

The

PSO Pileated



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The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

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From the President's Desk...

"Healing is impossible in loneliness; it is the opposite of loneliness. Conviviality is healing. To be healed we must come with all the other creatures to the feast of Creation."

- Wendell Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays*



Evan Mann and Friend

COVID stress syndrome, election anxiety, and social isolation are examples of 2020 additions to our lexicon. Take heart! The company of birds and birders can be a healthy antidote for what ails us. Recognize that we are members of a very special community of friends who share a passion for a particular set of Wendell's "other creatures" who are also familiar friends to each of us.

The "friendship" between bird and birder is a curious cross-species one. Our relationship with the birds we encounter is enriched by understanding their life stories, recognizing them by sight and voice, and appreciating their resilience and stamina. We can know them in this way on a species level. We cannot know the circumstances of an individual bird's life perched before us. For

me that mystery enriches the moments I spend with birds. For their part, our avian friends are not quite ready to embrace us as bosom buddies. Ah, but we humans have our ways. Binoculars, spotting scopes, and long lens cameras bridge the gap. Is peering into a viewfinder and through a Tamron SP 150-600mm F/5-6.3 at a Maggie perched in a distant tree an example of a Zoom meeting?

Besides optics, I like to use a blind as a low tech way to get close to birds. Hide within a bubble of camouflage fabric where a pair of Veeries have been gathering food for nestlings and watch their frenetic activity. Remember how dependent your own children were in those first months of life? The siskin-like sound of a zipper closing behind me may seem like an example of extreme social isolation. The opposite is true. With a three-legged stool and binoculars I am ready for some serious camaraderie. Untether one of the fabric windows and friends await.

The rich friendships that are shared among birders are also a source of great healing. Over the years my wife and I have enjoyed attending birding festivals. So there was no question but that we would be spending weekends in Oaks, PA, for the American Birding Expos in 2017 and 2018. At the bustling hotel breakfast bar one morning all the tables were occupied. We spotted one with just a single person so we walked over. As I asked if we could use the free seats, I recognized that I was addressing someone whose books are in my birding library. The path of the ensuing conversation went something like this: introductions, the workshops, the bird walks, birds, birding, conservation, climate change, politics, health,

aging, children, parents, ethnic heritage, hopes for the future. Forty-five minutes later the three of us realized that the room was empty and we would need to hurry to not be late for the day's obligations. I've had similar experiences before and since. I've had them with many of you! There is another author whose words grace my home library. J. Drew Lanham perfectly describes the experience Julia and I had over that breakfast. He characterizes conversations with new birding acquaintances as "reunions with strangers who've always been friends."

I wish each of you, my "lifelong" PSO friends, a happy and healthy holiday season. May 2021 be the year of a vaccine and a time when we can replace virtual greetings with hearty handshakes, laughter, and shared birding adventures. In the meantime, say hello for me to your friends at the bird feeders tomorrow morning.

Evan Mann, President
Susquehanna County

2020-21 Counts & Surveys

Special thanks to Chad Kauffman for organizing our trips and events. If you have any questions, please contact Chad at chadkauffman@earthlink.net. More trips may be added later or at the last minute. We will 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 when COVID-19 allows. Please contact any PSO board member for information.

December 14 - January 5 – Christmas Bird Counts.

January 12 - February 8 – Winter Raptor Surveys. Contact Greg Grove (gw2@psu.edu) for more information.

February 14-17 – Great Backyard Bird Count. Our state's birders have been actively participating in this count. It's a good time to encourage others to start birding and using eBird.

Certificates of Appreciation Awarded

Since 2007, PSO has issued certificates of appreciation to individuals and organizations who have graciously allowed access to their properties to view rare or unusual birds. The total number issued is now 170. The full list can be found on the PSO's website. Hummingbirds were in the spotlight this time with Certificates of Appreciation recently awarded to:

Don Nixon, Clearfield County, for Rufous Hummingbird
Jady and Bill Conroy, York County, for Calliope Hummingbird

Bird Quiz

How well do you know your Pennsylvania vireos?

1. Which of our state's six species would you most likely hear singing from low in the vegetation's understory?
2. Which species was formerly named the Solitary Vireo?
3. Which species' song is most likely to be confused with our Red-eyed Vireo's song?
4. Which two are the most widespread breeding vireo species in North America?
5. One of our species is scientifically named *griseus* meaning "gray." Which one? You may be surprised.

(Answers on page 20)

The Snowy Owl Conundrum

By Joe Gyekis

If a birder sees a Snowy Owl alone in the fields, will anyone ever know? Some birders will take that secret and sit on it until spring. Others will tell the world. I personally can identify with either approach.

A couple of years ago, I was looking for field birds, especially hoping for some longspurs. I braced myself against the cold wind and slowly scanned a field with my binoculars from the farthest edge and across in front of me. Suddenly, right in the foreground, I was staring straight into a huge pair of yellow eyes on a big white owl. I joyfully alerted the local birding community and celebrated by the side of the road and online with many friends who got to see it too. All was hunky-dory until a few days later when I heard a rumor that someone carrying a large camera walked into the farmer's field and approached the owl causing it to fly off, instead of respectfully watching from a distance and letting it sleep like everyone else had done the past few days. The American Birding Association's code of ethics states that we should never enter private property without the owner's permission and we should avoid stressing birds.

Here in central Pennsylvania the problems with owls being disturbed are not as severe as elsewhere. On beaches near cities, some birds have been chased all day long without any time to sleep. Preventing this kind of behavior is difficult, but one thing that many birding groups online have done is asking people to not post pictures and locations of Snowy Owls during the winter to avoid contributing to any of the frenzied quests for even more perfect pictures. After a few discussions with members of the birding community, we're also going to keep the Snowy Owl pictures off the PA Birders and PSO social media accounts.

We know that this decision is more symbolic than effective for reducing the mistreatment of owls. Most people who pay attention to the rules on our Facebook groups are not those who would act inconsiderately toward the birds or the local community in search of the sharpest photo. We also know that there is some cost to this decision--the extraordinary beauty of the Snowy Owl is one of the finest images that our social media feeds could possibly contain, and the awe at the beauty of nature is something that could have positive impacts. Wildlife can easily be "out of sight, out of mind." If our children grow up in a world where nobody talks about Snowy Owls, they won't care as much about the problem of their population decline. The recent work, suggesting that

Snowy Owls are not breeding all across the tundra but rather are nomadic, semi-colonial nesters, indicates that their population is vastly lower than previously thought. The North American population was estimated in 2016 to have declined by more than half since 1970. The International Union for Conservation of Nature now lists the Snowy Owl as vulnerable to extinction across its global range because if a similar number of individuals are lost by 2060, they would go extinct. Just as it's important to make sure that the few Snowy Owls wintering in the fields and marshes of Pennsylvania get their beauty sleep, we also need to inspire our communities and our young people to care about the whole population of these owls. Thus, I would not ask people to go silent and maintain absolute secrecy, but rather raise our voices in different ways.

If we find Snowy Owls this winter, let's talk to our friends individually about them rather than on bulk social media posts. Instead of trying to be popular in front of hundreds of people, let's try to have meaningful conversations with people we know in our communities. Let's share our excitement about seeing the owls along with respectful concern for their well-being. Let's make sure that we encourage some young people to get out and enjoy the bird. And if some photographers find out about it and get excited about close-ups, let's befriend them and encourage them to think about the owl's perspective without any hostility. The photographer who bumped "my" Snowy Owl learned from the experience and is a good person, more knowledgeable now than before. When people inevitably do end up sharing owl pictures all over the internet, just jump in there and use that as a platform to educate people about owl conservation. Let's teach them about how many owls die from eating mice that are sick from eating rodent poisons and why it's important to be careful with overuse of those products. Let's teach them about the big changes in the tundra habitat that may be the reason why there are half as many Snowy Owls now as in the 1970s. And if people are just plain enjoying it, let's enjoy it too! The more people experience, the more likely they are to care about some of the major conservation efforts that may need to be taken in the coming generation if the population trends keep going down.



