appeared did rather look like the bird in my pictures. I then posted the sighting to the PABIRDS listserv with a link to my pictures, and within a very few minutes received half a dozen responses, with nearly as many alternative IDs, including Alex Lamoreaux's suggestion it might be a MacGillivray's Warbler, the Mourning Warbler's western counterpart. As the MacGillivray's is a bird of western North America, I had not even considered it, but when I looked it up, it seemed like a good match.

The next morning, the crowds began. More than a dozen birders had already gathered around the first big bend in the nature trail when I arrived, and more continued to appear. The bird had been seen and heard a little while earlier, but had been silent for some minutes before I got there. It was exciting to be part of what felt like a big event. Yesterday's sighting had been a completely unexpected treat. Today there were serious expectations in the air. Everyone spoke in hushed voices and attempted to move along the gravel trail as soundlessly as possible, with all attention focused on one thing: a tiny bird thousands of miles from where it belonged, an unseen but palpable presence moving about in the brushy vegetation foraging for bugs to eat.

Whenever the bird showed itself, however briefly, the

clicking of camera shutters sounded all around me. Fortunately, that did not appear to disturb the bird, as it gave several opportunities for good long looks at it. With a wealth of photographic and video evidence, as well as physical observations by a number of skilled birders, it was quickly settled that the Highspire bird was a first-year male MacGillivray's Warbler, a bird that should have been somewhere in Central America, only the 2<sup>nd</sup> PA record and a Dauphin County first. Over the next two weeks, "the Mac" was a mini-celebrity, seen, photographed, and enjoyed by birders who traveled from all over PA and neighboring states to see him. I did not get the names of nearly everyone who made the trip, but I did compile a list of more than 175.

In two and a half weeks, it was a rare thing for the Mac to disappoint his public. Every day, he delighted visitors with his colorful presence as he offered one golden opportunity after another for great looks and photographs. He quickly established a pattern, covering a territory stretching maybe a quarter mile along the nature trail, moving from one end to the other several times a day, foraging in clear view of the trail, bathing in the little pools or streams that feed the reservoir, or perching atop the pile of logs where I first saw him, for hours each day.

The MacGillivray's Warbler brought with him a chance to observe a rarity, but he also brought so much more. For the Borough of Highspire, it brought their great little nature trail to a level of public notice they had not previously achieved, and for the neighboring community, a lot of opportunities to be educated about birds and birders. For area birders, it brought awareness of a new and exciting place to bird locally. For me, it was a stimulus to learn as much as I could about the species, and a chance to meet so many birders in person.

He was last seen and photographed on December 9, in a snowstorm that deposited 1-2 inches of white stuff in Highspire. It was a few days after the snow before I could return to the park, and when I got there, I could find no sign of him. As far as I know, he has not been seen since then. I still listen and watch for him every time I walk the trail, although by now I don't expect to see him again.

I wonder a lot about where he came from and how he got here, why he stayed, and then why so suddenly, he left – these questions will remain unanswered. That's okay. I don't need to know everything. What I do know is that for seventeen days, one tiny wanderer brought color and excitement to a dreary end-of-autumn for me and for many other area birders.

# Planned Field Trips

**March 16 – Tussey Mountain Spring Hawkwatch** near State College, Centre County. This is one of the best areas in the eastern hemisphere to see and count migrating Golden Eagles. Last year we picked the right day, but most of us had already left and missed the final push of dozens of Golden Eagles. The count begins at the end of February and continues for about two months. Break out your winter coat and gloves and experience the northern push of raptors. Dress warmly! Expect cold and wind. Everyone is welcome to participate. Meet in the parking lot at 11:00 a.m.

**April 25-27 – Derby Hill Hawkwatch**, located along the shore of Lake Ontario in New York State. This should be the peak of the Broad-winged Hawk migration, and we could have four- or five-digit days. We will plan to check the waterfowl in Oswego Harbor and bird Montezuma NWR. We will also consider trying for any nearby chase birds. Spots will be limited, and members will be given preference. Please sign up as soon as possible as we have lodging reserved. For more information, see <http://www.hawkcount.org/siteinfo.php?rsite=358> and <http://www.friendsofmontezuma.org>.

**May 2-3 – Shavers Creek Birding Cup.** This 24-hour birding fund-raiser sports several different categories to enjoy. For more information check out their link, <http://shaverscreek.org/public-programs-and-events/birding-cup/>.

**May 10 – The 23<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania Migration Count (PAMC).** This all-day snapshot of birds takes place in almost all of our 67 counties. We are very proud of the amount of participation. Few states still participate in the migration count, but the PAMC has continued for many years. For more information, check out the PSO's website at <http://www.pabirds.org/PAMC/Index.html>.

**May 16-18** – This field trip to **Presque Isle** in Erie County, led by Mike Leahy, will target migrants. Plans include a stop at the grasslands of northwestern PA for rare species including Upland Sandpiper, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Henslow's Sparrow.

**June 6-8** – Our annual **PSO meeting** in McKean County. For more information, see the articles in this newsletter or visit the PSO website at <http://www.pabirds.org/>.

**Late June or July – Maine Birding Extravaganza**, led by Mike Lanzone. Join PSO for a five-day trip to Maine's northern coast, starting near Portland and ending near Cutler. We will bird various habitats both inland and coastal. Several half- and full-day options for pelagic birding will also add many species to our lists! Join us for the entire time or just part of the time. Details will be forthcoming. Highlights of this trip could include Atlantic Puffin, Razorbill, Common Murre, Arctic Tern, Roseate Tern, Northern Fulmar, Great/South Polar Skua, Manx Shearwater, Red-billed Tropicbird, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Bicknell's Thrush, Spruce Grouse, and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher.

**August – Shorebirding** along the Atlantic coast. Possibilities include Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, or Virginia.

**September, October, and November Hawkwatch** trips. We eventually will visit every PA hawkwatch on PSO field trips. Anyone is welcome to come. Details will follow.

**October 11-12 – The Big Sit**, a birding project of *Birdwatcher's Digest*, is a fun way to do a whole lot of nothing but birding. Last year was the first year that birding was permitted on both Saturday and Sunday. In previous years the Big Sit was on Sundays only. This opened up options for birders. While our state won't list the most birds, we almost always lead in the largest number of circles. For more information, check out the site, <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit/index.php>.

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Members of the field trip committee are open to ideas for field trips, suggestions, and help. If you or your group are having outings or trips, please consider joining with PSO to allow more opportunities for our members and non-members alike. Check out the PSO website link for the latest updates and changes at <http://www.pabirds.org/Events/Events.php>.

