

The PSO Pileated



October 2017

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Volume 28, Number 3

From the President's Desk....

Thanks for a great meeting!

We had a great annual meeting in Carlisle in September. See the summary and overview on page 2 of this newsletter for details.

It was nice to see so many people; we had more than 120 attendees which was a great turnout! Thank you all for coming! During the business meeting, I asked how many in the audience were attending a PSO Annual Meeting for the first time, thinking a few hands would go up. To my surprise, numerous people raised their hands! I hope everyone enjoyed themselves.

I also had the opportunity to meet some members for the first time whom I only knew by name. I always enjoy that aspect of attending these meetings. I also enjoy exploring new birding areas and seeing the towns that host us. We were contacted by the Cumberland County Chamber of Congress a few years ago inviting us to have our annual meeting in the county. It was a nice gesture to reach out to us, and it also shows that PSO is becoming known across the state by non-birding organizations (we have also been contacted by a few other counties inviting us to have meetings). I also think it is another example of the awareness regarding the financial impact that birding makes on the economy of a region. Certainly we are not an enormous organization; however we can contribute to businesses in the places where we hold our meetings.



Ramsay Koury's field trip along Ridge Road was highly productive.

We tried a few new things for this meeting. One was a 50/50 raffle as an alternative to the Silent Auction. The funds generated support the Youth Scholarship, just as the Silent Auction has in the past. We also had a sponsor for the first time—RockJumper Worldwide Birding Adventures. Thanks to George Armistead for generously supporting our Youth Scholarship fund that gave three young people the opportunity to attend the meeting this year.

This meeting could not have happened without the dedication, determination, and perseverance of our Vice President, Vern Gauthier. Vern put an enormous amount of work into the meeting, and I am grateful to him for all his work. Every board member made suggestions and completed tasks that supported the meeting's activities. Thanks to all of you.

I attended field trips to SGL 230 on Saturday and SGL 170, Miller's Gap and Lamb's Gap on Sunday. I had never been to either location before, and I enjoyed both – with the exception of the biting insects on Sunday! Highlights for me were migrating Broad-winged Hawks coming off the mountain, a Lincoln's Sparrow, a Philadelphia Vireo, an Ovenbird on the forest floor that I thought I'd never see, a close look at a male Black-throated Blue Warbler, and two Wood Thrushes. The

(continued on page 15)

2017 PSO Meeting A Grand Success

by Debbie Kalbfleisch

This year, instead of holding a spring meeting, the PSO met September 15 through 17, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Meetings and social events were held in the Comfort Inn and Suites in downtown Carlisle. Just west of Harrisburg, Cumberland County is on one of the main eastern flyways for migratory birds, including hawks, grassland species, warblers, and shorebirds.

As a side note, since mid-July, a juvenile Roseate Spoonbill has been present at the Conodoguinet Creek in nearby Camp Hill. Many of the registrants stopped to search for this mega-rarity. Many people were able to see the bird, while many others, alas, did not!

Prior to the business meeting on Friday, September 15, people gathered to socialize and shop. Vendors included Aden Troyer from the Lost Creek Shoe Shop (Optics); Rockjumper Worldwide Birding Adventures; Conococheague Audubon; Sheree Daugherty with nature paintings and prints, as well as hand-painted bird ornaments; Appalachian Audubon; Birds by Botzan with bird and other animal sculptures and photographs; Laura Jackson with shade organic coffee, photographs, and t-shirts; and Lauren Shaffer Birding Pictures. Margaret and Roger Higbee manned the PSO table, assisted by Carol Guba and Linda Wagner, and sold official PSO hats, t-shirts, and other items. Special commemorative t-shirts featuring this year's logo of Cumberland County and a Dickcissel were ordered when participants registered for the meeting.

The business meeting on Friday evening was short and sweet, chaired by President Mike Fialkovich and assisted by Vern Gauthier, Vice President. This year, Shonah Hunter, Chuck Berthoud, Mark McConaughy, Scott Stoleson, and Brian Quindlen all left the board. We thank them for their many contributions and dedicated service over the years! Sandy Lockerman was reelected and new to the board was Evan Mann. The slate of officers was also reelected.

Vern Gauthier then introduced Saturday's field trip leaders. It was noted that the Comfort Suites was offering breakfast at 5:30 a.m. for folks staying at the hotel. Vern encouraged everyone to be at their meeting spots no later than 6:45 a.m. People were also invited to visit Waggoner's Gap Hawkwatch on their own after the morning trips.

After a short break, Andy Markel led a Flight Calls trip

into the night while Ian Gardner presented a summary for people wishing to brush up on their Fall Warbler Identification.

A nice variety of field trips was scheduled. Bill Franz led a walk along the Big Spring Creek in the valley; this trip was offered only on Saturday. Ramsay Koury led a mostly driving trip along the Big Flat, Ridge Road, and Milesburn Road on the Blue Ridge; these are among the best fall migrant traps in the county. Annette Mathes was the leader for a walk at Colonel Denning S.P., Elk Hill Road in Tuscarora State Forest, and Laurel Hill Road along the Kittatinny Ridge; this trip made a brief foray into Perry County. Vern Gauthier's field trip visited Pine Grove Furnace State Park and Camp Michaux on the Blue Ridge; Camp Michaux is an old Civilian Conservation Corps site and includes a section of the Appalachian Trail. Andy Markel led a trip in the valley to State Game Lands 169, generally a good place to find Mourning and Connecticut Warblers. Peter Lusardi's outing focused on State Game Lands 230, also located in the valley. Ted Nichols led a valley trip to the Harrisburg Former State Hospital Grounds and Wildwood Park. Bill Oyler's field trip hit Heisey Orchard, Still House Hollow, and Milesburn Road on the Blue Ridge. Chad Kauffman led a trip to Little Buffalo and Waggoner's Gap Hawkwatch on Kittatinny Ridge. Ian Gardner was the leader for an outing to Miller's Gap, Lamb's Gap, and State Game Lands 170 on the Kittatinny Ridge. All these field trips were highly successful and greatly enjoyed by the participants.