We Bird, eBird

Using eBird for Christmas Bird Counts

eBird has taken off, as more and more birders use it to keep track of their personal records and has become an increasingly valuable tool in the collection of avian data across the world. There are things birders should know and can do while using eBird to make the data more valuable to themselves and to others. Each issue we will look at some of the things that make eBird better for all. This month; Using eBird for Christmas Bird Counts.

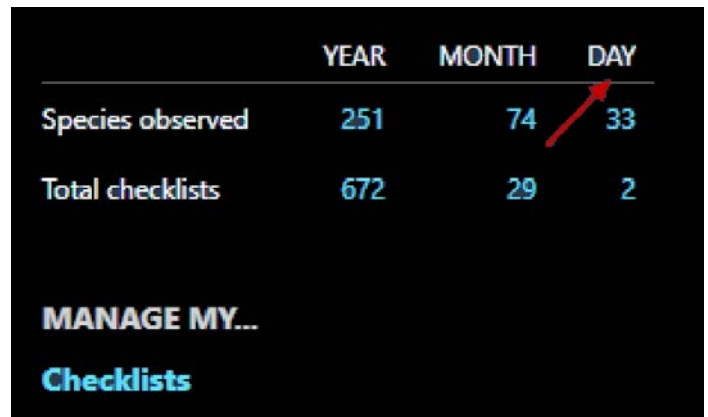
eBirding on the CBC

While doing your CBC, [eBird Mobile](#) makes it easy to keep your tallies through the day. Here are our tips for making your CBC eBirding as helpful as possible.

- **Only submit lists that include birds observed by your CBC group;** do not group lists from other birding parties together.
- Keep multiple lists throughout the day, ideally one for each stop, or perhaps one for each road.
- **Include only one-way distance in your traveling counts;** both CBC and eBird measure distance as one-way distance.

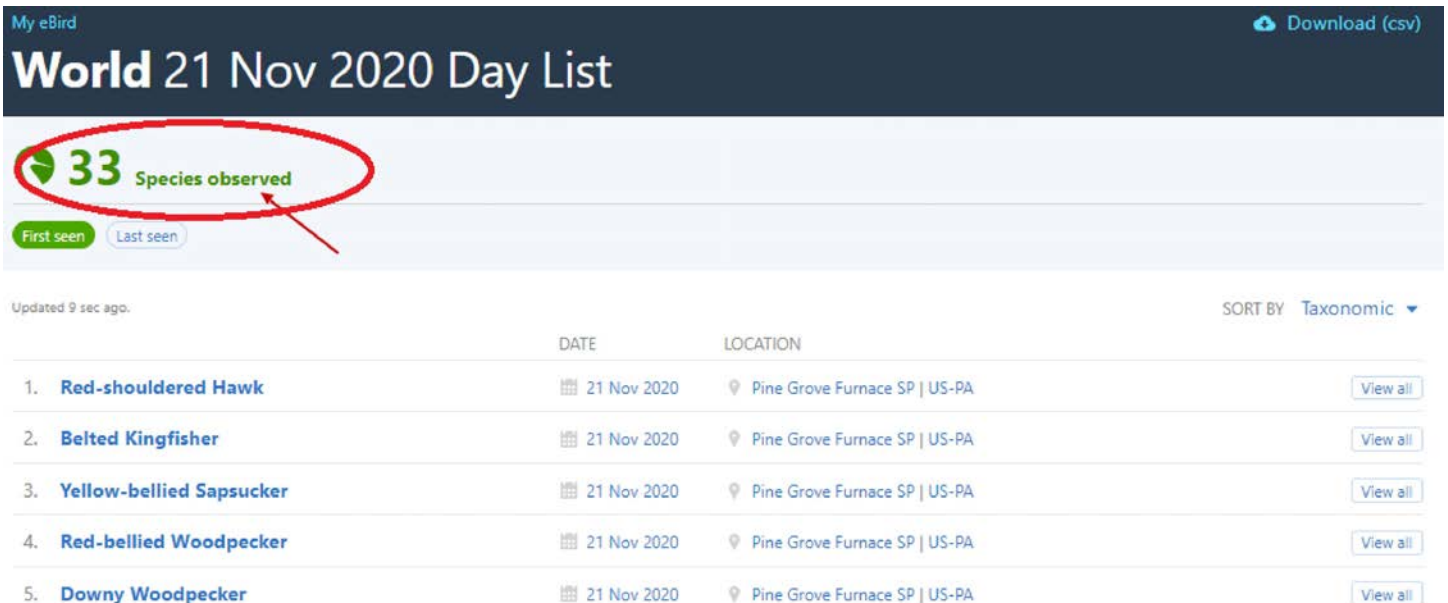
Summarizing Your CBC Data

If you enter your data on an iPhone, then you can easily summarize your daily totals using the Trip Summary on your phone. Unfortunately, if you use an Android or enter your data on the eBird website, this function is not available. To summarize your daily total, you need to go to the My eBird website and click on species observed for the day.



	YEAR	MONTH	DAY
Species observed	251	74	33
Total checklists	672	29	2

MANAGE MY...
[Checklists](#)



My eBird Download (csv)

World 21 Nov 2020 Day List

33 Species observed

First seen Last seen

Updated 9 sec ago. SORT BY Taxonomic ▾

	DATE	LOCATION	
1. Red-shouldered Hawk	21 Nov 2020	Pine Grove Furnace SP US-PA	View all
2. Belted Kingfisher	21 Nov 2020	Pine Grove Furnace SP US-PA	View all
3. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	21 Nov 2020	Pine Grove Furnace SP US-PA	View all
4. Red-bellied Woodpecker	21 Nov 2020	Pine Grove Furnace SP US-PA	View all
5. Downy Woodpecker	21 Nov 2020	Pine Grove Furnace SP US-PA	View all

This will bring you to a day list of species but will not tally the number of each species. (See partial list on page 4.)

To get the tally for each species you need to click on the “View all” button to the right of each species. (See Northern Flicker example below.)

Trip Summaries are supposed to be coming to the eBird website so perhaps this function will be available before the CBC season begins.

More Information

Follow this link for more information on eBird best practices:
<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000795623-ebird-rules-and-best-practices>

As an eBird user or reviewer, if you have a topic you would like to have covered in a future article, please contact me at verngauthier14@gmail.com

My eBird Download (csv)

Northern Flicker

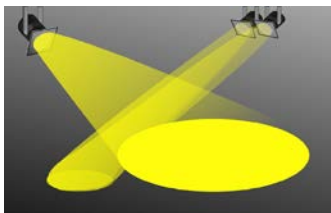
World 21 Nov 2020 Day Observations

2 Observations 5 individuals

First seen: 21 Nov 2020 Last seen: 21 Nov 2020 High Count: 21 Nov 2020 (4)

Updated 6 sec ago. SORT BY Taxonomic ▾

	DATE	COUNT	LOCATION
1. Northern Flicker	21 Nov 2020	# 4	Pine Grove Furnace SP US-PA
2. Northern Flicker	21 Nov 2020	# 1	Michaux SF--Camp Michaux US-PA



Young PA Birder Spotlight

A city suddenly blanketed with clouds and fog on October 2, 2020, made for a disastrous combination in the early hours as birds collided with buildings as they descended from migratory journeys, resulting in an estimated 1,000 - 1,500 migrant songbirds perishing upon or shortly after impact.

