

The

PSO Pileated



October 2019

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Volume 30, Number 3

From the President's Desk....

As I commence typing and I reflect on the fact that this is my first opportunity to share with you as the President of your PSO, I am humbled to be doing so. When I scan through the names of the organization's past presidents and those who have served on the Board of Directors, I find myself in the company of many whom I have long admired and respected for their work on behalf of bird conservation in Pennsylvania.

I nonetheless assume this responsibility with confidence. I have had two years to work alongside the current Board of Directors and our newest Past President, and I know the quality of the individuals on the team, recognize their commitment to the PSO, and have seen the time and energy they are willing to invest in its continued success. We have a leadership team that you and I can be assured will guide this organization into its fourth decade.

That's right. Happy Anniversary! It was thirty years ago, in October of 1989, at a meeting of the Breeding Bird Atlas compilers that a group of pioneering individuals conceived the idea of beginning an association of amateur and professional naturalists who shared an interest in advancing our knowledge of Pennsylvania's birds. The organizing committee who shepherded the PSO into existence was comprised of the following individuals: Jane Earle, Douglas Gross, Dr. Roy Ickes, Robert Martin, Jr, Conrad Schmidt, Jocelynn Smrekar, and Eugene



Evan Mann was elected PSO President at our annual meeting in Williamsport.

Photo by Chad Kauffman

Zielinski. And the rest, as they say, is history. Today our robust and healthy state organization provides its members with a place to learn about birds, share our experiences with one another, advocate with a single voice, nurture the next generation of birders, and enjoy the company of fellow bird lovers.

The two "products" of the PSO that arrive in our mailboxes (or digital in boxes) are superlative bar none. I recently spent some time at our website perusing the archive of past issues of this newsletter, "The PSO Pileated." I was astounded to realize how many members have made contributions to the articles on its pages. It truly is a place where members gather and share with one another. The quality of the periodical speaks to the commitment and talent of its editor, and I am certain you join me in thanking Margaret Higbee for all the work she does to make our newsletter a success.

Our quarterly journal, *Pennsylvania Birds*, is shared reciprocally with a number of other states around the U.S.; i.e., we exchange copies as they are published. I asked our editor if I could take a look at how our journal compared with others by viewing some of their recent issues. No other state is issuing a product with the quality and caliber of content that you have arriving in your box four times a year. With the recent addition of full color photographs, thanks to The Bird Screen Company and Frank and Barbara Haas, it has grown in quality. Greg

Grove, our able editor, has assembled quite a team. Take a look at the inside cover of your next issue, in publishing parlance “the masthead,” and note the list of seasonal and department editors. All of their time is donated as is the time of fifty-four county compilers.

But your annual membership dues are not just about receiving mail. We are committed to the future of birds and birding in the Commonwealth. Through your membership dollars and your engagement in the PSO, you are participating in our conservation initiatives, our support of avian research, our efforts to guide the next generation of birders and ornithologists, our providing an online community for birders, and our partnering with the state’s

regional bird clubs and agencies like the PGC to increase the volume of our collective voices. As a member of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology, you have much of which to be proud and many opportunities to become involved. We need your continued support, and we ask you to encourage others to join.

The challenges are great but so are the rewards. We trust you will seek a spot where you can serve and share in our successes.

It’s year one of decade four. Let’s get to it.

Evan Mann, PSO President
Susquehanna County

The 30th Annual PSO Meeting Revisited

by Deb Grove

The 30th annual PSO meeting was held September 13-15 in Williamsport, Lycoming County. The organization was started at the end of the First PA Breeding Bird Atlas by several people who had participated in surveying the state. They decided that they wanted to continue monitoring the state's bird populations and do this as an organization. Thus, PSO was born, and the first journal issued 30 years ago is available at:

<https://pabirds.org/pabirds/backissues/PBV01N1.pdf>.

Friday Evening

Attendees picked up their badges and annual meeting pins at the registration table at the Williamsport Holiday Inn Express and were greeted by Sandy Lockerman, Chuck Berthoud, and Chad Kauffman. The Friday evening social began at 6:00 p.m., and members reconnected with other birders from across the state. Thirty-five counties were represented although the 11 students from Penn State Dubois were not differentiated as to where their home counties were. New York State and Nova Scotia were also represented.

Exhibitors were available at the Friday evening social and during the afternoon on Saturday. They included: Sheree Daugherty, an amazing nature and wildlife artist; Juniata Valley Audubon Society, with coffee for sale from Lenca Farms in Honduras who are growing their coffee in a bird habitat-sustainable way; Lost Creek Shoe Shop of Oakland Mills, with binoculars, spotting scopes, and tripods; the Lycoming Audubon Society, displaying bird replicas, offering brochures and educational materials,

and showing photos covering their fifty years of environmental advocacy; Seven Mountains Audubon, presenting the opportunities for regional birders to join, support, and participate in future activities; Snyder's Nursery at the Feed Mill in Montoursville, with Aspen Song Wild Bird Food and re-purposed bird food bags; Tiadaghton Audubon Society, displaying the many birding opportunities in Tioga County, including the well-known site called The Muck; and Aidan Place, presenting his fund-raising project for the Champions of the Flyway and their work to conserve the birds migrating between Europe and Africa each year.

Members convened at 7:00 p.m. for the annual business meeting led by Mike Fialkovich who was ending three years of serving as the society's president. Mike announced that terms were ending for Board members Chad Kauffman and Andy McGann. Chad will stay on, but Andy has stepped down. Deb Grove's term was ending and moved on to Vice President elect. Three nominees for the board were presented: Carole Winslow from Clarion County, David Yeany II from Allegheny, and Eli DePaulis from Penn State Dubois. The officer slate that was up for a vote included Evan Mann, President; Deb Grove, Vice-President; Roger Higbee, Secretary; Frank Haas, Treasurer; Greg Grove, PA Birds Chief Editor; Mike Fialkovich, Past President. Motions were made and seconded to accept this slate which passed.

Evan Mann presented the treasurer's report for Frank Haas who was unable to attend. Besides presenting the routine information, he emphasized how PSO has been able to

collaborate with other groups to further conservation efforts. PSO made a \$500 contribution to "Frontiers in Ornithology: A Symposium for Youth" that will take place later this month in Delaware. Other awards are youth camp scholarships and youth scholarships to attend the PSO meeting.

Deb Grove followed him with information on the first Student Research Grant that was awarded to Victoria Gabrielle Roper at Bloomsburg University. (An article on this appears on page 11 of this newsletter.) Evan returned to the podium to introduce the exhibitors who were available at the meeting.

Chad Kauffman, Field Trip Chair, announced the field trips for the weekend. In the weeks before the meeting, Chad provided information for each leader with names of those who had signed up so that trip leaders could prepare their group members with information concerning where to meet, clothing and boot suggestions, and other necessary tidbits. The trips were Beginner Birding Walk on Canfield Island at Williamsport, Glacial Pools Reserve near Picture Rocks, Mill Street in Montoursville, the Montour Preserve, Rider Park near Warrensville, Rose Valley Lake, State Game Land 252, the Susquehanna River Walk at Williamsport, World's End State Park/Loyalsock State Forest, Ricketts Glen State Park, and the Williamsport Water Authority in Mosquito Valley.

Chad also announced other activities for attendees: Bird Banding at the Williamsport Water Authority with bander Nick Kerlin from Centre County and Hawkwatching with David Brown at the scenic overlook off Rt 15 south.

