

The

PSO Pileated



The Biweekly Newsletter for the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Thursday, April 30th, 2026

Hopefully the rain as of late hasn't gotten you too down. With the right gear, it can be a wonderful opportunity to bird waterfowl, or catch songbirds as the drops subside. Although, there is nothing wrong with staying dry and birding from your house or car window, of course ;)

We have lots of updates this week, including an important call for volunteers and some new director candidates we would like you all to meet.

If you have photos to share or any questions or comments about the newsletter, email me at: kaitlynstouch@gmail.com.

Happy birding!

-Kaitlyn Stouch

The PSO Pileated Editor

This edition's banner photo is courtesy of Doug Baird, taken in Evansburg State Park in 2024.

PSO Directors & Officers

During our upcoming PSO Annual Meeting on Friday, June 19, 2026 at the Blair County Convention Center, the Board of Directors plans to present the follow slate of Officers, Directors up for reappointment, and new Directors for votes by the membership:

Officers:

President: Laura Jackson, Bedford County

Vice President: Carolyn Hendricks, Bedford County

Treasurer: Frank Haas, Lancaster County

Secretary: Sheree Daugherty, Allegheny County

Directors for Renomination:

Chelsea Beck, Elk County

Jeff Kenney, Chester County

Karter Witmer, Tioga County

New Directors:

Justin Merry, PhD, Cambria County

Connor Schmitt, Blair County

Aidan Hannon, Lackawanna County

Get to know our new director candidates by scrolling a bit further down!



Eastern Phoebe in Haafsville, Lehigh County.
Photo by David Neimeyer using a Nikon coolpix950.

Volunteers Needed for new Annotated List Committee

The last edition of the *Annotated List of the Birds of Pennsylvania* was published in 2005.

A quick survey of our members (and others) revealed a demand for a new edition.

I am putting together a committee to accomplish this task.

The project will include the following.

1. Decide on the format (if it ain't broke, don't fix it!).
2. Select a new cover photo.
3. Rewrite (update) the introductory pages.
4. Add new species (through taxonomic changes or new occurrences).

5. Update every species' occurrence descriptions.

6. Update the bar graphs.

The largest part of the work will be the updating of the data. I imagine splitting this up by assigning groups of birds to individual committee members (one taking warblers, one taking waterfowl, etc.).

Proofreading will also be a very important roll.

I can take care of the graphics and layout.

For updating the species accounts, I am looking for persons who have a good feel for bird distribution and occurrence in the state and are experienced with mining eBird data.

I expect to have one or two zoom meetings to get started, and then the slogging work will occur.

How much the work will be divided up will depend on the number of volunteers we get.

[If you are interested in volunteering, please let me know ASAP. Contact me by clicking here.](#)

Please respond by May 15.

-Frank Haas

Publications Manager

PS: You can purchase the current Annotated List at <https://pabirds.org/pso-sales-2/>.



	Erie Shore	Northwest	North Allegheny	South Allegheny	Ridge and Valley	Piedmont	Poconos	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Tundra Swan																			
*Wood Duck																			
Gadwall																			
* Eurasian Wigeon																			
* American Wigeon																			
* American Black Duck																			
* Mallard																			
* Blue-winged Teal																			
Cinnamon Teal																			

Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) - Rivers, lakes, fields, and in flight. Lancaster is the major wintering and spring staging area for the eastern North American population; up to 40,000 have been seen here at one time.

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) - Variety of wetlands, breeding in cavities in swamps, marshes, or along creeks; will use nest boxes. Population rebounded from near extirpation in early 1900s.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*) - Wetlands. Nested historically in Crawford and Butler.

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) - Wetlands, usually with American Wigeon. Most birds identified are males.

American Wigeon (*Anas americana*) - Variety of wetlands during migration; requires emergent vegetation for nesting. Several old and one recent (1986) nesting record in Crawford.

American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*) - Wetlands, but may occasionally nest far from water. Decreasing, in part due to competition and interbreeding with Mallard. Appears to be more susceptible to disturbance than Mallard.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) - Almost any wetland, including those in urban areas but may nest far from water. Most common and widespread waterfowl in Pa. Only during a complete winter freeze do populations diminish as the birds move out.

Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) - Wetlands with emergent vegetation, less common on open water than many other ducks.

Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*) - Seven or eight records: Quemahoning Res. Somerset, 4/16-17/1954 (Leberman 1988); PISP, late March, 1959 (Poole 1964); Turkhannock, Wyoming, 8/22/1974 (AB 28:616); Lake Arthur, Butler, 3/18/1984 (AB 36:910); Mammoth, Westmoreland, 4/27/1985 (AB 39:299); and Donegal L., Westmoreland, 5/8-31/1985 (photos-PORC) (AB 39:299). (Previous two records may have been same bird.) Octoraro L., Lancaster, 11/25/1994 (PB 8:218); Moraine SP, Butler, 11/5/1996 (PB 10:220); Curllsville, Clarion, 9/21/1998 (PB 12:131).

Get to Know our New Board of Director Candidates:

Justin Merry, PhD

**Avian ecologist at St. Francis University,
Cambria County**

I fell in love with birds while taking an ornithology course with Don Miles and Clay Corbin at Ohio University in ~1999. While I focused on insect sensory ecology in graduate school, my interest in birds was reawakened when I heard a Montezuma Oropendola while at an Animal Behavior conference in Costa Rica (2022). Over the past 3.5 years, I have been immersing myself in birds in both hobby and professional contexts. I participate in the PA Bird Atlas, am active in Juniata Valley Audubon Society, and have two burgeoning research projects with Saint Francis University students involving bird behavior, communication, and conservation.



Connor Schmitt

**Blair County atlaser including point counts,
PSO publications author of Birds of Note and
in leadership roles in JVAS**

I've only been birding for a handful of years, but in that time I've learned a lot of practical knowledge by getting involved in the birding community. The last year or so I've focused mainly on Atlasing, including being one of the Paid Point Count Technicians in the summer. I'm currently Secretary and Field Trip Chair of the Juniata Valley Audubon Society and will be taking over as President in mid-April. As I've gotten more experience in organizations like these, I've learned how useful they are in terms of awareness, community, and conservation.



Aidan Hannon

Ecology researcher and conservation science trainee at Hawk Mountain

I have been birding for the better part of two years, with this spring being the first season I'm mentally equipped for the incoming migrants! I bird with my local Audubon chapter and recently Pocono Mountains Regional Birders, and have been participating in the PA Breeding Bird Atlas this and last season. I am about to graduate with my bachelor's degree in Biology and have worked on ecology research at Wilkes University, as well as raptor ecology/migration research at Hawk Mountain. I plan to continue in wildlife research and conservation, focusing on avian ecology. There is nothing I value more than the natural world, and I am eager to contribute to conservation in PA and beyond in any way I can.



This Week's Avian Action Alerts



Did you celebrate Earth Day on April 22? In case you forgot, here are some conservation updates that are worth celebrating!

1. WETLANDS PROTECTION IN FLORIDA

Florida is a fantastic place to bird and many Florida birds depend on wetland habitats. In 2020, the Trump Administration approved a wetland permitting program by the state that put Wood Storks, Roseate Spoonbills, Florida panthers, and Florida manatees at risk. Fortunately, that decision was appealed by conservation groups and the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals recently ruled that permits to build in wetlands should stay in the hands of federal regulations, not the state of Florida.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

2. A REMARKABLE GOLDEN EAGLE JOURNEY REVEALED

Gwaihir, an Eastern Golden Eagle was captured and tagged by Mike Lanzone and Trish Miller in Kentucky on January 21, 2026. In February, he started his migration north. Instead of ending up in eastern Canada where Eastern Golden Eagles nest, Gwaihir flew northwest, deep into the Arctic of northern Alaska. His journey of 4,887 miles, tracked by Cellular Technologies, showed that he passed through “more than 235 protected areas in ten states” ...plus Alberta, British Columbia, and the Yukon before entering the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

READ MORE ABOUT GWAIHIR'S REMARKABLE JOURNEY [HERE](#)

READ MORE ABOUT MIKE AND TRISH'S TAGGING EFFORTS IN KENTUCKY [HERE](#)