Most of Saturday's trips were repeated on Sunday, and an additional trip to the Gettysburg Battlefield was also offered; leaders were Deb Siefkend and Mike Bertram. The weather was generally good on both Saturday and Sunday, and most of us appreciated the cooler weather in the mountains.

After lunch on Saturday, people gathered in the meeting room for refreshments and to visit the vendors. Two papers were presented: Andy Wilson spoke on the use of drones in bird research, and afterwards, Art McMorris talked about the history and current status of Peregrine Falcons in Pennsylvania. There was a short break so the hotel people could set up the room for that evening's banquet. Sherron Lynch made two cakes for us, a chocolate cake with raspberry filling which was beautifully decorated with the meeting's logo, the head of a Dickcissel over Cumberland County, and a white cake with pineapple filling. Thank you, Sherron!

To begin the awards presentation on Saturday evening, three young birders were presented with certificates and a Youth Scholarship Award which enables those 18 and under to attend our annual meeting. Holly Merker introduced Carl Engstrom, Joshua McCoy, and Paul Heveran. They may be young, but each of them already has an impressive list of accomplishments! Many thanks to Rockjumper Birding Tours which helped sponsor the Youth Scholarships.



VP Vern Gauthier (far right) presented the PSO Conservation Award to the Waggoner's Gap counters. From left to right are Gene Wagner, Keith Gingrich, Ron Freed, and Dave Grove.

The PSO Conservation Award was given to the Audubon Hawkwatch at Waggoner's Gap. Present to receive the award were Dave Grove, Ron Freed, Gene Wagner, and Keith Gingrich. They have been keeping records at Waggoner's Gap for 23 years.

This year's Earl Poole Award for outstanding contributions to ornithology in Pennsylvania was presented to Scott Weidensaul. Scott is well known to most of us in the Commonwealth as the author of numerous books, as well as a bird bander and researcher of everything from hummingbirds to Snowy Owls.

Mike Fialkovich next tallied the list of birds seen so far during the weekend. The complete list of 121 species noted during our field trips is on page 7 of this newsletter.

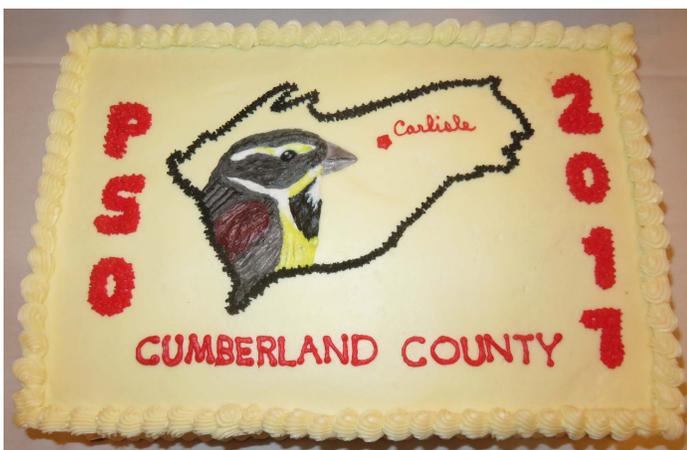
Our banquet speaker was Ted Floyd, Editor of the American Birding Association's "Birding" magazine. Ted is a native Pennsylvanian, who grew up in the heart of Pittsburgh. His topic was "Birding in the 21st Century" and was anything but dry! He illustrated how birding in the mid-80s meant keeping a list of birds on paper or index cards which then went into a cardboard box, probably never again seeing the light of day. Birding (and other observations of nature!) has now evolved to keeping detailed notes in eBird on one's cell

phone, including recorded songs and photographs, which are instantly available to anyone who might be interested, anywhere around the world.

Thanks to the Appalachian Audubon Society, the Conococheague Audubon Society, and Cumberland County birders for hosting us! There were 132 registrations, with 121 people on Field Trips, and 112 attendees at the Banquet. We were very pleased to have about 10 college students attend the meeting, and hope to have even more next year. Next year's meeting will be in Crawford County. No dates have been picked yet, but it will be sometime in the fall.



Special Thanks to Our "Resident Cake Baker"



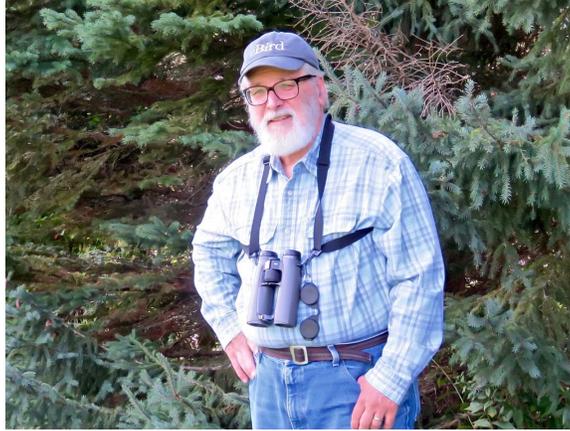
Sincere thanks to Sherron Lynch, who has been baking beautiful cakes for the past umpteen years for our annual PSO meeting.

Sherron's cakes are not only great to look at, but they are tasty as well. This year's cake sported the Dickcissel enclosed in the outline of Cumberland County. Sherron baked not one, but two different cakes this year. One was chocolate with raspberry filling and the other white with pineapple filling – unbelievably delicious!

Thank you so very much, Sherron, for taking the time to treat us with these bakery delights!

Welcome, New Board Member!

Locating Evan Mann during his childhood in northeastern Pennsylvania meant checking the woods, streams, and fields around his home. A curiosity about the natural world consumed many recreational hours. This interest in the natural sciences continued into his high school and college years.



Two subsequent events focused this interest to birds specifically. The first was to accept a job with a regional seed company where he managed a facility that manufactured a line of wild bird food products. A career that spanned almost two decades meant learning all aspects of that industry: staff management, bulk material handling, seed conditioning, pest management, ingredient/commodity purchasing, sales and marketing, and product management. A favorite responsibility was presenting bird feeding seminars to consumers at retail accounts throughout the northeast.