After that, the Bird Trivia game was ready to go! This exciting addition to the meeting was started last year by Emily Thomas of Penn State Dubois. Members joined in groups of two to four to answer 10 questions in each of 10 rounds. The nine teams tackled questions that were 50% PA Bird ID and songs, 10% each US and World Bird ID, and 10% each of PA Bird Natural History, Biology, and general Birding.

One photo to identify was that of a Common Swift. Joe Gyekis informed the audience of some facts. "Except when nesting, these swifts spend their lives in the air, living on the insects caught in flight; they drink, feed, and often mate and sleep on the wing. Some individuals go 10 months without landing. No other bird species spends as much of its life in flight. Their maximum horizontal flying speed is 111.6 km/h. Over a lifetime they can cover millions of kilometers." (Wikipedia)

Here are some of the questions:

1. Which Pennsylvania bird species has been called "Indian Hen"?
2. Which Pennsylvania bird species has shown a severe decline due to West Nile Virus?
3. How many Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported in Pennsylvania on the Christmas Bird Count in 2018? 0, 1-10, 11-100, 101-1000, 1001-10,000, or 10,000+
4. Name 3 of the most recent 6 species added to the state list by the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

Answers follow at the end of this article.

Of course there were photos to identify and also the songs or calls, my favorite. But one of the most entertaining parts of the quiz for me was listening to the laughter and shouts from the student teams.

Winning teams were: First Place: Diane Allison (Bucks County) and Paul Heveran (Montgomery); Second Place: Kathy Kuchwara (Cumberland County), Susan Strassner (Cumberland County), Annette Mathes (Dauphin County) and Verne Gauthier (Cumberland County); Third Place: a tie between Laura and Mike Jackson (Bedford County) and Rebecca Hart (Allegheny) and the returning champions, Michael David and David Yeany II, both of Allegheny. Congratulations to all!

Saturday Afternoon

On Saturday afternoon after a morning of enjoying field trips, members returned at 2:00 to hear the talk, "The State of Boreal Birds in Pennsylvania" by Doug Gross, recently retired from the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Doug was a founding member of PSO and served as president twice. He has worked on many field projects in PA, but the closest to his heart is his work to find and determine the status of birds in the boreal areas of PA. These areas are left from the receding Ice Age and resemble sites in Canada including both flora and fauna. The birds that inhabit these areas include Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Blackpoll Warbler, Swainson's Thrush, Canada Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, White-throated Sparrow, Red Crossbill, and Northern Goshawk. A bird that he hopes to see breeding again in PA is the Olive-sided Flycatcher that has been found breeding in the West Virginia mountains.

These birds of the cool coniferous swamps at elevations greater than 2000 feet are at great risk due to many factors and as Doug emphasized – by Ignorance and Indifference. But, specifically there are many causes including problems at the wintering grounds in Central and South America where sustainable agriculture is needed for the people to live and the birds to exist. Other problems are habitat removal by development in the Poconos and the northeast region, climate change, forestry practices, etc. Doug implored members to spend time searching these isolated areas and surveying unique ecosystems for these sensitive species.

The break between talks allowed members to visit the exhibitors but also to enjoy the continuing tradition of the specially decorated cake. Sherron Lynch of Allegheny County once again provided the traditional cake. This work of art, that was quickly demolished by the hungry attendees, was decorated with the “bird of the meeting,” the Merlin, set upon the Lycoming County outline. Ron Beach, a local and well known wildlife artist (<http://ronbeachart.com/index.html>), designed the Merlin logo which was also used for this year's collector pin and the t-shirt.

The afternoon's next talk, “Local and Long Distance Movements of Lesser Black-backed Gulls Wintering in Bucks County,” was presented by Dan Brauning of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. The circumpolar Lesser Black-backed Gull (LBBG) started to appear on PA bird lists in 1996 in eastern PA. Since then, the numbers have climbed to totals of nearly 1000 during the winter at sites such as Nockamixon Lake and Peace Valley Park. The PA Game Commission provided money to study these birds more closely to pursue why they had suddenly started populating eastern counties including Bucks and Northampton in PA and neighboring NJ counties in the winter. After monitoring the climbing numbers during Christmas Bird Counts, transmitters were finally fitted on nine LBBG in March 2018.

Dan showed several maps depicting sites where the transmitters indicated the gulls had traveled and stopped. The gulls moved north in the spring through northern New England states, through Labrador, and some settled in two specific places, Baffin Island and the Greenland shore. From the preliminary data, it appears that the gulls must have deviated from their usual European migratory route from Europe to Iceland to Greenland. During the '90s, LBBGs started heading down the coast to the US in the spring instead of returning to Europe.

So, an obvious question that was easily answered was what was the attraction in Bucks and neighboring counties? Well, the huge landfills! In fact the Bethlehem landfill was one of the biggest attractants. One might ask, why study this bird that is not a game bird or even endangered. Dan put forth one possibility and that is whether they might potentially spread the Avian Influenza Virus. Upon migrating to their summer sites, they might mix with those coming from Europe and thus spread this pathogen into Europe. The accumulated data will also give a peek into the effect of climate change on this unique "newcomer" to the states. In any case, it certainly looks like these immigrants are now US wintering "citizens."

Saturday Evening

The evening events started with a social at 6:00 in the room with the exhibitors. This was followed by the banquet buffet. At 8:00 President Mike Fialkovich performed his last duties as president and proceeded with the awards section of the meeting. Vern Gauthier came forward first to introduce the two students who were honored with youth scholarships to the meeting. The first, Ty Sharrow from Carbon County, was nominated by Dr. Jerry Skinner. Ty is a student at Keystone College and has taken several courses, including bird banding which has moved him to research projects. The second, Dominic Mirarchi of Cumberland County, was nominated by Jane Earle who stated that he was an excellent birder who helped her lead many bird walks. As a high school student he has also been active in his school by founding the Birding, Conservation, and Outing Club and by participating in other ornithological activities.

Evan Mann came forward next to present two more awards. The first was the PSO Conservation Award that was given to the Lycoming Audubon Society (LAS) for their impact on conservation in PA. LAS has worked since 1968 to preserve and enhance the ecosystems in Lycoming and Clinton counties. A few of their efforts are: lobbying to require gas companies to be responsible for methane release, denying the placement of a wind farm on Moosic Mountain, and resisting development near Rose Valley Lake. More information on the LAS is on page 6 of this newsletter.

The second award was the Earl Poole Award that was presented to Nick Bolgiano of Centre County. Nick has been a major contributor to ornithology for the last 30 years. Again, see the article on page 8 of this newsletter that provides more details concerning his efforts. Nick's projects include analyzing Christmas Bird Count data in

PA, hawk migration in both the spring and fall, hawk populations in the winter in PA from the Winter Raptor Survey, and others. He wrote a seminal paper in *American Birds* 2004 – “Changes in boreal bird irruptions in eastern North America relative to the 1970s spruce budworm infestation” that analyzed and drew attention to what was a major effect on bird populations, containment measures, and forest ecology.

The bird list of all species seen during the meeting in the area was next. This year Chad Kauffman, Vern Gauthier and Evan Mann worked on a new method by using eBird to determine what birds had been seen. One member of each field trip group was designated to submit the birds seen to eBird. The list was then shared on eBird to the PSO Birding group site. Chad brought up the list on his computer and the numbers as of Saturday evening were shown to the members. Total individuals were shown as well as the number of checklists that produced the numbers. Sunday's birds were added and a complete list is available on page 7 of this newsletter.