3. THE SCARLET Tanager IS CLOSER TO STATE RECOGNITION

Thanks to Pa. Rep. Mandy Steele, House Bill 2316 has been introduced in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. If passed by the House and Senate, this spectacular bird will be designated as our State Migratory Bird. You are invited to join Audubon in Harrisburg to voice your support on June 1, which is also Native Species Day.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

4. EARTH DAY SURPRISE!

In a seemingly deliberate act of insult to conservation and stewardship, the House of Representatives was set to vote on the ESA Amendments Act of 2025 (H.R. 1897) on Earth Day that would have gutted the Endangered Species Act by undermining vital protections for threatened and endangered animals. Due to public outcry, the vote was canceled. The bill sponsors couldn't get the votes from Republicans since their attempt to turn the Endangered Species Act into the “Extinction Act” was met with thousands of protests. YOUR VOICE DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

PLEASE CALL PA REP. BRIAN FITZPATRICK (R) TO THANK HIM FOR SUPPORTING THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT AND OPPOSING H.R. 1897: [District Office 215-579-8102](#)

Submitted by Laura Jackson, Conservation Chair

REMINDER: Register for the 2026 PSO Birding Festival!

Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology 2026 Birding Festival

(and Annual Meeting)

June 19 – 21, 2026

Blair County Convention Center
Altoona, Pennsylvania



Registration for PSO's 2026 Birding Festival is OPEN! We hope you will be joining us in Altoona for the Festival's first-ever visit to Blair County. Have you registered yet?

The Festival features an incredible [schedule](#) of field trips, presentations, vendors, and chances to socialize. Scheduled during the height of nesting season, field trips will include observing nesting behaviors and contributing to the Pennsylvania Bird Atlas. The Saturday evening banquet will include a keynote from Ross and Melissa Gallardy on a record-breaking Pennsylvania big year.

Blair County and the surrounding region are home to a wonderful variety of nesting birds. Festival field trips will visit wetlands, grasslands, and streamside and upland forests. So whether you want to search for Henslow's Sparrows, Cerulean Warblers, Osprey, or the Worm-eating Warbler featured in this year's logo, there is a trip for you.

Visit <https://pabirds.org/2026-overview/> to register.

The deadline to register for the banquet is June 9 and the deadline for all registrations is June 14. Some field trips will fill, so early registration is recommended. Information on lodging and dining is available on the Festival website.

The Blitz Reminder



B4C

The 2026 PA Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation (B4C) is a means by which PSO raises funds to partner with Conservation Organizations big and small which are actively working one or more of the core areas supported by B4C funding:

- Bird-Safe Habitats
- Conservation Education
- Conservation Monitoring & Science
- Threat Mitigation

Organizations receiving funding must agree that the grant will support conservation work directly and not be used for administrative costs or for required habitat offsets associated with development projects. So, do the Blitz June 5-15.

Go to www.breedingbirdblitz.org for more information.

Bird the Blitz. Raise the funds. Protect the birds of PA.

2026 County Spotlights

**Bradford County
Birding Spotlight**

October 16-19, 2026

Our County Spotlights are PSO-organized weekend field trips to lesser-birded counties in Pennsylvania. Just one is left for 2026. Be sure to save the date!

Graphics by Tony Desantis.

Organization Information

To email a PSO officer or Board Member, click on the name below.

Officers

President – [Brian Byrnes](#) (Delaware)

Vice-President – [Carolyn Hendricks](#) (Bedford)

Secretary – [Sheree Daugherty](#) (Allegheny)

Treasurer – [Franklin Haas](#) (Lancaster)

Board Members

[David Barber](#) (Schuylkill) , [Chelsea Beck](#) (Elk), [Joseph Gyekis](#) (Centre), [Laura Jackson](#) (Bedford), [Jeff Kenney](#) (Chester) [Mary Alice Koeneke](#) (Butler), [Wayne Laubscher](#) (Clinton), [Richard Rieger](#) (Schuylkill), [Brian Shema](#) (Allegheny), [Doug Wentzel](#) (Huntingdon), [Karter Witmer](#) (Tioga)

Newsletter Editor

[Kaitlyn Stouch](#) (Centre)

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[View more info on our organization members here](#)



Did you Know...

We are on social media! We have a Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and even a Discord server for our members and friends. Make sure you join us on whatever your preferred platform is to get daily updates and chat with other birders around the state.



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