The second event that broadened Evan's interest to include all wild birds occurred one spring evening when his wife, Julia, asked him to listen with her to a song emanating from just inside the woods adjacent to their home. "My spark song," says Evan, "was the magnificent vocalization of the Wood Thrush. From that point on, my eyes and ears were attuned to the beauty of all birds. I was hooked. I was a birder!"

After owning and operating a business manufacturing feeders and nest boxes for a number of years, Evan's final career choice was to join a regional cooperative of farm and home retailers, creating for them a new brand of wild

bird food, and then shepherding it through its initial five years of product life.

Evan served on the board of directors of the National Bird-feeding Society, and has chaired various marketing committees. Locally, he participated on the board of Friends of Salt Springs Park, which manages a small state park for the Pennsylvania Parks Department.

Evan is our Susquehanna County compiler for *Pennsylvania Birds*. He covered five blocks in his home county during our last breeding bird atlas. He leads bird walks and presents bird-related workshops in his community. Evan is the eBird reviewer and filter editor for two northern tier counties. He also runs a Breeding Bird Survey route for the USGS.

"Ever since that Wood Thrush sang its way into my heart, birding has been an aesthetic experience for me. While the thrill of a new species is always exciting, I don't do much chasing, and I let eBird worry about where my numbers are. I am just as happy to spend time in my local patch observing a pair of neotropicals and wondering about the rest of the saga of their lives that I will never know. Our birds make allies of people quite well. If I can help people understand and appreciate them, I am convinced they will join us in supporting the conservation of birds and their habitats. If by serving on the PSO Board, I can help make that happen, count me in!"

Certificates of Appreciation Awarded

Since the March 2017 newsletter, these Certificates of Appreciation were issued to the following individuals who allowed access to their properties to view rare or unusual birds. The full list can be found on the PSO's website.

Snowy Owl, Aden Miller, Crawford Co.
Snowy Owl, Eric Miller, Crawford Co.
Yellow-headed Blackbird, Alvin Stolzhus, Centre Co.
Swallow-tailed Kite, Anthony and Kathy Showalter, Snyder Co.

2017 PSO Meeting Participants

Tina Alianiello	Ted Floyd	Helen Heveran	Wayne Laubscher	Joan Renninger
Diane Allison	Bill Franz	Paul Heveran	Melissa Little	Darby Richard
George Armistead	Linda Franz	Margaret Higbee	Gary Lockerman	Ramona Sahni
Valerie Barnes	Ron Freed	Roger Higbee	Sandy Lockerman	Lauri Shaffer
Chelsea Beck	Ian Gardner	Jody Hochberg	Peter Lusardi	Ralph Shaffer
Chuck Berthoud	Vern Gauthier	Marcia Hochberg	Pat Lynch	Deb Siefken
Michael Bertram	Don Gilbert	Paul Hough	Sherron Lynch	Ralph Siefken
Nathaniel Blake	Jen Gilbert	Marjorie Howard	Evan Mann	Carole Simon
Barry Blust	Taylor Gillette	Adrienne Izaguirre	Julia Mann	Lee Simpson
Madison Botch	Keith Gingrich	Frank Izaguirre	Eric Marchbein	Sam Sinderson
Susan Braun	Vilda Graf	Laura Jackson	Andy Markel	Jack Solomon
Dan Brauning	Elizabeth Grant	Mike Jackson	Annette Mathes	Susie Solomon
Doris Brookens	Phil Grant	Karena Johnson	Dan McCoy	Kate St. John
Scott Brookens	Debra Grim	Tim Johnson	Joshua McCoy	Dan Stambaugh
Steve Brookens	Dave Grove	Debbie Kalbfleisch	Art McMorris	Susan Strassner
Brian Byrnes	Deb Grove	Chad Kauffman	Holly Merker	Emily Thomas
Gail Carns	Greg Grove	Phil Keener	Craig Miller	Lisa Tull
Mary Paulone Carns	Carol Guba	Rudy Keller	Jean Miller	Nick Voris
Sheree Daugherty	Joe Gyekis	Dave Kerr	Frank Moone	Gene Wagner
Michael David	Jen Harned	Michelle Kienholz	Jane Myers	Linda Wagner
Eli DePaulis	Cathy Hart	Robert Kochert	Ted Nichols II	Scott Walker
Jane Earle	Deborah Hart	Theresa Kochert	Richard Nugent	Scott Weidensaul
Carl Engstrom	Rebecca Hart	Ramsay Koury	Bill Oyler	Howard West
Kurt Engstrom	Mike Harvell	Kathy Kuckwara	Lisa Perkins	Nathan Weyandt
Mike Fialkovich	Rena Haussermann	Janet Kuehl	Julia Plummer	Tiffany Willow
Chris Fischer	Paul Hess	Tom Kuehl	Eric Reitz	Andy Wilson
Ronnie Fischer				

Congratulations to Our 2017 Conservation Award Winner

The 2017 Conservation Award was presented to the Audubon Hawkwatch at Waggoner's Gap for the many years and countless hours of volunteer citizen science provided by its counters, helping to advance the study of migrating raptors and the conservation of raptor populations.

The season at Waggoner's runs from August 1 through December 31 during which time the counters spend around 1,100 hours. Over the course of a season that equals out to an average of more than seven hours a day; and if you remove the days where the weather is too adverse to go to the hawkwatch or to stay there too long, you can start to understand the dedication of these counters.

Present to receive the award was Dave Grove who has been the compiler at Waggoner's Gap since 1994 and his three lieutenants, Ron Freed, Gene Wagner, and Keith Gingrich. Ron and Keith mainly cover the morning shift, while Dave and Gene take charge of the afternoon shift. Due to increasing age of the four (as Dave says, none of them are getting any younger), the decision was made in

2016 to pursue a paid counter position in 2017 which has become a reality! Dave and friends still spend a lot of time at the watch, but they can do fewer hours now that there is a paid counter.

You can help support this in the future by making donations to PA Audubon for the specific purpose of funding the Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch Counter. Also, endowments can be set up to provide a steady stream of funding for this specific purpose. To memorialize someone, donations (in lieu of flowers) could be made to PA Audubon, for the specific purpose of supporting the Waggoner's Gap counter. Donations can be sent to the address listed below. Please note on the check or on the envelope that the donation is specifically for the Waggoner's Gap paid counter.