Dr. David Toews gave the banquet talk on the triple hybrid bird found in Blair County. The title of his presentation was "Mistakes Happen: Hybridization in Wood Warblers." His talk is based on a "weirdo" bird found by Lowell Burket at his second home in Roaring Spring, Blair County. The bird was determined to be a Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warbler x Chestnut-sided Warbler and has been called Burket's Warbler. Lowell photographed this bird and saw that it was different. He was persistent with his emails to the Lab of Ornithology to get attention, including pictures and a video of the bird singing a Chestnut-sided Warbler song. David headed to Blair County, found the bird, netted it, and drew a blood sample to use for DNA analysis.



Burket's Warbler was photographed in Blair County by Lowell Burket.

Then he started as in "True Detective" fashion to solve the mystery with these questions: Who was involved, what happened, when did it happen, where did it happen, and why?



To summarize his findings, he used the newest DNA techniques to sequence the entire genome with less than one nanogram DNA. The mitochondrial DNA analysis which would determine the mother's species showed that she was a Golden-winged Warbler. Further DNA analysis proved that its father had been a Chestnut-sided Warbler. But wait, he wasn't finished. Using the carotenoid or color gene sequence to distinguish between the winged warblers, he found that the mother was actually a Brewster's or a Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warbler cross! Thus a triple hybrid!

David also described a similar case of a Cerulean x Golden-winged hybrid. In both cases the birds are widely separated phylogenetically in the warbler group. The "Why?" question could not be answered by this study, but he mentioned some possibilities including one theory that perhaps there were not enough male Golden- or Blue-winged Warblers with which to mate.

Dr. Toews arrived at Penn State in January 2019 and is an assistant professor in the Biology Department.

Previously, he had a postdoctoral position at Cornell and received his PhD from the University of British Columbia at Vancouver.

His talk ended the evening, and the members dispersed. However, they gathered again in the morning for more field trips. We hope to see you all again next year in Lancaster County, and, of course, we hope to see those who couldn't make it, too.

Answers to quiz questions:

1. Pileated Woodpecker
2. Ruffed Grouse
3. 101 to 1000
4. Any of the following nine were accepted: Common Shelduck, Corn Crake, Rock Wren, Varied Bunting, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Black-backed Oriole, White-winged Tern, European Robin, Brown Booby.

Attendees at Our Annual PSO Meeting

September 13-15, 2019

Diane Ackerson	Jane Earle	Chad Kauffman	Aidan Place
Diane Allison	Kathleen Ebeling	Andrew Keister	Julia Plummer
Ron Beach	Gary Edwards	Rudy Keller	Laura Porturas
Sondra Beach	Mike Fialkovich	Mary Alice Koeneke	Robert Reiter
Ryan Beatty	Diane Franco	Glenn Koppel	Keely Roen
Charles Berthoud	Vernon Gauthier	Kathy Kuchwara	Robert Ross
Diane Bierly	Don Gilbert	Wayne Laubscher	Eric Schill
Nick Bolgiano	Jennifer Gilbert	Sandra Lockerman	Lauren Shaffer
Jo Ann Bowes	Debra Grim	Meredith Lombard	Ty Sharrow
Susan Braun	Douglas Gross	Dianne Looker	Jerry Skinner
Daniel Brauning	Deb Grove	Ted Loy	Shane Stevenson
Marcia Brauning	Greg Grove	Pat Lynch	Kate St. John
Doris Brookens	Timothy Grover	Sherron Lynch	Susan Strassner
Steve Brookens	Carol Guba	Betsy Manlove	Stephen Thomas
Bobby Brown	Joseph Gyekis	Evan Mann	Suzanne Thomas
David Brown	Rebecca Hart	Eric Marchbein	Derek Thorne
Deb Brown	Austin Hartinstine	Annette Mathes	David Toews
Robert Brown	Todd Herman	Mark McConaughy	Derek Via
Sydney Brown	Paul Heveran	Gary Metzger	Linda Wagner
Brian Byrnes	Marg Higbee	Patrick Millar	Larry Waltz
Jo Ann Cooper	Roger Higbee	Craig Miller	Rebecca Waltz
Kay Cramer	Donna Hocker	Jean Miller	Howard West
Jean Dalton	Dorothy Holloway	Domineco Mirarchi	Ian West
Sheree Daugherty	Matt Irons	Dominic Mirarchi	Tiffany Willow
Michael David	Laura Jackson	Frank Moone	Carole Winslow
Eli DePaulis	Mike Jackson	Richard Nugent	David Yeany
Madeline Dunlap	Deborah Kalbfleisch	Karol Pasquinelli	Joseph Yoder

Lycoming Audubon Is Conservation Award Recipient

The Conservation Award is presented periodically to an individual or organization that has had a positive impact on bird conservation in Pennsylvania. This year Lycoming Audubon Society (LAS) was selected to receive the 2019 Conservation Award.

Since its formation in 1968 LAS has worked for the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment in Lycoming and Clinton counties. LAS has advocated for our natural resources with a clear and unambiguous voice on a number of issues. They lobbied their state senator in favor of requiring the gas industry to capture fugitive methane emissions, worked with the Game Commission to deny the siting of a wind turbine farm on Moosic Mountain, and resisted the commercial development of a parcel of land overlooking Rose Valley Lake.

Lycoming Audubon is actively involved with the local community in conserving bird habitats. They constructed the first Chimney Swift tower in north central PA to serve as a nesting and roosting spot for this declining species. They worked to reestablish approximately 15 acres of bird

friendly grasslands in the Lime Bluff Recreation Area. LAS established a mowing schedule to encourage successful breeding of grassland nesting species, and they installed signs around the park explaining these habitat improvements.

LAS offers the public guided bird walks at prime birding locations around Lycoming and Clinton Counties. They offer free conservation oriented programs at the public library. Each school year LAS teaches part of the curriculum for various school districts' 4th through 7th grade classes. They partner with Lycoming College, the Williamsport Water Authority, along with several local conservation agencies to offer outdoor education classes.

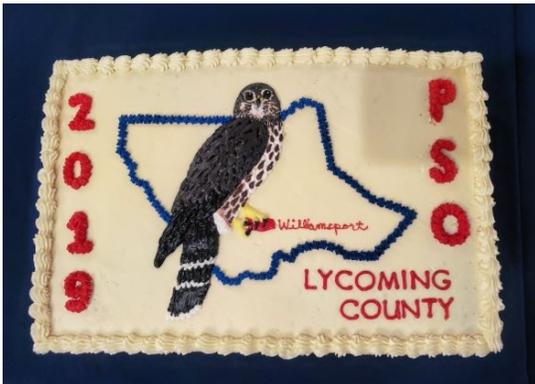
LAS is making a difference in the communities it serves. The members are focused and equipped to make a difference for birds in their region of the Commonwealth. For these reasons and many others they were recognized with the 2019 Conservation Award. Ted Loy, current president, Gary Metzger, and Dan Alters accepted the award on behalf of the members of LAS.