Though a full species tally was not available, images show a hefty toll on Black-throated Blue and Black-and-white Warblers, accompanied by Ovenbirds, Northern Waterthrushes, Magnolia Warblers, Northern Parulas, and many more.

This moving event stirred local birders, bringing the perils and dangers birds face in migration to the forefront. Victoria Sindlinger, a teen birder from Philadelphia, was so moved by these disastrous accidental deaths, she used words to shape a story around the tiny bodies in an effort to process, document, and share the story of the birds whose journeys came to an abrupt and untimely end. Using her young voice, a beacon for bird conservation, Victoria combines her gift for writing and her passion for birds to share with us an event to be remembered – by us and for the birds. See page 6.

– Holly Merker
PSO Education Chairperson

The Fall of the Migrants

by Victoria Sindlinger

It was a foggy autumn night,
Already crisp, with Northwest winds blowing in an additional chill.
Riding those winds were hundreds of thousands of tiny travelers,
Crossing countries, yes, even continents, wingbeat by wingbeat.

The moon's milky light edged each feather like frost
As silken wings rowed through ink-dark skies.
As the night passed, certain migrants were pressed ever lower
By a thick ceiling of oppressive clouds.

All of a sudden, the ill-fated wanderers were enveloped in a blaze
of city light;
Dazed, they floated down across Philadelphia, too disoriented by
the glare to go on.
Perching in the alien catacomb, they waited out the night
As the dawn crept forward, illuminating a bloodstained sky.

And it began to rain birds.

Block after city block, the innocent creatures of northern woods,
Desperate to escape, saw at last a sliver of sky, or a bough of shelter.
Dashing for the mirage, they crashed into gleaming skyscraper glass with deadly speed
Never even knowing what killed them.

Early risers were greeted with sidewalks strewn with exquisite corpses,
Exotic colors covered the streets and rooftops like an art project gone mad.
Wounded birds huddled in bushes and watched morning's rush hour
As they awaited their own death.

Many of the fallen were taken for science,
Taken also for an appeal to the conscience of corporations;
And as they methodically catalogued the hundreds of losses,
The bird-collectors were moved to tears.

Now, all we can do is pick up the pieces,
See where they fit together and where this puzzle will lead us.
Those with compassion for nature have rallied to restore night,
Armed with passion, petitions, and committed volunteers.

We must hope it's enough.



Victoria Sindlinger

Hot Off the Press

An excellent new book, written by Gary Edwards with Jeffrey Hall, is now available, *Birds of Venango County - The status, distribution, and history of the birds of Pennsylvania's Oil Region*. Gary has been collecting data for this comprehensive work for decades. Contact Gary to get your copy.

The book is \$20 plus \$3.50 postage. Address is: Gary Edwards, 224 Meadow Rd. Apt.9, Seneca, PA 16346.
Email is gedwards3011@gmail.com.

The Raven Reporter

Tales of Discovery about Pennsylvania Birds



Critical Evergreen Conifers

Birders are enjoying a suite of irruptions this fall and winter. Red-breasted Nuthatches, Pine Siskins, Evening Grosbeaks, and Common Redpolls already have reached the state in numbers larger than in recent years. Each species has its own special niche and diet, but there are some overlaps between these boreal songbirds. That is, they benefit from evergreen conifers. This year the evergreen conifer producing seed cones is the Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*). But in some years the seed source is often Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), Virginia or Scrub Pine (*Pinus virginiana*), or Jack Pine (*Pinus banksiana*), and in some mountain areas the Red Spruce (*Picea rubens*). Most seedeaters do not really seem to care whether a seed source is native or exotic, so they also can respond to a variety of ornamental species not native to Pennsylvania, especially Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*), Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa*), and Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*).

The larger cones can present a challenge for birds with smaller beaks. And when cones are fresh, the sap covering also challenges birds trying to get to the seeds without committing some acrobatics. A few birds will hover-glean seeds from cones to avoid the fresh sap. I have seen some rather spectacular aerial maneuvers made by Red-breasted Nuthatches to extract seeds from the big sap-covered cones of white pines. The various “types” of Red Crossbills have differently sized bills and tend to prefer certain conifers as a result. Usually we see “Type 1” Red Crossbills forage on Eastern White Pines here, but this year we also are finding some “Type 10” crossbills that favor Sitka Spruce out west. These can be identified by their call notes.

This year the Eastern White Pine seems to be providing the most seeds for migrating boreal birds. Their large, firm bracts challenge small-billed birds, but I have seen Red-breasted Nuthatches pull many seeds from their cones, sometimes mid-air. Where they are bearing cones, Eastern Hemlocks also are attracting birds. If and when the seeds of white pines are exhausted, the birds will move to other food sources or leave the area. This explains the step-wise migration of many seed-eating birds.

If the cone crop is adequate, the irrupting birds could stay till spring and nest in the area. I have seen Red-breasted Nuthatches forage all winter on a plentiful Virginia Pine cone crop and then nest in those woods the next spring.

They also will take advantage of Red Pine plantations with good crops. Red Crossbills also have attempted to nest where a revolving set of ripening cones of different species allowed them to stay in an area from August to the next March. Only a big blizzard prevented them from successfully nesting on Dutch Mountain. Birders should look for these follow-up cone crop nesting events next spring.



This Red-breasted Nuthatch is foraging on Eastern White Pine.

Photo by Doug Gross

All of these observations have led me to believe that evergreen conifers deserve more attention, not only by birds but by land managers. There is a tendency to focus on the hardwood trees in this state because of their timber value and perhaps for their hard mast. Our evergreen conifers are now showing their own value as a food source for a variety of birds. Due to their year-round green cover, the needle-leaved evergreens also provide thermal cover in hard winter months. The deep shade needed to keep streams cold has been provided by hemlocks, and without them, fewer miles of cold running water would be available for trout and also for waterthrushes. Now might be the time to not only go birding in the pines but plan for more conifers in our future forests.

Birding in the Winter Woods

As the snowflakes fly, it is easy to stay inside and carefully watch your feeder area from the comfort of your home. Evening Grosbeaks might show up to make your day. This is fun and often a very successful strategy. You can go through a few pallets of sunflower seeds feeding the “yellow horde” of cracking grosbeaks all winter. It also is possible to encounter Evening Grosbeaks and other winter visitors in the woods where they live when they are

not at your feeder. A good walk in the forest can yield surprises. Or you can get back there on cross-country skis or snowshoes.

One of the favorite memories from many years doing Christmas Counts was hearing a crackling sound overhead in a riparian woods of Lycoming County. I saw the little seed casing crumbs on the snow in front of me and wondered what was crunching up the hackberries overhead. Sure enough it was a small flock of Evening Grosbeaks. They were ignoring all the sunflower seed feeders in town and eating the small berries of the hackberry tree in front of me, seeds and all. They were the only grosbeaks reported for that count circle that year.

Evening Grosbeaks eat a dazzling variety of seeds and fruits. They are famous for munching up the keys or samaras of maples and box-elders (which are really just maples with leaves like ash trees). Grosbeaks also are attracted to the fruits of staghorn sumac, poison ivy, and hawthorns. They will crunch up standard red berries including multiflora rose hips and winterberries.

Grosbeaks also will seek out dried grapes and cherries. Do not forget to check shale pits, borrow pits, and gravelly and salty roads for grosbeaks seeking grit and pits. That is how I found my first Pine Grosbeaks while roaming backroads in a CBC count. They were in the middle of the road.

In spring, Evening Grosbeaks will switch to buds and caterpillars. In the North, they are often associated with spruce budworms. When they have nested in Pennsylvania, they ate a lot of elm spanworms which were abundant in our northern counties. When they did nest, some were just in backyards, not in the deep woods where you might expect them (although I think they also nested there). If the Evening Grosbeak irruption lasts into the spring, birders should look and listen for nesting birds.

