



From the President's Desk...

It's hard to believe another PSO annual meeting has passed. This year's location was in northwestern PA, held on the Pitt-Bradford campus. The meeting was excellent. Many thanks to the board and members who attended as well as the Allegheny Highlands Bird Club that worked so hard to pull everything together for this meeting. It was an overwhelming success.

I know every year we report that the meeting was great, and they all have been. However this year's meeting was exceptional. Here are a few highlights. Weather and birding were superb throughout the weekend. I think the weather is one thing that we cannot count on, so it is nice that it cooperated! Field trips were well organized going to interesting places in and around the Allegheny National Forest. I know there was some difference in opinion of limiting the group sizes, but it seemed to work very well. Parking was limited in many places, and the leaders were better able to manage and lead their groups. The speakers on Saturday afternoon did a wonderful job presenting some outstanding research and projects. We heard about Northern Saw-whet Owls, Youth in Nature, Golden-winged Warblers and Snowy Owls. The vendors were more diverse than I have previously seen and there were a lot of them, which was great to see. I have not seen such a huge silent auction at this or any other meeting! The number of silent auction items was so large, that the tables were overflowing, which is a nice problem to have.



Outgoing president John Fedak poses with newly elected Mike Lanzone.

Photo by Mark McConaughy

Thanks to everyone who donated items for this year's auction. Dr. Bridget Stutchbury was our banquet speaker. It was excellent to hear a recap of her extremely interesting research in Crawford County. Finally, this year's meeting set a record for the highest attendance at any PSO meeting! In the last five years the most attending an annual meeting was 89. This year there were 131 people. WOW!

I don't think that the high attendance at this meeting was a random event. Over the last several years PSO has been growing and expanding its reach, becoming more visible in social media, expanding field trip offerings, reaching out to younger birders, and getting the membership more involved in the day-to-day operations of the committees. All of these things have helped increase our membership and renew interest in PSO. Remember, PSO was founded to "foster the study and appreciation of the birds of Pennsylvania and to promote the conservation of birds and their habitats."

As I begin my term as president, I am pleased to see such a renewed interest in PSO. I hope to continue reaching out to all birders across the state. This organization is only as good as its membership, and I hope every one of you will tell us what you want PSO to become. In the next several years you can expect PSO to continue to grow and expand. Among the list of things that we will be expanding this year will be the research and conservation committee. PSO should be a strong voice in conserving our state's resources, so like the field trip committee, you will see more of this side of PSO. I hope to hear from

many of you who would like to be involved in PSO. We would love to hear from you, even if it's just shooting us a few comments and or suggestions. If you want to be more involved we would welcome you to sit on one of our committees, and we are always looking for good candidates for the Board of Directors!

On the research initiative side, one such project was launched this year. Many of you know that the PSO was initially formed after the 1st Breeding Bird Atlas when the regional coordinators agreed Pennsylvania needed a statewide birding organization. When the 2nd PBBA came along, PSO's members were again the backbone of the effort. This summer PSO kicked off the PA Breeding Bird Blitz or PAB3. It was a concentrated effort by a group of birders to gather data on the state's breeding bird population. This survey is intended to be a quick snapshot of the state's breeding birds. Birders go out and enter all their sightings into eBird where we can later analyze the data. The yearly effort will help keep up with changes in bird

distribution since the 2nd PBBA field work was completed in 2009. This year it was held June 27-30, and several very good prizes were awarded to lucky birders who submitted checklists. Thanks to all who participated and entered data in eBird during this effort!

As we look toward next year's meeting, we have our sights set on southeastern Pennsylvania. Tentative dates are May 29-31 unless an issue arises with the venue. We will be celebrating PSO's 25th anniversary at the meeting, so stay tuned for the announcement of special events. Next year's target species for field trips will be shorebirds and Mississippi Kites. We have many great field trips in the works! Field trips may include John Heinz NWR, Bucktoe Creek Preserve, Longwood Gardens, and Nottingham County Park/Goat Hill Preserve. This will be another good meeting that you won't want to miss. I hope to see many of you there!

– Michael Lanzone, President
Somerset, PA
mlanzone@gmail.com

Record Attendance at PSO's 2014 Annual Meeting

PSO's annual meeting attendance hit a record high this year. Thanks to all of you who were able to come to this year's meeting and helped make it a huge success! Here is a rundown of PSO meeting attendance since 2001:

2014 – 131	Bradford
2013 – 80	Wilkes-Barre
2012 – 89	Lock Haven
2011 – 64	Bedford
2010 – 79	Erie
2009 – 63	Morgantown
2008 – 99	Mars
2007 – 93	Harrisburg
2006 – 96	Ligonier
2005 – 106	Clarion
2004 – 64	Danville
2003 – 82	Indiana
2002 – 70	East Stroudsburg
2001 – 87	State College



PSO Bird Quiz

1. Always an exciting rarity in Pennsylvania, our most recent Scissor-tailed Flycatcher appeared in Juniata County in late June 2014. Where and when was the state's first record confirmed by a specimen?
2. No peeking at the checklist. Which sparrows on Pennsylvania's official list are named in honor of people?
3. *In Birds of Central Pennsylvania*, Nick Bolgiano lists 69 species found at Black Moshannon State Park between May 20 and July 31. Which three were noted in the highest numbers?
4. The official list of Pennsylvania birds traditionally placed the Blue-winged Warbler first on the warbler list. Which species comes first now? For a bonus, why?
5. What color is a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher's throat – one of several features that may help to distinguish it from an Acadian Flycatcher?

The 2014 PSO Meeting in Bradford

by Mark A. McConaughy

The 2014 PSO meeting was hosted by the Allegheny Highlands Bird Club in Bradford, McKean County, Pennsylvania, between June 6 and 8. The meeting was held at the Bradford campus of the University of Pittsburgh. Registered for the meeting were 131 persons, one of the largest registrations the PSO has had for a meeting.

The meeting started on Friday evening, June 6, with a social. Attendees could view and buy materials provided by 11 vendors whose wares were available through Saturday afternoon.