Birds Listed by 2019 PSO Meeting Attendees

Friday, September 13, through Sunday, September 15

Canada Goose	Northern Harrier	Tree Swallow	Swamp Sparrow
Mute Swan	Sharp-shinned Hawk	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Dark-eyed Junco
Wood Duck	Cooper's Hawk	Bank Swallow	Bobolink
Blue-winged Teal	Red-shouldered Hawk	Cliff Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Mallard	Broad-winged Hawk	Barn Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Green-winged Teal	Red-tailed Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Common Grackle
Common Merganser	Eastern Screech-Owl	Tufted Titmouse	Ovenbird
Wild Turkey	Belted Kingfisher	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Waterthrush
Pied-billed Grebe	Red-headed Woodpecker	White-breasted Nuthatch	Blue-winged Warbler
Rock Pigeon	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Brown Creeper	Black-and-white Warbler
Mourning Dove	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	House Wren	Tennessee Warbler
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Downy Woodpecker	Winter Wren	Nashville Warbler
Black-billed Cuckoo	Hairy Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	Common Yellowthroat
Common Nighthawk	Northern Flicker	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Hooded Warbler
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Pileated Woodpecker	Golden-crowned Kinglet	American Redstart
Chimney Swift	American Kestrel	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Cape May Warbler
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Merlin	Eastern Bluebird	Northern Parula
Killdeer	Peregrine Falcon	Veery	Magnolia Warbler
Least Sandpiper	Great Crested Flycatcher	Swainson's Thrush	Bay-breasted Warbler
Pectoral Sandpiper	Eastern Kingbird	Hermit Thrush	Blackburnian Warbler
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Wood Thrush	Yellow Warbler
Wilson's Snipe	Eastern Wood-Pewee	American Robin	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Spotted Sandpiper	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Brown Thrasher	Blackpoll Warbler
Solitary Sandpiper	Acadian Flycatcher	Gray Catbird	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Lesser Yellowlegs	Least Flycatcher	European Starling	Palm Warbler
Greater Yellowlegs	Eastern Phoebe	Cedar Waxwing	Pine Warbler
Common Loon	White-eyed Vireo	House Sparrow	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Blue-headed Vireo	House Finch	Black-throated Green Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Warbling Vireo	Purple Finch	Canada Warbler
Great Egret	Red-eyed Vireo	American Goldfinch	Wilson's Warbler
Green Heron	Blue Jay	Eastern Towhee	Scarlet Tanager
Black Vulture	American Crow	Chipping Sparrow	Northern Cardinal
Turkey Vulture	Fish Crow	Field Sparrow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Osprey	Common Raven	Song Sparrow	Indigo Bunting
Bald Eagle			

Total = 137 species listed



Special Thanks to Sherron Lynch!

Sincere thanks to Sherron Lynch who once again provided a beautiful, delicious cake for our annual PSO meeting at Williamsport! Sherron's cakes are *not* ordinary cakes. The cake is light and moist; the fillings are superb!!! The decorations are artistic.

Thanks, Sherron, for sharing your talent – and your cakes – with PSO!!!

Nick Bolgiano Receives Earl Poole Award

With deep gratitude for his many contributions to ornithology in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology awarded Nick Bolgiano the 2019 Earl Poole Award at our annual meeting in Williamsport.

One of the nominations submitted to the Awards Committee states, “For some 30 years, Nick Bolgiano has been a major contributor to ornithology in Pennsylvania and, in particular, he has mined citizen science data for trends involving a wide variety of species – raptors foremost, but also species as disparate as bobwhite and pheasants to chickadees and Carolina Wrens to blackbirds. As our Christmas Bird Count editor since 1998, and his having dug deeply into the CBC database, Nick is without a doubt the foremost expert on CBC data in Pennsylvania.”

Along with Greg Grove, Nick co-authored the book *Birds of Central Pennsylvania*, an excellent update of Merrill Wood’s 1958 work by the same name. Nick is a major contributor to Stone Mountain Hawkwatch in autumn and Tussey Mountain Hawkwatch in the spring, where he is their primary coordinator. His commitment to understanding the migration of birds of prey was recently recognized by another national organization. The Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) presented Nick its 2018 Appreciation Award “for his long-term citizen science contributions and dedication to raptor

research efforts.” During our 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas Project, Nick served as a Regional Coordinator and authored the species accounts for thirteen species. He has also served on the organization’s Board of Directors.

Open any issue of *Pennsylvania Birds*, scan the table of contents, and you are likely to see Nick’s name beside an article. He has been our Winter Season Editor since the 2015-16 season. Dig into one of his many feature articles in the journal, and besides learning more about the status and distribution of particular birds or groups of birds in the Commonwealth, you will receive a primer in statistical analysis. Nick’s conclusions are always based on a rigorous examination of the data which he is able to share in a way that makes it accessible to the layperson. Nick frequently speaks to bird clubs and to the general public about Pennsylvania’s birds. He has run three Breeding Bird Survey routes for the U.S. Geological Survey.

Nick Bolgiano has a passion for the avian life of our state and works to conserve and protect it through knowledge and understanding. For all these reasons Nick Bolgiano was an obvious choice to receive the 2019 Earl Poole Award.

Thank you, Nick, for all you do!

PSO Bird Quiz

How well do you know your Pennsylvania birds? Answers are on page 20.

1. Which bird has sometimes been called the “Ground Robin”?
2. Between our first and second Breeding Bird Atlas periods, which forest bird’s southern range limit retracted an average of 10 miles northward?
3. A shorebird we see only in migration was said in 1918 to be “a very rare breeder in the higher mountainous districts” of the state. Which species?
4. A severe storm in November 1889 brought a flock of 15 to 20 rare waterfowl into Erie Bay where a hunter said, “So fearless or stupid were the ducks that it was no trouble to shoot them.” Can you guess what those birds were?
5. Which woodpecker is identifiable by its uneven series of taps that may sound like Morse code?

Welcome, New Board Members!

At our PSO annual meeting on Friday evening, September 13, in Williamsport, three new members were elected to the Board of Directors. We welcome Eli DePaulis, Carole Winslow, and David Yeany to the board!

Welcome, Eli DePaulis!



Eli DePaulis is currently a sophomore in the wildlife technology program at Penn State DuBois. He has been a PSO member since 2017, but he has been involved with bird-related conservation projects since high school. The majority of his bird conservation

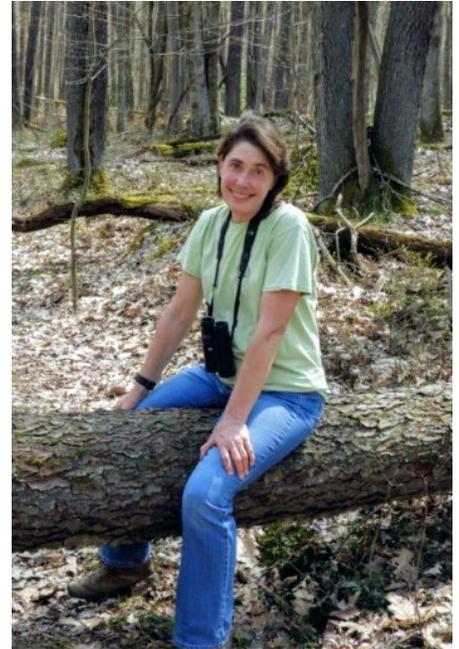
experience has been under the auspices of the Appalachian Audubon Society (AAS) which he joined in 2013. Through AAS, Eli has served in a variety of roles, including as the chairman of the youth committee, outreach coordinator, and conservation committee member. Currently his main project with AAS is an ecosystem restoration project at the Trout Run Nature Preserve.

During the past two summers, Eli has been employed on a variety of research and conservation projects through Penn State, including emergent invasive plant surveying, invasive plant suppression, and oak regeneration assessments. He is currently working on his own undergraduate research project at Penn State DuBois, examining the differences in soil moisture, soil temperature, and air temperature in native plant communities versus those dominated by the exotic shrub honeysuckle in a wetland near Penn State DuBois.