Amy Weidensaul
Director of Community Conservation
Audubon Pennsylvania
100 Wildwood Way
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Scott Weidensaul is Our 2017 Earl Poole Award Recipient

The Earl Poole award is presented annually to a person or persons who have made significant contributions to Pennsylvania's ornithology. This may be in the form of research, volunteer efforts, publications, field work, or any other pursuit that has increased our knowledge and understanding of the birdlife in Pennsylvania.

This year's recipient is Scott Weidensaul. Scott has been involved in ornithology since his childhood, and it has pretty much consumed most of his adult life. He is a licensed raptor, songbird, and hummingbird bander and is an active field researcher. At the Ned Smith Center, he has guided and inspired 90+ volunteers in its Northern Saw-whet Owl Migration Program for the past 21 years. He is a cofounder of Project SNOWstorm, a collaboration of scientists, researchers, and organizations studying the irruptive migration of wintering Snowy Owls in North America. He is also involved in researching wintering hummingbirds in Pennsylvania.

Scott is an author and naturalist and has written over two dozen books, including *Living on the Wind*, a Pulitzer Prize finalist; *Mountains of the Heart*; *The Peterson Reference Guide to Owls of North America and the Caribbean*; and *Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Ornithology*. He serves on the boards of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art.



Scott Weidensaul poses with Sandy Lockerman who presented the Poole Award. Vern Gauthier looks on in the background.

Special thanks to Mike Fialkovich for providing all the photos of the awards recipients.



Thanks to RockJumper Birding Tours for their Sponsorship of our Youth Scholarship program and for helping to keep meeting registration fees reasonable.

RockJumper is also offering PSO members registering in 2017 for a RockJumper tour in 2017 or 2018 a 5% discount off that tour.

For more information visit: www.rockjumperbirding.com

Or contact George Armistead at: info@rockjumperbirding.com

Congratulations to Our Youth Scholarship Recipients

Each year, the PSO offers a scholarship to a young Pennsylvania birder who shows a strong interest in ornithology so that he or she may attend the PSO Annual Meeting. This PSO Youth Scholarship provides full expenses for attendance to the entire weekend's events for one young birder, and his or her parent/legal guardian, including: all lodging, meals, and travel expenses.

This year, thanks to the generous sponsorship and support provided by RockJumper Birding Tours, facilitated by George Armistead, the PSO could offer not just one, but three youth scholarships to deserving young Pennsylvania birders!

The recipients of this year's scholarships reached across the Commonwealth, representing western, central, and eastern Pennsylvania: Joshua McCoy of Butler County, Carl Engstrom of Centre County, and Paul Heveran of Montgomery County. All three young men have remarkable birding resumes at their young ages, and all possess an incredible passion for birds, and birding, in their own regions, and beyond.

Carl Engstrom, 17, hails from State College and has a keen interest in bird distribution in his region, which is demonstrated by the numerous projects and studies on bird populations in which he participates. These include: the PAMC, the State College and Culp CBCs (since 2007!), three Winter Raptor Surveys (WRS), the Great Backyard Bird Count, the Juniata Audubon Society's Birding Classic (He was a prize-winner!). Carl also helped organize a nesting study (sponsored by PSU) that studies First Energy powerline rights-of-way. He also manages data for the "Central PA Historical Data" eBird account, and if that isn't enough, Carl is helping in the development of a course at PSU about the evolution and conservation of Hawaiian Honeycreepers! Carl was nominated by Deb and Greg Grove, who have been impressed with his involvement and passion for birds, and picked him out as a rising star in the Pennsylvania birding community.



Joshua McCoy poses with Holly Merker at our annual meeting.



Paul Heveran receives his framed certificate from Holly Merker.



Carl Engstrom poses with Holly Merker.

Paul Heveran, 17, is from Pennsburg, and is a keen hawkwatcher and passionate birder. Paul was nominated for the scholarship by Dr. Laurie Goodrich of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary where Paul volunteers. Paul is a versatile volunteer for Hawk Mountain. He not only stands watch as a hawk counter on the North Lookout, but he also works behind the scenes extracting data for researchers to analyze on Broad-winged Hawks. He also helps with nest box checks for American Kestrels. Paul is an avid eBirder in his home county of Montgomery where he devotes a lot of time to censusing birds in his yard and local hotspots, including Green Lane Reservoir. Paul enjoys birding outside of Pennsylvania, too, making treks to Cape May, NJ, and coastal Maine to study birds. Paul hopes to continue his love of birds by pursuing studies in ornithology in college.

Joshua McCoy, 16, lives in Sarver, and has been studying birds since he was a young boy. His goal is to pursue a career in wildlife biology. Joshua is an active member of the Bartramian Audubon Society. In 2017, Joshua won the coveted Gene and Joanne Wilhelm Scholarship, which sends one young birder to the Hog Island Audubon Camp's "Coastal Maine Bird Studies" programs for teen birders in coastal Maine. It was here that I personally met Joshua, took notice of his passion for birds and birding, and nominated

him for this scholar-ship. During his Hog Island experience, Joshua had the opportunity to explore ornithology at a new, scientific level, aimed at bird conservation and science. During the program, Joshua got experience using professional recording equipment to record the island's Black-capped Chickadees and spent time learning and watching the process of bird banding. One of the highlights of his experience in Maine was assisting in the banding of Atlantic Puffins on Eastern Egg Rock Island, an experience he chalks up to helping him solidify his desire to continue to study and learn about birds and wildlife as he seeks out a career in wildlife biology.

We wish these three young men all the best as they

continue with their pursuits and endeavors in birding and bird conservation! They are some of the shining stars of Pennsylvania's younger birding community, and the PSO is proud to recognize them for their devotion to bird study here in Pennsylvania!

If you know of a young birder in your region who is deserving of this special opportunity to connect with birders across the state, please consider nominating them for the 2018 PSO Youth Scholarship Award!