There also were displays about the Kinzua Bridge/Elk/Bendigo State Parks, Sinnemahoning State Park, and the McKean and Warren County conservation districts that provided information about the Warren and McKean County areas. A short 15-minute PSO business meeting was held to elect officers for the next year (see the elected officer listing elsewhere in this newsletter) followed by a description of the six different birding outings to be run on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

A large group followed John Fedak on Friday evening, hoping to see or hear Eastern Whip-poor-wills and Northern Saw-whet Owls. Most of the people did not get to see or hear either of these species, although they were known to be in the areas visited. It is likely that the bright moon kept them from calling that evening. In particular, the Northern Saw-whet Owl is a very small species subject to predation by larger owls, so it is cautious about exposing itself on well-lit nights where it might become prey.

Saturday morning arrived, and an excellent breakfast was served to PSO members at 5:30 by the University of Pittsburgh. The bird outing groups met after breakfast and headed to their respective areas at 6:30 a.m. Groups went to the Allegheny National Forest Willow Creek Loop (Marilla to Willow Bay), Allegheny National Forest



Mark McConaughy photographed this very cooperative Virginia Rail at Akeley Swamp.

Northeast Loop (Tracy Ridge to Sugar Bay), Ormsby/SGL62/Kinzua Bridge, Songbird Road/Timberdoodle Flats, Allegheny National Forest Mead Run Loop (Westline to Redbridge) and Akeley Swamp (SGL 282). I had registered for the Akeley Swamp outing and accompanied this group of 20, the maximum number of birders permitted on each outing.

Akeley Swamp, located in the northeastern section of Warren County, is the largest swamp in this area of Pennsylvania. We took a

flat, easy walk along a dike that formed one edge of the swamp. The group was successful in viewing two cooperative Virginia Rails which were one of the outing's target species. We also noted a couple of calling Northern Waterthrushes, many Yellow Warblers, Willow Flycatchers, Wood Ducks, a young Hooded Merganser, Green Herons, a Great Blue Heron, and calling Swamp Sparrows. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo flushed from her nest as we walked down the dike. The group headed back to Bradford at 11:00 a.m. for lunch, so we could attend the afternoon sessions at the University of Pittsburgh Bradford campus.

Saturday afternoon's presentations started at 1:15. Kathleen Kolos presented a paper titled "Examining Breeding Season Habitat Characteristics of Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*)."

These owls prefer to live in coniferous forests and wet riparian habitats but have also been found in deciduous forest and coastal scrub brush. They are more generalists than previously believed; however, they are heat intolerant and climate change is impacting them and their breeding areas.

The next presentation by Don Bickford described Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities (CCOYA), a program designed to involve youth in outdoor activities. They have taught kids to fish and to kayak. They have

also conducted service projects in parks, taught gun safety to potential hunters, provided raptor education, taken kids birding, worked with the Pennsylvania Game Commission trapping bears and elk, and taught kids about the universe through astronomy classes. They have also partnered with other groups including 4-H clubs. It is great that they are involving youth in nature and something other than video games!

Jeff Larkin discussed “The Golden-winged Warbler Initiative: a Model for Building an Effective Conservation Partnership.” Golden-winged Warblers prefer to nest in young deciduous forests and forested wetlands. However, the population of Golden-winged Warblers has been in a steep decline. Larkin showed how this decline is paralleled by a similar decline in young forests in Pennsylvania from 19% to 10% of our overall forested environment. He has been actively working with public and private property owners to provide adequate habitat for breeding Golden-winged Warblers. They now have several full-time Foresters and Conservation Managers who work with property owners to manage their land while providing appropriate habitats for these birds. Many other species also find this type of land management beneficial.

The final presentation on Friday afternoon was about “Breakthroughs in Wildlife Tracking Technology: Project Snowstorm.” Mike Lanzone, our newly elected PSO president, talked about tracking Snowy Owls that were part of this winter’s eruption. A total of 22 Snowy Owls were caught and equipped with tracking monitors. One Snowy Owl, named Erie after the area where it was caught, was tracked with a monitor sponsored by the PSO. These monitors have provided a wealth of information about the daily movements of Snowy Owls. Erie spent a lot of time out on the ice floes of Lake Erie this winter hunting water birds. This reliance on ice floes was not realized prior to tracking these birds. It was also found that Snowy Owls found along coastal areas were more mobile than those settling inland. Much information still needs to be processed and will undoubtedly provide additional information about Snowy Owl movements.

A raptor program presented by Mark Baker was open to the general public, following the formal paper presentations. Baker brought a Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Harris’s Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Barn Owl, Snowy Owl, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Barred Owl for people to see. Most of these were injured birds that could not be released into the wild. He described what had happened to the individual birds and how he feeds them; he also provided information about their normal

lives if they were still in the wild.

The annual Saturday banquet was held at the University of Pittsburgh Bradford. They provided an excellent buffet of Spinach salad, Chicken Marseilles, Roast Beef, Pasta Penne, rice, green beans, Apple Crisp and Apple Cobbler. After dinner, the PSO Conservation Award was presented to the Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities and was accepted for them by Don Bickford. The Earl Poole award was presented to Scott Stoleson.



Scott Stoleson receives the Poole Award from Mike Lanzone.
Photo by Mark McConaughy

The banquet speaker, Dr. Bridget Stutchbury, talked about “The Bird Detective: The Secret Lives of Birds.” She has conducted studies of birds that lived on her property in northwestern Pennsylvania and many other areas. Her studies have shown that many of our perceptions about birds and their behavior are wrong. Songbirds were believed to be monogamous, mating only within the pair bond. Stutchbury’s work has shown that females often mated with males from adjacent territories. This was proven when DNA taken from offspring showed that the females had mated with a number of different males, each producing offspring in the nest. This was confirmed by radio tracking of the birds which showed they wandered outside their local territories. Another study showed that Purple Martin females who mated with younger males often would mate outside the pair bond with older male Purple Martins. This likely is due to the fact that life for Purple Martins is stressful. Older male Purple Martins have demonstrated their abilities to survive those rigors making them more attractive mating specimens. Her study of Blue-headed Vireos have shown that they are genetically monogamous. However, when the young are getting ready to fledge, the female takes off to mate with a

new male. The old male mate is left to feed and fledge the young. She has also used radio tracking to view migration paths of both Purple Martins and Wood Thrushes. It was found that Purple Martins from the eastern United States migrate in a number of stops to the Central Amazon Basin while those from the Midwest go to Patagonia in southeastern Brazil and northern Argentina. Meanwhile the Wood Thrushes winter in the Yucatan and Costa Rica (Purple Martins stop for a couple of weeks during migration in the Yucatan). The deforestation of the Yucatan for sunlight coffee plantations has detrimentally affected Wood Thrushes and probably the Purple Martins because of declining suitable habitat. It was a very interesting presentation.