If birders want to enjoy redpolls, it might help to acquire an interest in birch and aspen trees. Redpolls may be feeder birds, but many more forage on wild natural foods in the woods. Large flocks can be found in birch forests where they hang from boughs eating the narrow, hanging catkins. I have seen flocks in Yellow, Black, American White, Paper, and Gray birches as well as backyard European White Birches. Gray birches grow almost anywhere including places with shallow soil like old coal slag heaps and surface mine reclamation sites, wetlands,

and glaciated mountains. The big flocks of Common Redpolls may be back off the road and along trails where birches and aspens grow in abundance. The redpoll wave has only begun, and we may see record numbers this winter.

The History of Listing Northern Goshawk in Pennsylvania



Grosbeaks also are attracted to the fruits of staghorn sumac.

The Ornithological Technical Committee (OTC) is the bird committee of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey (PABS) which acts as advisors to the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC). Among its functions are recommendations for changes in the state's list of Endangered and Threatened bird species. One of the several species under consideration for status change is the Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), one of the rarest and most difficult to study breeding birds in the state. The results of the Second Breeding Bird Atlas seemed to indicate that the breeding range of this forest raptor has greatly contracted from the first Atlas, and its population was much smaller.

Essentially, almost no goshawks were found south of Route 80 and few, east of the Northeast extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike where they had been previously (Brinker 2012). Since the effort by birders was greater during the Second Atlas than in the first, and the birding community was more experienced and informed about goshawks, these results were alarming to bird conservationists. Were these results reflective of a smaller population, or could the apparent decline be explained by other reasons, including a temporary decrease from West Nile Virus or other factors or as part of a population cycle? Or did Atlas volunteers overlook them? The analysis is complicated by the contribution to the first Atlas results by a study conducted by Penn State graduate student Tim Kimmel on goshawks that was aided by falconers in his field crews (Kimmel and Yahner 1994). In the 2nd Atlas, studies conducted by Brinker at least somewhat replaced the effort made by the Kimmel study with the additional knowledge and experience gained in the meantime. So, the changes in range shown in the 2nd Atlas may reflect a decline in the species although the habitat for the species is especially extensive in the northern counties. Many publications advanced our common knowledge of goshawks and the best ways to find them. This is especially true of a landmark inventory and monitoring technical guide published by the USDA Forestry Service that informs current and future studies including a species status assessment (Woodridge and Hargis 2006).

The Northern Goshawk was first listed in Pennsylvania as "Status Undetermined" in 1985 as part of the first effort to provide a "Species of Special Concern" List by the newly formed Pennsylvania Biological Survey (Gill 1985). Even at that point, PABS made the recommendation that "a study should be undertaken to determine the current status of Northern Goshawks in Pennsylvania and to determine the factors affecting their population." The reasons for this Undetermined status were given due to its "preference for deep woods." At that point, the authors believed that this species was "on the increase" but its exact status was unknown. This status designation was changed to "Candidate - Rare" by the OTC in 1994 after the results of the first Breeding Bird Atlas and the Kimmel study were published (Brauning *et al.* 1994). As part of the first PABS meeting about inventorying and monitoring needs in the state, it was listed by the OTC as a species in need of systematic surveys in 1998 for the following reasons: "Large-scale forests, remote areas: secretive" (Gross in Hassinger *et al.* 1998). In the first Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan (PGC-PFBC 2005), the Northern Goshawk was listed as "Vulnerable." This was essentially the same status as the "Candidate – Rare" designation but a different set of conservation status definitions, more consistent with other taxonomic groups, was used. In 2010, the OTC summarized the "Species of Conservation Concern" listed in the first State Wildlife Action Plan with partial results in hand from the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas. In this publication, the population of the goshawk was described as "small and thinly scattered" of a species that deserved more survey and a cooperative research on many aspects of its ecology with a regional approach including other states in the Northeast (Wilson and Rensel in Steele, Brittingham, Maret, and Merritt 2010).

One of the main objectives of breeding bird atlases is the evaluation of species' status. As a result of the Atlas Projects, changes are usually made in the state list with the advice of the OTC. After the results of the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas were published the OTC changed the status of Northern Goshawk to "Near Threatened" due to the apparent reduction in population size and range of its breeding population (Brinker 2012, OTC minutes). This status may change as we learn more about its range and population size through studies conducted at Penn State and in cooperation with several organizations, including the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, the Allegheny National Forest, the Bureau of Forestry, the PGC, Brinker's Mid-Appalachian Northern Goshawk Project, falconers, and volunteer birders. Stayed tuned.

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Good birding!

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Birding Thoughts after 40 Years

by Arlene Koch

The day was fast drawing to a close when I walked out onto the deck and saw a large bird that turned out to be a Great Horned Owl sitting atop a snag at the yard's edge. At last count my husband David had erected twelve snags, or bare tree trunks, on the property, several of which are in the yard. When we built this house on his family's farm in 1978, his father came over when he was putting the first snag in. And when he saw that David had just planted a chestnut tree trunk from the woods, he was, to say the least, incredulous. He shook his head, muttered words I won't repeat here, and quickly walked away.

But today, 42 years later, that chestnut snag is still there, still in great shape, and has been a perch for some of the best or most unusual birds I've had through the years. Bare perching spots, be they five or 30 feet tall, make it easy to see what's on them, and birds quickly acclimate themselves to them. And while I know that not everyone has access to dead tree trunks, any kind of pole or perch, big or little, will do.

During the warm months Ruby-throated Hummingbirds always seek out perches. I saw that up close years ago when I accompanied friend Nancy Newfield on hummingbird banding sessions around New Orleans. And from that time on, I've put a tomato cage or some other perch near every hummingbird feeder I put out. The females use them to check out the area near the feeder before going to it. And the males do the same, but they also use tall snags as lookouts, especially when they're in their high-hormone breeding phase. During May and June when the females are off nesting somewhere out of sight, I can almost always find a male somewhere on one of these tall snags.

I've done a lot of hummingbird lectures in the last 20 or so years, and at times it's been an eye-opening and entertaining experience. When it comes to these tiny birds, many people believe erroneous things about them. I've been told that Ruby-throated Hummingbirds come to flowers because they smell good, which isn't true, or because they hear you call them. One time after I explained that male and female hummers only connect while mating and then they both go their own ways, an audience member said that she knew the male and female she saw together at the same flowers were paired up. And when I asked her why she said that, she replied that she could tell by the way they looked at each other. Also, during these lectures I've been asked non-hummingbird questions like whether or not I ever considered using Botox or if I wore Depends.

Birding means different things to different people. Some do it for its competitive aspect, others do it for the chance to see something they may never see again, and some do it for fun. I, like so many other people I know, have been through all of these phases, but I realized years ago that birding is an incredible learning experience. And by that I'm talking about all the things you learn along the way, not just seeing new or different species.

Books (remember them?) can teach you a lot. Those dealing with landscaping for wildlife or native vs. introduced plants can teach you about the symbiotic relationship between plants and different kinds of birds. If you don't know that redpolls like to feed on birch catkins or even what a catkin is, you probably won't know to look there for them in an invasive year like the one we're currently having. I often wonder how many new birders these days actually consult books rather than thinking that they'll get all their answers from the internet. And while that may seem like a snarky comment, it's not meant to be. All resources, including technical articles and conversations with long-time experienced birders, should be explored.

eBird has become the go-to for birders these days. Its purpose and worldwide reach is incredible, and the data it produces is invaluable. But it sure has produced a change in the birding behavior of many people. We've hosted hundreds of birders on our property. A few years ago a Harris's Sparrow spent six months here. Almost 300 people came to see it; but, rather than looking at it and watching its behavior, a great percentage of them quickly looked away, got out their I-phone to record the sighting, and left. Birding is a very personal thing and to each his own.

