

The

# PSO Pileated



December 2017

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Volume 28, Number 4

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

### *It's Christmas Bird Count Time!*

It's always hard to believe another year has passed and it's the holiday season again. One of the season's activities for birders is the Christmas Bird Count. All counts occurring in the state are listed in this newsletter for your reference.

I've often seen in the literature or heard during programs given by environmental organizations that even a small task can make a difference in protecting the environment. It's better to do something, no matter how small, rather than doing nothing. Protecting the environment, of course, means protecting birds and ourselves.

Participating in the Christmas Bird Count contributes to our understanding of the status of birds in Pennsylvania with respect to all of North America and beyond. We all have the opportunity to provide important data that assist scientists in their efforts to protect and preserve birds just by participating in a Christmas Count.

Audubon's Christmas Bird Count website explains how the important information collected by the CBC contributes to conservation efforts. CBC data was used for Audubon's 2014 Climate Change Report. This report predicts how climate change could affect the ranges of 558 North American species. The models indicate 314 species will lose more than half their current range by 2080.



A total of 962 Dark-eyed Juncos were tallied during the 2016 Pittsburgh Bird Count.

Photo by Mike Fialkovich

The EPA's 2012 Report included Audubon's climate change work from CBC data as one of 26 indicators of climate change.

CBC data were instrumental in the North American Bird Conservation Initiative portion of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's State of the Birds report in 2009.

CBC data were used in the development of Audubon's Common Birds in Decline Report.

Source: Audubon Christmas Bird Count Website <<http://www.audubon.org/history-christmas-bird-count>>

This year is the 118th Christmas Bird Count. I know some of you participate in multiple counts, so think of the important contributions you are making! I have participated in the Pittsburgh count as a count leader since 1992. I have participated in other counts over the years including Erie, Indiana, and the Pittsburgh South Hills CBC.

Christmas Bird Count data can also illustrate the changes in distribution of birds for reasons other than climate change. For example, Evening Grosbeak distribution has been associated with spruce budworm outbreaks. Other northern finches move south in search of food if cone and birch crops fail. CBC data is part of the tracking process of these irruptions.

Looking at the Pittsburgh CBC data over the years I found interesting trends for some species.

Ring-necked Pheasant – A total of 110 were noted in 1971 with steady numbers through the mid-1970s. Starting in 1977 there was a downward trend that continued until none were found in 2007. There were two years following 2007 where single birds were reported which were probably released individuals. In the Pittsburgh area, a lot of the decline was related to development that eliminated brushy habitat.

Carolina Wren – The winter of 1976-1977 is notable historically for its severity. The Carolina Wren tally for the Pittsburgh CBC dropped from 106 in 1976 to just 29 in 1977 and 23 in 1978. The low numbers began to rebound in 1982-83. In 1993 the wren's numbers dropped by half. The news-making blizzard of 1993 in March of that year combined frigid temperatures and record snowfall. It's well known the numbers prove the harsh weather put a serious dent in the Carolina Wren population those years, but looking at the actual numbers gives us a sense of the magnitude of the impact to that species.

The 1961 and 1972 CBC tallied 74 and 32 Pine Grosbeaks respectively!

Evening Grosbeaks were nearly annual from 1970 – 1986 with high counts of 110 in 1971, 178 in 1975, and 244 in

1985. From 1987 to the present they were just recorded twice: a single bird in 1986 and two in 1990.

I was not participating in the count when most of these trends were in progress, but I have experienced the decline of the Ring-necked Pheasant (albeit a non-native species) firsthand.

We have had newcomers to the Pittsburgh CBC over the years that are now annual. Fish Crow was first tallied in 2013 and Common Raven in 2006 (for count week).

I'm not trying to be depressing, but rather I'm pointing out what we do as birders has importance and what may seem to us to be an insignificant action really does contribute to our knowledge and conservation of birds. Some birds are showing an upward trend in the state including Fish Crows, Common Ravens, and Bald Eagles. Don't forget, Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Yellow-throated Warblers are a few others that have become widespread over the decades. You may want to research the counts in which you participate to see what changes have occurred over the past 117 years.

Enjoy participating in the CBCs and enjoy all other birding! Happy holidays!

Mike Fialkovich, PSO President  
Allegheny County  
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## 2017-18 Birding Trips, Excursions, Surveys, and More

More trips may be added later or at the last minute. We continue to work with local groups and clubs to bird with them in their favorite spots by joining their existing field trips or creating new ones. Please contact any PSO board member for more information. Details will follow in the March newsletter and on line.

**December 14 - January 5** – Christmas Bird Counts.

**January 1** – Start of the eBird 200 Challenge for Juniata County, one of our under-birded counties.

**January 13 - February 12** – Winter Raptor Surveys. Contact Greg Grove ([gwg2@psu.edu](mailto:gwg2@psu.edu)) for more information.

**February 16-19** – Great Backyard Bird Count. Our state has been actively participating in this count. It's a good time to encourage others to start birding and using eBird.

**May 4-5** – Shaver's Creek Birding Cup. This annual fundraiser for Shaver's Creek Environmental Center is an attempt to find as many species as possible in a 24-hour period. There are various categories. See their website ([www.shaverscreek.org](http://www.shaverscreek.org)) for more information.

**May 12** – PA Migration Count (PAMC). The second Saturday in May is a great time to get out to count birds.

**June 15 - 18** – Breeding Bird Blitz. This will be the fourth year of this organized count, with the goal of getting reports of breeding birds entered on eBird. Do the Blitz!

**September 14-16** – PSO Annual Meeting in Meadville, Crawford County. A great variety of field trips are in the planning stages.

**October 13-14** – The Big Sit, sponsored by *Bird Watcher's Digest*. You may join or create your own circle and count what you see in a 24-hour time frame.

**November 3-4** – Waggoner's Gap Hawkwatch. This is usually the peak for migrating Golden Eagles.

# Swallow-tailed Kite Found in Snyder County

by Brandon Miller

We've probably all heard the phrase "beginner's luck." A novice steps up to the plate and slams a home run. I think we experienced that this summer when sixteen-year-old Adam Stauffer found a Swallow-tailed Kite. Adam had been introduced to birding about three months earlier on a bird walk with his cousin. Let's hope that he'll be content with the more common species he's more likely to find in the future.



David Yeany was one of the fortunate birders who photographed the Swallow-tailed Kite.

In our Snyder County Mennonite community we are not blessed with an abundance of birders as are some of the other Amish and Mennonite communities. Only a handful of individuals consider themselves birders. However, when this kite showed up only a mile from our place, it seemed to spark a lot of interest. A small wonder! A Swallow-tailed Kite is an awesome sight, especially here in Pennsylvania where it is not expected. In fact, it was the first confirmed sighting for both Snyder and Juniata Counties.

The bird was first reported by Adam, an energetic young man who helps his grandfather on a small produce farm where the bird was found. The kite remained for most of its stay in that area near the town of Oriental.

On August 10, 2017, Adam was mowing when he noticed the Barn Swallows fussing over a raptor that was heading in his direction. As it passed overhead, he noticed its black and white plumage and long, forked tail. Almost certain that he had seen a Swallow-tailed Kite, he checked his field guide and confirmed that his identification was correct. I believe he saw it again the next day then not until the 19<sup>th</sup>. After that, he saw it every day until September 1 when it was last seen.

I first heard about it a week after the initial sighting when I met Adam at the local produce auction. He walked up to me and said, "Brandon, you're not going to believe what I saw last week!" He described the bird, and his description did sound like a Swallow-tailed Kite, but I was a little skeptical. (Sorry, Adam!) A Swallow-tailed Kite in Pennsylvania? But this bird is unmistakable. "Oh, well," I thought, "maybe next time." I didn't have much hope that it would turn up again since it had been a week ago.