Holly Merker, PSO Education Committee Chair

Welcome New Members

Josh Auld, Kennett Square, PA
 Nathaniel Blake, Pittsburgh, PA
 Donald Heintzelman, Emmaus, PA
 Christopher Hoff, Orrtanna, PA
 Douglas Kraemer, Phoenixville, PA
 Dan Stambaugh, Harrisburg, PA
 Jeff Stratford, Wilkes-Barre, PA
 Howard West, Hummelstown, PA

Birds Listed by 2017 PSO Meeting Attendants

Friday, September 15, through Sunday, September 17

The rules allow that every bird, as long as it was seen somewhere in PA en route to PSO, may be added to the list, but PSO birds are listed separately. Asterisked birds were not listed on any of the scheduled field trips.

Canada Goose	Northern Harrier	Common Raven	Lincoln's Sparrow
Wood Duck	Sharp-shinned Hawk	*Purple Martin	Baltimore Oriole
*Blue-winged Teal	Cooper's Hawk	Tree Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Northern Shoveler	Red-shouldered Hawk	N Rough-winged Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Mallard	Broad-winged Hawk	Barn Swallow	Common Grackle
American Black Duck	Red-tailed Hawk	Carolina Chickadee	Ovenbird
Green-winged Teal	Eastern Screech-Owl	Black-capped Chickadee	Black-and-white Warbler
Bufflehead	Great Horned Owl	Tufted Titmouse	Tennessee Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Belted Kingfisher	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Nashville Warbler
Rock Pigeon	Red-headed Woodpecker	White-breasted Nuthatch	Mourning Warbler
Mourning Dove	Red-bellied Woodpecker	House Wren	Kentucky Warbler
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Downy Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	Common Yellowthroat
Black-billed Cuckoo	Hairy Woodpecker	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Hooded Warbler
Common Nighthawk	Northern Flicker	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	American Redstart
Chimney Swift	Pileated Woodpecker	Eastern Bluebird	Cape May Warbler
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	American Kestrel	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Northern Parula
Killdeer	Merlin	Swainson's Thrush	Magnolia Warbler
Least Sandpiper	Peregrine Falcon	Wood Thrush	Bay-breasted Warbler
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Eastern Wood-Pewee	American Robin	Blackburnian Warbler
Wilson's Snipe	Willow Flycatcher	Gray Catbird	Yellow Warbler
*Spotted Sandpiper	Eastern Phoebe	Brown Thrasher	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Solitary Sandpiper	Great Crested Flycatcher	Northern Mockingbird	Blackpoll Warbler
Lesser Yellowlegs	White-eyed Vireo	European Starling	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Yellow-throated Vireo	Cedar Waxwing	Palm Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Blue-headed Vireo	House Sparrow	Pine Warbler
Great Egret	Philadelphia Vireo	House Finch	Prairie Warbler
Green Heron	Warbling Vireo	American Goldfinch	Black-throated Green Warbler
*Roseate Spoonbill	Red-eyed Vireo	Eastern Towhee	Scarlet Tanager
Black Vulture	Blue Jay	Chipping Sparrow	Northern Cardinal
Turkey Vulture	American Crow	Field Sparrow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Osprey	Fish Crow	Song Sparrow	Indigo Bunting
Bald Eagle			

**Total = 125 species seen in the state
 121 species listed on the field trips**

Conservation Chat Room

How to Help Birds - One Tree at a Time



Dr. Doug Tallamy, author of “Bringing Nature Home,” points out that everyone who has a yard can help birds by planting native trees, shrubs, and flowers that provide food for birds, especially those plants that support

caterpillars. His research shows that white oak trees support the most species of caterpillars, followed by other oaks, native cherry, willow, and birch.

Unfortunately, most landscape designers deliberately choose non-native plants because they aren’t eaten as much by our native insects, but that effectively creates a “no-fly” zone for birds. Birds have to fly right past the exotic plants because these plants don’t have the insects needed to sustain them, especially when birds are feeding young. Doug Tallamy has found that contrary to what many people believe, “birds do not reproduce on berries and seeds.

Ninety-six percent of terrestrial birds rear their young on insects.” Because native caterpillars did not evolve with non-native plants, most lack the ability to overcome the plants’ chemical defenses and cannot eat them.

Fortunately, there are three online resources that can help us figure out how to replant our yards with native plants.

National Wildlife Federation has **Native Plant Finder:** www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/

Just enter your zip code to discover the best native plants that attract butterflies and moths which support birds. This tool is based on Dr. Tallamy’s research and has been developed with the United States Forest Service.

National Audubon has a similar program called **Plants for Birds:** www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds

Based on your zip code, the program not only lists and describes shrubs, trees, and fruit that are best for birds, but it also provides a link to local and regional plant nurseries where you can buy the native plants. While it is



Dr. Tallamy found that during the breeding season, Carolina Chickadees and other birds need a lot of insects – in the case of chickadees, more than 5,000 per clutch of hatchlings – and most of these were caterpillars.

Photo by Laura Jackson

www.panativeplantsociety.org/

Fall is considered by many to be the best time to plant trees and shrubs since new root growth is encouraged without new top growth, when the air becomes cooler than the ground. There is usually more moisture in the fall, too, so the plants have a better developed root system by next spring when the plant begins to grow.

Inventory your yard this fall and find a spot where you can plant a native tree. Then stand back and watch for chickadees!

Laura Jackson
Bedford County

PSO Field Trip

November 4-5 – Allegheny Front Hawkwatch. This is usually the peak for migrating Golden Eagles. We hope to see you there! For more information, go to <https://www.facebook.com/events/193271144533626>.

In an Unlikely Tern of Events, Rare Bird Visits Wellsboro

by Rich Hanlon

The story begins on a beautiful Thursday morning, August 10, when I had originally planned to be birding in a neighboring county with some friends but chose to hang back so I could see my wife off when she left for a conference in Hershey, PA, in the early afternoon. I figured since I was home and it was my day off, I might as well hit up some of the local lakes for an hour or two. I had plans to stop by Nessmuk Lake, The Muck, Woodland Park, and Hamilton Lake. As luck, or fate – or whatever you'd prefer to believe – would have it, Nessmuk Lake was my only birding stop that morning, and for good reason.