Event information and sign-ups are available on the PSO facebook page found at <https://www.facebook.com/pabirds>.

# The Great Backyard Bird Count Revisited

by Holly Merker

The 2014 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was held February 14-17, and Pennsylvania ranked as one of the top states in participation again this year.

Launched in 1998 as a joint venture between the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, the GBBC boasted the title of the first online citizen science project providing real time results. This project gave the general public the first opportunity to contribute their backyard bird sightings through a vetted online database, providing researchers and participants alike a window to view data instantly. This allowed a “big picture” view of birdlife and bird distribution across the country during the annual four-day window while engaging those interested in the study of the birds in their own backyards. The project has been enormously successful, and Pennsylvania has consistently ranked in the top three states in the amount of data provided to the GBBC.

In 2013, the GBBC data merged with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s eBird, a 24/7 avian citizen science project. In partnering with eBird, the GBBC expanded to include global participation, allowing for an even broader over-

view of birdlife around the globe. This year, the project also partnered with Bird Studies Canada and was sponsored by Wild Birds Unlimited.

To enter data, participants went through either the GBBC website or the eBird website (eBird.org), or here in Pennsylvania, our state portal (ebird.org/content/pa/). To make data entry even easier, a free App for smart phones was available through BirdLog, who developed an App popularly used in the last few years for eBird data entry. Weeks in advance of the GBBC, Cornell Lab of Ornithology released its newest tool for bird identification: “Merlin Bird ID,” an App that helps the user identify a bird by a series of questions and answers.

The GBBC was advertised widely through various birding websites, and in some regions, articles appeared in newspapers and other media to encourage participation.

The 2014 GBBC results rank Pennsylvania third in the amount of participation globally, following only California and New York.

State/Province	Number of Species	Number of Checklists
California	364	8,761
New York	166	8,071
Pennsylvania	139	7,194
Ontario	146	6,329
Texas	349	5,686

Here in Pennsylvania, checklists (each report is a checklist) came from each of the 67 counties. Within the state, the two bottom corners reflect the highest level of participation, which is not surprising since they are

densely populated with people. Allegheny held the highest number of checklists submitted, followed by Chester and Montgomery. Counties with the fewest checklists included Forest, Cameron, and Wyoming.

Pennsylvania County	Number of Checklists Submitted
Allegheny	743
Chester	697
Montgomery	503
Bucks	413
Berks	331

One hundred thirty-nine bird species were reported in Pennsylvania through eBird and GBBC. Berks County birders pulled their county to the top of the leader board

with a total of 94 species reported. Forest County came in with the fewest species at 15.

<b>Pennsylvania County</b>	<b>Total Species Observed</b>
Berks	94
Northampton	92
Lancaster	91
Allegheny	90
Cumberland	86

The totals represent only species accepted into the eBird/GBBC database and does not include species reported that were not verified by an eBird editor. Pennsylvania has a team of eBird editors around the state, who are working hard to ensure the best possible data quality. The GBBC presents a challenge because some species can be trickier to identify for the less experienced bird-watcher. To help catch potential errors in commonly misidentified species, eBird data filters were specially tailored for the four-day period. This allowed fewer species options for the participants, and offered the most likely birds to appear at feeders during this count. The review process will continue for several weeks past the count, as late reports were accepted through 2/28, and this process is time consuming for the volunteer editors.

GBBC data highlighted species that had stronger showings at feeding stations this winter, especially after the volumes of snowfall prior to and during the count

period. Some irregular winter feeder birds with a stronger than typical presence included: Eastern Towhees, Fox Sparrows, and American Tree Sparrows.

No true rarities were uncovered as a result of the count this year, but some of the of the species highlights, most of which were entered through eBird, were: Trumpeter Swan, multiple Red-necked Grebes, Golden Eagle, multiple Snowy Owls, and a continuing Bullock’s Oriole.

Overall, 2014 proved to be another successful year for the GBBC in terms of participation and data entry across the state. This speaks to the popularity and interest in watching and feeding birds here in Pennsylvania, and interest in citizen science projects.

To further view results, or to learn more about how you can participate next year, go to: <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>.

## **Certificates of Appreciation Awarded**

PSO has issued certificates of appreciation to individuals and organizations who have allowed access to their properties to view vagrants. The total number issued is

now 113. The full list can be found on the PSO’s website. Since last March, the following Certificates of Appreciation have been awarded to:

- Black-chinned Hummingbird, Dale and Helen Gearhart, Franklin Co.
- MacGillivray’s Warbler, Sue Hannon, Dauphin Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Marie and Bill Hartranft, Berks Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Kate Hastings, Northumberland Co.
- LeConte’s Sparrow, Harold and Margaret Lehman, Cumberland Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Scott Kinzey, Allegheny Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Barbara Malt, Lehigh Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Sherri and Donny Ney, Schuylkill Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Jeff Payne, Somerset Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Bob and Kathy Pruznick, Northampton Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Jo and Jim Smoker, Berks Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Wendi and Bill Wetzel, Lehigh Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Mary Zeigler, Centre Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Robert & Teresa Tule, Lycoming Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Harold and Betty Klase, Juniata Co.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Bob and Tina Swarner, Juniata Co.

(continued on page 7 bottom)



Geoff Malosh photographed Scott Kinzey’s Rufous in Allegheny County.

# Ornithological Literature Notes

Check the Cerulean Warbler account in *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania*, and you will see a remarkable change in this species' distribution and abundance in recent decades. Scott Stoleson and Cameron Rutt documented the decline in block occupancy across southwestern Pennsylvania during the 20 years since the first atlas. The southwestern counties have traditionally been a stronghold for the species in our state.

At the same time Stoleson and Rutt described a gradual range expansion in progress toward the north and east. This expansion, however, does not offset the state's overall 28% decline in relative abundance shown by the North American Breeding Survey during that same period.

Shannon Curley at East Stroudsburg University, Terry Master at the university, and Gregory George at Delaware Valley College in Doylestown investigated Ceruleans' abundance, distribution, and habitat preferences in one expansion area in eastern Pennsylvania. The results were published in 2012 in *Ornitologia Neotropical* (23:351 - 357), the journal of the Neotropical Ornithological Society.

The authors' investigation focused on the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in parts of Monroe, Northampton, and Pike counties in Pennsylvania and Sussex and Warren counties in New Jersey. Habitat composition was measured and bird surveys were

conducted in June 2009 and May - June 2010 along transects that ran parallel to the Delaware River.