I've been birding for more than 40 years in spite of never thinking I'd be looking at birds when I was in college. Only old women with funny hats do that, I thought, but now I'm one of them; and I hope to continue for a long time.

But I'm glad to see that finally ethnic diversity in the birding world is being encouraged, and I hope that all the people now looking at birds due to the pandemic will continue to do so. The more birders there are, the better it is for everyone.

And, in case anyone wondered, I in turn asked the woman who asked me about Botox if it would make me any smarter. She replied that she didn't know what I meant. And I said, "I rest my case."

Pennsylvania Ornithological Research

Those of us who focus closely on our state's ornithological research are aware of pioneering studies involving Carolina and Black-capped Chickadee hybridization, Louisiana Waterthrush ecology, and Cerulean Warbler biology.

The year 2020 brought us a remarkable variety of work on these and other species. Here are examples of this year's prominent publications by Pennsylvania researchers.

Broad-winged Hawks – Rebecca A. McCabe, Laurie J. Goodrich, David R. Barber, and Keith L. Bildstein at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, and Terry L. Master at East Stroudsburg University collaborated in a study of this raptor's migration behavior. Among other findings, they discovered that adults from the Pennsylvania population wintered in Nicaragua, Brazil, Peru, and Colombia, whereas those from Alberta wintered in Surinam, Venezuela, and Bolivia. Thus, the hawks migrating from Pennsylvania and those migrating from Alberta, Canada, represent two distinct breeding populations. (*Wilson Journal of Ornithology* (132:1-14).



This Broad-winged Hawk, photographed by Mike Fialkovich at Jennings, Butler Co., will probably migrate to Nicaragua, Brazil, Peru, or Colombia.

Herring Gulls – Laura R. Ingraham, Stephen A. Oswald, Eunice Son, and Jennifer M. Arnold at Penn State University studied Herring Gulls' predation on Ring-billed Gulls at a large Ring-billed nesting colony at Gull Island in Lake Ontario. The results suggest possible approaches to ease the extent of predation. (PLOS ONE

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0239180>)

Carolina and Black-capped Chickadees – Robert L. Curry at Villanova University, well known to PSO members for his research in the southeastern Pennsylvania hybrid zone, is among authors of a study finding that hybrids suffer spatial memory and problem-solving deficits compared to their parental species. These deficiencies may reduce hybrids' rates of survival and, thus, prevent expansion of the narrow width of the hybrid zone as it moves northward. (*Evolution* 74: 498-1513).



By providing large tracts of forests and managing the habitats within, there is hope that this Cerulean Warbler's fledglings will have a better chance for survival.

Photo by DJ McNeil.

Cerulean Warblers – Jeffery L. Larkin at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Scott H. Stoleson at the U.S. Forest Research Northern Research Station at Irvine, PA, collaborated in a study of fledglings' survival and habitat selection in this tragically declining species. The results suggest that providing or retaining large tracts of carefully managed micro-habitats within forests can be important for fledglings' survival. (*The Condor: Ornithological Applications* 122: 1-15).

Louisiana Waterthrushes – Pennsylvania is already well known for important studies of this species' ecology and environmental threats. Steven C. Latta at the National Aviary in Pittsburgh participated in new research investigating genetic effects of shale gas development on this warbler's population and fitness. The results uncovered effects that could affect the species' long-term survival. (*Ibis* 162: 1211-1224).

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Conservation Chat Room

Big, Bold Evening Grosbeaks



Female Evening Grosbeaks are a soft gray and yellow with white patches on their black wings and tail. Males are a brighter yellow with a bold yellow supercilium and a prominent white patch on

their black wings. They are sociable members of the Finch family.



We all need a bright spot to lift our spirits in 2020, so thank goodness for birds. Some families are just starting to enjoy backyard birds while others are expert bird-watchers and hawk counters. Whatever the level of engagement, watching birds is exciting!

My parents enjoyed watching birds back in the 1940s, and all seven children continue that interest. Even today, we share our observations, whether it's from my youngest sister in Norco, California, who saw a male Pin-tailed Whydah in her backyard, or my brother in Clearville, Pennsylvania, calling to tell me about his latest Red-breasted Nuthatch sighting. Watching birds in our backyards is never dull and never predictable. Of course, to share our excitement, we have to identify the birds we see. That's why it amazes me that some people enjoy watching birds but don't bother to learn their names. How can they truly convey their experiences if they don't know what they are watching? This Chinese proverb says it best, "The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right name."



We are tempting Evening Grosbeaks with trays of black oil sunflower seeds in our backyard. One quickly selects a seed, rolls it over in his bill until the seed lies along the bill's sharp edge. The dry shell is split and then discarded as the tasty sunflower meat is swallowed.

I found the name Evening Grosbeak to be confusing when I decided to write this column about a bird that's been visiting my backyard since early November. A small flock of two flashy males and six female Evening Grosbeaks stopped at our feeders on November 2, 2020. Since then, we've enjoyed almost daily visits that range from a low of two to a high of thirteen Evening Grosbeaks.

Watching these birds piqued my curiosity, so I'm going to share the questions that came to mind as I watched them – and the answers I found when I did some research.

Why are these birds called Evening Grosbeaks?

"Grosbeak" is obvious: they have a large beak.

"Grosbeak" comes from the French *gros bec*, meaning thick beak.¹

Why "Evening?" We mainly see these flashy birds in the early morning and afternoon – never at the platform feeder in the evening. It turns out that this species was named for the "mistaken impression that it sang only at dusk."² I think of them as "Wandering Grosbeaks," a name that more accurately describes their wanderlust, which I'll talk about later. Wandering Grosbeak also fits the name given by French explorers: *Gros bec errant*.

What's the scientific name of the Evening Grosbeak and what does it mean?

In 1886, the American Ornithologist's Union first edition decided on *Coccothraustes vespertine*, but that was changed to *Hesperiphona vespertina*, then *C. vespertinus*. The Avibase taxonomic concepts (current) is *H. vespertine*. The (Charles) Sibley and Monroe 2nd edition (1996) use *H. vespertine*.³

It turns out that the Emperor Napoleon I's nephew, Prince Charles Lucien Bonaparte, introduced the genus *Hesperiphona* in 1850. The name is from Ancient Greek *hesperos*, "evening," and *phona*, "cry." The species *vespertine* is Latin for "evening," but this species is not active in the evening.⁴

Currently, the ABA, eBird, and Cornell Lab of Ornithology use *Coccothraustes vespertinus*.

Coccothraustes means kernel-crushing or seed-breaker, a name certainly appropriate for this finch with such a large, powerful bill.⁵

Why are Evening Grosbeaks sometimes called “sugar birds?”

As is often the case, an answer to a question led to another question. Researching this question led me to Arthur Cleveland Bent’s “Life Histories of Familiar North American Birds.” I don’t have all of his books, so I was delighted to find an electronic version. Bent relayed observations by others who saw Evening Grosbeaks feeding on “wild” maple syrup – the sap that dripped from sugar maple twigs where squirrels had nipped the buds. One observer said the Evening Grosbeaks climbed about parrot fashion, drinking sap from the sugar maple tree. Grosbeaks also eat the seeds of pin and wild cherries, apples, crabapples, and sumac.⁶

When they aren’t eating, they spend a lot of time in the sugar maple tree just above the feeder. I wonder if they are feasting on seeds, sumac, and other natural food in our woods? It is well known that Evening Grosbeaks feed on maple tree buds and seeds, especially those of *Acer negundo*, commonly called the Manitoba maple or, in our part of the U.S., the box elder tree.