Sunday morning arrived and we were served another delicious breakfast at the University of Pittsburgh Bradford. We again met for the outings scheduled for Sunday morning. These include most of the same outings led on Saturday along with ones to Benezette and East

Branch to view birds and possibly elk and another to Hearts Content to view old growth forests and the associated birds. I had registered to go on the Allegheny National Forest Northeast Loop outing. This included stops at Wolf Run, the intersection of PA Routes 346 and PA 321, and at Willow Bay of the Allegheny Reservoir. Birds listed included Cerulean Warblers, Yellow Warblers, Chestnut-sided Warblers, Ovenbird, American Redstarts, Scarlet Tanagers, Veery, and other species along Wolf Run. A very cooperative Northern Parula was seen at the intersection of PA Routes 346 and PA 321. An Osprey nest and Cliff Swallow nests as well as other species were found at Willow Bay. Not far from Willow Bay we stopped to look at Ruby-throated Hummingbirds using a bush as a perch. While there, a Mourning Warbler started calling nearby, and the group glimpsed it for a brief period. After that the group broke up and headed home – a very successful PSO meeting! We hope to see everyone again next year.

Breeding Bird Blitz a Success

The first annual Breeding Bird Blitz (PAB3) took place from June 27-30, 2014. The intent of the Blitz was threefold. First, one goal was to get birders out looking for birds during the breeding season when many birders have packed it in for the summer; second, to give their sightings more meaning by using eBird; and third, just to have fun birding. Prizes were given on each day, randomly drawn from submitted checklists. Winners included Pamela Fisher, Peter Burns, Larry Bernhardt, and Kerry Grim.

While the data is still coming in, it does seem that the PAB3 did motivate birders to get out and then report their findings on eBird. At this point 930 eBird checklists have been submitted which would be a 30% increase over the same time frame in 2013, and approximately 66,000 individual birds have been reported which is about a 75% increase over last year's number. The Blitz has been a joint venture of PSO and the PA Game Commission with both Dan Brauning and Doug Gross of the PGC giving a helping hand in the planning and publicizing of the count. It is hoped that the Blitz will grow in the years to follow and become a good way to supplement the breeding bird data reported in the 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas of Pennsylvania. A big thank you to the folks who donated prizes and especially to those who participated.

– Vern Gauthier

PSO Bird Quiz Answers

(Quiz on page 2)

1. Rothsville, Lancaster County, in November 1942
2. Bachman's, Henslow's, Le Conte's, Nelson's, Lincoln's, and Harris's
3. Red-eyed Vireo, Common Yellowthroat, and Barn Swallow in that order.
4. Ovenbird. The American Ornithologists' Union extensively rearranged the wood-warbler checklist sequence in 2011 because the old sequence did not accurately reflect wood-warblers' evolutionary relationships.
5. Yellowish, instead of whitish or grayish as an Acadian's throat.



2014 PSO Meeting Participants

Hannah Baker
 Mark Baker
 Ilan Basrawi
 Chuck Berthoud
 Don Bickford
 Sandra Bickford
 Gloria Bickel
 Carolyn Blatchley
 Barry Blust
 Carol Blye
 Rob Blye
 Nick Bolgiano
 Brian Botzan
 Katherine Bowley
 Al Bratkovich
 Susan Braun
 Dan Brauning
 Marcia Brauning
 Dave Brinker
 Brian Byrnes
 Jessica Canzano
 Laura Carlson
 Shawn Carlson
 Lisa Chapman
 Clayton Delancey
 Gordon Downing
 Jane Downing
 Holly Dzemyan
 John Dzemyan
 Dave Ebeling
 Kathy Ebeling
 Rachel Eckman
 Gary Edwards

Bailey Fedak
 Danny Fedak
 John Fedak
 Lisa Fedak
 Mike Fialkovich
 Chris Fischer
 Ronnie Fischer
 Randy Flament
 Diane Franco
 Sean Gess
 Sandra Goodwin
 Chris Grecco
 Debra Grim
 Jarret Groshek
 Jody Groshek
 Len Groshek
 Doug Gross
 Deb Grove
 Greg Grove
 Barb Haas
 Frank Haas
 Maggie Harlan
 Cindy Harvey
 Paul Hess
 Margaret Higbee
 Roger Higbee
 Jane Hileman
 Deuane Hoffman
 Marjorie Howard
 James Hoyson
 Shonah Hunter
 Bonnie Ingram
 Galen Ingram

Laura Jackson
 Mike Jackson
 Claudia Jakim
 Kathryn Johnson
 Mark Johnson
 Tianna Johnson
 Debbie Kalbfleisch
 Chad Kauffman
 Rudy Keller
 Aidan Kern
 Kathy Kern
 Cathy Koczela
 Katie Kolos
 Jesse Krout
 Kathy Kuchwara
 Janet Kuehl
 Tom Kuehl
 Jennifer Kuhn
 Dave Kyler
 Trudy Kyler
 Sherri LaBar
 Mike Lanzone
 Jeffery Larkin
 Wayne Laubscher
 Pat Lynch
 Sherron Lynch
 Jennifer Macey
 Sarah MacLellan
 Corky Magoon
 Bob Martin
 Annette Mathes
 Mark McConaughy
 Carol McCullough

Fred McCullough
 Andrew McGann
 Heather McKean
 Madeline Miles
 Craig Miller
 Jean Miller
 Trish Miller
 Ron Montgomery
 Mary Mulcahy
 Richard Nugent
 Aidan Place
 Andrew Place
 Joan Renninger
 Dave Rieger
 Kathryn R. Riley
 Bob Ross
 Ken Schoener
 Lauren Shaffer
 Ralph Shaffer
 Sam Sinderson
 Arthur Steinberger
 Pam Stoleson
 Scott Stoleson
 Sue Strassner
 Bridget Stutchbury
 Mickey Swackhamer
 Shannon Thompson
 Kim Van Fleet
 Nathan Weyandt
 Ellen Whipple
 Carole Winslow
 Robert Zand

PSO Field Trips Revisited



Birders stop to check a beaver pond near SGL 62.