On August 21 my brother Waylon came home all excited. He had met Adam who told him that the bird was being

seen again. We quickly changed our plans, ate a quick lunch, and headed to Anthony Showalters' farm where Adam works. Driving into the valley where this farm is located, we made a quick stop in the middle of the road to check out a raptor soaring overhead. Imagine our excitement when we discovered it was indeed a Swallow-tailed Kite! It was a lifer for my dad, my two brothers, and me. A little while later we were on top of a hill on Anthony's farm with a great view of the valley below. From here

we had more views of this "drop-dead gorgeous" bird. It's amazing how long this kite can soar with barely a flap of its wings. It is absolutely a master of the air and the epitome of grace.

As soon as we got home, I called Aden Troyer, an accomplished birder. I knew he would want to know about this, and he has the contacts to spread the word. We set our spotting scope up in our back field and actually spotted the kite about half a mile out toward Anthony's farm. Wow! A Swallow-tailed Kite for our farm list! I think that's going to be pretty hard to beat!

The next day when Aden and his buddy Allen showed up, we drove to Anthony's farm. From the hill we scanned anxiously. Would the kite still be here? We should not have feared as within ten minutes the bird suddenly appeared. After a while, it flew directly overhead, and Allen was able to take several photos.

Numerous birders – and birders in the making – showed up, and most got to see it.

We later learned that one neighbor had seen the bird the day before Adam and that some of the neighbors who had seen and were enjoying the kite did not realize that it was unusual. We were lucky that Adam knew he had spotted something good and spread the word. Adam's grandfather Anthony was amused that so many people suddenly wanted to come to his farm. Anthony also benefited as most bought produce from his stand.

All in all, it was an enjoyable experience, and our joy was multiplied by all those who came to see this southern wonder for themselves. So, go outside and enjoy the birds. Introduce a friend to birding, and maybe in a few weeks, you just might hear, "Hey! You won't believe what I found!"

# Allegheny Front Hawkwatch Field Trip Revisited

by Chad Kauffman

Mild weather and good east winds welcomed us to the hawkwatch on Saturday, November 4. We were about 45 minutes too late for the two early Northern Goshawks that started the day off with a bang. A good number of birders enjoyed the constant trickle of raptors passing by. Six Golden Eagles of all ages came through, giving us close looks at most of them. A zipping Merlin was a treat for those who got to see it for a few seconds. A beautiful Red-shouldered Hawk appeared and circled lazily for a bit, entertaining us for a while. Red-tailed Hawks were certainly the birds of the day and consistently trickled past us, sometimes three to five at a clip. Late in the day a tagged Golden Eagle came by, much to the delight of those still lingering when the rain started.

On Sunday, the 5<sup>th</sup>, rain and fog didn't allow the hawkwatch to happen, but those who still were in the area enjoyed Shawnee Lake where nice numbers of waterfowl were found. Surf Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Lesser Scaup,



This is one of the six Golden Eagles that flew by the Allegheny Front on November 4.

Photo by John Baird

Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Common Loon, and Hooded Merganser were some of the highlights on the water. In the woods, we enjoyed Hermit Thrush, Rusty Blackbird, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, both Kinglets, Fox Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco, and White-throated Sparrows. Both Friday and Saturday evening offered large numbers of blackbirds as well as some murmurations.

Somerset Lake provided shorebirds for the birders. On Saturday afternoon, some birders were lucky enough to find and identify two tagged Trumpeter Swans.

Next year's Golden Eagle weekend will be at Waggoner's Gap Hawkwatch on the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2018. We always try to pick the peak time for this recurring hawkwatch weekend, but we are at the mercy of weather and winds.

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## The Allegheny Front Field Trip – Another Perspective

by Tom Kuehl

A rare occurrence! Not only good weather, but also favorable east-wind conditions for the PSO annual outing to the Allegheny Front Hawkwatch. The outing was led by Chad and Noah Kauffmann. Along with PSO attendees the favorable conditions drew quite a crowd, which included a good showing of members of the Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club as well as the 3 Rivers Birding Club and Todd Bird Club members who had a joint outing at Yellow Creek State Park that morning.

Well into the prime time for Golden Eagle migration, and with no better place to be than the Allegheny Front on a strong east wind, the anticipation was high for a great day. The day's tally of



This Sharp-shinned Hawk entertained PSO outing participants at the Front.

Photo by John Baird

six Golden Eagles deemed it a good day but not the possible blow-out day for Golden Eagles that these conditions can produce at this time of the year. The several highlights of the day included: spectacular views of the white tail-base and wing-patches of a juvenile Golden Eagle that floated past in the late morning; a 4<sup>th</sup>-year (nearly adult) Bald Eagle that drew oohs and aahs as it cruised straight overhead of the gathered masses in the early afternoon; as did an adult Red-shouldered Hawk when it, too, took a low and slow flight path over the hawkwatch. Also, kudos to Kate St. John who spotted a female Northern Harrier flying low in the valley that might have otherwise sneaked past the many observers

that day. And alas, only a few early arrivals were present to see two Northern Goshawks (quite the rarity) that flew over at 8:13 and 8:19 a.m.

It was good that the strong east winds provided for almost non-stop action with a steady stream of what would be a total of 157 Red-tailed Hawks, as that helped to make the cold wind bearable for the many observers. A quick passing Merlin also helped to stir the blood, and it was nice to have two groups of 3 Black Vultures float over for quite good looks at their stubby tails and silvery wing tips. Common Loon and Double-crested Cormorant flyovers also provided a warming diversion from the cold.

The Allegheny Front is well known for the magical late-day rush of Golden Eagles, but on this day those hopes were dashed by the arrival of clouds and drizzle. As a result, the 3:10 p.m. adult Golden Eagle with a transmitter on its back was the final eagle of the day. Lacking a full



Red-tailed Hawks were definitely the bird of the count with 157 tallied.

Photo by John Baird

description and photo, the best guess by text message communications with researcher Mike Lanzone was that it could have been one that had been named "Letson."

The drizzle and fog dampened the hawk watching conditions on Day 2 but provided an opportunity for a bit of morning birding at Shawnee State Park. Highlights there for Chad and Noah, Tom and Janet Kuehl, and Tiffany Willow were a Surf Scoter, a drake Long-tailed Duck, very nice looks at two Fox Sparrows, and at least five Rusty Blackbirds. Also memorable, Chad reported high quality beef and beer

at the Jean Bonnet Tavern on both Friday and Saturday nights. PSO Participants: Chad Kauffmann, Noah Kauffmann, Janet Kuehl, Tom Kuehl, Tiffany Willow, Jack Solomon, Richard Nugent, Dick Byers, Brian Wargo (Saturday Counter), Bob Stewart (Compiler).

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## The Raven Reporter

Tales of Discovery about Pennsylvania Birds



### Another "Snowy Winter"?

Everyone remembers the great Snowy Owl irruption of 2013-2014. It was one of the most fabulous birding events in anyone's memory and a starry highlight in the state's recent birding history. There are few birds more charismatic and appealing than the "big white owl." There were so many popping up in many places that winter! That was the biggest Snowy Owl irruption in memory that may never be duplicated. It looks like the winter of 2017 – 2018 will be a "Snowy Winter" with lots of opportunities to see these northern visitors. With many birders having fond memories of viewing Snowies or "just misses" that winter, the stage is set for a lot of Snowy Owl viewing this winter. They have already been reported at a variety of locations in the Northeast as well as the Mid-

west and Great Plains. It looks like there was a pretty good breeding season at a few locations to the north, so many Snowy Owls may be headed this way, and a few have already arrived.

For up-to-date news about Snowy Owls and researchers studying this species, check out the Project SNOWstorm website at: <http://www.projectsnowstorm.org/>. There you will find opportunities to contribute sightings, photos, and donations to the project. We encourage all to participate!