The researchers found that the warblers' nesting territories were primarily characterized by black walnut, American sycamore, sugar maple, green ash, and slippery elm. Black walnut was the tree species most often used by Ceruleans as a song perch. The authors speculated that it might be preferred because it is a late leaf-out species. Late leaf-out trees could provide less dense foliage, enabling better song transmission and increased visibility for territorial males.

Those findings indicate that Cerulean Warblers are accepting a much broader array of nesting habitats than the species' traditionally known preference for oaks in many areas of Pennsylvania. The northern red oak was the most common tree in the surveyed area, yet it occurred least frequently in Cerulean Warbler territories than would have been expected statistically.

This warbler's acceptance of a wider variety of nest trees is welcome news because oaks have been declining severely in recent decades. As Pennsylvania's Cerulean Warblers expand eastward and northward, they are finding suitable substitutes.

—Paul Hess  
Natrona Heights, PA  
phess@salsgiver.com

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## Certificates of Appreciation Awarded (continued from page 6)

Rufous Hummingbird, Candy Messinger, York Co.  
Rufous Hummingbird, Dan Bogar, Perry Co.  
Rufous Hummingbird, Mary Ache, Montgomery Co.  
Rufous Hummingbird, Gary Freed, Montgomery Co.  
Rufous Hummingbird, John and Gibby Vogel, Somerset Co.  
Rufous Hummingbird, Karen Hall, Lycoming Co.  
Rufous Hummingbird, Diane Dincher, Lycoming Co.  
Bahama Woodstar, Delmas and Ruth Witmer and family, Lancaster Co.  
Rufous Hummingbird, Becky Smith, Allegheny Co.  
Rufous Hummingbird, Kim Marasco, Allegheny Co.  
Rufous Hummingbird, Bernice and Anthony Ziniewicz, Luzerne Co.  
Rufous Hummingbird, Alane Younger, Lehigh Co.  
Common Redpoll, Kim Steininger, Chester Co.



This Bahama Woodstar was photographed by Michael Burkholder.

# The Raven Reporter

Tales of  
Discovery about  
Pennsylvania  
Birds

## Rusty Blackbird Spring Blitz

The Rusties are coming! Rusty Blackbirds are moving northward from their southeastern U.S. wintering grounds, and they are headed towards Pennsylvania. Some are already here. So get ready to go out to search. After the winter of the Snowy Owl, a boreal bird of winter, we have another boreal bird that migrates through the state – the elusive Rusty Blackbird. The Rusty Blackbird Spring Migration Blitz officially opened in Pennsylvania on March 15. We encourage all birders to participate. Helping out is easy. Go birding as you normally do and search especially carefully for Rusty Blackbirds and report your results to PA eBird under the “Rusty Blackbird Spring Migration Blitz” survey header in the drop-down list of options. For more information on Blitz objectives, along with Rusty Blackbird identification tips, data collection instructions, and data reporting information, additional resources are available at the International Rusty Blackbird Working Group website: <http://rustyblackbird.org/outreach/migration-blitz/>. We hope you’ll “get Rusty” with us to help conserve this elusive and vulnerable songbird. The PA eBird story can be found here: <http://ebird.org/content/pa/>.

Have you heard a squeaky-hinge song lately, or seen a flash of rust-tipped feathers under a bright yellow eye? Although occasionally overlooked as “just another blackbird,” Rusty Blackbirds face an unfortunate and remarkable notoriety. This species has endured a decline more severe than that of any other once common, still living, land bird.

Pennsylvania has plenty of Rusty Blackbird habitat. They visit the muddy edges of our streams, our wetlands, and our wet woods and thickets. Unlike other blackbirds, they are not commonly found in agricultural settings. Rusty Blackbirds are often found where Wood Ducks, American Black Ducks, Wilson’s Snipe, American Woodcock, or Solitary Sandpipers can be found in migration. Although



our state plays no role in the nesting phase of its life cycle and a very minor one in its winter range, our state may be quite important in its stopover migration. A large percentage of the Rusties that nest in New England and eastern Canada probably migrate through Pennsylvania on their way to southern swamplands. We’re on the Rusty migration highway.

Pennsylvania’s challenge is to find Rusties where birders do not normally go. Rusties often visit the out-of-the way places. Add another county to your list of Rusty hot-spots. Those PA birders who participated in the Breeding Bird Atlas probably know some locations in their old Atlas blocks where Rusties might be found.

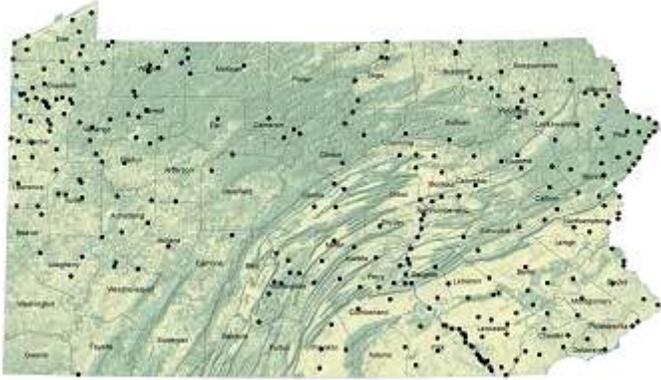
In March of 2014, the International Rusty Blackbird Working Group, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, eBird, and other state, federal, and local partners including the PA Game Commission, launched a Rusty Blackbird Spring Migration Blitz that challenges birders to scour the landscape for Rusty Blackbirds during this species’ northward migration. Thirty-eight states, nine provinces, and three territories will participate in this international effort to locate Rusty Blackbirds; each region is assigned a set of target dates during which local birders will seek this elusive species. The Spring Blitz continues in Pennsylvania until the end of April because some Rusty Blackbirds are still migrating through the northern counties or higher elevations at that time. It might be an opportunity (or an excuse) to go searching for Rusties in new places you have never birded before. Pennsylvania has hundreds of miles of streambanks that have potential for Rusties. These Icterids often forage and roost in different places, finding treed areas for nightly rest and shallow water for foraging. Rusty Blackbird habitats include many of the most rural counties that are poorly covered by birders and eBird.

Also, follow Rusty Blackbird Spring Blitz on Facebook for the most up-to-date information about the Blitz: <https://www.facebook.com/rustyblackbirdspringblitz>

Pennsylvania Rusty Blackbird Coordinators are Doug Gross of the PA Game Commission and Bob Mulvihill of the National Aviary.

[Parts of this announcement were written by the International Rusty Blackbird Working Group.]