Photo by Mike Fialkovich



The Meade Run Loop produced a nice assortment of birds for the group on Saturday.

Photo by Margaret Higbee



Field trip participants to Hearts Content enjoy the song of a Swainson's Thrush.

Photo by Mike Fialkovich

Birds Listed by 2014 PSO Meeting Attendants

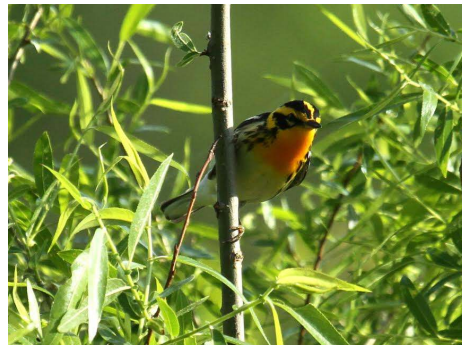
Friday, June 6, through Sunday, June 8

The rules were slightly different this year. Every bird, as long as it was seen somewhere in PA en route to PSO, was added to the list. Total species tallied was 138.

Canada Goose	Eastern Whip-poor-will	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Blackburnian Warbler
Wood Duck	Chimney Swift	White-breasted Nuthatch	Yellow Warbler
Mallard	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Brown Creeper	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Belted Kingfisher	Carolina Wren	Blackpoll Warbler
Common Merganser	Red-bellied Woodpecker	House Wren	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Ruddy Duck	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Winter Wren	Pine Warbler
Ring-necked Pheasant	Downy Woodpecker	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Ruffed Grouse	Hairy Woodpecker	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Black-throated Green
Wild Turkey	Northern Flicker	Eastern Bluebird	Canada Warbler
Common Loon	Pileated Woodpecker	Veery	Eastern Towhee
Double-crested Cormorant	American Kestrel	Swainson's Thrush	Chipping Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Merlin	Hermit Thrush	Field Sparrow
Great Egret	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Wood Thrush	Savannah Sparrow
Green Heron	Acadian Flycatcher	American Robin	Grasshopper Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Alder Flycatcher	Gray Catbird	Henslow's Sparrow
Osprey	Willow Flycatcher	Northern Mockingbird	Song Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Least Flycatcher	Brown Thrasher	Swamp Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Eastern Phoebe	European Starling	White-throated Sparrow
Northern Goshawk	Great Crested Flycatcher	Cedar Waxwing	Dark-eyed Junco
Red-shouldered Hawk	Eastern Kingbird	Ovenbird	Scarlet Tanager
Broad-winged Hawk	Blue-headed Vireo	Louisiana Waterthrush	Northern Cardinal
Red-tailed Hawk	Warbling Vireo	Northern Waterthrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Virginia Rail	Red-eyed Vireo	Golden-winged Warbler	Indigo Bunting
Sora	Blue Jay	Blue-winged Warbler	Dickcissel
Killdeer	American Crow	Black-and-white Warbler	Bobolink
American Woodcock	Fish Crow	Nashville Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
Ring-billed Gull	Common Raven	Mourning Warbler	Eastern Meadowlark
Rock Pigeon	Purple Martin	Common Yellowthroat	Common Grackle
Mourning Dove	Tree Swallow	Hooded Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	N. Rough-winged Swallow	American Redstart	Orchard Oriole
Black-billed Cuckoo	Cliff Swallow	Cerulean Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
Eastern Screech-Owl	Barn Swallow	Northern Parula	Purple Finch
Great Horned Owl	Black-capped Chickadee	Magnolia Warbler	House Finch
Barred Owl	Tufted Titmouse	Bay-breasted Warbler	American Goldfinch
Common Nighthawk			House Sparrow



Mourning Warbler was yet another field trip highlight for meeting attendees.
Photo by Chuck Berthoud



Wayne Laubscher captured this Blackburnian Warbler photo on the PSO Benezette outing on Sunday.



Merlin was one of the McKean County highlights.

Photo by Mike Lanzone

Welcome, New Board Members!



Vern Gauthier

Vernon Gauthier has had a lifelong fascination with birds. As a child he spent countless hours wandering the fields and woods which surrounded his home in southeastern Massachusetts looking for birds. Some of his fondest memories are the call of a bobwhite on a summer's day, whip-poor-wills calling from close by at night, woodcocks with their whirring display flights as an early spring day turned to night, Evening Grosbeaks descending upon his

feeders in a shower of gold, and endless lines of blackbirds migrating in the fall.

While he has never lost his interest in birds, the amount of time he has spent engaged with them has varied with the times of his life. Thirteen years ago he moved to Cumberland County and fell in with a dedicated community of birders both locally and statewide. Up until this time he had never really met others who had a similar fascination with birds. As a result, his birding spiked to a whole new level.

Vern is a member of PSO and compiles *PA Birds* reports for the counties of Cumberland and Perry. He helps with the planning of the PSO field trips and led a trip to Cape Cod in the summer of 2013. He also regularly leads a spring field trip for The Appalachian Audubon Society each May and he helps lead a monthly bird walk of the Big Spring, his home patch. Additionally, he is the compiler for the York Springs CBC which he organized two years ago. He runs three Breeding Bird Survey routes, two Winter Raptor Surveys, and two Nightjar Survey routes. He participated in the 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas and for a time was an eBird editor for three counties.