In the spring, their preference switches to insects. Maurice Broun, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, wrote to Mr. Bent, describing 20 - 40 Evening Grosbeaks feeding on canker-worms in the tops of large oaks for five days in May 1952.

Wild cherries provide important summer food for both adults and fledglings, but they don’t swallow the cherries whole like Robins and Cedar Waxwings. Bent claimed the Evening Grosbeaks can be heard in a wild cherry grove as the flock crushes the cherry stones with their mandibles.

Why don’t Evening Grosbeaks visit us every winter?

These birds exhibit what is called “irruptive migration.” This type of migration typically occurs among birds that live in the far north or boreal forests. Their migration depends on a complex puzzle of reasons, but essentially it is tied to food. An “irruption” occurs when an unusually large number of birds leave their typical range to fly south in search of food.

The Winter Finch Forecast, developed by the Finch Research Network, analyzes cone crops of spruce and Eastern white pine, as well as white birch seed production. Researchers also look at spruce budworm outbreaks in Quebec, Manitoba, and the Great Lakes. This report is eagerly awaited each fall by many birders since it tells us that winter birding will be more exciting as we watch for Red-breasted Nuthatches, redpolls, and other boreal species, including Evening Grosbeaks. The prediction for



Grosbeak bills are the color of bone in the winter, but they make a remarkable transition in the spring, turning green to match the color of new leaves and new needles that tip the spruce boughs – a perfect match resulting in excellent camouflage for the nesting season.

the winter of 2020-2021? It looks like a good flight year!⁷

Research by Nick Bolgiano offered convincing reasons as to why so many Evening Grosbeaks may appear in eastern North America: massive outbreaks of the Eastern spruce budworm. The Evening Grosbeak is no different from many other birds. They rely on juicy, nutritious insect larvae to feed their young. Bolgiano tracked various Eastern spruce budworm infestations; one notable infestation occurred from 1968 – 1985, which defoliated 55 million hectares – an astounding 135,907,960 acres of forest! More food means that more young survive so more food is needed in the winter. This means, though, the birds will leave the north if tree seed production is low which it was this year.⁸

Earlier researchers thought that Evening Grosbeaks irrupted into the northeastern U.S. because of the increased numbers of pin cherry and the widespread planting of box elder as a shade tree, but Bolgiano’s analysis showed that the CBC data suggest that the budworm infestation and resulting increased numbers of birds was the real reason why so many Evening Grosbeaks migrated south for the winter when food was scarce.

What are some fascinating facts about Evening Grosbeaks in Pennsylvania?

First Sighting

I took a deep dive into some of my bird books to learn more about the natural history of Evening Grosbeaks. The oldest book, written by B. Harry Warren, was printed in 1890 and contained references to killing Evening

Grosbeaks in order to study their stomach contents: seeds and buds. Warren, State Ornithologist of the Pennsylvania Board of Agriculture, reported that their first appearance in Pennsylvania was in December 1889.⁹

What did Bent do the first time he saw Evening Grosbeaks, the first record in southeastern Massachusetts? He killed three and soon had them laid out on his skinning table. It's no wonder that Evening Grosbeaks are no longer the naïve visitors from the north, unafraid of humans. In addition to killing the birds for scientific study, many birds were killed for sport. The first invasion in the East during 1889-90 brought out the worst in boys..."the birds were tame, and many were captured using a slip-noose attached to the end of a long stick."⁶

Evening Grosbeaks Can Dance

Fortunately, part of these early studies included detailed observations of live Evening Grosbeaks: their feeding, sleeping, mating, and communication behaviors. I found it especially intriguing to read about the courtship displays. An observer in northern Michigan in 1930 gave the first published account. He wrote, "As the female...perched near, the male made a beautiful display. He crouched low, puffed out his plumage, extended his wings horizontally and set them quivering. The gorgeous contrast of the glossy black wings with the golden body suggested the appearance of a bird of paradise. There was no song." But they can dance! Bent saw the male face the female, then, "With crest raised, bill and tail pointed upwards, breast almost touching the ground and wings drooped but spread wide and vibrating, he slowly pivots back and forth."⁶ There are YouTube videos showing the birds of paradise courtship displays, but I could not find any showing Evening Grosbeak displays. It would be amazing to watch!

A Songbird That Doesn't Sing

Did you catch the fact that the Evening Grosbeak is a songbird that doesn't sing? Perhaps that's because they perform the courtship dance. They do have different types of calls, though, and researchers think the flight calls are used for flock cohesion. Birds with different call types have different breeding ranges. Evening Grosbeaks wandering into our areas are most likely Type 3, a subspecies known as *C. vespertinus vespertinus*. Other subspecies are found in the far northwest, Arizona, and Mexico. There are five subspecies, and some are not well represented in the Macaulay Library, so please submit your recordings.¹⁰

I enjoy listening to Evening Grosbeaks – the chorus of cheery calls as they sit in my backyard trees reminds me of House Sparrows, but the sound is louder and sharper.

Confirmed Breeding in Pennsylvania

An important book for all birders, the "Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania," yielded the last fascinating fact: the discovery by Skip Conant in 1994 of paired Evening Grosbeaks, followed by sightings of recently fledged young in Forkston Township, Wyoming County, Pennsylvania. According to the editors, this was a first for our state and likely tied to the elm spanworm infestation. That was also the last confirmed breeding of Evening Grosbeaks in Pennsylvania.¹¹

It's easy to tell male Evening Grosbeaks at my feeder, but am I looking at adults only, or are there some juveniles, too?

Benjamin Shaub made the case that John James Audubon, in "Birds of America," incorrectly stated that the immature male Evening Grosbeak, "has a plumage like that of the adult female." Shaub trapped, banded, and photographed young grosbeaks in 1952, that showed distinct differences between juvenal and adult plumage. He explained that the first winter plumage of both male and female is like the adult, and that the molt to adult plumage occurs between September and the end of October. He also pointed out that juveniles have dark bills.¹²

We don't think we saw any juvenal Evening Grosbeaks at our feeders as they all matched either the adult male or female plumage.

Even though this is an irruptive year, why aren't we seeing huge flocks of Evening Grosbeaks like people did in the 1970s and 80s?

I remember flocks of 40 to 50 birds at our bird feeders many years ago, but the largest flock we've seen so far this year included just 13 birds – six males and seven females.

The low count is really no surprise. Just over a year ago, an all-star team of scientists headed by Kenneth Rosenberg reported that three billion birds have gone since 1970. Boreal forest bird populations decreased by 33%.¹³ Specifically, Evening Grosbeaks are steeply declining and are most at risk of extinction without significant conservation actions to reduce declines and reduce threats, giving them a score of 13 on the "Watch List." The list was compiled by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), an effort to recognize birds in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico as an "international natural economic resource."¹⁴

Ironically, the Evening Grosbeak is probably one of the few species of songbirds where an economic value has

been determined. John Takekawa and Edward Garton studied bird predation of the western spruce budworm in north-central Washington in the 1970s. Although many birds fed on budworm larvae and pupae, the Evening Grosbeak was the main predator, being responsible for 43% and 70% of the bird predation at two different study sites. They then compared the cost of spraying with Sevin-4-oil to control budworm to the effectiveness of natural predation by Evening Grosbeaks. They found that Sevin-4-oil “decreased budworm survival by 80% at a cost of \$1,820 per km²...which was nearly the same as that of bird predation.” When the number of grosbeaks was considered at each site, the value of one Evening Grosbeak was equivalent to investing \$1.80 to \$6.80 in spraying each year.¹⁵

Of course, we know that the economic importance pales to the intrinsic value of birds as they are vital ecological indicators.

Ontario and Québec have pledged to protect 50% of their boreal forest – more than 80 million hectares (197,684,305 acres), but that’s only 13% of the boreal forest in North America, quite likely the most important songbird nursery in North America.