The winter Snowy Owl irruptions result in part from breeding population successes in the North. The large breeding population of the Ungava Peninsula probably was a source for the southern movement of Snowy Owls in the winter of 2013 – 2014. Reports indicate that there were populations of Snowy Owls there again in 2017. Nesting owls also were reported by researchers working in northwest Hudson Bay region known as Rankin Inlet and at Igloodik, located north of Hudson Bay on the Foxe Basin; so the prospects of an irruption this winter look fairly good. Many Snowy Owls have been seen in the Great Plains, the Midwest, and the Northeast, especially along the coast. Reports are already coming from as far south as Oklahoma and Virginia. For more details about the new season, please see the report by J. F. Therrien on the Project SNOWstorm website where the latest news

about Snowy Owls can be found.

Birders are urged to contribute Snowy Owl sightings directly to Project SNOWstorm, complete with photographs and details about the sighting location. Photos of owls with good view of the tail or open wings are especially welcome because they are helpful for determining the age and sex of the owl. See good examples in the “I Want to Help / Contribute Photos” section of the Project SNOWstorm website.

Birders also can contribute reports to eBird, especially those with details about the sighting and location. I advise making good sites eBird hotspots named after roads or other readily recognizable landmarks. Our state may be important on a continental scale for some winter raptor populations. Where Pennsylvania birders have found Snowy Owls, they also have observed other interesting birds of the open country. While watching Snowies, it is not unusual to hear the twittering of Horned Larks (often the “Northern” subspecies, *alpestris*), Snow Buntings, American Pipits, and Dark-eyed Juncos. Other open country raptors like Rough-legged Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels, Northern Harriers, Barn Owls, and Short-eared Owls also offer enjoyment and opportunities for photography. Alert birders might even see a Peregrine Falcon or Merlin zip by in the open country. All of these birds are great to add to eBird records. We would like to learn more about how raptors and northern visitors use the open landscapes in Pennsylvania.

Although they can be seen during the day, for the most part Snowy Owls are nocturnal like most other owls. They usually do not move much in the daytime except when disturbed. So, a lot of the best owl searching can be done just at daybreak and dusk when they are most active in light. Actually, Snowy Owls sit tight for long periods during the day often in full view. They often perch in prominent places that imitate the high ground they seek as hunting posts. We also wonder if they signal their presence and local dominance of a hunting area by selecting a prominent position. A healthy looking owl may also signal to others that this is a great place to feed on rodents so other owls may use this as their next foraging area. It might not be a coincidence that a few owls can be found at one location after they “settle down” for the winter.

The Snowy Owl has been deservedly receiving more attention for conservation. In the 2016 revision of the *Partners in Flight Landbird Conservation Plan for*



A Snowy Owl visited Presque Isle State Park on November 14, 2017.

Photo by Tony Bruno

*Canada and Continental United States*, Appendix A, Species Assessment Information lists Snowy Owl as a Yellow Watch List “with steep declines and major threats.” The continental population is estimated at less than 30,000 individuals. Of course, this is a rough estimate for a nomadic species that nests in remote locations. The population size certainly changes on a yearly basis. There are strong suspicions that Snowy Owl populations move from one geographical area to others regularly, a prey-focused nomadic lifestyle that defies categorization and understanding.

The ever-changing nesting grounds are likely to be in different provinces, states, countries, and continents each year. For example, a Snowy Owl population could nest on the Arctic tundra of Alaska or Canada for one season and then move somewhere in Siberia the next – a different country, continent, and hemisphere. So, population estimates are challenging to make on any geographical scale or even a hemispheric level. They change, sometimes dramatically, on a yearly basis.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) is particularly proud to be part of the Snowy Owl research community since so many Pennsylvanians are involved in some way with Project SNOWstorm and related projects. The Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art in Millersburg, Pennsylvania, is a base for the Project SNOWstorm team. Scott Weidensaul, a native of southeast Pennsylvania, is one of the co-founders of Project SNOWstorm and is a board member and volunteer curator at the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art. He is the author of several bird books, the most recently published was *Peterson Reference Guide to Owls of North America and the Caribbean* published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Dr. Jean-Francois Therrien, senior research biologist at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, has studied Snowy Owls for many years on their Arctic breeding grounds and recently as part of the Project SNOWstorm team. Dr. Eugene Potapov of Bryn Athyn College is a key Snowy Owl researcher who has co-written a book with Richard Sale called *The Snowy Owl* published by T & AD Poyser. The technology that tracks Snowy Owls has been designed and manufactured by Cellular Tracking Technologies which originated at Somerset, Pennsylvania, with Mike Lanzone, Trish Miller, and Andrew McGann. Drew Weber of Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Nemesis Bird designed and manages the website. David Brinker of Project OwlNet, who lives in Maryland, does research on Northern Goshawks and Northern Saw-whet Owls in our state.



Jake Dingel photographed this gorgeous Snowy Owl.

And, the PGC is a proud partner of Project SNOWstorm with Dan Brauning and Doug Gross serving as team members. PSO has sponsored a GPS unit for a Snowy Owl called “Erie” caught in the same-named county, and many Pennsylvanians have contributed data and funds to the project.

We are grateful for the involvement of Pennsylvania birders in

Snowy Owl research. Please keep involved, both with Project SNOWstorm and with eBird. The PGC Wildlife Diversity Section thanks you!

The PGC is planning to release a new Working Together for Wildlife (WTFW) patch and print. I have heard that the next thematic feature of WTFW will be the Snowy Owl which will be released in early 2018. Please support this selection which supports the Wildlife Diversity program.

### **Some Tips for Good and Responsible Snowy Owl Watching – A Little “Owl Etiquette”**

Here are some suggestions for enjoying Snowy Owls and other raptors of the open country without disturbing either the owls, other observers, the human neighbors, and the landowners. With the high powered optics and long lenses of cameras, there are lots of opportunities to enjoy Snowy Owls without getting too close. One solution that I have seen a few times is simply sharing your high powered optics with others so they can get a good view without getting too close. It is also a great way to invite beginners into the world of birds and birding.

- \* Remain quiet and stand still as much as possible. Avoid loud conversation, vehicle noises, making unnecessary movements.
- \* Keep a respectable distance to avoid flushing the owls or keeping others from observing them. If the owl reacts to you, you are too close!
- \* Do not approach the owl with intent of flushing it.
- \* Do not attempt to call, lure, or bait the owls. The owls will take such offerings only too readily, but it is not in their best interest to be supported in this way.

- \* Respect private property and nearby residents.
- \* Do not impede roadways, airport runways, road and driveway access, or block traffic flow.
- \* Avoid damaging lawns and right-of-way lanes with your tires.
- \* Take advantage of opportunities to teach others about the owls and good birding etiquette. Share your optics and your knowledge.
- \* In short, be a good ambassador of the birding community and think first of the welfare of the owls.

### **Raptor and Predator Education Needed!**

I have learned a lot in my position with a state wildlife agency. One of the unfortunate lessons learned is the consistent prejudice many hold against raptors and other predators. If one spends time mostly with birders and raptor enthusiasts at places like PSO meetings, bird clubs, Audubon chapter meetings, and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, you would get the impression that we are living in a “post raptor-hating era.” Unfortunately, that is far from true, especially in rural counties.

The perceived decline of small game in Pennsylvania is often blamed on raptors, especially Red-tailed Hawks which are not only common but conspicuous. So, it is easy to see them on the landscape rather than the many other possible causes of wildlife population declines such as elusive nocturnal nest predators. And, you will hear a lot about “gosh-hawks” killing all the small game, too. When I was receiving the Bald Eagle Management Plan public responses, I was amazed to find that some people thought that Bald Eagles were a threat to “livestock” and therefore needed to be controlled. I patiently explained that Bald Eagles mostly ate fish, preyed on some other species, and ate at some carcasses opportunistically, but were not a significant threat to livestock. In the last year, I have even heard the complaint that Bald Eagles are the reason for the decline of muskrats because the eagles have become so uncontrollably common in muskrat habitat. And, some hunters in Lancaster County are blaming Bald Eagles for decline of Ring-necked Pheasants, claiming that this mainly piscivorous raptor takes a lot of pheasants on farmland. While it is possible that Bald Eagles occasionally prey opportunistically on a pheasant where they are readily available (especially after stocking when the pheasants are disoriented), I greatly doubt that eagles are a significant predator of any upland game bird in our state. Although Bald Eagles are out there in agricultural

areas, the evidence is simply not there that they prey very often on pheasants or any other game bird in quantities enough to lower their populations.