While not birding, he serves as pastor at First United Presbyterian Church in Newville. He has been ordained for more than 20 years, having received his Masters of Divinity from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and his Doctor of Ministry from Lancaster Seminary.

He is married to his wife Elisabeth, and they have two children, Allison and Peter. They reside in Newville, located in Cumberland County.

Chuck Berthoud



Chuck Berthoud has been a birder for many years. He has served since 1988 as the section leader for the Lebanon County CBC. He organized a core group of birders for whom it has become an annual tradition that they all look forward to the CBC. The section they cover has no public land, so they have developed good relationships with land owners, some of whom have become more interested in wildlife themselves. As a result of ongoing birding, their section consistently reports the largest number of species in the count circle.

In the 1990s Chuck served as a Quittapahilla Audubon Society board member for four years; he was the chair of the newsletter committee for two years.

As regional coordinator with Bill Hintze for Region 55 of the Breeding Bird Atlas in 2006, Bill inspired him to assume the coordinator duties for Region 92-93 for 2007-2008; this was an area that was seriously behind in volunteer efforts. With the help of others, who birded many Block 6s, he succeeded in encouraging the block owners to finish their blocks and start others. Chuck credits Ramsay Koury with helping him to understand PA's breeding birds.

In early 2013, Chuck participated in an online class presented by Cornell, "Courtship and Breeding Bird Behavior."

From 2010-2012 Chuck compiled Lebanon County records for *PA Birds* magazine. During that period he worked closely with Randy Miller who had been keeping detailed records since the early 1990s. At the end of his tenure, he recruited the very active birder Tim Becker to take his place. Chuck also worked with Randy to get all of his county early and late dates and high counts into a spreadsheet. Some of his records are from library sources,

providing Lebanon County with one of the most complete annotated lists in the state.

In 2013 he took over as PA Migration Count compiler for Lebanon County. Chuck writes, "For me this is a fun opportunity to coordinate volunteers in a great annual tradition."

In 2012, Chuck and his wife Nancy started traveling. He submitted an eBird list almost everywhere they went. By June, they had seen so much of the country that he decided to bird intensely the rest of the year. He finished the year with more than 620 species.

Welcome aboard, Vern and Chuck!!!

The Raven Reporter

Tales of Discovery about Pennsylvania Birds



Exhibit Celebrates Birth of "American Ornithology"

Alexander Wilson, the father of American ornithology, lived and worked in Philadelphia. His great work called "American Ornithology" was not only the first important publication about birds in the New World, but also the young nation's first significant scientific publication. It was not only "about birds," but had a scientific approach including descriptions of bird behavior and a population estimate of a huge flock of Passenger Pigeons. An exhibit is now showing at The State Museum of Pennsylvania that features Wilson's prints from American Ornithology and a number of bird specimens from the museum's collections from the 19th century. Titled "A Fondness for Birds: Pennsylvania's Alexander Wilson," this exhibit provides us with a connection to a time when many forest and field birds still nested right in Philadelphia.

The State Museum of Pennsylvania is located in the state capital complex of Harrisburg. It covers all aspects of Pennsylvania history and holds significant collections that relate to some of America's most historically important events and individuals. Situated next to the State Capitol building, the State Museum is the only museum in the Commonwealth where the public can experience the full expanse of the state's heritage and its connections to the national experience. I was fortunate to have worked a little with the staff on the exhibit. Officer Scott Bills and I presented some of the agency's perspective on Wilson

and his legacy to Pennsylvania ornithology and bird habitats. The Wilson exhibit runs through March 15, 2015, and is included with general admission to the museum. The museum's address is 300 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120-0024 (phone 717-787-4980). More information can be found at the website, <http://www.statemuseumpa.org/>

Rusty Blackbird Spring Blitz Results

Thanks to everyone who searched for and reported Rusty Blackbirds during our Spring Blitz in March and April. State birders really responded with better coverage than ever before for this mystery migratory songbird. In March 2014, birders included Rusty Blackbird in 236 eBird reports, 95 more than the 141 in 2013 – an increase of 68%. The April results were less dramatic with an 8% increase in 2014 in the number of field trips with Rusty Blackbird over the previous year. The distribution of these sightings was biased toward the southern counties where there are more active birders making eBird reports. There were very few Rusty Blackbird reports in the big woods counties of the north-central region. This may be a result of less habitat or fewer birders. I remember my own failed field trips late in March and early April when many locations were still too frozen to provide the muddy shallow waters where this boreal water-loving songbird likes to forage. More attention by birders to migrating Rusty Blackbirds may reveal more details about their migration patterns.

Thanks for "getting Rusty" with us and contributing to our efforts to find out more about this elusive and vulnerable migratory songbird that I affectionately call the "boreal oriole." You can find additional resources at the International Rusty Blackbird Working Group website: <http://rustyblackbird.org/outreach/migration-blitz/>.

Canada Warbler: Our Next Forest Bird Challenge?

Pennsylvania has been engaged in research, monitoring, and management for some of the region's most threatened migratory songbirds. We especially have been engaged with Golden-winged Warblers and Cerulean Warblers

with on-going projects. One of the most likely “next big things” in bird conservation may be the Canada Warbler, a songbird of the northern forest.

Over its breeding range, populations of Canada Warbler have been in general decline. Changes in Pennsylvania have been more difficult to tease apart as the Breeding Bird Survey results do not really indicate any trend. My own take on Canada Warbler is that it

should be increasing more than it has been, given the general recovery of the state’s forests, reflected by increases in many forest bird species in the last few decades. These increases represent returns to pre-timbering populations of forests still in recovery.

The Canada’s quick cheery song is easily overlooked. It is a hurried song, often heard from dense forest understory, that is easily confused with other emphatic songs like Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, or Hooded Warbler. Most Canada Warblers are found in higher elevation forests where fewer birders lurk and add birds to their eBird lists. Some pockets of Canada Warblers are known, but many are not being documented by birders regularly. The best spots are almost impenetrable “walls of green” with dense vegetation. And, Canada Warblers often are found in wet locations, near streams, or in boggy areas.