I parked my car in the lot next to the pavilion, grabbed my camera and binoculars and proceeded towards the south shore of Nessmuk Lake. I stopped abruptly 40 yards short of the water's edge at the sight of a dark colored tern perched on one of the pylons that jut straight out of the water next to shore. The bird was facing me head-on, so I could see that the head and breast were black with some white spotting on the forehead.

Believing I was in the presence of a rare migrating Black Tern, I called my birding friends, Kathy Riley and John Corcoran. They arrived on the scene about 10 minutes later, and the three of us watched as it flew around the lake. As we watched it, Kathy said, "I don't think that's a Black Tern."

"What do you think it is?" John and I asked. Kathy opened her field guide to the terns and pointed to a photo of a much rarer White-winged Tern which was depicted next to Black Tern in her guide. Sure enough, we had a match. That tern, with its tail looking like it was dipped in white paint, white upper wings, and underwings black to the shoulder with white primary and secondary feathers was definitely a White-winged Tern!

And so, I with my camera, John with his spotting scope, and Kathy with her field guide confirmed the ID for us. We got the word out quickly, and within a few hours crowds were beginning to form at the lakeshore – mostly locals at first, but then people from all over Pennsylvania and New York were there by evening of that first day. At 5:00 p.m. a team from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology arrived.

The Cornell crew informed us that one of the reasons the tern decided to settle at Nessmuk was because the habitat is very good for it. I was told that in Europe, White-

winged Terns are primarily found in healthy shallow marsh habitats that have good perches close to the water's surface. That is also a description of what we currently see at Nessmuk Lake.

It seemed that every time the White-winged Tern would leave its perch during the day, Barn Swallows would mob it repeatedly, and waxwings always seemed curious about its presence, but they were not as aggressive as the swallows.

My favorite experiences with the White-winged Tern were in the evenings, just before dark, when it would go into a feeding frenzy making pass after pass over the shallow marsh at the south end of Nessmuk Lake in company with Chimney Swifts and Cedar Waxwings. The Chimney Swifts especially seemed to welcome the White-winged Tern, and there were moments when it seemed to assimilate with their flock, moving in unison with the swifts through areas of densest insect activity. I think the evening flights of the White-winged Tern, its shape, movement, and behavior, very closely resemble that of a feeding Common Nighthawk; this may speak to the swift's acceptance.

Over the course of four days, the Tiadaghton Audubon Society estimates that 300 people came to see the White-winged Tern. It very quickly became a widely sought-after bird for a number of reasons. One, it's a Eurasian breeder, and traveling to the shores (and inland!) of North America is not part of this species' regular migration pathway. This tern species has been reported on eBird.org only a little more than twenty times, ever. In addition to that, this is the first documented sighting of a White-winged Tern in the United States during the calendar year 2017 and the first documented sighting of a White-winged Tern in the state of Pennsylvania, ever. It is also a very strikingly colored and beautiful bird, an adult transitioning from breeding to non-breeding plumage. So it's easy to see how this bird rose to fame so quickly. But apparently it held little to no regard for its celebrity status as it departed without notice sometime between Sunday night and Monday morning.

As I reflect upon this experience, there are questions I want to ask the bird that I will never know the answer to! "Where did you come from?" and "How did you get here?" I am filled with gratitude to have had such an amazing experience with such a beautiful and interesting avian traveler and to have met so many kind and respect-

ful people from so many places – some who traveled from as far as Colorado, Texas, and Florida – who share my love and appreciation of birds.

Another observation I've made through this experience is that it pays to nurture healthy ecosystems. Many of our visitors, and especially those who traveled far distances to get here, asked for recommendations concerning food and lodging around Wellsboro. The presence of this rare bird had a significant impact on local businesses during its

stay, especially on restaurants and hotels. If not for the healthy status of our local bodies of water and the land adjacent to it, it's not very likely that our national celebrity, the White-winged Tern, would have made a visit. It pays to nurture healthy ecosystems, and this is something we can all participate in together, for the sake of the birds and our local economy.

[Note: Rich Hanlon is a member of the Tiadaghton Audubon Society.]

Yellow-headed Blackbird Found in Centre County

by Chad Kauffman

On June 1, 2017, I received a phone call from an Amish friend asking how the Mifflin County eBird 200 challenge was going. I had mailed him a list to keep him up to date. He then asked if I had heard about the Yellow-headed Blackbird that was found near Spring Mills. I hadn't heard a word of it, so he shared with me an Amish bird phone hotline, which I called for more info. I learned that Alvin Stolfus had reported one on May 31. After I called Joe Verica to see if he had time to check it out, he went as soon as he could. It took him a while to find the right spot, but he eventually found it and was able to see the bird. He took photos and got word to me. Between the two of us, we reported on the many social media that birders enjoy in today's age.

There seemed to be some error with the online maps regarding the directions for accessing the bird. We straightened that out. One of the family members put up a wooden sign that read "Yellow-headed Blackbird" with an arrow to help visiting birders know where to turn off Route 45.



Photo by Jen Lee



Brian Schmoke photographed the Spring Mills Yellow-headed Blackbird.

This picture was shared on the State College listserv by Jen Lee as well as on Facebook. I thought that was funny as well as terribly nice of them to do that for us bird chasers.

Between June 1 and the third, many people chased the bird and were successful based on eBird reports and other posts. The last time the bird was seen was on the evening of Saturday, June 3, according to the Amish families.

As usual, PSO tries to send thank-you notes to those who are willing to share and host birders, so we were trying to contact the people who helped make this bird accessible. I want to thank them again for helping to get the word out so we could enjoy such a great bird in Centre County.

Brian Schmoke was able to obtain some good photos for his eBird checklists and I asked him to share them with us for this article, the journal, as well as to make copies to share with the Stolfus family.

Ornithological Literature Notes

Two Golden-winged Warblers from Pennsylvania tell a fascinating story about “migratory connectivity.” You may see this rather stiff term used with increasing frequency in ornithological articles. It refers to tracking the lives of individual birds from their breeding territories, along their migration routes, to their wintering grounds, and then back again to their breeding grounds in the subsequent spring.