And anyone who lives in rural Pennsylvania knows that coyotes are blamed for everything possible. The wily coyote may be a significant predator, but whether this generalist predator has caused declines in any native bird or mammal species is yet to be shown. I have often heard that goshawks have caused the decline of small game including pheasants, grouse, and squirrels and that the bounty for them should be reinstated. No wonder we

didn't get much response when we asked for goshawk reports!

I mention this issue in this forum because I think that it is important that the birding community continue to support raptor conservation and education. You can never get too much of it!

Good owling, raptor-watching, and winter birding

Doug Gross, PA Game Commission  
[dogross@pa.gov](mailto:dogross@pa.gov)

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**The Snowy Owl photos below are compliments of J. L. Therien, Hawk Mt. Sanctuary Association, and Project SNOWstorm.**

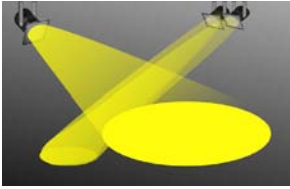


To date, Snowy Owls have been eBirded at nine locations in Erie County, four locations in Montgomery, and single spots in Butler, Lycoming, and Lebanon.

They are also being eBirded just over the state lines in Ohio, New York, and Maryland.

So grab your optics and find a Snowy!  
Maybe your county is next.





## Young PA Birder Spotlight

The PSO Education Committee is pleased to announce a Young

PA Birder Spotlight! This feature article will be a new addition to *The PSO Pileated*.

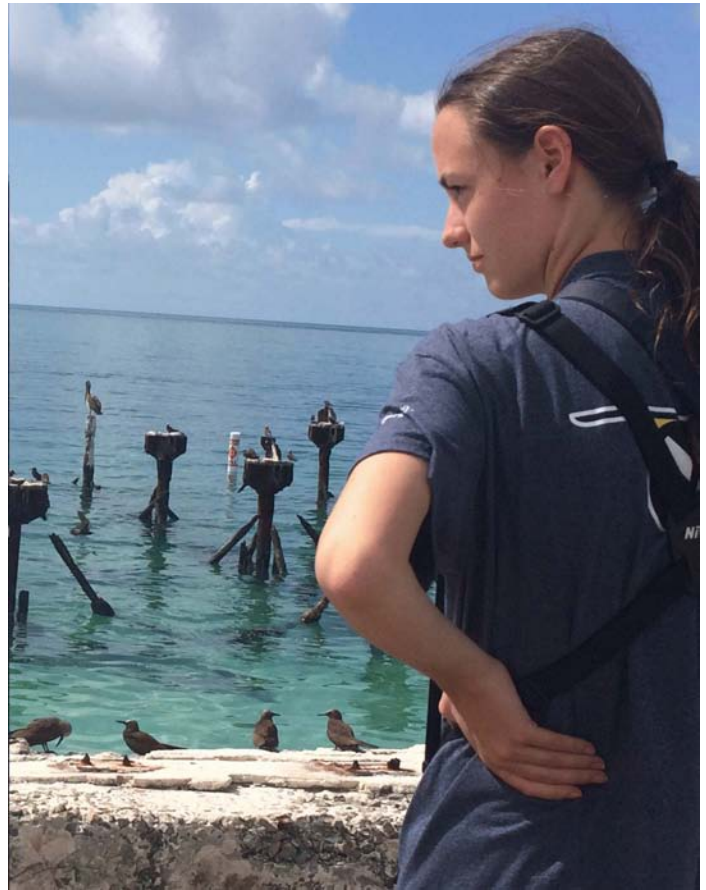
In an effort to recognize the many contributions to ornithology, birding, and conservation that many of our PA young birders are making, we will be spotlighting a young birder from the Commonwealth in this newsletter. If you know a young PA birder you think should be spotlighted, please send an email to the email address below!

Pennsylvania has a long tradition of being steeped in ornithological history. Many of the most prominent ornithologists in American history had roots here in the Commonwealth during their youth. Names like Cassin, Townsend, and Say should ring a bell for most birders, and those “avian namesake ornithologists” are among those who spent part of their youth in Pennsylvania.

In our modern era, it is pretty clear that younger Pennsylvanians carry this tradition forward as young birders hailing from our state continue to make their mark within their own birding communities and beyond. One such young birder is sixteen-year-old Madelyne Ray of Ambler, Montgomery County.

In 2014, Madelyne was given the book, *For the Birds: A Month by Month Guide to Attracting Birds to Your Backyard*, by Schmauss, Schmauss, and Krolic. Though she had already been interested in birds, it was this book that inspired her to take her interest to the next level. Soon after, Madelyne discovered eBird and began studying the birds in her backyard. In 2015 Madelyne attended the American Birding Association’s young birder camp, *Camp Avocet*, based in Lewes, Delaware. This experience provided her the opportunity to learn and study the birds of the Delmarva coast, many of which were lifers for her. But, more importantly, this camp (and the other camps she would later attend) allowed her to meet and spend time with other teen birders who share her passion of birding.

In 2015, Madelyne joined the Wyncote Audubon, a club that provided her the opportunity to spread her wings and share her talents. Since then, she has been active with Wyncote Audubon in various capacities, including Student Liaison to the Board, Co-chair of the Wyncote Audubon’s Bird-a-Thon, and as a current member of the Board of Directors! In recognition of her talents and passion for birds, the club awarded her the *Griscom Scholarship* to attend the Hog Island Audubon Camp’s



*Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens* in Maine in June of 2016.

But that’s not where Madelyne’s experiences with involvement in the birding community or with teen birding camps ended. She was one of 16 teens selected to attend the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s *Young Birder Event* in 2016 and received a partial scholarship to attend the American Birding Association’s *Camp Colorado* during the summer of 2016.

Madelyne loves to write about her birding experiences and is a contributing blogger to a young birders’ blog called “Young Birders of the Round Table” (<https://ybrt.wordpress.com/>). With many young birders to choose from, Madelyne was selected by the ABA to publish an article in *Birding* magazine; it appeared in Vol. 49, No. 5, October 2017! In the article, called “A Tale of 2 Bird Camps” (p. 38), Madelyne shares her experiences at both ABA young birder camps inspiring others to attend. Check it out!

In pursuit of her love of both birds and animals, Madelyne has donated her time as a volunteer at the Philadelphia Zoo and is currently a volunteer at Tri-State Bird Rescue in Newark, Delaware. These experiences have helped her forge her path toward a potential career with birds and animals as she plans to pursue a degree in Wildlife

Biology and ultimately attend veterinary medicine school.

When asked what her favorite bird is, Madelyne states, “Swallow-tailed Kite,” noting she acquired her “lifer” at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge in South Carolina. But she says, “ALL birds are GREAT!”

There’s no doubt that Madelyne is a rising star in Pennsylvania’s birding community, not only engaged in the

study of birds, but also as an active participant within the birding community itself in her local area.

Thank you, Madelyne Ray, for all that you have done and are doing for our birds and for birders here in Pennsylvania, and beyond!

Holly Merker  
PSO Education Committee Chair  
HCybelle@gmail.com

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## New Website Design, Access to *Pennsylvania Birds* Online, and New Membership Term

by Frank Haas

The PSO has revamped its website ([www.pabirds.org](http://www.pabirds.org)) with a new look and features.

The menus are easier to read and navigate. The site is device-friendly, meaning it is easier to view on phones and tablets.

In addition to the existing features, we have added the minutes from the Board Meetings (going back to 1994) and Treasurer’s Reports (going back to 2003).