## Bald Eagle Officially Upgraded to Secure in Pennsylvania



Bald Eagle nests are now found across Pennsylvania and in 57 counties. There were 271 nests recorded in 2013 season, but we know that there were some unreported nests.

Map by Patti Barber

At the public meeting of the PGC Board of Commissioners, the Bald Eagle was officially removed from the list of the state's threatened species. It was a unanimous vote by the PGC BOC to upgrade the species. The vote by the commissioners followed a 60-day public comment period which had followed a previous public meeting in September where Patti Barber, the Endangered Birds biologist for PGC, presented the reasons for "delisting" the Bald Eagle.

The Board of Game Commissioners on January 31 voted unanimously reclassify the Bald Eagle as a Pennsylvania "protected" species. The commissioners' vote follows the close of a 60-day period to accept public comments on the proposal. Thanks to all PSO members and eagle-lovers everywhere for making comments on the delisting proposal. Your comments are very much appreciated. The Bald Eagle was proposed to a working group of the BOC as early as August by Doug Gross who was preparing the Board for the September meeting. This working group meeting is open to the press, so some media outlets were announcing the probable intentions of the agency well before the September meeting. So, this process of a delisting proposal for Bald Eagle has been a very public and transparent one.

The basic reason for the delisting and upgrade in status of Bald Eagle is that its population has met the criteria set for such a status change in its publicly discussed Bald Eagle Management Plan. The Plan called for delisting when four criteria are met for a five-year span. That happened in 2013, when 271 Bald Eagle nests were documented in 57 Pennsylvania counties, and there were an average of 1.2 fledglings per successful nest. The

reasoning behind delisting has already been described in October 2013 Raven Reporter.

At the January public BOC meeting, Barber explained to the commissioners that 65 comments were submitted in the public comment process, 52 of them supporting delisting Bald Eagle. Of the 13 comments that opposed delisting, 10 of them cited concern that delisting would somehow leave eagles more vulnerable and less protected. However, that suspicion is simply not the case. These protections also were described previously in a Raven Reporter column, basically that the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act gives a lot of authority to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect eagle nests.

As mentioned in previous columns, the PGC will continue to monitor nests but with less emphasis on nest success and productivity. The PGC will rely more on volunteers to find and monitor nests. Your help is very much appreciated. Please send your observations, especially those involving newly found nests, to Patti Barber.



In 2013, 271 Bald Eagle nests were documented in 57 Pennsylvania counties, with an average of 1.2 fledglings per successful nest.

Photo by Hal Korber

We are fortunate that this bird is so charismatic and popular with the general public. There is widespread support for protection. The PGC has been promoting public education about eagles, broadening our approach with a new video camera view of the Hays nest in Pittsburgh. It is hoped that this video will provide inspiration to many to enjoy and respect eagles and all that they represent in the state. With an increasingly high percentage of the public living in the urban landscape, far removed from nature, eagle education may reach many who otherwise do not have the opportunity to experience the nature of tooth and claw. There are risks accompanying this educational experience, but we feel that these are worth the opportunity to expose more people to the wonderful world of wild eagles.

### **The 200th Anniversary of Alexander Wilson's American Birds**

American ornithology was born in Pennsylvania. Philadelphia was its birthplace and the first real American ornithologist, Alexander Wilson, lived there. Born on July 6, 1766, in Paisley, Scotland, Alex Wilson was known in his homeland by friends and family as "Sandy." He was a fairly successful poet who often wrote and advocated for the rights of working men, especially weavers. Sandy got into a little legal trouble in Scotland and sought new opportunities in young America. The idealism of America probably appealed to young Wilson. In Philadelphia, Wilson taught school and edited an encyclopedia to make a living. There he met William Bartram who was America's foremost naturalist. It was a fortuitous meeting for the future of the country's natural history study.

Wilson's nine-volume *American Ornithology* was not only the first important document of American ornithology but also the first major scientific publication of the young United States. Wilson working tirelessly on this project from 1803 until his untimely death in 1813. The herculean project may have killed him. Wilson often worked day and night on the project, ignoring his own health and welfare. On his way to finishing this massive literary undertaking, he traveled more than 12,000 miles through all 15 states and 4 territories of the fledgling United States. These trips led him through New England in 1808, the southern states in 1809, and west as far as New Orleans in 1810. While on these trips, he not only observed birds and collected specimens, but he also solicited subscribers. As part of these studies, he discovered 26 bird species. He not only wrote 314 species accounts but also provided illustrations for all of them.

His illustrations may suffer from comparison with Audubon and later artists, but Wilson was a self-taught illustrator whose approach was often pragmatic, fitting several species on one plate. Because of a lack of finances due to the pinching of the American economy as a result of the War of 1812 with Great Britain, he also needed to finish the engraving for the last two volumes of this encyclopedic work.

Although Wilson is not as well-known as John James Audubon, he probably had a greater effect on the course of American ornithology. Wilson was an insightful observer of bird behavior, taking ornithology beyond simple descriptions of specimens and naming new species. In fact, Wilson's descriptions of bird behavior and ecology (long before the concept was invented) were beyond what was being done in Europe and inspired those "more advanced" ornithologists to greater heights. Wilson, a very diligent and modest man, paved the way for entire science.

Alexander Wilson's *American Ornithology* will be celebrated in a symposium on April 23, 2014, at Ohio Wesleyan University led by Dr. Jed Burtt who recently published a biography of Wilson. I will have more announcements about the celebration of Wilson's accomplishments in future columns.

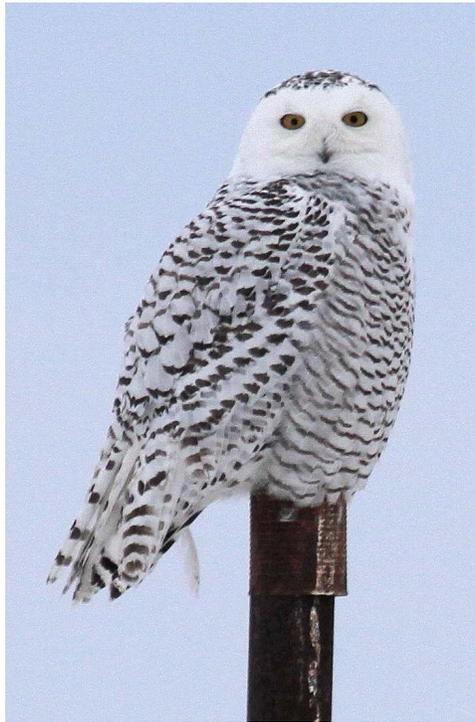
### **Lessons from Project SNOWstorm**

The Snowy Owl irruption of the winter of 2013–14 brought us more than a boatload of charismatic big white owls. It also brought a blizzard of birding energy and unprecedented cooperation on a large scale. When reports began streaming in of Snowy Owls in late November and early December, it became apparent that we were being treated to an amazing phenomenon. This looked like a major Snowy Owl irruption that has proven to be the biggest one in living memory. We may never see a Snowy Owl irruption like this again in our lifetime.