Eli writes, "I am looking forward to serving on the PSO Board of Directors and being a part of the conservation and outreach work conducted by PSO."

Welcome, Carole Winslow!

Carole Winslow began her love of birds and the outdoors when she was young, inspired by her father, who took the family on yearly vacations to the Allegheny National Forest, where he taught her not only birds but a love of nature as well. She became a true birder when she moved to her farm in rural north-western PA in 1994. She especially enjoys the challenge



of birding by ear and birding by habitat. As a member of Seneca Rocks Audubon in Clarion, she has participated in the CBC there since 2002, when she became an eBirder. For the past seven years, Carole has served as the eBird reviewer for Clarion County and Jefferson as well.

Since 2007 she has been the Clarion County compiler for *Pennsylvania Birds*, PSO's quarterly publication. During the Second Breeding Bird Atlas (2004-2009), Carole served as a regional coordinator. She loves to travel and has birded in the western states and the Adirondack Mountains of New York.

For the past 15 years she has run three Winter Raptor Survey routes in southern Clarion County. Carole also has been responsible for running two Breeding Bird Survey routes for the past seven years as well, covering territory in Butler, Armstrong, Clarion, and Jefferson counties. During the past five years she also assisted in point counts at two local State Game Lands with the PGC. For several years she participated in Golden-winged Warbler Surveys for Doug Gross in both Clarion and Armstrong.

Welcome, David Yeany!

David Yeany II is an Ornithologist and Conservation Planning Specialist in the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC). David joined WPC in 2011 and has 15 years of professional experience in conservation biology, conducting bird studies throughout Maryland and Pennsylvania. His current work includes avian ecology and monitoring, wildlife-habitat relationship studies, mapping important habitats for rare species, spatial analysis in GIS, and conservation projects for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), particularly birds. Some of his projects included shale gas impact assessments on forest interior birds, bird habitat relationships in the PA Wilds region, statewide high elevation peatland bird surveys and monitoring, statewide grassland bird SGCN surveys, co-founding the Allegheny Bird Conservation Alliance, and collaborating on tracking studies of wintering Evening Grosbeaks and breeding Swainson's Thrushes using nanotag technology and the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. David represents the Natural Heritage Program on the Pennsylvania Biological Survey (PABS) Ornithological Technical Committee. He also has been an active member of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology since 2012, helping to lead several PSO field trips and serving on the PSO Field Trip and



Conservation Committees. Similarly he regularly leads field trips for the Pittsburgh-based Three Rivers Birding Club and participates in Christmas Bird Counts each year.

Prior to joining WPC, David was the Important Bird Areas Coordinator for Audubon Maryland-DC, where he helped identify critical bird habitats, developed conservation strategies for IBAs, and conducted monitoring for at-risk bird

populations. In Maryland, his projects included extensive marsh bird surveys in coastal areas of the Chesapeake Bay and Delmarva Peninsula, wintering waterfowl research, forest restoration bird monitoring, and surveys of targeted rare bird species. He has past experience working in the Wildlife Division at Fort Indiantown Gap National Guard Training Center in Annville, PA, and for the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, District 8 (Clarion), conducting wildlife and habitat inventory and research.

David holds a Master's of Science degree in Applied Ecology and Conservation Biology from Frostburg State University and Bachelor's of Science in Biology from Messiah College. David grew up in Forest County and currently lives with his wife Colleen and young son Drake in Allegheny County.

2020 PSO Annual Meeting September 18-20, 2020 Lancaster County

Next year's annual meeting will be held September 18-20 in Lancaster County. The Lancaster Bird Club is working with our group to help with the planning of our events. Mark your calendars now and save the dates.

Lancaster County is No. 1 in eBird for the number of species reported and No. 5 for the number of checklists

submitted. Current totals are 264 species and 7,911 checklists to date in 2019. All-time Lancaster lists to date have included 345 species and 58,526 checklists. This county has a lot to offer birders!

This is certain to be a great meeting. Details will follow in the next issues of this newsletter.

PSO Annual Meeting Minutes

Holiday Inn Express
Williamsport, PA
September 13, 2019

The annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology was called to order by President Mike Fialkovich at 7:05 p.m. Mike mentioned that this is the 30th annual meeting and the first in Lycoming County.

Directors and Officers

The following directors and officers were nominated:

Current director to be re-elected: Chad Kauffman

New directors nominated:

Eli DePaulis – Harrisburg
Carole Winslow – Clarion
David Yeany – Pittsburgh

Retiring Director: Andy McGann

Officers: President – Evan Mann
Vice President – Deb Grove
Secretary – Roger Higbee
Treasurer – Frank Haas

Doug Gross made a motion to approve the nominated directors and officers. Mark McConaughy seconded the motion. All the above officers and directors were approved by a vote of the majority of the members present.

Mike then introduced the Board of Directors and officers to the membership.

Evan Mann gave the treasurer's report for Frank Haas. He reported a gain of \$5,825.57 during the fiscal year which ended April 30, 2019, and ended with a balance of \$34,691.57. Membership has increased from 415 to 468 members. He also explained that 60% of our income is from dues, 25% annual meeting, and 6% donations. Our largest expenses are the Journal, the Annual Meeting, and the Newsletter (58%, 19%, and 7.5% respectively). He noted that PSO supports three different student scholarships and grants totaling \$1,927.63 and also mentioned that we donated \$500 to the Delaware Birdathon for the purchase of critical habitat for migrating Red Knots. Deb Grove next gave an overview of the \$500 Student Research Grant which was given to Victoria Gabrielle Roper.

The vendors and exhibitors were mentioned. Chad Kauffman gave an overview of the field trips and it was announced that field trip participants should have received directions and meeting times from the field trip leaders. He also explained the new system of keeping track of birds seen during the meeting and field trips using eBird.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. The Bird Quiz followed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger V. Higbee, Secretary

Winter Finches Will Not Make Us Happy in PA this Year

According to Ron Pittaway, the abundant spruce cone crops in the boreal forest in Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland will keep birds in the north this year. Most conifers (except pines), birches, and other seed crops are good to excellent in much of northeastern Canada.

It appears that we'll have to head north to find the winter finches this year. Maybe a winter trip to Algonquin?



Evening Grosbeak

Youth Scholarship Award Winners

This year PSO awarded two very deserving youths with scholarships to our annual meeting. It was great meeting these young men and birding with them. If you know a young person who would benefit from attendance at our next annual meeting, please consider nominating him or her next year.

Dominic Mirarchi

Dominic Mirarchi of Camp Hill, PA, has been co-leading many bird walks at the DiFillippo Nature Preserve in Cumberland County where he loves to help less experienced birders see birds and learn their songs. Dominic's early interest in dinosaurs evolved into a love of birds. His mother's response was to purchase him folding ID guides. His reading, learning, field experience, and passion for avian life have not ceased. Dominic intends to major in animal science or biology in college. His desire to share with others has led to his membership and leadership in a number of organizations: Appalachian Audubon Society (AAS), AAS Young Birders Society, Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania, and Trinity High School Birding, Conservation, and Outing Club. Dominic Mirarchi was a perfect candidate to join us in Williamsport. He is a young person with the promise of making a difference for birdlife in Pennsylvania. He was nominated by member Jane Earle.