As its name implies, the Canada Warbler is primarily a bird of the Canadian forest, but it is also found in the mixed forests of the Great Lakes region, northeastern states, and the Appalachian Mountains as far south as the northern tip of Georgia. Pennsylvania probably has a majority of its nesting population in the Appalachian Mountain region. Most Canada Warblers nesting in Pennsylvania are on the plateaus at higher elevations. Few are found below 1000 feet in the state. My own low elevation favorite location is the east side of the Roaring Creek section of Weiser State Forest in Columbia County where the Canadas are around very old and big hemlocks at 900 feet or so. The state’s population is estimated at only 27,000 singing males.

Canada Warblers are found in cooler forests where there is a healthy understory, and often where there are conifers and ericaceous shrubs. They are associated with large-scale forests, often the interiors. Sometimes windfalls and storms create the gaps needed for shrub and understory generation deep in a forest. Enigmatically,



© Shawn Collins

Shawn Collins photographed this Canada Warbler at one of the hotspots, Oil Creek State Park, on June 22, 2014.

they are associated with both mature forests and disturbed woods. The well-developed understory may originate from either “natural” or human-caused means. They can be locally abundant in wooded wetlands, rhododendron, or mountain laurel thickets. But, they also can be found in regenerating forests with dense shrub layer resulting from timbering or pest- or disease-caused tree mortality. Where Canada Warblers are found, there often is a dynamic combination of mature forest,

gaps, and regeneration. So, there is hope for this species because it responds well, not only to naturally diverse forest but also to a well-managed forest with careful forestry. High ungulate densities (in our case, White-tailed Deer) can prevent the regeneration needed for good Canada Warbler habitat. The future of this species in our state may hinge on integrated forest management including deer management.

Some hotspots for this boreal forest species worth visiting include: Lackawanna State Forest near Thornhurst, State Game Lands 127, Tom Darling Preserve and Long Pond near Blakeslee, Hickory Run State Park, Ricketts Glen State Park, SGL 57, Loyalsock State Forest, Tiadaghton State Forest, Sproul State Forest, Oil Creek State Park, Allegheny National Forest, and other extensive wooded areas of the plateaus. I would appreciate hearing where there are other Canada Warbler hotspots and invite Pennsylvania birders to visit the better places for this forest bird and record their results. A recent summary of the Canada Warbler in the Appalachian Region was posted on-line: <http://amjv.org/index.php/species>.

Bird and Wildlife Diversity Reports Available to the Public

The PA Game Commission conducts many surveys, some as part of its own projects and others as part of regional, national, and international efforts. The Wildlife Diversity Program produces an Illustrated Annual Report each year in conjunction with its presentations at the public Board of Commissioners meeting each June. This report has summaries of many of the program’s projects including the mammal, public outreach, and planning projects as well as the birds. It even contains information about bats and rats! This report is available to the public at the PGC website: <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=741916&mode=2>

The PGC also works in the context of the Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture. The scope of our projects are within the entire biogeographical region where Pennsylvania plays a very important role for the management and conservation of several species. The AMJV has published a set of "success stories" for the bird conservation in the Appalachian Mountains, several that include multiple states and institutions. Pennsylvania's projects are included. Please check them out at the following website: <http://amjv.org/index.php/success-stories/category/year-2013>

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to eBird and to the many bird projects across the state. You have been a

vital part of our several successful stories!

I would like to add that it was great to see so many friends at the 2014 PSO meeting in Bradford. I had fun at the "big woods" meeting.

Good Birding!

– Doug

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The Name Game

by Gary Edwards

In 1927, Alabama, Florida, Maine, Missouri, Oregon, Texas, and Wyoming began the trend of designating an official state bird. Arizona completed the process in 1973 by conferring that title on the Cactus Wren. So all states have an official bird, but some species have been selected by multiple states.

There are 28 species represented, 29 if you count D.C.'s Wood Thrush. The Northern Cardinal is the most popular species, chosen by seven states, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Second most popular is the Western Meadowlark, the favorite in six states, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, and Wyoming. The Northern Mockingbird places third, being honored in Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas. Other multiple winners are the American Robin (Connecticut, Michigan, Wisconsin); American Goldfinch (Iowa, New Jersey, Washington); Eastern Bluebird (Missouri, New York); Mountain Bluebird (Idaho, Nevada); Black-capped Chickadee (Maine, Massachusetts). The remaining 20 states have unique species.

It's interesting that Delaware selected the Blue Hen



Pennsylvania's state bird, the Ruffed Grouse was chosen in 1931.

Photo by Roger Higbee

Chicken as its representative, and Rhode Island, not to be outdone, named the Rhode Island Red. Hunting of the state bird is allowed in Alaska (Willow Ptarmigan), California (California Quail), South Dakota (Ring-necked Pheasant), and Pennsylvania (Ruffed Grouse, chosen in 1931).

Here are the rest: Alabama (Northern Flicker), Arizona (Cactus Wren), Colorado (Lark Bunting), Georgia (Brown Thrasher), Hawaii (Hawaiian Goose), Louisiana (Brown Pelican), Maryland (Baltimore Oriole), Minnesota (Common Loon), New Hampshire (Purple Finch), New Mexico (Greater Roadrunner), Oklahoma (Scissor-tailed Flycatcher), South Carolina (Carolina Wren), Utah (California Gull), and Vermont (Hermit Thrush).

Not content with only a state bird, five states have named an official state game bird: Alabama, Massachusetts, and South Carolina selected the Wild Turkey while Georgia and Tennessee named the Northern Bobwhite. Mississippi also has selected the Wood Duck as its state waterfowl.