How did we react? Of course, we reacted by chasing these Arctic visitors, watching them intently, taking many photographs, and sharing our observations with our birding friends. That meant posts to listservs, blogs, and eBird reports.

The ornithological community also reacted in a more important way. Thanks to the initiatives of David Brinker and Scott Weidensaul of Project OwlNet, a coalition of interested birders, owl researchers, and bird organizations formed an organization that was named "Project

SNOWstorm” after the four-letter banding code of the Snowy Owl. The PGC chimed in quickly by providing funding for establishing the project’s informative and exciting website. We also posted a Snowy Owl story on the PA eBird portal. Not only did this website provide great background information about this mysterious boreal bird, but it was also a means for observers to contribute their photographs and a means for the project to share maps of marked owls and other news about the project results. The Project SNOWstorm website also allowed voluntary contributions which far exceeded the project’s goals and anyone’s expectations. Several organizations contributed funds and resources for 20 cellular tracking devices purchased for tracking owls. PSO was one of these organizations, contributing funds that purchased the unit used to track the journeys of “Erie” that owl that floated on ice and traveled internationally from Presque Isle into Canada.



this species’ status and the threats it endures.

Many of the Snowy Owl myths were shattered during this irruption. Unlike the usual portrayal as weakened and starving birds, most of the Snowy Owls were fairly healthy, well-fed, young birds that made out pretty well in the landscapes they adopted for their winter homes. Some owls moved around while others became local residents on farms. They also became celebrities with the local birders, photographers, and residents who may have never paid attention to charismatic owls or any other wild bird before. I was witness to many kindly conversations between birders, researchers, and local residents who were curious, about not only the owls but the people who were fascinated by them. There were a few

awkward moments, some unfortunate bad etiquette, some trespassing, and a few misunderstandings with at least one falconer and some members of the media. But, overall this was a very good experience for the birding and wildlife-watching community.

Many Pennsylvania birders have contributed sightings and fabulous photographs of Snowy Owls. Each of these has been an important contribution, leading to a growing “snowball” effect which has not yet ended. I’ve also seen a rejuvenation of local bird clubs whose members have faithfully checked on Snowy Owls and shared their sightings with others and with researchers. Many birders and photographers have posted their photos on their personal Facebook pages.

The Snowies have been attracted to larger open land, mostly farmland, and also some of the limited coastal areas of the state. The overall picture of Snowy Owls’ winter distribution has been heavily weighed along the Atlantic Coast where dozens of the owls have gathered. Although most owls have been seen as singles, there has been an intriguing tendency for them to cluster in areas, sometimes within sight of each other. Eugene Potopov, a Russian biologist who teaches at Bryn Athyn College, has called these loose aggregations of Snowy Owls “loose boids” which may move from one area to another in response to prey availability. This is an interesting concept to consider, not only for the sake of understanding the owls but also to better assess the population size and conservation status of the species. The estimated population of this boreal raptor may be much lower than has been published by ornithological or conservation organizations. If so, we may be giving more attention to

Many lessons were learned about Snowy Owls from this effort, but we also learned that a cooperative attitude shared among the many contributors made this an even more rewarding experience for all of us. Because of the same cooperation that made “Project Toot Route” a success, the Northern Saw-whet banding projects through “Project OwlNet” were able to continue despite the Snowy Owl irruption. More yet will be learned as the Snowy Owls return north and the many owl researchers and “owl advocates” consider the copious amount of information contributed to the Project SNOWstorm website, eBird, and other places where owl data have been shared.

At this point, the current Snowy Owl adventure has not ended. There still are several Snowy Owls in the state with more wandering up from the South. My count is 44 counties with Snowy Owl reports to either SNOWstorm or eBird (thanks to Drew Weber for collaborating). I’ve heard of unofficial reports that have not been verified by competent birders or entered into these project data compilations for other counties. As more Snowies move northward, we may learn even more about them and the people who enjoy them.

(continued on page 12 bottom)

# Lodging Information for Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

June 6 - 8, 2014

University of Pittsburgh - Bradford, Conference Center  
300 Campus Drive; Bradford, PA 16701

Contact Kim Rublee to make your lodging reservations: (814) 362-0990; [kdr22@pitt.edu](mailto:kdr22@pitt.edu).

Several lodging options are available. The prices are for the unit, per night. Make roommate arrangements and share the cost. One person will be charged and the roommate will reimburse the person charged. You should make every attempt to arrange your own roommate, but if you have difficulties, please let Shonah Hunter, [shunter@lhup.edu](mailto:shunter@lhup.edu) know, and she will try to help you find a roommate. However, UPitt – Bradford, nor PSO, nor Shonah Hunter will be held responsible for assigning a roommate for you and will not incur any costs should one not be available.

When you call to inquire and make a reservation, Kim Rublee will review the options with you, just like a hotel would. You will select the option that you would like to reserve. When you check in, you will receive the name of the building and the room number you are staying in, again just like a hotel.

Double Room: \$114.00 (after tax) per night.  
Sleeps 2 people, 1 double bedroom with king or twin bed, Specify bed choice when making your reservation. One bathroom. Living room and kitchenette will be a shared common space.

If 2 individuals stay as roommates, it will be \$57 per person, per night.

**Apartment Suite (4): \$137.00(after tax) per night.**  
Sleeps 4 people, 2 double bedrooms with king or twin beds. Specify bed choice when making your reservation. Two bathrooms, living room, kitchenette.

If 4 individuals stay as roommates, it will be \$34.25 per person, per night.

If 2 individuals stay, one in each room, it will be \$68.50 per person, per night.

**Apartment (6): \$195.00 (after tax) per night.**  
Sleeps 6 people, 3 double bedrooms with twin beds, 2 bathrooms, spacious living room, kitchenette.

If 6 individuals stay as roommates, it will be \$32.50 per person, per night.

If 3 couples stay, one in each room, it will be \$65 per couple, per night.

If 3 individuals want to rent the unit and stay in separate rooms, it will be \$65.00 per person, per night.