Ty Sharrow

Ty Sharrow of Lehigh, PA, is currently an undergraduate student studying biology at Keystone College in La Plume, PA. He was nominated for a Youth Scholarship by his advisor at that institution, Dr. Jerry Skinner, Professor of Biology, retired. Upon their meeting, it was apparent that Ty was an avid neophyte birder. After a course in bird banding, he had developed enough skills that he landed a volunteer internship the next summer helping to monitor a MAPS station. The following summer he was hired to help with a grassland bird survey in Illinois. Ty spotted and photographed his first Rough-legged Hawk while participating in a Winter Raptor Survey. Ty reports that his experience at our annual meeting was encouraging and positive. He especially enjoyed meeting and spending time with the students from Penn State DuBois.

2019 Student Research Grant Awarded to Victoria Roper

This year was the first year that PSO awarded a student research grant. This award is designed to provide support to either a graduate or undergraduate student in pursuit of a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree. The award is conducted in support of a thesis or dissertation. Students submit a research proposal that is reviewed by a PSO committee for scientific merit and whether the work will make a meaningful contribution to the understanding of Pennsylvania avifauna. If selected, the student must travel to the PSO Annual Meeting to give a talk about his or her work and/or submit an article to the *Pennsylvania Birds* journal, not more than two years after the award of the grant, describing the study and findings to the PSO membership. The recipient will also be awarded a one-year membership in the PSO.

This year's recipient, Victoria Gabrielle Roper who is attending Bloomsburg University, was awarded \$500 for her research entitled "Differences in the Reproduction, Body Condition, and Diet of Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) in Artificial Versus Natural Wetlands." Victoria

is the student of Dr. Lauri Green in the Department of Biology.

Victoria defined her objective as follows: "My broad goal is to investigate the differences between artificial and natural wetland habitat on aerial insectivore reproduction and diet through their main prey, aerial insects. I will specifically examine insect abundances and biomass response to wetland vegetation composition and potential impacts on Tree Swallow productivity and nestlings' body condition. Using stable 4 isotopes, I will evaluate the diet and niche width of Tree Swallows across areas that vary in respect to wetland vegetation composition."

Victoria was unable to attend the meeting but sent an update to members. She remarked that she had a successful summer's field work. Out of 99 nest boxes, she had 70% occupancy rates at two wetlands and 19% at the other. She had lots of chicks which she banded and did blood draws for her isotope analysis.

Meeting Photos by Mike Fialkovich



The afternoon began with Doug Gross's program, "The State of Boreal Birds in PA."



Dan Brauning followed with "Local and Long Distance Movements of Lesser Black-backed Gulls Wintering in Bucks County."



Vern Gauthier presents Ty Sharrow with one of two Youth Scholarship Awards.



Vern Gauthier awards Dominic Mirarchi as one of two Youth Scholarship Award winners.



Evan Mann had the privilege of presenting Nick Bolgiano with the 2019 Earl Poole Award.



The evening culminated with an excellent presentation by Dr. David Toews.

Hawk Mountain Field Trip Scheduled

PSO is returning to Hawk Mountain's hawkwatch for the weekend of November 2-3 with the hope of finding the peak of the Golden Eagle migration as well as spotting the other larger raptors. Bring something comfy to sit on, snacks and drinks for the day, and come to enjoy watching the skies with us.

You are welcome to head out to the watch anytime you wish, but if you want to meet our group at the Visitor Center, be there before 8:00 a.m. If you aren't a member of Hawk Mountain, fees will need to be paid at the Visitor Center each day to walk to the lookouts. Become a member, and you can get in for free while different membership levels allow you to bring others. For more information, please visit their website: <http://www.hawkmountain.org/>.

Some attendees are staying at local hotels on Friday and Saturday. If you would like more information, contact me directly (chadkauffman@earthlink.net).

From the Visitor Center to the North Lookout it is a one-mile hike. We need to allow at least 30 minutes, because

there is unstable ground, and it's a long, uphill hike. All participants should be aware that this hike involves walking on and over rocks and climbing steep steps. It won't be a race, so if it takes longer for some to walk, that is fine. Some in the group can go ahead while others arrive later. As with all hawkwatches, you can come and go at anytime.

The official count at that time of the year begins around 7:30 a.m. or possibly a little earlier. But, action for raptors typically doesn't start until later. The Visitor Center opens at 8 a.m., so we will meet there when it opens, give participants time to pay or to use the restrooms, etc. We will then start our trek. Arriving earlier ensures better seating opportunities on the rocks, as you get first pick. Even in early November, it gets crowded, especially if there are good northwest winds.

eBirders should note that the Visitor Center and the South Lookout are in Berks County while the North Lookout and the Acopian Center are in Schuylkill.

Chad Kauffman

Tips for Hawkwatch Participants

- * Stadium cushions or folded blankets are a must on those rocks, especially late in the season when the rocks will not only be hard but cold as well.
- * Sunscreen is also a must. The rocks reflect the light, so it is just like being on open water. Sunglasses are recommended, too.
- * Don't forget to bring water and snacks. It's a long way back to your vehicle!
- * Foot and hand warmers are another good idea; sitting in one spot for hours is hard on the body; and it's hard to keep the blood flowing, so these help a lot!
- * And last of all, pack your heavy outerwear; don't wear it on the hike up the mountain as you will get hot and sweaty by the time you get to the lookout. If you soak all your layers, you will be miserable because you will ultimately cool off. Once you are damp, it's hard to get warm again.. Skim down as much as possible, and bring layers in your day pack to put on once you arrive at the top. Some people even switch shirts once they get up to the lookout since they sweat through their shirts.



What You Can Do on the PSO Website

pabirds.org

Frank Haas - pso@pabirds.org

The PSO website has a bunch of resources for birders in Pennsylvania. This is the second in a series of articles on the features of the website.

Today's topic is Publications. The PSO publishes two publications – “The PSO Pileated” (our newsletter) and *Pennsylvania Birds* (our journal). Digital versions of both of these can be found on the website.

The PSO Pileated

The newsletter is published four times per year. You can receive a printed copy and/or digital version (you can choose which option in your account profile on the site or when you join or renew).

The latest issue of *The PSO Pileated* can be found on the top menu of the site. Just click on the “Latest Newsletter” tab. This will open the latest newsletter in Adobe Acrobat (or other compatible software on your computer). You can read it, print it, copy it, etc.

For previous newsletters, click on the “Publications” tab and then “Newsletter.” This will bring up a list of newsletters with the most recent at the top. Clicking on one will bring it up with the same software as above.

The online newsletters are in color! You do not need to be a member to access the newsletters.

Pennsylvania Birds

Pennsylvania Birds is published four times a year. As with the newsletter, you can choose to receive a printed copy and/or a digital version (you can choose which option in your account profile on the site or when you join or renew).

Unlike the newsletter, the last two years' issues of the digital version are only available to current members. Older issues are available to anyone.

The latest issue is available on the top menu. For non-members, the Cover, Table of Contents, Editorial, and a sample article can be seen. For members, the whole issue is available once you log in. As with the newsletter, it is downloaded using Adobe Acrobat or similar software. You can read it, copy it, or print it.

Older issues can be accessed under Publications/Pennsylvania Birds/Back Issues. If you are not logged in, it will list all of the issues older than two years. If you are logged in, all of the issues will be displayed. The issues are listed with the newest on top. It also shows the date of publication and the size of the file (in case you have a slow connection).

If you are looking for something in particular, you can use the indexes. Click on Publications/Pennsylvania Birds/Index. There are nine indexes – Author, Title, Annual Reports, Site Guides, Listing Articles, Personality Profiles, Reviews, General, and Species.