Just why the Evening Grosbeak is declining is complex. A Canadian study released in 2016 designated Evening Grosbeaks as a *species of special concern* based on significant long-term declines (77-90%), due to six main factors: The main threat is loss of habitat caused by logging, resulting in fewer mature and old-growth mixed wood and conifer forests that contain fir and white spruce. Habitat degradation is also due to pesticide use to control spruce budworm. Direct mortality is caused by three factors: window collisions when birds are visiting feeders in the winter, car collisions when birds are feeding on grit and salt along roads in the winter, and death from salt toxicity. The fifth threat is a potential contraction of balsam fir breeding habitat due to climate change.¹⁶

What can we do to help Evening Grosbeaks?

I’ll list the easy ways first:

- * Participate in the Christmas Bird Counts this winter. The bird observations will be part of the longest citizen science project in the world and provide important data to understand long-term bird trends.
- * Be sure to enter any Evening Grosbeak sightings into eBird.

- * Watch for color-banded Evening Grosbeaks and report those to David Yeany II at dyeany@paconserve.org. Include date, time, location (address and GPS coordinates), and, most importantly, color-band combination/nanotag transmitter presence. Any additional observations are also welcome. Evening Grosbeaks have been regular winter visitors in Marienville in Forest County, so there is a winter and migration movement study in and around the Allegheny National Forest. For more details, see the post about Evening Grosbeaks on the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Programs’ Facebook page.¹⁷
- * Prevent bird kills at your home. Keep your cat indoors and install deterrents to reduce window collisions. Two different deterrents that really work are Bird Screens¹⁸ and Acopian Bird Savers.¹⁹
- * This might be the toughest one: don’t buy toilet or face tissue made from trees. Soft tissue paper consumes trees, contaminates water, and uses chlorine-based bleach. It is arguably one of the most harmful products that people use – especially Americans, since we use so much. Many of the trees used to make soft toilet tissue come from the boreal forest in Canada. What to use instead? I switched to toilet paper made from bamboo grown by small farmers in China. The on-line company, “Who Gives A Crap,” sells a variety of bamboo paper products that are tree-free. The company donates half its profits to non-profit organizations like WaterAid working to improve access to water and basic sanitation in developing countries.

If Evening Grosbeaks haven’t yet found your backyard, don’t despair. Winter winds may still push these wanderers your way. Keep your feeders stocked with black oil sunflower seeds and watch for these seed-crackers feeding in fruit-producing native shrubs and trees like maple, hackberry, and mountain ash. These flashy visitors brighten a winter day.

Laura Jackson
Bedford County
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Notes: The three photos on pages 12-13 were taken by Laura Jackson.

(See Footnotes - page 19, bottom)

Christmas Bird Counts Held in Pennsylvania*

	Name of Count	County	Compiler	Phone Number	E-mail Address	Date
1	Allentown	Lehigh/Berks	Brandon Swayser	610-965-4397 X 136	BSwayser@wildlandspa.org	12/19/20
2	Audubon	Montgomery Delaware, Chester	Vincent Smith	484-410-1157	Nyctea34@aol.com	12/26/20
3	Bald Eagle	Centre	Bob Snyder	814-753-2629	rhs2@psu.edu	12/27/20
4	Beaver	Beaver	Rick Mason	724-847-0909	richarddmason@gmail.com	12/19/20
5	Bedford	Bedford	Laura & Mike Jackson	814-652-9268	jacksonlaura73@gmail.com	1/2/21
6	Belsano	Indiana Cambria	Robert Gordon	814-418-8412	rhgiii@robertgordoniiiiviolinmaker.com	12/30/20
7	Benezette	Clearfield, Elk	Mark Johnson	814-546-2886	luckybirder@gmail.com	12/22/20
8	Bernville	Berks	Ed Barrell	610-926-2962	ed.barrell@comcast.net	12/26/20
9	Bethlehem- Easton	Northampton	Elaine & Donald Mease	610-346-7754	measede@enter.net	12/26/20
10	Bloomsburg	Columbia	Karol Pasquinelli	570-351-5120	karol2@ptd.net northbranchbirders@gmail.com	12/20/20
11	Buffalo Creek	Washington	Larry Helgerman	412-508-0321	bobolink1989@gmail.com	12/20/20
12	Buffalo Creek Valley	Butler Armstrong	George Reese	724-353-9649	g.reese@gaiconsultants.com	12/19/20
13	Bushy Run	Westmoreland	Steve Manns		psuloon@yahoo.com	12/26/20
14	Butler	Butler, Mercer, Lawrence	Glenn Koppel Mary A. Koeneke	703-203-3362 703-203-6337	macatilly@gmail.com macatilly@icloud.com	12/20/20
15	Central Bucks	Bucks	Diane Allison	267-733-3868	dalliso@mail.ptd.net	12/27/20
16	Chambersburg	Franklin	Valerie Barnes	717-352-4397	barnesva4@comcast.net	12/19/20
17	Clarion	Clarion	Deb McCanna	724-526-5693	dmcc1018@windstream.net	12/19/20
18	Clarksville	Greene	Terry Dayton	724-627-9665	tdayton@windstream.net	12/27/20
19	Cowanesque	Tioga	Sean Minnick			
20	Culp	Blair	Laura Jackson John Carter	814-652-9268	mljackson2@embarqmail.com carter0206@aol.com	12/19/20
21	Curtin	Dauphin	Scott Bills	717-896-8859	srb24@comcast.net	12/28/20
22	Dallas Area	Luzerne	Rick Koval	570-991-0580	pocononaturalist@yahoo.com	12/19/20
23	Dingman's Ferry	Pike	Derek Scott	570-828-2310 x 234	dscott@peec.org	12/27/20

24	DuBois	Clearfield	Marianne Atkinson Jocelyn Smrekar		marianne5@windstream.net	12/19/20
25	Elverson	Chester	Jim Cook	610-587-7545	escjim@windstream.net	12/26/20
26	Emporium	Cameron	Bob Martin	814-486-1990	bmartin@zitomedia.net	
27	Erie	Erie	Michele Franz		isomorphun@roadrunner.com	12/19/20
28	Gettysburg	Adams	Mike Bertram	717-352-7936	the2nomads@centurylink.net	12/19/20
29	Glenolden	Delaware	David Eberly	610-543-3499	david.eberly@gmail.com	12/19/20
30	Grove City	Butler, Mercer Lawrence Venango	Brendyn Baptiste	724-496-4856	brendynbaptiste@yahoo.com	maybe 12/21/20 ???
31	Hamburg	Berks Schuylkill	Laurie Goodrich	610-756-6961 570-943-3411 x106	goodrich@hawkmtn.org	12/27/20
32	Harrisburg	Dauphin	Annette Mathes	717-514-4512	amathes19@verizon.net	12/19/20
33	Huntingdon	Huntingdon	Deb Grove	814-643-3295	dsg4@psu.edu	12/20/20
34	Imperial	Allegheny Washington	Bob Mulvihill	412-522-5729	robert.mulvihill@aviary.org	1/3/21
35	Indiana	Indiana	Roger & Marg Higbee	724-354-3493 412-309-3538	bcoriolle@windstream.net rvhigbee@windstream.net	12/26/20
36	Johnstown	Cambria	Jeff Payne	814-279-8142	paynemt@gmail.com	12/20/20
37	Lake Raystown	Huntingdon Blair	Jon Kauffman	717-413-5522	jvk5019@psu.edu	12/28/20
38	Lancaster	Lancaster	Barb Hunsberger Roger Stoner	717-393-4091	phunsberger@comcast.net	1/2/21
39	Lebanon	Lebanon, Dauphin	Fritz Heilman	717-273-0487	volks5@verizon.net	12/19/20
40	Lewisburg	Union, Snyder, Northumberland	Allen Schweinsberg	570-524-0432	aschwein@bucknell.edu	12/19/20
41	Lewistown	Juniata	Abram Troyer Chad Kauffman	717-994-6715	chadkauffman@earthlink.net	12/19/20
42	Linesville	Crawford	Clare Nicolls	814-587-6395	tcnicolls@windstream.net	12/20/20
43	Lititz	Lancaster Lebanon	Ted Nichols	717-856-3851	tanicholsii@gmail.com	12/27/20
44	Lock Haven- Jersey Shore	Clinton Lycoming	Wayne Laubscher	570-748-7511	wnlaubscher@comcast.net	12/19/20
45	Mansfield- Wellsboro	Tioga	Gary Tyson	570-724-5789	gnats3@ptd.net	1/1/21
46	Montrose	Susquehanna	Evan Mann	570-663-2621	7evanmann@gmail.com	12/14/20