Chat Room for Conservation

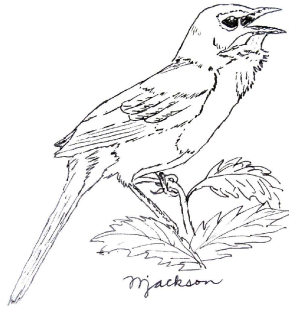
The WOW Bird

This isn't the first time I've written for the *PSO Pileated*, but this is my first attempt at a column which I plan to write about conservation issues, especially concerning birds. It's easy to be negative when writing about the topic. The problems facing our environment can be over-whelming and downright depressing when we start thinking about all the many environmental concerns. So, this column will typically have two parts, first some bad news and secondly, some good news. There is always hope – even for an extinct bird like the Passenger Pigeon.

If you just look at the numbers, birds appear to be doing rather well in Pennsylvania compared to other species. Of the 414 bird species found in Pennsylvania, only 20 species are endangered or threatened in the state. That's 4.8%. We have 37 reptile species and 6 of them are listed, or 16.2%. For amphibians, 7 out of 36 species are listed, or 19.4%. Thirty-eight species of fish out of 217 are listed, which is 17.5%. Out of 66 species of mammals, only 6 are listed, which is 9%. Eleven out of 65 mussel species are listed, or 16.9%. There are more than 2,100 plant species in Pennsylvania and 604 species are listed, or 28.7% of the species.

A better understanding of the overall health of wildlife is to recognize that 20% of Pennsylvania's wildlife species are listed as species of special concern. That number is directly tied to pollution, habitat loss, and forest fragmentation. We've lost more than half of our wetlands and many that remain are degraded. Our forests are fragmented by energy development, and many of our streams are polluted. The nuclear, coal, and oil industries all got their start in Pennsylvania, so it is no wonder that we are considered an industrial state with so many pollution issues. See ActionPA.org for more details on why Pennsylvania is #1 for all the wrong reasons.

In the midst of all these environmental problems, however, we can still find quiet solitude, we can find an abundance of birds, and we can find inspiration in a landscape devoid of development – if we know where to go and where to look – and if we take the time to do so. Birders know where to go, so do hikers, and so do nature photographers. We can also celebrate the fact that Pennsylvania is home to a significant number of Scarlet Tanagers, and those numbers appear to be fairly stable.



The male Scarlet Tanager wins first prize for being the brightest red bird in the dry oak forests, where they prefer to nest. I'm lucky - I also live in a dry oak forest and I've thrilled to their cheery, hoarse song all spring. Their distinctive song is a reminder that Pennsylvania is truly a keystone state for Scarlet Tanagers, since an estimated 15 - 17% of the world's population breeds here. Bridget Stutchbury, our banquet speaker (who was simply wonderful!) at this year's PSO Conference, is the author of the page on Scarlet Tanagers for the *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania*¹. She summarizes a study by Scott Stoleson and Jeff Larkin, which shows that, "Pennsylvania supports a higher proportion of the species' population than that of any other bird species."² Wow!

Massive forest fragmentation caused by industrial wind and gas development will most surely impact our Scarlet Tanagers, and we each of us have a responsibility to protect their habitat. Fortunately, Scarlet Tanagers may not be as area-sensitive as some other forest obligates, but their resiliency will be tested by all the industrial energy development in Pennsylvania. Let's hope this "wow" bird continues to flash its bold colors in our Pennsylvania forests for many generations to come.

– Laura Jackson, Bedford County



Mike and Laura Jackson photographed this male Scarlet Tanager in May, while doing a Golden-winged Warbler survey on SGL 48 in southern Bedford County.

¹Wilson, Andrew; Brauning, Daniel; Mulvihill, Robert. *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania*. University Park, Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012.

²www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/jrnl/2010/nrs_2010_stoleson_001.pdf

PSO Field Trips, Outings and Events

[Note: For those without internet access, more information may be obtained by calling Chad Kauffman at 717-994-6715.]

August Shorebird Days: We will bird Delaware August 16-17. Make arrangements for your own lodging in central or southern Delaware. More information will be forthcoming.

PA Fall Hawkwatch Field Trips: Each month we will schedule a trip to a hawkwatch site in PA. Eventually every hawkwatch in the state will be visited by a PSO field trip. We have visited six in the last two years with many more to come. Everyone is welcome. Details will be forthcoming.

The Big Sit: October 10-11 is the Big Sit, a birding project of *Bird Watcher's Digest*. This is a fun way to do a whole lot of nothing but birding. Last year 2013 was the first year that the Big Sit included both days of the weekend; in the past it had been on Sundays only. This opened up options for birders. While our state won't get the most birds, we almost always lead in the number of circles, something else we should be proud of. For more info, check out their site, <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit/index.php>

Christmas Bird Count – The 115th annual CBC will be held from December 15, 2014, to January 5, 2015. This long standing tradition in the birding world is something that PSO and many Audubon chapters across the state have embraced to offer another opportunity to bird while adding valuable data to the citizens' science world. It's great seeing what birds are out there during that time of the season. PSO has worked hard to get compilers for each county, and we have done a tremendous job. If you aren't already involved, please contact anyone in the birding community or at PSO to see how you can join the fun. If you participate in one count, please consider others nearby as it is a lot of fun, and there is no longer a fee involved. For more information, check out their website, <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

We are open to ideas for field trips, suggestions, and helpers. If you or a birding group you belong to, 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>.

We also have great activity on some other Facebook pages if you haven't already checked them out.

PA Birders <http://on.fb.me/1ce1izw>, our first group created on Facebook, was so popular that it caused us to create the others. This group is primarily for news and announcements. We are really growing a strong community on there as we get to see their faces and pictures and socialize. Some great connections and friendships have been formed on the birding forums.

PA Bird Photography at <http://on.fb.me/18CAQLU> allows you to share any pictures you have. It's important to let people know where and when you took the photos.

PA Bird ID Help, <http://on.fb.me/1f6jJqR>, is available if you have a picture or sound you need help to identify. This is a great forum from which to learn. We usually try to guide you to the identification rather than blurting out the answers immediately. This is a great learning tool and a refresher for others.

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Ralph K. Bell (1915-2014): A Legend to Remember

by Paul Hess

Ralph K. Bell of Greene County died on May 20, 2014, at the age of 99. By any measure, he was assuredly *not* an old man. Ask anyone who respected him, honored him, and loved him.