Members can now manage their accounts online – updating their address, checking their membership status, changing their password, etc.

The biggest change is members can now access all issues of *Pennsylvania Birds* online. Up until now, only issues prior to two years ago were available. This was to encourage birders to join the PSO to receive the publication. However, with changing times and more people getting comfortable with digital versions of publications, the board has decided to give our members a choice of printed or digital versions of the magazine (all members will have access to the online version but may select to receive the printed version as well). The only difference between the two is the online version is in full color.

To access the online version, a member will have to login. We ask that members not share their login information with non-members. Once logged in, members will have access to ALL issues of *Pennsylvania Birds*.

If you would like to stop receiving the printed version, please send an email to [ps0@pabirds.org](mailto:ps0@pabirds.org). Also, when you renew your membership, you will be asked to select printed or online (as you do now for the newsletter).

We are NOT eliminating the printed version! We are just offering a choice (and saving trees!).

Some of the existing features that have been redesigned include the Birds of Pennsylvania, *Pennsylvania Birds* index, and About Us.

The Site Guide is still the old version, but a new version based on Google Maps is in the works.

A reminder of some of the existing features...

### **Birds of Pennsylvania** (the star of the website IMHO)

This feature lists all of the birds on the Official List of Birds of Pennsylvania with photos, range maps, seasonal occurrence charts, and links to all of the records of the species that were published in the Birds of Note section of *Pennsylvania Birds* going back to 1992 (and farther back for rare birds). So, if a rare bird shows up and you want to check other records for that species in the state, just go to Birds of Pennsylvania, click on the species, then click on Notable Records. You can also see if it has occurred in your county by looking at the range map (You can also check the County List under the Birding menu).

### ***Pennsylvania Birds* Index**

You can look up articles in *Pennsylvania Birds* by clicking on Publications/ Pennsylvania/ Birds/ Index. You can search by Title, Author, Annual Reports, Sites, Listing Articles, Personalities, Reviews, Species, or General articles. It is not a word search, but a list of articles by those categories. So, if you want to see if there are any articles (not Local Notes) on Red-bellied Woodpecker, you would select Publications, Pennsylvania Birds, Index, Species. Then scroll down to Red-bellied Woodpecker. The listing gives the issue and page number. Click on the issue and it will take you to that issue. Then go to the page and read the article.

## Join/Renew

The pages for joining the PSO or renewing your membership have become more user-friendly.

To renew, just login and you will be able to update your address, email, and publication preferences, etc. And you can renew your membership.

Also, if you do not like paying online or want to pay by check, you will still be able to renew (or join) online and send a check through the mail. Your membership will be activated once the check is received.

## New Membership Terms

Up until now, birders joining the PSO would be joining for a publishing year, i.e. May 1 to April 30. This ensured that they would receive four issues of *Pennsylvania Birds* covering one calendar year. Originally, *Pennsylvania Birds* issues were divided into quarters, Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, etc. However, in 2002, we switched to match the reporting periods in *North American Birds* (Dec-Feb, Mar-May, Jun-Jul, Aug-Nov).

That meant that the PSO membership period no longer matched a calendar year (it was still 12 months, just not Jan-Dec).

One drawback of this scheme was that we had to try to estimate how many members we would have later in the membership year in order to send them the back issues

once they joined (or renewed). We usually ended up with a surplus of copies, but in one year we ran out.

With the advance in digital publications – note the change above – we have decided to change the membership year from the current May-April to twelve months starting when the person joins. Renewals will simply add twelve months to their existing membership.

Instead of receiving back issues, members will receive the four issues that are published during their term. If they renew too late and miss an issue (assuming they chose printed instead of online), they will still have access to it via the website.

Existing memberships will end April 30, 2018, but new memberships and late renewals will end twelve months after they join or renew.

We ask, even if you opt for the printed version of the journal, that you still provide us with an email address (if you have one), so that we can send renewal reminders via email, rather than wasting money on postcards.

Those few members without email will still receive postcard renewal reminders.

So... check out the new website!

[www.pabirds.org](http://www.pabirds.org)

## ***Thanks, Frank!***

*We extend our sincere, heartfelt thanks to Frank Haas for all his hard work on the PSO website. He has spent countless hours learning new programming procedures, redesigning, and updating our website. Thank you!!!*

## **Christmas Bird Counts Are a Lot of Fun**

The Christmas Bird Count season is rapidly approaching. The list of all counts held in Pennsylvania starts on page 15. If you haven't participated in one before, you're missing a lot of fun. Check out the list for a count near you. Most compilers are happy to have new participants. The opportunity is there to either join a party in the field or count birds at your own feeder if you live within a count circle.

Don't miss another season. The count period runs from Thursday, December 14, through Friday, January 5.

Compiler of the Upper Bucks CBC Bill Etter writes:

"The 50th Upper Bucks CBC will take place on Sunday, December 17. Happy Golden Anniversary, Upper Bucks...fifty years!

We currently have open territories in the Perkasio and Quakertown areas, and there will inevitably be a last minute scramble to cover something somewhere. If anyone wishes to help out, new participants are always welcomed...please let me know."

## Welcome New Members

The following members have joined since September 19, 2017

George Armistead, Philadelphia, Pa  
Lesley Brechbiel, McConnellsburg, PA  
David Brooke, Natrona Heights, PA  
Robert Davidheiser, Pottstown, PA  
Paul Heveran, Pennsburg, PA  
Brandon Martin, Port Trevorton, PA  
Tomas Nonnenmacher, Meadville, PA  
Holger Pflücke, Philadelphia, PA  
Robert Scribner, Cambridge Springs, PA  
  
Robert H. Snyder, Howard, PA  
Barbara Stone, Susquehanna, PA  
Nancy Tully, East Stroudsburg, PA  
Laurel Wiegand, Palmyra, PA



## How Well Do You Know Your Pennsylvania Jaegers, Gulls, and Terns?

1. Are jaegers more closely related to murres or to gulls?
2. The Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee recently accepted records of two gull subspecies that are very rare in the state. One is named "Short-billed," and the other is named "Vega." What are their two species?
3. Pennsylvania's first two records of a vagrant tern species came in 1878, one in Delaware County and the other in Chester County. Which species?
4. Inexperienced birders sometimes have trouble distinguishing Franklin's Gulls from Laughing Gulls. Which has more prominent eye arcs and less extensive black on the underside of the primaries?
5. Which of our three jaeger species was last to join Pennsylvania's bird list? For a bonus, where and in what year was it found?

(Answers on page 20)

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## Do you need a present for a birder?

Check the PSO website. We sell T-shirts, both short- and long-sleeved; hats; checklists and binders for those checklists; *The Annotated List of the Birds of Pennsylvania*; as well as patches, decalcs, and Zippo lighters.



# Ornithological Literature Notes

Pennsylvania has a little-known ornithological claim to fame for the Black Rail. The first bird of this species known to North American science was found in 1836 in a field near Philadelphia.

The discovery was described in an article drably titled “The Little Black Rail” in the January 1900 issue of *The Auk*, the journal of the American Ornithologists’ Union ([tinyurl.com/PA-Black-Rail](http://tinyurl.com/PA-Black-Rail)). The story is resurrected in a technical report published in 2016 by the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary ([tinyurl.com/Black-Rail-decline](http://tinyurl.com/Black-Rail-decline)).

If you are an American Birding Association member (and you should be!), you may have read the “News and Notes” article in the June 2017 issue of *Birding* magazine. If so, you already know much of the sad story.

The technical report summarizes an amazingly extensive survey of long-time locations along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts where Black Rails once thrived. The locations are in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Texas. In virtually all of those areas, very low numbers were found, and in some places, the rails were gone.