The remarkable method that allows such tracking relies on tiny devices called light-level geolocators attached to birds, which almost continuously record aspects of daylight timing that enable plotting a bird’s geographic journeys across many thousands of miles. During April and May 2014 and 2015 the devices were attached to 43 individuals in three distantly spaced breeding populations in Minnesota, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania. These included 20 deployed on their breeding grounds in the Delaware State Forest in Pike and Monroe Counties. Four of the birds were recovered, the researchers were able to obtain data from two of them.

The point was to determine where the birds in widely separated breeding populations of Golden-winged Warblers migrated and spent the nonbreeding season in the tropics. Did they all converge in a single geographically concentrated winter range? Did they spread out onto various wintering grounds? Was there a discernible pattern between breeding-season location and wintering locations?

Indeed, they did spread out “far and wide” according to the findings reported by Gunnar R. Kramer and eight coauthors in 2017 in *The Condor: Ornithological Applications* (Vol. 119, pp.108-121). Among the coauthors is Jeff Larkin, professor of ecology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, who is one of the foremost researchers of Golden-winged Warbler ecology and behavior.

“Our results reveal nearly complete temporal and geographic isolation among three populations of Golden-winged Warblers throughout the annual cycle,” the authors said. During the nonbreeding season the Minnesota birds occurred in Central America from southern Mexico to central Nicaragua. The Tennessee



Moises Siles, an El Jaguar conservation staff member and a coauthor as well, holds a Golden-winged Warbler wearing a geocator.

Photo by Jeff Larkin

Important Golden-winged Warbler migration research continues. The newest study was published last month in the *Journal of Field Ornithology* (Vol.88, pp.288-298) by lead author Jeff Larkin and six coauthors from North Carolina, Tennessee, Nicaragua, and Maine.

These researchers used light-level geolocators to understand the migratory behaviors of Golden-wings wintering at one location – the El Jaguar Reserve in Nicaragua. The study uncovered strong geographic connectivity. All six birds from which geolocators were recovered in the following winter migrated to breeding locations concentrated in a single area that included portions of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Additionally, data from the geolocators revealed important stopover areas in southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize as well as a region of Louisiana, Arkansas, eastern Oklahoma, and Texas.

Larkin comments to PSO members on the importance of these studies in developing effective conservation plans: “Studies that provide insight to geographic linkages between breeding and wintering populations and that identify important migratory stopover areas are critical for developing conservation strategies that consider the full annual life cycle of at-risk migratory songbirds.”

Paul Hess
Natrona Heights PA
phess@salsgiver.com

The Raven Reporter

Tales of
Discovery about
Pennsylvania
Birds



Wildlife-Associated Recreation is Very Big Business

A report on the preliminary findings of the 2016 National Survey on wildlife-associated recreation provide evidence that wildlife-watching is an increasing economic force in America. Birding is a big part of this. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife report released in September is called the *2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation: National Overview*. A more comprehensive report will be released in December. This report has been published every 5 years since 1955. With so many questions about public support of wildlife habitat and programs, it is very heartening to see that various forms of wildlife recreation are going strong. In 2016, over 101 million Americans, about 40% of the population, participated in a form of outdoor recreation that involved wildlife. This includes not only the traditional “consumptive” hunting, fishing but also “nonconsumptive” wildlife enjoyment such as birding and nature photography. Check it out at:

https://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/subpages/nationalsurvey/national_survey.htm

The expenditures of wildlife recreation are staggeringly high with an estimated \$156.3 billion spent on equipment, travel, licenses, and fees. Wildlife watchers spent \$75.9 billion in their activities. This expenditure creates and supports thousands of jobs, the basis for many rural communities’ economies, and represents approximately 1% of the Gross Domestic Product.

Of the wildlife-based activities measured, “wildlife watching” was the most popular. Although there are a whopping 35.8 million people that went fishing and 11.5 million that went hunting, an even greater 86 million people said that they enjoyed “wildlife watching” in 2016, more than fishing and hunting combined. Of these “watchers,” 45.1 million were bird observers. Most wildlife watching takes place near home, but as we all

know there also is a fair bit of traveling done by this group. Almost 59.1 million, about 69% of the wildlife watchers, fed wildlife around their homes. And 11.0 million (13%) maintained plantings or natural areas for wildlife near their homes. That is a significant bit of wildlife habitat management being done by private citizens on private land!

Wildlife Watching is not only “big” but continues to grow! If we compare the 2016 survey results with the two previous surveys, there are significant increases of 21% and 20% respectively in participation. The biggest difference between these time periods is the number of participants who enjoyed wildlife near their homes, an 18% increase from 2011 to 2016.

All of this is not just statistics to give us reason to go “wow!” with amazement and appreciation. With this information, birders can go forth with more confidence that their interests should be better appreciated by government agencies, communities, organizations, and private businesses. Wildlife watching is popular, growing, and big business. Birders do not have to take a back seat to anybody in demanding services and getting results. They contribute and deserve more attention and respect for their contributions.

The full report will be published by USFWS in December. I am anticipating more details including state-specific information.

Huge Red Spruce Cone Crop Found

This has been an extraordinary year for spruce cones in the Northeast. Our own native spruces, red and black spruce, did very well this year. The exotic Norway spruces also have produced many cones as well.

With this big cone crop, we could see conifer birds taking advantage of this temporarily abundant food source. Both Red and White-winged Crossbills, as well as others such as Red-breasted Nuthatch and many finches may take advantage of these cone crops. These red spruce forests are mostly in the Northeast region including North Mountain and the Poconos. Some red spruces are scattered as far south as Hickory Run State Park area in the Penn Forest section of Weiser State Forest. On North Mountain, there are some red spruce in Ricketts Glen State Park, but more in SGL 13, 66, and especially SGL 57. Some are readily found along game lands and state roads near the ghost village of Ricketts. More are deep in the woods and swamps.

There are many spruce groves in the Poconos. There are many red spruce around Blakeslee, Long Pond, Gouldsboro, Thornhurst, and Promised Land. Some are on public lands like SGL 127 around Brady's Lake and Gouldsboro, SGL 318 (Lost Lakes) near Blakeslee, and Spruce Swamp Natural Area and nearby locations in Pinchot State Forest near Thornhurst. There also are red spruce found at Tom Darling Nature Reserve, the Maple Tract Preserve, and Fern Ridge Bog Preserve near Blakeslee, Fern Ridge, and Long Pond.