Again, one individual, or couple, will be charged and the roommates will reimburse the person charged.

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## Raven Reporter (continued from page 11)

### Project SNOWstorm

Please keep submitting your Snowy Owl reports to SNOWstorm and eBird. If you hear of unreported sightings, please verify those reports and submit them as well.

Good birding!

–Doug

Doug Gross  
Endangered and Non-game Bird Section Supervisor  
PA Game Commission  
106 Winters Road  
Orangeville, PA 17859  
570-458-4109; [dogross@pa.gov](mailto:dogross@pa.gov); [dagross144@verizon.net](mailto:dagross144@verizon.net)

PA eBird: <http://ebird.org/content/pa>

# PSO's 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

## Bradford, PA

University of Pittsburgh

### Friday, June 6, 2014

6:00 p.m. Registration – Vendors and Local Displays  
7:00 p.m. Social - Vendors and Local Displays  
7:30 p.m. Business Meeting  
7:45 p.m. Field Trip Reviews – Allegheny Highlands Bird Club  
8:15 p.m. Possible Owling Outing – John Fedak

### Saturday, June 7, 2014

5:30 a.m. Breakfast  
6:30 a.m. Field Trip Departures  
  
12:00 p.m. Lunch on your own  
  
1:15 – 1:45 p.m. *Northern Saw-whet Owl Breeding Habitat* – Kathleen Kolos  
1:45 – 2:10 p.m. *Involving Youth in Nature* – Don Bickford  
  
2:10 – 2:30 p.m. Break – Vendors  
  
2:35 – 3:00 p.m. *Golden-winged Warblers* – Jeff Larkin  
3:05 – 3:30 p.m. *Project SNOWstorm* – Mike Lanzone  
3:30 – 4:00 p.m. Vendors and Local Displays  
  
3:45 – 4:30 p.m. *Raptor Program* – Mark Baker (sponsored by PSO and AHBC and open to community)  
  
6:00 – 6:30 p.m. Social  
  
6:30 p.m. Banquet  
Presentation of Poole Award  
Presentation of Conservation Award  
Compilation of Bird List  
Silent Auction Winners  
  
Speaker: Bridget Stutchbury on *The Private Lives of Birds*

### Sunday, June 8, 2014

5:30 a.m. Breakfast  
6:30 a.m. Field Trip Departures

# Meeting Field Trips

## **Allegheny National Forest Willow Creek Loop** (Marilla to Willow Bay) (Saturday & Sunday, June 7 & 8)

Birds of conifer forests will be the focus of this trip. We'll explore pine and hemlock forests, a mixed conifer plantation along Marilla Reservoir, and the shores of the scenic Allegheny Reservoir. Birds likely to be seen include Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Blue-headed Vireo, Tree Swallow, Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Dark-eyed Junco, Purple Finch, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, and a variety of other warblers. Pine Siskins and Red Crossbills have bred here. Ospreys, Bald Eagles, and Common Mergansers are also likely on the reservoir, and Common Loon is a possibility. Walking will be easy along flat surfaces, and restroom facilities will be available at one stop. Waterproof footwear suggested.



## **Allegheny National Forest Northeast Loop** (Tracy Ridge to Sugar Bay) (Saturday & Sunday, June 7 & 8)

This field trip will visit several sites in one of the largest intact forest tracts in the northeastern US, and include both cherry-maple and mixed oak forests, as well as shrubby thickets. At Tracy Ridge Campground, target birds of this high-elevation oak forest will be Cerulean, Hooded, Chestnut-sided, and Black-throated Blue warblers; Scarlet Tanager; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; and Hermit Thrush. From there we'll drop down to the Allegheny Reservoir at Sugar Bay, where we can watch Osprey on their nest and search for Common Merganser, Alder Flycatcher, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Baltimore Oriole. We'll wind back towards Bradford through dense maple-cherry and hemlock forest where typical birds include Ruffed Grouse; Broad-winged Hawk; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; Acadian and Least Flycatchers; Winter Wren; Swainson's and Hermit thrushes; Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Mourning, and other warblers; and Dark-eyed Juncos. Walking will be mostly on level ground, but a portion of the driving will be on narrow, unpaved forest roads. Waterproof footwear may prove useful at Sugar Bay.

## **Ormsby/SGL 62/Kinzua Bridge** (Saturday & Sunday, June 7 & 8)

The high plateau country of McKean County will be our focus as we explore shrubby swamps, mixed and hardwood forests, and thickets. The Kinzua Bridge State Park includes a spectacular gorge and scenic view of the High Plateau as well as the site of the former Kinzua Viaduct, once the second highest bridge of this type on the North American continent and in the National Register of Historical Places. Probable birds include White-throated Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow, Alder Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, and many more. Walking will be on level trails, some paved, and along dirt roads. There are restrooms at Kinzua Bridge State Park.

## **Songbird Road/Timberdoodle Flats** (Saturday & Sunday, June 7 & 8)

This trip will visit two of the best local birding areas. Appropriately named Songbird Road, this area is a regenerating clearcut area that contains several warbler species including Mourning Warbler. Alder Flycatcher may also be found.

Timberdoodle Flats, which includes two Wildlife Interpretive Trails, is a relatively easy, flat walk through a variety of shrubby and forested habitats. Besides American Woodcock, birds likely here include Eastern Bluebird, Cedar Waxwing, American Redstart, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and Blue-winged Warbler. There are no facilities on this trip. The walking will be on a level dirt road and nicely maintained trails.

## **Allegheny National Forest: Mead Run Loop** (Westline to Redbridge) (Saturday, June 7, only)

Mixed forest and lakeside habitats will be covered on this trip. Typical north-country forest birds found here include Ruffed Grouse, Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Least Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Common Raven, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Veery, and a host of warblers. Redbridge includes a swamp and one arm of the Allegheny Reservoir. Birds usually seen here include nesting Osprey, Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Common Merganser, Tree Swallow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Mourning Warbler. This area is one of the best places locally to see lingering

shorebirds. Walking will be mostly easy and level while some driving will be on narrow gravel roads. There may be restrooms available at the Redbridge campground.

### **Akeley Swamp (SGL 282) (Saturday, June 7, only)**

This state game lands, located in the Conewango Creek Valley in northern Warren County, includes the largest freshwater marsh in the region. This is the local go-to spot for Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Gallinule, Pied-billed Grebe, Mallard, Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck, Alder Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, Swamp Sparrow, and much more. Blue-winged Teal, Bald Eagle, Wilson's Snipe, and Least Bittern are possible. To get there we'll travel through extensive farm country where we'll watch for grassland and open country birds such as American Kestrel, Killdeer, Brown Thrasher, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah and Field sparrows, and Barn and Tree swallows. Access and walking are very easy along a level railbed that traverses the marsh. Spotting scopes are especially useful here. No facilities.