Each index is listed alphabetically and lists the Article Title, the Issue, and page number. By clicking on the Issue, the issue is opened and then you can page to the article. As with the above online copies, you can read, copy, or print it.

☞ Author – This lists all articles by Author, alphabetically by last name.

☞ Title – This lists all articles by Title, alphabetically.

☞ Annual Reports – Articles published annually such as Christmas Bird Counts, Winter Raptor Surveys, Raptor Migration reports, etc., alphabetically

☞ Site Guides – Site Guide articles, alphabetically

☞ Listing Articles – Articles about Big Days, Annual Bird Lists Report, etc.

☞ Personality Profiles – Self explanatory

☞ Reviews – Reviews of books, etc.

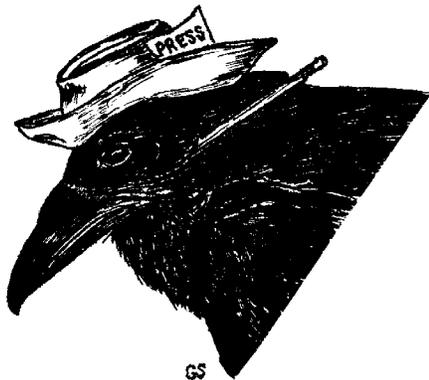
☞ General – Articles that don't fit into any other category.

☞ Species – Articles about a specific species, listed alphabetically by species. This is NOT a listing of every reference to a species in the entire journal. You will not find mentions of each species in the County Reports, etc. This is only for articles focusing on one species. Articles about multiple species are in the General Index.

(continued on page 18)

The Raven Reporter

Tales of Discovery about Pennsylvania Birds



New Study Published: North America Birds Have Declined by 30% since 1970

In a landmark scientific study, a team of ornithologists have utilized a set of bird population monitoring project data sets to determine the extent of bird declines since we have been seriously counting birds in a systematic way. The results are not surprising but stunningly depressing. One of the most depressing aspects of the study is how widespread and deep the bird population declines truly are. Even most common species are in decline. It has been the mantra of conservation that we want to “keep common birds common,” but we have failed to even accomplish that. Among the species used as examples of the decline are such familiar species as Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Baltimore Oriole, Barn Swallow, Evening Grosbeak, and Wood Thrush.

All major habitat groups are in decline except wetland birds. I would add a caveat to this summary that since the survey only includes trends from 1970, it may not include declines in wetland birds that occurred before wetland protections and proactive waterfowl conservation went into effect. Pennsylvania’s wetland birds certainly have not enjoyed the increases in habitat and populations found elsewhere on the continent. The greatest declines have been in grassland birds which have suffered from direct conflict from human use of that arable habitat. Among the geographic groups in steepest decline are the birds of the boreal forests and eastern forests that migrate to South and Central America. Those are our birds!

Among the many things for our group to note is the heavy use of volunteer bird data in this study. The sources of bird data include the North American Breeding Bird Survey, Audubon Christmas Bird Counts, shorebird migration surveys, and breeding waterfowl surveys. Except for the waterfowl surveys primarily conducted by government employees, the vast bulk of the data are

collected and contributed by volunteers. Even the Partners in Flight population database is mostly populated by volunteer data. So, these results and the ability of experts to summarize them are due to your own efforts. The use of an independently collected data set, the weather station (NEXRAD) measure of nocturnal passage of migrating birds, make the survey-based trend estimates more credible.

A take-away from this study is the critical contributions of volunteers to bird monitoring. Without them, important studies like this one are impossible. A question we should be addressing is what are the next steps we can take to stem the tide of the declines and also how we can contribute meaningful monitoring efforts to find the best means to aid recovery of some species. The bird conservation groups have already published some suggestions for birders and common citizens to help. But, there are also others that are outlined in wildlife planning documents such as the State Wildlife Action Plan. Finding population clusters of species that management could affect in a positive way would be one approach. Many of these population clusters or hotspots (think Golden-winged Warblers, Cerulean Warblers, Wood Thrushes, Canada Warblers) are off-road and demand focused efforts. Then, targeting those areas for management activity, whether on public or private lands, should be the next step with an integrated approach that involves the volunteers. Nightbirds are still poorly monitored for trends, so management possibilities are not clearly defined. We need to address this gap in coverage and potential management. You can manage for whip-poor-wills and saw-whets if you know where they are. A continuing challenge is to keep some optimism and contribute what we can to stem the tide and reverse some negative trends. After all, most people love wildlife and the forests, meadows, and fields that support them.

Why Not a Wildlife Conservation Stamp?

With the increased concern for bird conservation, how can birders help? There are many tangible ways for ordinary citizens to contribute to conservation. The examples are numerous, including providing habitat on your property by reducing lawn size and planting native species, decreasing bird mortality from glass and feral cats, avoiding pesticides, drinking bird-friendly coffee and other agricultural products, decreasing use of plastics, and being an ambassador for birds and their habitats.

I often hear the claim that hunters are the only ones who contribute to wildlife because they provide the major

funding to state and federal wildlife agencies through their hunting license fees and excise taxes paid on guns and ammunition. Hunters certainly pay their fair share of the cost for conservation, but general taxpayers also support wildlife conservation by funding National Forests, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, State Parks and Forests, and other public lands with wildlife habitat. And, protections for air and water by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and PA Department of Environmental Protection and the many programs supporting wildlife habitat provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture are supported by general taxpayer monies. Most wildlife in our state live on private lands, but rarely are the private landowners given their due credit for providing that habitat and allowing use of it by consumptive and nonconsumptive wildlife enthusiasts. Birders contributed indirectly to bird management and conservation by providing their bird data which is worth millions of dollars each year in indirect services to agencies. The Atlas and BBS route data alone are worth tons. And eBird is an amazing dataset that can be used for many purposes by wildlife agencies that know how to use geographically based bird data.

Yet, as important and critical as these contributions by non-consumptive users go, they do not resonate as loudly as direct funding of wildlife agencies. We don't pay the wages and supplies of the game wardens and land management on game lands directly. How can birders do that? An option is to purchase a hunting license. Some birders do this every year. This may be an option for many people, but I will wager that most birders do not want to be identified as a hunter but would rather be recognized as a non-consumptive wildlife watcher and conservationist with a distinctive identity. Birders have their own identity. Why confuse them with another group despite the overlapping interests? Some efforts have been made by agencies to obtain some financial support from non-consumptive wildlife enthusiasts but without the success of the mandatory hunting license. One example is the PA Game Commission's "Working Together for Wildlife" patches and paintings. I do not think that this is particularly large or steady funding for wildlife diversity projects in the agency. For one, the marketing is limited to the *Pennsylvania Game News*, some handouts distributed at the headquarters and outdoor shows, and the agency website. None of these are serious or effective efforts to reach out to birders and wildlife watchers who might support wildlife diversity. Few except hunters read the *Game News*. After all it is called "Game" news – not using the term "wildlife" which would have much wider appeal. If wildlife agencies really want to reach out to other stakeholders, they need to find more creative and

inclusive ways to reach the many thousands of people who enjoy wildlife in a non-consumptive way. And, birders are only one part of the public who would be interested. Hunters comprise less than 10% of the public. What about the other 90%?!? Let's reach out to them!