The decline is particularly disheartening to Pennsylvania birders who easily found their first Black Rail not far away a few decades ago at Elliott Island, Maryland—and to birders who might still seek one there. High counts were 100+ in the 1950s, 45 in the 1970s, 47 in the 1980s, 44 in the 1990s, 12 in the 2000s, and 2 in the 2010s. No Black Rails were detected there during the 2016 breeding season.

The cause of population crashes in many coastal areas is a familiar one: habitat lost to development in once-extensive tidal marshes. Even where traditional expanses of salt marsh remain, dangers may include rising sea levels that alter essential microhabitats of vegetation height and food resources, increased nest predation, use of insecticides for mosquito control, and perhaps other factors yet to be discovered.



Audubon's Least Water-hen

Now back to the Black Rail’s discovery in Pennsylvania... An observer named Dr. Thomas Rowan captured an adult with four young on July, 22, 1836, on his farm in Philadelphia and said many could be collected in the meadows in his farm. He told Titian Peale, the famous artist/ naturalist/ collector about the discovery, and Peale sent specimens to John James

Audubon.

In 1838, in the fourth volume of his classic *Ornithological Biography*, Audubon first announced and illustrated it as a bird of the United States. He named the bird the “Least Water Rail” in his species account. His painting in *Birds of North America* is based on the Philadelphia specimens, and he calls the bird the “Least Water-hen” in the caption. If there is an explanation for those oddly differing names, I cannot find it.

Audubon described the specimens in tremendous detail. For example, how about this for the adult: “Nasal groove extending to a little beyond the middle of the bill; nostrils linear, lateral, submedial, pervious [meaning permeable, allowing water to pass through].” Indeed, Audubon was far more than an artist.

While listing the very few Pennsylvania records since the 1990s, the William and Mary team’s study comments, “Although not well documented, the species was apparently a common breeder within the vast tidal marshes of the upper Delaware River in Philadelphia. These marshes were lost to urban expansion during the 1800s as was the ability of this area to support breeding Black Rails. What remains today of this system is unlikely to support breeding.”

That almost reads like an obituary, doesn’t it?

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phess@salsgiver.com



# Conservation Chat Room

## A Christmas Present for the Birds



As we search for birds in fields and forests, at feeders, and scan waterways and the skies during our many Christmas Bird Counts this year, I hope everyone will make a special effort to find some of Pennsylvania's "species of greatest conservation need," listed in the **Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan 2015 - 2025**.

Appendix 1.4 has a list of birds with a detailed description of the status, threats, actions, surveys, and research on each of the 90 bird species in the greatest need of our help in Pennsylvania.

The important parts of the **Action Plan** detail why these birds are declining and include strategies on how to help these birds; that's why it's called an action plan.

Fortunately, the Pennsylvania Game Commission has identified actions to address various threats specific to each species.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission website has links to PDFs for each chapter in the extensive **Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan**, so it is easy to look at



Brown Creeper is one of the species of greatest conservation need.

Photo by Laura Jackson

specific parts of the plan. Just Google, "Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Wildlife Action Plan," to see a list of chapter topics with PDF links. See Appendix 1.4 to click on the PDF for Birds.

Documenting bird species as part of the **Christmas Bird Count** and including your sightings in **eBird** will help scientists

know more about the distribution of these birds in the winter. I won't list all the birds of greatest conservation need, but there are a few birds in the list below that you might find in your Christmas count circle (keeping in mind, of course, that anything is possible when it comes to bird sightings). Please take a few minutes to look at the entire list of 90 bird species online.

Here are just 33 of the 90 species that I'm going to listen and look for in the Bedford and Blair Christmas Bird Count Circles:

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Tundra Swan         | Northern Saw-whet Owl  |
| Blue-winged Teal    | Red-headed Woodpecker  |
| American Black Duck | American Kestrel       |
| Lesser Scaup        | Peregrine Falcon       |
| Ruffed Grouse       | Loggerhead Shrike      |
| American Coot       | Brown Creeper          |
| American Woodcock   | Winter Wren            |
| Osprey              | Sedge Wren             |
| Bald Eagle          | Marsh Wren             |
| Northern Harrier    | Gray Catbird           |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk  | Red Crossbill          |
| Northern Goshawk    | Pine Siskin            |
| Broad-winged Hawk   | Eastern Towhee         |
| Golden Eagle        | White-throated Sparrow |
| Barn Owl            | Eastern Meadowlark     |
| Long-eared Owl      | Rusty Blackbird        |
| Short-eared Owl     |                        |

Were you surprised to learn that some of these birds are in trouble? I was. Although some birds have gotten a lot of press, others are fading quietly away. While reasons for population declines are complex, many are due to habitat loss from residential and commercial development, climate change, and pollution.

The Christmas Bird Count data is used by scientists to study long-term trends in bird populations, so please do your part by participating in the CBC. Christmas Bird Counts exposed the plummeting numbers of the American Black Duck, leading to restrictions on its hunting in both the U.S. and Canada. The recovery of the Bald Eagle, a wonderful success story, can be traced in CBC data. Don't wait – find a Christmas Bird Count circle near you and volunteer: [www.audubon.org/join-christmas-bird-count](http://www.audubon.org/join-christmas-bird-count)

Laura Jackson  
Bedford County  
mljackson2@embarqmail.com

## **Christmas Bird Counts Held in Pennsylvania**

	<b>Name of Count</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Compiler</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>E-mail Address</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Allentown	Lehigh/Berks	Rett Oren		<a href="mailto:rettoen@gmail.com">rettoen@gmail.com</a>	12/16/17
2	Audubon	Montgomery Delaware Chester	Vincent Smith	484-410-1157	<a href="mailto:Nyctea34@aol.com">Nyctea34@aol.com</a>	12/23/17
3	Bald Eagle	Centre	Bob Snyder	814-863-6168	<a href="mailto:rhs2@psu.edu">rhs2@psu.edu</a>	1/1/18
4	Beaver	Beaver	Rick Mason	724-847-0909	<a href="mailto:richarddmason@gmail.com">richarddmason@gmail.com</a>	12/16/17
5	Bedford	Bedford	Laura & Mike Jackson	814-652-9268	<a href="mailto:jacksonlaura73@gmail.com">jacksonlaura73@gmail.com</a>	12/30/17
6	Benezette	Clearfield, Elk	Mark Johnson	814-546-2886	<a href="mailto:luckybirder@gmail.com">luckybirder@gmail.com</a>	12/31/17
7	Bernville	Berks	Ed Barrell	610-926-2962	<a href="mailto:ed.barrell@comcast.net">ed.barrell@comcast.net</a>	12/30/17
8	Bethlehem- Easton	Northampton	Elaine & Donald Mease	610-346-7754	<a href="mailto:measede@enter.net">measede@enter.net</a>	12/30/17
9	Bloomsburg	Columbia	Karol Pasquinelli	570-351-5120	<a href="mailto:karol2@ptd.net">karol2@ptd.net</a>	12/17/17
10	Buffalo Creek	Washington	Larry Helgerman	412-508-0321	<a href="mailto:bobolink1989@gmail.com">bobolink1989@gmail.com</a>	12/17/17
11	Buffalo Creek Valley	Butler Armstrong	George Reese	724-353-9649	<a href="mailto:g.reese@gaiconsultants.com">g.reese@gaiconsultants.com</a>	12/16/17
12	Bushy Run	Westmoreland	Dick Byers	724-593-3543	<a href="mailto:otusasio@lhtot.com">otusasio@lhtot.com</a>	12/31/17
13	Butler	Butler Lawrence Mercer	Glenn Koppel Mary A Koeneke	703-203-3362 703-203-6337	<a href="mailto:kestrel22@hotmail.com">kestrel22@hotmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:macatilly@icloud.com">macatilly@icloud.com</a>	12/16/17
14	Central Bucks	Bucks	Diane Allison	610-847-2085	<a href="mailto:dalliso@mail.ptd.net">dalliso@mail.ptd.net</a>	12/31/17
15	Chambersburg	Franklin	Valerie Barnes	717-352-4397	<a href="mailto:barnesva4@comcast.net">barnesva4@comcast.net</a>	12/16/17
16	Clarion	Clarion	Gary Edwards	814-671-1273	<a href="mailto:gedwards@csonline.net">gedwards@csonline.net</a>	12/17/17
17	Clarksville	Greene	Terry Dayton	724-627-9665	<a href="mailto:tdayton@windstream.net">tdayton@windstream.net</a>	12/23/17
18	Culp	Blair	Laura Jackson	814-652-9268	<a href="mailto:mljackson2@embarqmail.com">mljackson2@embarqmail.com</a>	12/16/17
19	Curtin	Dauphin	Scott Bills	717-896-8859		12/27/17
20	Dallas Area	Luzerne	Rick Koval	570-991-0580	<a href="mailto:pocononaturalist@yahoo.com">pocononaturalist@yahoo.com</a>	12/16/17
21	Dingman's Ferry	Pike	Derek Scott	570-828-2310 x 234		1/1/18
22	DuBois	Clearfield	Marianne Atkin- son, Joc Smrekar		<a href="mailto:marianne5@windstream.net">marianne5@windstream.net</a>	12/16/17
23	Elverson	Chester	Jim Cook	610-587-7545	<a href="mailto:escjim@windstream.net">escjim@windstream.net</a>	12/23/17