Note: These last two trips are farther from the meeting site and intended to be visited as people head home to the southeast or southwest.

### **Benezette and East Branch (Sunday, June 8, only)**

This trip will begin in Elk County where we will visit a small marsh for possible Virginia Rail, Sora, Swamp Sparrow, and Alder and Willow flycatchers. This is also a spot that hosted Sedge Wren during the Atlas and does support breeding Northern Harriers. From there the trip will travel to East Branch Lake to observe Cliff Swallows, Osprey, and possible waterfowl. We will then travel through St. Marys to Benezette. At Benezette, many grassland birds can be observed including Bobolink and Savannah Sparrow. Henslow's Sparrow is a possibility. We will stop at the Elk County Visitor's Center on Winslow Hill to view several bird species as well as elk. Walking will be easy on roadside and well maintained trails. There are restroom and picnic facilities available.



### **Hearts Content Old Growth (Sunday, June 8, only)**

This protected 140-acre tract supports 450-year-old virgin hemlock, pine, and beech forest. This trip is worth taking just for the experience of seeing what the area looked like before European settlement, with huge trees towering over



Swamp Sparrow is one of the target species at Akeley Swamp.

Photo by Wayne Laubscher

150 feet high. Common breeding birds here include Pileated Woodpecker; Winter Wren; Brown Creeper; Swainson's and Hermit thrushes; Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Yellow-rumped, and Pine warblers; Red-breasted Nuthatch; and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Barred and Northern Saw-whet owls, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Northern Goshawk are possible as well. Walking will be moderate along a well-maintained trail that is steep in spots. Waterproof footwear is recommended. Restroom and picnic facilities are available.

## **PSO Quiz**

How well do you know your Pennsylvania birds?

1. Which one of our wood-warblers has the most subspecies and the largest breeding range in the Americas?
2. In *Birds of Pennsylvania*, Frank Haas and Roger Burrows describe a rare visitor this way: "As it walks, the [...] jerks its head back and forth like a chicken, enhancing the glossy effect, distinguishing it from other blackbirds." Which species?
3. The Chestnut-sided Warbler's scientific name is *pennsylvanica*. Who named it that, and why?
4. Which woodpecker on Pennsylvania's provisional list awaits photographic or specimen confirmation before being added to the official state list?
5. Pennsylvania birders are fascinated when discovering a rare Eurasian Teal here. Why isn't this teal on our official state list?

# 2014 Annual Meeting Speakers

## Kathleen A. Kolos – Northern Saw-whet Owl Research

Kathleen earned her Bachelor of Science degree in biology from York College of Pennsylvania. Her undergraduate research proposed the examination of Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) habitat use in southeastern Pennsylvania using a combination of radio telemetry and geographical information systems (GIS). Last year she received a graduate assistantship position at Shippensburg University and is now earning her Master of Science degree in biology. Her current research is investigating the habitat characteristics of Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*) during the breeding season in three different

regions of Pennsylvania. She hopes to shed some light on this aspect of their breeding ecology by using field vegetation data, small mammal surveys, and LiDAR data analysis through GIS. Last spring she completed her first round of field work throughout the state and is now currently collecting field data for the 2014 breeding season. She is scheduled to graduate from Shippensburg University in December of 2014 where she will present and defend her findings from this study as her master's thesis.

## Don “Bick” Bickford – Involving Youth in Nature

Don Bickford is the director of the Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities (CCOYA) which was organized in January 2011 through an endowment set up by the Andrews Family of Emporium and Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania. CCOYA's primary goal is to provide area youth the opportunity and education to become more aware of the outdoor lifestyle and the benefits this can bring to them in their lives and personal growth.

Don and his wife Sandra live in Emporium and have been married for 38 years. They have raised six children and have been blessed with seven grandchildren. Don is currently very active in many organizations including; Allegheny Highlands Bird Club, Cameron County Long Beards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, North Central Whitetails Chapter of Quality Deer Management Association, Bucktail Watershed Association, Cameron County 4-H Youth Air Rifles, Cameron County Collaborative Board, and Rotary International. He also serves as an advisor to the Cameron County High School Outdoor Club and is Treasurer/Secretary of Russell Hollow Hunt Club.

In 2013 Don received the award of recognition for Outstanding Services and Contributions to Programs and Objectives of Penn State Cooperative Extension of Cameron County. He is also the recipient of the 2013 Champion of the Wilds “Inspiring Youth Award” awarded to him by the Pennsylvania Wilds initiative. Prior to his current position, Don was employed by GKN Sintered Metals for 33 years as Sales Account Manager.

He has always enjoyed the outdoors and is an avid hunter and fisherman when time allows. Don loves birding and was introduced to birding by his brother-in-law Mark Johnson. Other hobbies that occupy Don's time are reading, hiking, night-sky viewing, and spending time with his family. Don states, “I have been given a unique opportunity to pass along our love of nature and the outdoors to our young people. Although this is a great challenge, it is very rewarding. My biggest thrill is to introduce a young person to something new and see their first ‘WOW’ moment. That's when you know you have them hooked.”

## Jeff Larkin – Golden-winged Warbler Research

Dr. Jeff Larkin is Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He received his BA in Biology from Ithaca College. Dr. Larkin then attended the University of Kentucky where he earned an M.S. in Forestry and Ph.D in Animal Sciences. His research often combines his expertise in forestry, wildlife ecology, and conservation implementation. Most of his research strongly emphasizes wildlife-

habitat relations on multiple spatial scales. Previous and ongoing research is examining the ecology and conservation of Golden-winged and Cerulean warblers, fisher, Allegheny woodrats, forest dwelling salamanders, black bear, elk, and moose. Dr. Larkin's research is often highly collaborative, and resulting data are synthesized into applied information used by natural resource agencies to enhance or develop management guidelines.

## Mike Lanzone – Project SNOWstorm Rundown

Mike started birding at the age of eight and has worked as a field ornithologist for various state, federal, and private organizations across the United States and Mexico. Recently he was the Assistant Coordinator for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas and the Biotechnology and Biomonitoring Lab Supervisor stationed at Powdermill, the biological research station of Carnegie Museum of Natural History.