A possible venue for funding wildlife agencies would be a "wildlife conservation stamp" that would mirror the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, better known as "the Duck Stamp." More can be found about the program at: <https://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp/buy-duck-stamp.php>. Birders and other wetland enthusiasts can buy duck stamps through the American Birding Association. A similar program would allow Pennsylvania birders, wildlife watchers, conservationists, and hikers of game lands to support the agency's wildlife habitat and diversity programs. After all, the so-called non-game species comprise 86% of the birds and mammals for which the PGC has responsibility (the hunted species only account for about 14%). Stamps that feature high conservation priority and charismatic wildlife would be winners. (Please ditch the chipmunks and woodchucks as art objects on a conservation stamp!)

Why not stamps featuring Golden-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Wood Thrush, American Bittern, Peregrine Falcon, Scarlet Tanager, or your favorite bat? Funding levels similar to the annual hunting license or duck stamp would parallel the mandatory "user fee" paid by hunters and trappers each year in the form of a hunting license. With an annual stamp, there will be demand for the newest design as there is for the beautifully rendered "Duck Stamp" and the "Junior Duck Stamp." Art contests and friendly public debate would only increase interest. Not only would stamps provide additional monies needed for the many declining species, but they also will bring the non-consumptive wildlife watchers in as direct supporters of needed programs. They would feel ownership and feel more involved and interested in the agency's many programs. Any voluntary funding program has its challenges, but a wildlife conservation stamp would be much more appealing than the programs now in effect.

Good birding!

Doug Gross, Birding Volunteer
Dagross144@verizon.net



Ornithological Literature Notes

Plumage, song, and sometimes behavior are the primary factors in mate choice and, thus, preserving a bird's status as a distinct species.

But what about odor? Its role in seabirds' recognition of their own species, and even of their individual mates and young, are well studied. Passerines have not had such extensive research, and a recent study in Pennsylvania offers evidence of a significant role for odor in preserving the separate species status of Carolina and Black-capped Chickadees in their hybrid zone.

Alex Van Huynh and Amber M. Rice at Lehigh University demonstrate experimentally how olfactory preferences contribute to reproductive isolation between these two very similar species. The authors tested the possible role among 41 Black-capped and 40 Carolinas captured at Nockamixon State Park, DeSales University, Lehigh University, Jacobsburg State Park, and Bangor. They reported the results in 2019 in the journal *Ecology and Evolution*.

Using gas chromatography and mass spectrometry, they first found significant differences in uropygial gland oil chemistry between the two species. Most notably, the chickadees' behavior showed that the birds significantly preferred odor cues within their own species, suggesting that the different odors promote reproductive isolation between the two.



Black-capped Chickadee

Why, then, would some chickadees in the hybrid zone still interbreed with the opposite species? Perhaps these birds' ability to detect odors is "compromised," a condition that has been found in insects and mice.

Nevertheless, Amber Rice emphasized in a Lehigh University news release, "The sense of smell has been very understudied in birds, particularly songbirds, because they frequently have such impressive plumage and song

variation. Some other recent work has documented that species of songbirds can smell and prefer their species' odors, but this is the first example in currently hybridizing species that we know of."

Alex Van Huynh adds, "Our results show that not only can odor cues be used by songbirds, potentially as a mate choice cue, but that they can have ecological and evolutionary consequences for songbird species."

Charles Darwin, who so forcefully emphasized a role for males' plumage in mate attraction, would now have something new to consider—something technically impossible for him to know in his scientific era. Let's wonder what he might have considered a role for odor if he had been aware of it.

Paul Hess
Natrona Heights, PA
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What You Can Do on the PSO Website *(continued from page 15)*

If you are looking for records of a particular species (not an article), you have two options. If it is a rare species, go to *Birding/Birds of PA*, select the species and then click on Notable Records. All of the records for that species that have occurred in the Birds of Note section since 1992 are listed (and older records for real rarities).

For more common species, you would have to bring up each issue and search for the species name using the search feature in Acrobat, etc.

As you can see, this is a rich resource for anyone interested in the birds of Pennsylvania.

Coming up next: Site Guide

PS: Don't just wait for the next article in this series, go to the website and explore!

Conservation Chat Room

Conservation News You Can Use



Help Needed

The PSO Board of Directors would like to reach out to other like-minded groups to work together on avian projects. We know that collaboration produces many far-reaching benefits. One group that could use our help is Juniata Valley Audubon

Society's committee called Partners in Neotropical Bird Conservation (PiNBC). PiNBC links birders and scientists in promoting bird conservation both in the U.S. and in Central and South America. It brings together a diverse and widespread group of people who work together on bird conservation projects and issues. You can read about our projects at pinbc.org. Contact Laura Jackson at jacksonlaura73@gmail.com if you'd like to help develop and work on new projects yet to be determined.

Did you plant any native trees or shrubs in 2019?

First the reminder. Don't forget that fall is a wonderful time to plant native trees and shrubs. Woody plants continue to develop root structure even when photosynthesis stops; this gives them a good start for that burst of spring growth.

Our native oak trees not only produce acorns valued by many birds but also feed many caterpillars that birds feed to their young. White oak is perhaps the best species since it is low in tannic acid, but other oaks are also important additions to your yard. If you want to attract robins, catbirds, Cedar Waxwings, or Yellow-rumped Warblers, plant native crabapples, winterberry holly, red mulberry, white-flowering dogwood, and eastern red cedar. Winterberry holly also provides lots of shrubby cover during nesting season.



This American Robin, as well as dozens of Cedar Waxwings, feasted on winterberry holly fruit in my backyard last October. Earlier that summer, a Gray Catbird nested in this colorful native shrub.

Now for the question: Did you plant any native trees or shrubs? In the March 2019 "PSO Pileated," I asked readers to let me know, but so far only one person has responded: Twenty-one seedlings were purchased and planted last April. Please share your efforts by emailing Laura Jackson at jacksonlaura73@gmail.com. Want more birds? Plant more native trees and shrubs.

Intro to the Conservation Opportunity Area Tool

The Conservation Opportunity Tool is a free web-based map and data program that will help you learn more about the needs of declining species in Pennsylvania – these species are also referred to as "Species of Greatest Conservation Need." The tool is designed to guide conservation planners and supportive actions, but you can also use it to learn more about an area and its wildlife. The tool allows you to search by species or to find out what species are present in a certain area. It's not just birds – mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates are included.

While the tool is free, you must register, since reports are sent to your email. The tool is available at

<https://wildlifeactionmap.pa.gov>.

It's easy to use and draws from an extensive database of Wildlife Action Plan species – the most comprehensive ever compiled in Pennsylvania. Just remember that many species are not on the list, since they are not considered as "Greatest Conservation Need Species."

The Conservation Opportunity Area Tool does not replace the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) that developers

must use for environmental project reviews with state agencies.

I recently used the tool to study an area of Evitt's Mountain in Bedford County, Pennsylvania, that is being considered for an industrial wind project. I drew a polygon along the top of the mountain where the turbines would be built. The tool then generated a report to show what watersheds and species would be impacted. I was

surprised to learn that eight species of greatest conservation need would be potentially affected by this proposed project. Five of those species were birds that were identified, as well as one mammal, but the other two species are so sensitive that they were not named. I hope you will use this interactive program that puts the 2015-2025 Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan close at hand.

Laura Jackson, jacksonlaura73@gmail.com
Conservation Chair
Bedford County

Answers to Bird Quiz

page 8

1. Towhee
2. Brown Creeper
3. Solitary Sandpiper
4. King Eider
5. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

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:

PSO
2469 Hammertown Road
Narvon, PA 17555-9730

Membership Categories

Membership Categories:

Individual	\$ 30.00	Student	\$ 25.00
Family	\$ 35.00	Electronic Student	\$ 10.00
Sustaining	\$ 45.00		

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