24	Emporium	Cameron	Bob Martin	814-486-1990	<a href="mailto:bmartin@zitomedia.net">bmartin@zitomedia.net</a>	12/17/17
25	Erie	Erie	Michele Franz		<a href="mailto:isomorphun@roadrunner.com">isomorphun@roadrunner.com</a>	12/16/17
26	Gettysburg	Adams	Mike O'Brien	717-642-6676	<a href="mailto:maddogobrien@gmail.com">maddogobrien@gmail.com</a>	12/16/17
27	Glenolden	Delaware	David Eberly	610-543-3499	<a href="mailto:david.eberly@gmail.com">david.eberly@gmail.com</a>	12/16/17
28	Grove City	Butler Mercer Lawrence Venango	Brendyn Baptiste	724-496-4856	<a href="mailto:brendynbaptiste@yahoo.com">brendynbaptiste@yahoo.com</a>	12/23/17
29	Hamburg	Berks Schuylkill	Laurie Goodrich	610-756-6961 570-943-3411 x106	<a href="mailto:goodrich@hawkmtn.org">goodrich@hawkmtn.org</a>	12/31/17
30	Harrisburg	Dauphin	Deuane Hoffman	717-564-7475	<a href="mailto:corvuscorax@comcast.net">corvuscorax@comcast.net</a>	12/16/17
31	Huntingdon	Huntingdon	Deb Grove	814-643-3295	<a href="mailto:dsg4@psu.edu">dsg4@psu.edu</a>	12/17/17
32	Imperial	Allegheny Washington	Bob Mulvihill		<a href="mailto:robert.mulvihill@gmail.com">robert.mulvihill@gmail.com</a>	
33	Indiana	Indiana	Roger & Marg Higbee	724-354-3493 412-309-3538	<a href="mailto:bcoriole@windstream.net">bcoriole@windstream.net</a> <a href="mailto:rvhigbee@windstream.net">rvhigbee@windstream.net</a>	12/26/17
34	Johnstown	Cambria	Jeff Payne	814-279-8142	<a href="mailto:paynemt@gmail.com">paynemt@gmail.com</a>	12/14/17
35	Lake Raystown	Huntingdon Blair	Greg Grove	814-643-3295	<a href="mailto:gwg2@psu.edu">gwg2@psu.edu</a>	12/28/17
36	Lancaster	Lancaster	Barbara Hunsberger Roger Stoner	717-393-4091	<a href="mailto:phunsberger@comcast.net">phunsberger@comcast.net</a>	12/30/17
37	Lebanon	Lebanon, Dauphin	Fritz Heilman	717-273-0487	<a href="mailto:volks5@verizon.net">volks5@verizon.net</a>	12/16/17
38	Lewisburg	Union, Snyder, Northumber- land	Allen Schweinsberg	570-524-0432	<a href="mailto:aschwein@bucknell.edu">aschwein@bucknell.edu</a>	12/16/17
39	Lewistown	Juniata	Abram Troyer Chad Kauffman	717-994-6715	<a href="mailto:chadkauffman@earthlink.net">chadkauffman@earthlink.net</a>	12/16/17
40	Linesville	Crawford	Clare Nicolls	814-587-6395	<a href="mailto:tcnicolls@windstream.net">tcnicolls@windstream.net</a>	12/17/17
41	Lititz	Lancaster, Lebanon	Ted Nichols	717-856-3851	<a href="mailto:tanicholsii@gmail.com">tanicholsii@gmail.com</a>	12/31/17
42	Lock Haven- Jersey Shore	Clinton Lycoming	Wayne Laubscher	570-748-7511	<a href="mailto:wnlaubscher@comcast.net">wnlaubscher@comcast.net</a>	12/16/17
43	Mansfield- Wellsboro	Tioga	Gary Tyson	570-724-5789	<a href="mailto:gnats3@ptd.net">gnats3@ptd.net</a>	1/1/2018
44	New Bloomfield	Perry	Annette Mathes	717-514-4512	<a href="mailto:amathes19@verizon.net">amathes19@verizon.net</a>	12/23/17
45	Newville	Cumberland	Vern Gauthier	717-385-9526	<a href="mailto:pabirder@gmail.com">pabirder@gmail.com</a>	12/30/17



46	Northern Elk	Elk, McKean	Brendyn Baptiste		<a href="mailto:brendynb62699@gmail.com">brendynb62699@gmail.com</a>	12/30/17
47	Northern Lycoming	Lycoming	David Brown	570-772-9262	<a href="mailto:davidebrownpa@gmail.com">davidebrownpa@gmail.com</a>	12/30/17
48	Penns Creek	Centre	Cathy Pierce		<a href="mailto:winghaven.nursery@gmail.com">winghaven.nursery@gmail.com</a>	12/23/17
49	Pennypack Valley	Philadelphia	Peter Kurtz	215-342-3638 215-685-0470	<a href="mailto:peter.kurtz@phila.gov">peter.kurtz@phila.gov</a>	12/16/17
50	Philipsburg	Centre Clearfield	Greg Kojadinovich	814-237-5964		
51	Pittsburgh	Allegheny	Brian Shema	412-963-6100	<a href="mailto:bshema@aswp.org">bshema@aswp.org</a>	12/30/17
52	Pittsburgh South Hills	Allegheny Washington	Nancy Page	412-221-4795		12/16/17
53	Pleasantville	Venango	Russ States	814-676-6320	<a href="mailto:pabirder@verizon.net">pabirder@verizon.net</a>	12/31/17
54	Pocono Mt.	Monroe	Brian Hardiman	570-629-3061	<a href="mailto:bhmccd@ptd.net">bhmccd@ptd.net</a>	12/17/17
55	Potter County	Potter	Dave Hauber	814-274-8946	<a href="mailto:haubers3@penn.com">haubers3@penn.com</a>	12/17/17
56	Reading	Berks	Ken Lebo	610-856-1413	<a href="mailto:klebo@dejazzd.com">klebo@dejazzd.com</a>	12/17/17
57	Rector	Westmoreland	Matt Webb	412-622-5591	<a href="mailto:webbm@carnegiemnh.org">webbm@carnegiemnh.org</a>	12/17/17
58	Ryerson	Greene	Marjorie Howard	724-852-3155	<a href="mailto:birdwatcher108@comcast.net">birdwatcher108@comcast.net</a>	12/16/17
59	Scranton	Lackawanna	Mark Catalano Cheryle Stone	570-760-6556	<a href="mailto:cstone@epix.net">cstone@epix.net</a>	12/16/17
60	South Butler	Butler	Chris Kubiak	412-963-6100	<a href="mailto:ckubiak@aswp.org">ckubiak@aswp.org</a>	1/6/2018
61	Southeastern Bradford	Bradford	Rebecca Lesko	570-592-2629	<a href="mailto:EMNCinfo@yahoo.com">EMNCinfo@yahoo.com</a>	12/30/17
62	Southern Bucks	Bucks	Mark Gallagher	215-378-8162	<a href="mailto:mgallagher@princetonhydro.com">mgallagher@princetonhydro.com</a>	12/16/17
63	Southern Lancaster County	Lancaster	Bob Schutsky	717-548-3303 (10 a.m. to 9 p.m.)	<a href="mailto:info@birdtreks.com">info@birdtreks.com</a>	12/17/17
64	State College	Centre	Jim Dunn Bob Fowles	814-863-8625 814-238-1990	<a href="mailto:jwd6@psu.edu">jwd6@psu.edu</a> <a href="mailto:rbf@psu.edu">rbf@psu.edu</a>	12/17/17
65	Tamaqua	Schuykill Carbon	Jonathan DeBalko		<a href="mailto:jonathan.debalko@wilkes.edu">jonathan.debalko@wilkes.edu</a>	12/28/17
66	Thompson	Susquehanna	Stuart Slocum		<a href="mailto:slocumsw95@yahoo.com">slocumsw95@yahoo.com</a>	
67	Tunkhannock	Wyoming	Rick Koval	570-991-0580	<a href="mailto:pocononaturalist@yahoo.com">pocononaturalist@yahoo.com</a>	12/17/17
68	Upper Bucks	Bucks Montgomery Lehigh	Bill Etter	215-964-3613	<a href="mailto:billetter01@gmail.com">billetter01@gmail.com</a>	12/17/17