His legacy is measured in astounding numbers: As of May 2013 he had banded 142,255 birds since 1954, including more than 7,000 Eastern Bluebirds. He wrote more than 200 scientific articles.

It is measured in countless accomplishments such as founding the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory in West Virginia in 1958, the oldest continuous bird banding station in North America.

It is measured in many honors including the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology's prestigious Earl L. Poole Award in 1998 for significant contributions to ornithology in the state.

It is measured by the thousands – yes, thousands – of people young and old, whom he taught the value of studying nature and the importance of conservation for more than half a century.

In the end, perhaps his legacy is measured most wonderfully by the pure spirit of the man. Words like “icon,” “legend,” “mentor,” “educator,” “wit,” “fun,” and “wisdom” are frequent in anything anyone ever said about Ralph. How many people have we known who could be measured by a combination of all those accolades?

Many Pennsylvania birders, professional ornithologists, and other naturalists first met Ralph at one of his annual spring outings at his Greene County farm. After their first visit, a lot of them made the outing an annual pilgrimage. Ralph's failing health prevented him from participating in this year's event on May 17, but he was close to the activities. His friend Paul Beck from Allegheny County was fortunate to spend a few minutes with him as he rested in the house. Paul commented later, “I think that he timed his departure so that he could be present for one last outing at the farm.” Knowing Ralph, that makes perfect sense.

Most PSO members first met Ralph at the 1998 annual meeting at Mansfield when he was honored with the Poole Award. After introducing Ralph at the banquet and presenting the award, PSO President Alan C. Gregory

wrote in the *PSO Newsletter*, “I knew that no matter what I said, a two-minute speech could never adequately convey this man's contributions to field ornithology and conservation...Above all else, though, it was a pleasure to meet this gentleman who has done so much for ornithology in Pennsylvania and neighboring West Virginia.”

Please consider sending a memorial contribution to the Ralph K. Bell Bird Club, c/o Marjorie Howard, President, 149 Preachers Road, Waynesburg, PA 15370, or to the Allegheny Front Migration Observatory, c/o Joan Bell Pattison, Project Leader, 10391 Glastonbury Circle #202, Fort Myers, FL 33913.

The Three Rivers Birding Club website (www.3RBC.org) will soon contain a detailed biographical account of Ralph's astonishing life and achievements, as well as complete comments from friends and colleagues that are merely excerpted on this page. If you would like to add a comment, send it to me at phess@salsgiver.com.

Marjorie Howard, PSO Board Member and President of the Ralph K. Bell Bird Club: “Greene County lost a good man who was a teacher, mentor, conservationist, citizen scientist, local ornithologist and a dear friend. Ralph enjoyed teaching others about nature but especially about the birds. I had the pleasure of birding with him many times including at Enlow Fork, at his annual farm walk, and at Dolly Sods. He had a way of making the walk interesting by telling a story or a joke. He now is flying with the birds he loved.”

Carol and Fred McCullough, President and Trustee, respectively, of the Brooks Bird Club in Wheeling and PSO Members: “Meeting Ralph was a life-changing event for us. We heard bird banding occurred at Dolly Sods in the fall so we went there in the fall of 1969. Ralph was banding and short-handed, and that was the beginning of us spending a significant portion of each fall there. We are very fortunate to have worked with this remarkable man.”

Bob Leberman, Bird Bander Emeritus at Powdermill Nature Reserve and PSO Poole Award Recipient: “I have known Ralph as a friend since the late 1950s. For several decades he was a beloved fixture at the annual Eastern Bird Banding Association meetings, where he was

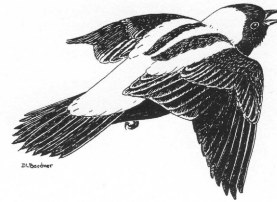


After climbing a tall ladder, Ralph Bell reaches into his American Kestrel nest box to capture the nestlings for banding. Ralph was able to do this well into his 90s, and seeing the chicks was always an exciting climax to the annual May outings at his Greene County farm. Tom Moeller captured the iconic portrait at the 2010 Three Rivers Birding Club outing.

appreciated for his sense of humor, dislike of cowbirds, and folksy ways. And he was, of course, the star of the Allegheny Front banding station in West Virginia. He certainly will be missed.”

Larry Helgerman, Trustee of the Brooks Bird Club: “‘It sure is nice to know famous people.’ This is what Ralph would say to me (and many others) when I saw him as he would reach out to shake my hand. Funny thing is, Ralph K. Bell was the famous man, though you would never hear that from him. Ralph was one of the most modest gentlemen I ever knew. I’m sure he’s in good company with other past birders. He’s probably teaching Wilson or Audubon to bird by ear.”

Jack Solomon, Past President of the Three Rivers Birding Club and Past PSO Board Member: “Back in the early 1970s when I started birding, Ralph was already a legend, not only for his annual outing, but also for his ornithological skills and personality. My favorite activity on his outings was talking to Ralph, enjoying his sense of humor, and learning about all aspects of nature. I’m pleased to have known the man who epitomizes the joy of making a major contribution to science while having fun and enriching many lives.”



The Aerial Ballet

by Gary Ferrence

The Deere came close,
His nerves caved in.
With his cover blown,
The game was to begin.

Ol’ Sol; gone to bed,
The moon’s light, so intense,
A brown ghost floated down.
The peent was heard: that important sound.



His beak opened to speak;
I heard not a word.
After all he was no more,
Than a ghostly brown bird.

The lunar glow, so clear and bright,
Up he’d spiral, out of sight.
Titters and chirps descend from above,
The objective of course: wild bird love.

A fluff of bird on the wetland was seen.
A little round bird: dancing for a queen.
The Prairie was shorn.
New life was born.

PSO Newsletter

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

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Photo by Mike Fialkovich

Special Thanks to Sherron Lynch!

Sincere thanks to Sherron Lynch who has designed PSO cakes for many of our annual meetings. This year's cake depicted a Northern Saw-whet Owl, and as usual, was delicious!!!

Many thanks!

Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

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