In the spring of 2011 he was awarded the Conservation Award from the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology for the work done on eastern Golden Eagles. Currently, Mike is the Chief Executive Officer of Cellular Tracking Technologies in Somerset, PA. His major foci include

Golden Eagle flight behavior and telemetry and nocturnal monitoring of birds using flight calls. A lot of his work recently has focused on advances in the application of bioacoustics to the monitoring of geographically remote breeding populations of songbirds in North America and, hopefully, around the world.

When he isn't working, he spends much of his time outside birding, taking photographs, and gardening. In addition to serving on several board of directors for NGOs, Mike currently serves on the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee and is PSO's vice president.

## Mark Baker – Raptor Program

Mark Baker, a licensed bird rehabilitator and falconer whose goal is to help wildlife, specializes in birds of prey. Mark will bring several raptors with him including Eastern Screech-Owl and Red-tailed Hawk.

During the Raptor Show, he will discuss the life history of each bird, as well as their habitats and their prey. The

audience will enjoy close-up views of these birds.

Mark runs the Eagle Dream Rehabilitation Center to care for injured raptors with the hope of releasing them back into the wild. Birds that are unable to be released are cared for by Mark. Photography will be permitted after the show.

## Bridget Stutchbury – Our Banquet Speaker

Dr. Bridget Stutchbury was born in Montreal and raised in Toronto. She completed her M.Sc. at Queen's University and her Ph.D. at Yale, and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Smithsonian Institution. She is a professor and Canada Research Chair in Ecology and Conservation Biology at York University, Toronto. Since the 1980s, she has followed songbirds to their wintering grounds in Latin America and back to their breeding grounds in North America to understand their behavior, ecology, and conservation, resulting in hundreds of publications in the scientific literature. She has conducted much of her

research on her farm near Cambridge Springs, Crawford County, PA. In 2005, Stutchbury was named one of the Toronto Star's "People to Watch" after her groundbreaking research into the sexual antics of birds made international headlines. Her book *The Silence of the Songbirds* was short-listed for the Governor General's Award for Nonfiction. Her other books include *The Bird Detective: Investigating the Secret Lives of Birds*, *The Private Lives of Birds*, and *Behavioral Ecology of Tropical Birds* (coauthored with ornithologist and husband Gene Morton).

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## Silent Auction Planned

Once again this year PSO will hold a silent auction at our annual meeting in Bradford. 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 Bradford (or send it with someone who will be attending if you can not).

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

## Dr. Scott Stoleson Named Poole Award Recipient



Scott Stoleson is this year's Poole Award recipient.

This year's Earl Poole Award recipient is Dr. Scott Stoleson, a Research Biologist for the United States Forest Service's Northern Research Station. Dr. Stoleson earned a B.A. in Biological Sciences from Dartmouth in 1979 and his M.S. and Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology from Yale University.

Before moving to Pennsylvania, Dr. Stoleson studied avian demography

and conservation in a variety of locations in the western United States and in both Central and South America. Dr. Stoleson joined the Forest Service in Irvine, Pennsylvania, in 2002 where his work has focused on evaluating the impacts of land management on the distribution, abundance, and demography of vertebrate populations, and assessing habitat requirements of wildlife communities

and species of special concern. For one of his focal species, the Cerulean Warbler, he has studied the long-term effects of forest management practices affecting the conservation of this species in eastern North America. He has worked with and mentored numerous graduate students. He has also authored or co-authored more than 20 scientific papers. In addition, he has written book chapters on avian biology and conservation based on research in Pennsylvania, the western U.S., Mexico, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and the Galápagos Islands.

Scott has led natural history tours for the National Audubon Society to the Caribbean, Central and South America, and he leads tours and workshops for the Roger Tory Peterson Birding Festival in Jamestown, NY. He served as a field consultant for David Attenborough's "Life of Birds" series on BBC. He was a regional co-coordinator for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas, served on the PA Biological Survey's Ornithological Technical Committee, and runs a BBS route in northwestern PA.

Dr. Stoleson is this year's candidate for the Earl Poole Award because of his long term commitment to ornithology as well as his serving as an important role model for upcoming ornithologists.

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## Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities Honored with PSO's Conservation Award

This year's Conservation Award goes to Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities, centered in Emporium, PA. Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities began in January 2011, but they have already made huge strides in their work to provide area youth with the opportunity and education to become more aware of the outdoor lifestyle and the benefits this can bring to them in their lives and personal growth. The long list of the programs that they have implemented in the area during the past several years is quite impressive. These programs include a wide

variety of opportunities to expose youth to outdoor activities, skills, and careers, many of which are conservation oriented.

This organization is exactly what is needed to help our youth become productive adults, leaders in our communities, and good stewards of our outdoor world. Therefore the Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities is a perfect recipient for this year's conservation award.



# Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology Annual Meeting Scholarship Program

In order to foster an interest in, and appreciation for birding and ornithology in Pennsylvania, each year the PSO will provide a scholarship for a person 18 years of age or younger OR an Undergraduate college student who wishes to attend the PSO annual meeting.

(You may not nominate someone without their knowledge or permission)

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

In order to complete your nominations, please send this form to Shonah A. Hunter ([shunter@lhup.edu](mailto:shunter@lhup.edu)), or by land mail to: Dr. Shonah A. Hunter, Department of Biological Sciences, Lock Haven University, Lock Haven, PA 17745 by May 15, 2014. Selection will be conducted by a committee.

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email address (print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

If a college undergraduate student, College Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of nominating PSO Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship (if any) to Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

If the nominee is younger than 18, and a parent or guardian is not accompanying the youth, the nominating PSO member must sign the following statement.

In nominating this youth, I understand that I will be responsible for the youth at the annual meeting and for his/her transportation to and from the meeting.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

If the nominee is younger than 18, the parent/guardian must sign the following statement.

In allowing my child to be nominated, I understand that PSO is providing the scholarship for my child to attend the annual meeting. The person nominating my child has my permission to transport him/her to and from the meeting and to be responsible for her/him during the annual meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## 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	\$ 30.00
2469 Hammertown Road	Family	\$ 35.00
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## Answers to Bird Quiz (page 9)

1. Yellow Warbler
2. Brewer's Blackbird
3. Linnaeus in 1766 because his specimen came from Philadelphia. (He used *pen...*, not *penn...*, for the scientific name.)
4. Lewis's Woodpecker
5. The American Ornithologists' Union checklist combines the Eurasian Teal with our Green-winged Teal as one species. (European checklists separate them as two species.)



Alder Flycatcher is a possibility on the PSO meeting field trips.

# **Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology**

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