69	Warren	Warren	Michael Toole	814-723-4714	<a href="mailto:m_t_toole@verizon.net">m_t_toole@verizon.net</a>	12/16/17
70	Washington	Washington	Tom Contreras	724-223-6118	<a href="mailto:tcontreras@washjeff.edu">tcontreras@washjeff.edu</a>	12/16/17
71	West Chester	Chester	Barry Blust Anthony Fernandes	610-458-5616	<a href="mailto:BarryBlust@comcast.net">BarryBlust@comcast.net</a> <a href="mailto:jets741@verizon.net">jets741@verizon.net</a>	12/16/17
72	Western Chester	Chester	Larry Lewis	484-340-7672	<a href="mailto:earlybirdtours@comcast.net">earlybirdtours@comcast.net</a>	12/30/17
73	Western Schuylkill	Schuylkill	Dave Krue1	570-622-3704	<a href="mailto:dkrue1300@comcast.net">dkrue1300@comcast.net</a>	12/17/17
74	White Mills	Wayne	Barb Leo	570-253-2364	<a href="mailto:barbaraaleo@earthlink.net">barbaraaleo@earthlink.net</a>	12/16/17
75	Wild Creek– Little Gap	Carbon Monroe	Corey Husic	570-269-7509	<a href="mailto:coreyhusic@gmail.com">coreyhusic@gmail.com</a>	12/17/17
76	Williamsport	Lycoming	David Brown	570-772-9262	<a href="mailto:davidebrownpa@gmail.com">davidebrownpa@gmail.com</a>	12/16/17
77	Wyncote	Montgomery	Andy Fayer		<a href="mailto:AndyFayer@aol.com">AndyFayer@aol.com</a>	12/16/17
78	York	York	Bernie Frick	717-843-6675	<a href="mailto:bernardfrick@alum.lehigh.edu">bernardfrick@alum.lehigh.edu</a>	12/16/17
79	York Springs	Adams Cumberland York	Vern Gauthier	717-385-9526	<a href="mailto:pabirder@gmail.com">pabirder@gmail.com</a>	12/27/17

## Tell Another Birder about PSO

You may be surprised to learn how many PA birders do not know much about PSO. Why, some have never even heard of us! I know that's pretty unbelievable, but true! That is why it never hurts to take the opportunity to share with others what you appreciate about being a PSO

member. Maybe it's the journal or the newsletter, the field trips, special projects, or the connection with birders from other parts of the state; whatever it is, don't be shy. Give a good word about PSO and an invitation to join to other birders you know.

## Electronic or Printed Newsletter?

If you are now receiving a printed copy of "The PSO Pileated" and would prefer to receive it on line, please notify Frank Haas at [fchaas@pabirds.org](mailto:fchaas@pabirds.org).



# Pennsylvania Bird Lists Report Form for 2017

Report Totals as of December 31, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Please print.)

**Send by 20 January 2018 to:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

Peter Robinson      [pabirder@hotmail.com](mailto:pabirder@hotmail.com)  
P. O. Box 482  
Hanover, PA 17331

\_\_\_\_\_  
City                                  State                  ZIP

PLEASE include ONLY those species included in the Official List of the Birds of PA (see [www.pabirds.org](http://www.pabirds.org)) or *The Birds of Pennsylvania* (McWilliams & Brauning), unless you are VERY certain of the bird ID, and VERY confident that the bird is a wild one, not an escapee. Do not include Black Swan, Mandarin Duck, European Goldfinch, etc. **Please send only the numbers that are new or have changed from last year. There is no need to submit any numbers that are the same as last year.**

**PA Life List** \_\_\_\_\_ (Report new species and other other comments about 2017 birding in PA on back)

**PA Life List Unassisted** \_\_\_\_\_ (Species found on your own. Not “chase” birds)

**PA 2017 Annual List** \_\_\_\_\_ **Highest PA Annual List** \_\_\_\_\_ **Year** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Ticks** \_\_\_\_\_ (Total of all life lists for all counties. Blue Jay in all counties = 67 ticks.)

**Vote For “Bird of the Year”** 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**County Life Lists**      (100 species or more)

Adams	_____	Delaware	_____	Monroe	_____
Allegheny	_____	Elk	_____	Montgomery	_____
Armstrong	_____	Erie	_____	Montour	_____
Beaver	_____	Fayette	_____	Northampton	_____
Bedford	_____	Forest	_____	Northumberland	_____
Berks	_____	Franklin	_____	Perry	_____
Blair	_____	Fulton	_____	Philadelphia	_____
Bradford	_____	Greene	_____	Pike	_____
Bucks	_____	Huntingdon	_____	Potter	_____
Butler	_____	Indiana	_____	Schuylkill	_____
Cambria	_____	Jefferson	_____	Snyder	_____
Cameron	_____	Juniata	_____	Somerset	_____
Carbon	_____	Lackawanna	_____	Sullivan	_____
Centre	_____	Lancaster	_____	Susquehanna	_____
Chester	_____	Lawrence	_____	Tioga	_____
Clarion	_____	Lebanon	_____	Union	_____
Clearfield	_____	Lehigh	_____	Venango	_____
Clinton	_____	Luzerne	_____	Warren	_____
Columbia	_____	Lycoming	_____	Washington	_____
Crawford	_____	McKean	_____	Wayne	_____
Cumberland	_____	Mercer	_____	Westmoreland	_____
Dauphin	_____	Mifflin	_____	Wyoming	_____
York	_____				

**County Annual Lists** \_\_\_\_\_  
(100 or more) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Answers to Bird Quiz

(page 12)

1. Murres. Jaegers were traditionally considered most closely related to gulls, but based on DNA evidence, the American Ornithologists' Union determined in 2013 that they are more closely related to alcids (which include murres). So jaegers are no longer placed next to gulls on our up-to-date checklists.
2. "Short-billed" is the *brachyrhynchus* subspecies of Mew Gull from the northwestern U.S. and Canada. "Vega" is the *vegae* subspecies of Herring Gull from northeastern Asia and the Bering Sea.
3. Sooty Tern
4. Franklin's Gull
5. Long-tailed Jaeger, found in Lancaster County in 2000.



## 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:

Membership Categories:

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	Student	\$ 25.00
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