47	New Bloomfield	Perry	Betsy Riter		rriter@pa.net	12/21/20
48	Newville	Cumberland	Vern Gauthier	717-385-9526	verngauthier14@gmail.com	1/2/21
49	Ohiopyle	Fayette, Somerset	Matt Juskowich	412-831-0898	jusko88@yahoo.com	1/2/21
50	Northern Lycoming	Lycoming	David Brown	570-772-9262	davidebrownpa@gmail.com	1/2/21
51	Penns Creek	Centre	Cathy Pierce		winghaven.nursery@gmail.com	12/19/20
52	Pennypack Valley	Philadelphia	Peter Kurtz	215-342-3638 215-685-0470	peter.kurtz@phila.gov	
53	Philipsburg	Centre, Clearfield	Greg Kojadinovich	814-237-5964	gsak40@gmail.com	
54	Pittsburgh	Allegheny	Brian Shema	412-963-6100	bshema@aswp.org	12/26/20
55	Pittsburgh South Hills	Allegheny Washington	Nancy Page	412-221-4795	nanpaul@verizon.net	12/19/20
56	Pleasantville	Venango	Russ States	814-676-6320	pelagics202@gmail.com	1/3/21
57	Pocono Mt.	Monroe	Darryl Speicher		poconoavian@hotmail.com	12/20/20
58	Potter County	Potter	Dave Hauber	814-274-8946	haubers3@penn.com	12/27/20
59	Reading	Berks	Lucy Cairns	610-223-4501		12/20/20
60	Rector	Westmoreland	Annie Lindsay	724-593-7521	LindsayA@carnegiemnh.org	12/20/20
61	Ryerson	Greene	Marjorie Howard	724-852-3155	birdwatcher108@comcast.net	12/30/20
62	Scranton	Lackawanna	Mark Catalano	570-760-6556	mwc.2473@gmail.com	12/19/20
63	South Butler	Butler	Chris Kubiak	412-963-6100	ckubiak@aswp.org	1/2/21
64	Southeastern Bradford	Bradford	Rebecca Lesko	570-592-2629	EMNCinfo@yahoo.com	
65	Southern Bucks	Bucks	Mark Gallagher	215-378-8162	mgallagher@princetonhydro.com	12/19/20
66	Southern Lancaster County	Lancaster	Bob Schutsky	717-548-3303 717-572-0771 (10 am to 9 pm)	info@birdtreks.com	No Count this year
67	State College	Centre	Bob Fowles	814-238-1990	rpf@psu.edu	12/20/20
68	Tamaqua	Schuykill Carbon	Jonathan DeBalko		jonathan.debalko@wilkes.edu	
69	Tunkhannock	Wyoming	Rick Koval	570-991-0580	pocononaturalist@yahoo.com	
70	Upper Bucks	Bucks, Lehigh, Montgomery	Bill Etter	215-964-3613	billetter01@gmail.com	12/20/20
71	Warren	Warren	Michael Toole	814-723-4714	m_t_toole@verizon.net	12/19/20

72	Washington	Washington	Tom Contreras	724-223-6118	tcontreras@washjeff.edu	No count this year
73	West Chester	Chester	Barry Blust Anthony Fernandes	610-458-5616	BarryBlust@comcast.net jets741@verizon.net	12/19/20
74	Western Chester	Chester	Larry Lewis	484-340-7672	earlybirdtours@comcast.net	12/27/20
75	Western Schuylkill	Schuylkill	Dave KrueI	570-622-3704	dkrueI300@comcast.net	12/20/20
76	White Mills	Wayne	Barb Leo	570-253-2364	barbaraaleo@earthlink.net	12/19/20
77	Wild Creek– Little Gap	Carbon Monroe	Corey Husic	570-269-7509	coreyhusic@gmail.com	12/27/20
78	Williamsport	Lycoming	David Brown	570-772-9262	davidebrownpa@gmail.com	12/19/20
79	Wyncote	Montgomery	Kristy Morley	215-646-8866	kristy@wwwa.org	
80	York	York	Bernie Frick	717-843-6675	bernardfrick@alum.lehigh.edu	12/19/20
81	York Springs	Adams, York, Cumberland	Vern Gauthier	717-385-9526	verngauthier14@gmail.com	12/30/20

*With the Covid-19 situation, please be sure to check with the compiler to ascertain whether your count is still scheduled or whether it has been canceled.

Footnotes from Conservation Chat Room – Big, Bold Evening Grosbeaks

(page 15)

1. <https://ornithology.com/the-evening-grosbeak/>
2. <https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/learn/identification/finchesallies/evening-grosbeak.php>
3. <https://avibase.bsc-eoc.org/species.jsp?avibaseid=C6B5497C9DB6796A>
4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evening_grosbeak
5. <https://www.wordsense.eu/coccothraustes/>
6. <https://birdsbybent.com/ch41-50/grosbeak.html>
7. <https://finchnetwork.org/winter-finch-forecast-2020>
8. http://www.audubon.org/sites/default/files/documents/104_026-33BUDWORMfeature.pdf
9. Warren, B.H. Report on the Birds of Pennsylvania. 1890. 2nd Edition. E.K. Meyers, State Printer, Harrisburg.
10. <https://ebird.org/news/evening-grosbeak-call-types-of-north-america>
11. Wilson, Andrew. Brauning, Daniel. Mulvihill, Robert. Editors. Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania. 2012. The Pennsylvania State University Press. University Park, Pa.
12. Shaub, Benjamin. John James Audubon and Juvenile Evening Grosbeaks. The Wilson Bulletin June 1964. Vol. 76, No. 2, pp. 173 – 178.
13. <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/366/6461/120https://www.stateofthebirds.org/2016/resources/species-assessments/>
14. <https://www.stateofthebirds.org/2016/>
15. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233615986_How_Much_is_an_Evening_Grosbeak_Worth

Answers to Bird Quiz

(page 2)

1. White-eyed Vireo
2. Blue-headed Vireo
3. Philadelphia Vireo
4. Warbling Vireo and Red-eyed Vireo
5. White-eyed Vireo – not the Warbling Vireo which is named *gilvus*, meaning “pale yellow.”



This seemingly inquisitive Evening Grosbeak was photographed by Laura Jackson, Bedford County.

PSO Newsletter

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

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Pennsylvania Bird Lists Report Form for 2020

Report Totals as of December 31, 2020

Name (Please print.)

Address

City State ZIP

Send by January 24, 2021 to:

Andy Keister akeister110@gmail.com
110 Hawk Ridge Road
Bloomsburg, PA 17815

PLEASE include ONLY those species included in the Official List of the Birds of PA (see www.pabirds.org).
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 comments about 2020 birding in PA on back)

PA Life List Unassisted _____ (Species found on your own. Not "chase" birds)

PA 2020 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) _____