Doug Gross assisted with the collection and a research project on the genetic diversity of red spruce in the Appalachians.

Photo by Doug Gross

Some spruces are isolated from the rest of the state. There also are scattered spots like Algerine Swamp Natural Area on Lycoming and Tioga county line and Bear Meadows Natural Area in Centre County.

Birders should be on the look-out for some conifer birds in the coming months as a consequence of this big but local cone crop. That season may begin soon since the cones are ripe now in September and they will begin to drop seeds as the cones dry.

I gathered some information on native spruce cone crops and participated in projects involving spruce. Our own DCNR Penn Nursery and PGC Howard Nursery gather cones for seed propagation. I assisted with these collections and a research project conducted by the USDA Forest Service on the genetic diversity of red spruce in the Appalachians.

There is a big demand for red spruce seedlings because of concerns about the loss of our native hemlock to hemlock woolly adelgid and other pests and diseases. Red spruce may be a replacement for hemlock in some situations where it overlaps in acceptable growing conditions.

Spruce and other evergreens provide thermal protection for many kinds of wildlife in cold weather.

Greg Turner, PGC mammologist, and I provided site locations for native red spruce stands to Dr. John Butnor of the USDA Forest Service who collected several samples in a study of the genetics of red spruce in the Appalachian Mountains. John used a very impressive pruning tool with a telescoping pole that allows cone collection as high as 40 feet off of the ground.

The Pennsylvania red spruce populations are scattered and isolated from each other, removed from both the Maryland and New York spruce stands in the high mountains of each state. The Pennsylvania red spruce patches differ from other states because they are more likely to be associated with wetlands, often at lower elevations than neighboring states. So, Pennsylvania red spruce may have attributes lacking elsewhere that make their seeds good candidates for transplanting in locations where others might fail. Red spruce is reproducing freely where there are mature trees and growing slowly under canopies of deciduous trees such as red maple and American beech. Some in the Poconos grow right next to scrub oak and pitch pine where scrub barrens and boreal bogs meet in strange places. We have a unique native spruce community in Pennsylvania that offers lots of opportunities for birding and ecological exploration.

Goshawk Reports Still Appreciated

As you have heard in the past from a variety of sources, the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the Pennsylvania Goshawk Project would like to learn more about goshawk status in the state. This "ultimate forest raptor" seems to be in decline and may have significant conservation issues. The more we learn about current or recent goshawk breeding areas, the more we can implement conservation at those locations.

In the last newsletter, I made an appeal to Pennsylvania birders to share their information about goshawk nesting areas with the PGC or the PA Goshawk Project in confidence. We have received very few reports of goshawks on territory in 2017. If you did search for goshawks or go birding especially where you have found them before and did or did not detect goshawks, that information also would be helpful for us to know. Since the goshawk is a Species of Greatest Conservation Need identified as such in the State Wildlife Action Plan as a Near-Threatened species, the PGC is very interested in learning more about it. Please share any results of your searches and birding trips in goshawk country with us through the Pennsyl-

vania Goshawk Project (PABS goshawk survey) at www.pabiologicalsurvey.org/goshawk. Goshawk reports can be e-mailed to goshawk@psu.edu. Any goshawk observations on game lands or an area where there may be conflict issues between goshawks and humans should be sent to pgcgoshawk@pa.gov or directly to me. Reports to either the Pennsylvania Goshawk Project or the Game Commission will be treated as confidential.

Good Pennsylvania and World Birding!

Doug Gross, Endangered and Non-game Bird Section Supervisor
106 Winters Road, Orangeville, PA 17859
PA Game Commission
dogross@pa.gov

From the President's Desk *(continued from page 1)*

woods of SGL 170 seemed silent at first, but with careful searching we were able to find a variety of migrants. The field trip leaders deserve our thanks for their leadership and time.

Our speakers were well received, and I learned a lot from all the presentations. Having done presentations myself, I know the amount of preparation that is required to speak to a group.

We had a number of vendors showcasing various items; two were local Audubon Chapters drawing awareness to their activities, providing a local flare to the meeting. Some of the board members stepped down as their terms concluded, and I thank all of them for their dedicated service. Some were longtime members of the board while others had to step down for personal reasons.

We will evaluate the feedback regarding the meeting from the survey that was sent to attendees. I was impressed

with the detailed answers to the survey questions provided by those who responded. We are considering keeping the meeting around the same time for a few years to evaluate how well it goes in all aspects. We are looking at the Pymatuning area in Crawford County for next year's meeting. There are several facilities that can handle us. There's much work to be done in the coming months for next year's meeting..

Once again, thanks to everyone for a successful meeting. It was great to see all of you!

Good birding!

Mike Fialkovich
PSO President
Allegheny County
mpfial@verizon.net

Maybe You Were There



Chad Kauffman photographed participants of the Little Buffalo field trip on Saturday.



Linda Wagner got a group shot of Sunday's Ridge field trip.



Nessmuk Lake in Wellsboro, Tioga County, hosted this beautiful White-winged Tern August 10-12.

Photo by Roger Higbee



David Yeany photographed this Swallow-tailed Kite on August 26 on Nipple Road in Snyder Co.

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 Greg Grove – PSO Editor gwg2@psu.edu
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 Mike Lanzone – Past President mlanzone@gmail.com
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 Chad Kauffman – chadkauffman@earthlink.net
 Wayne Laubscher – wnlaubscher@comcast.net
 Sandra Lockerman – sandylockerman@yahoo.com
 Annette Mathes – amathes19@verizon.net
 Andrew McGann – andrew.mcgann@gmail.com
 Evan Mann – evanm@frontier.com
 Flo McGuire – fmcguire1@verizon.net
 Holly Merker – hcybelle@gmail.com
 Emily Thomas – eht5002@hotmail.com
 Linda Wagner – lwagner342@msn.com
 Drew Weber – drewweber@gmail.com

Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

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

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