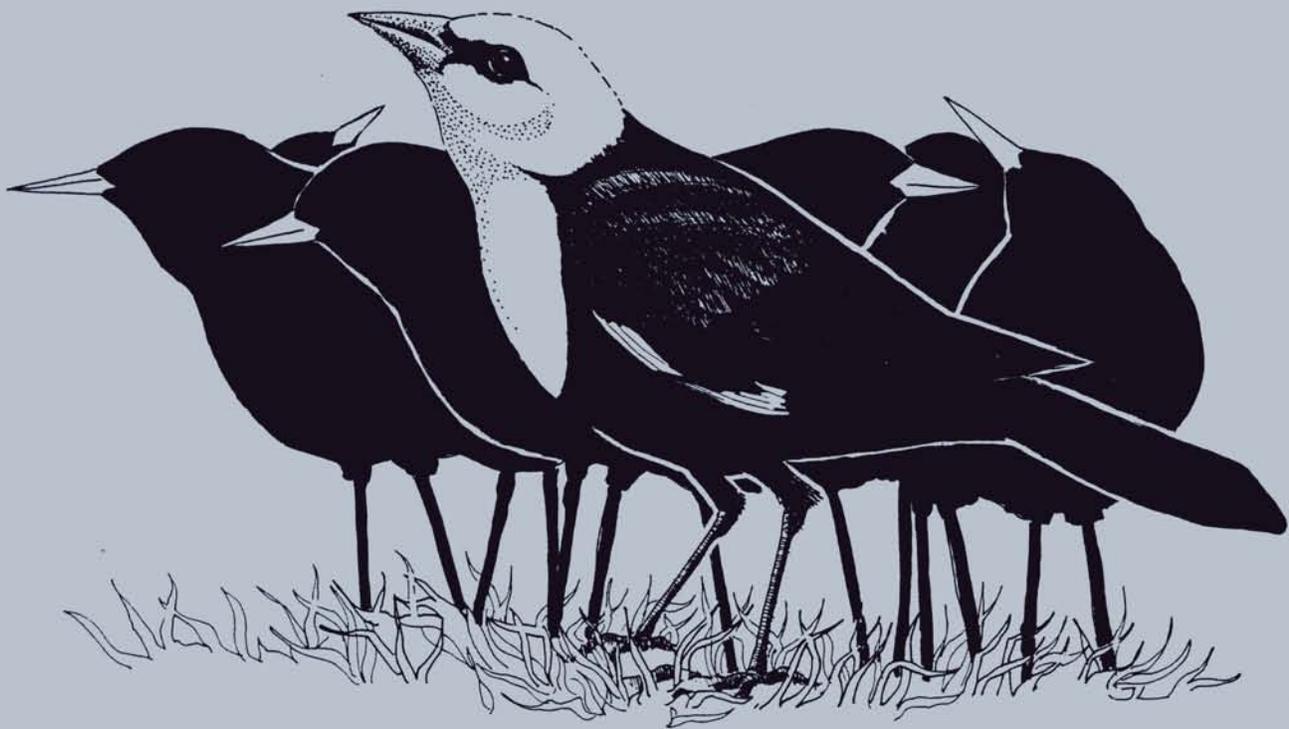


# PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS

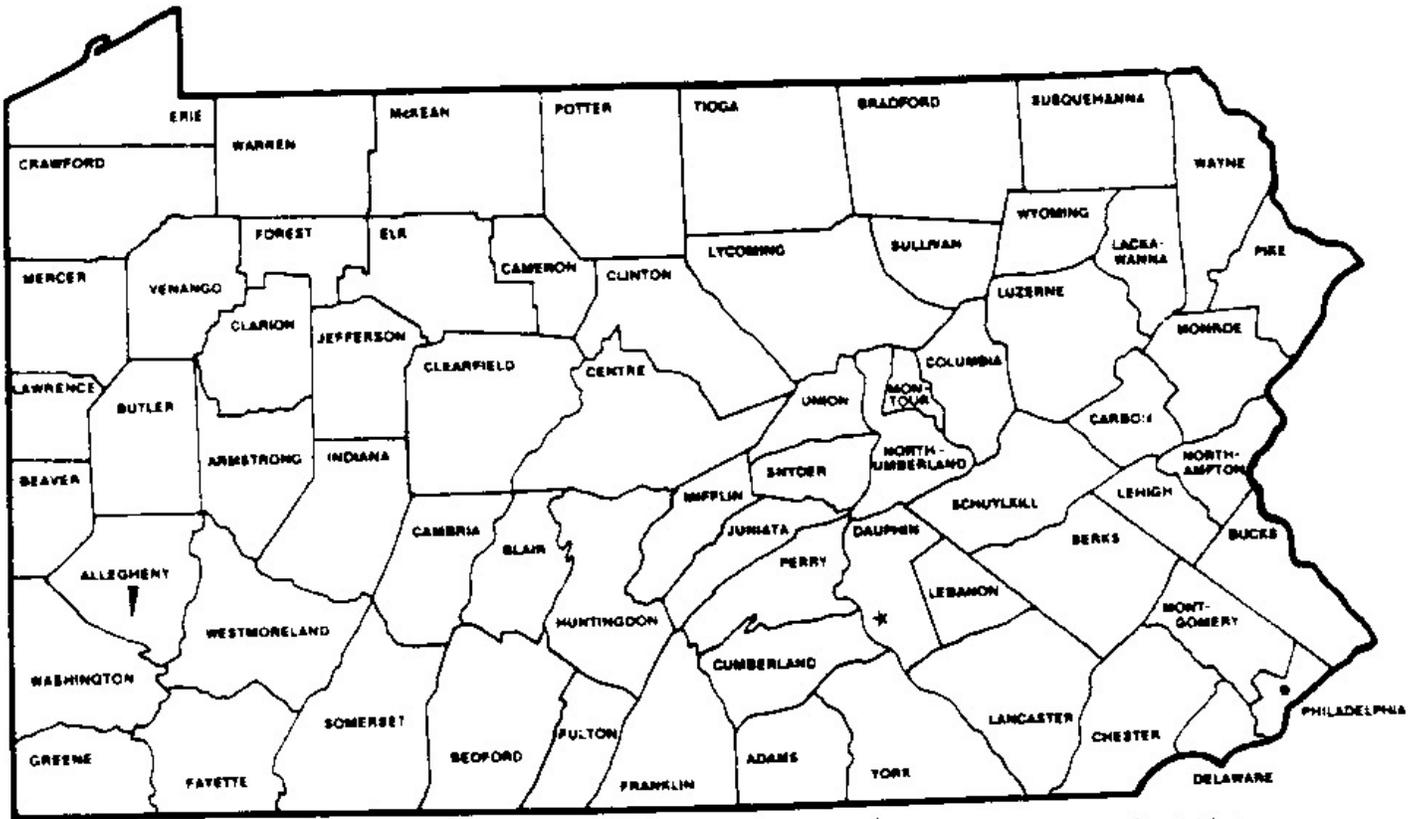
---



---

Volume 2, No.1

Jan-Mar 1988



▼ Pittsburgh

★ Harrisburg

● Philadelphia

# PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1, JAN - MAR 1988

## Table of Contents

---

Editorial	1
Letters	2
News & Announcements	3
Pennsylvania Needs (Schwalbe)	4
The Joys of Atlasing (Conant)	5
The Landowner (Mock)	6
Green-tailed Towhee in Bucks County (McNaught)	7
Waterfowl Watcher Alert (Marich)	8
Big Ma Ma (Dean)	9
Harold B. Morrin (Haas)	11
Our Pennsylvania Big Year (Haas)	12
Summary of the Season	16
County Reports	17

Cover: Yellow-headed Blackbird, by Jim Lockyer

Illustrations: Page 10, Jim Lockyer  
All others, Frank Haas



## from the Editors...

In this issue, we are starting two new features: Letters to the Editors and Personality Profile.

The lead articles are particularly pertinent as we enter the final year of the Breeding Bird Atlas Project. There really are joys in atlasing (Conant) and never rule out the possibility of gaining access to private property (Mock) for improving your species count for a block, or even adding a lifer.

Many of us have observed color-marked or tagged birds in the field and Marich gives us information for the reporting of same. Information is also being requested on Cedar Waxwings with orange, rather than yellow, tail tips (Carnegie Museum of Natural History).

Although we typically only have one species of hummingbird east of the Mississippi, they are still fun to watch as Barbara Dean attests. The ornithological needs of Pennsylvania are addressed and challenges for the birding community are presented by the Schwalbes.

One of the articles included in this issue is a report of our 1986 Pennsylvania Big Year. When it was learned that PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS would in fact become a reality, several people requested us to write about our record Big Year in 1986. We hesitated lest people would think we were using the magazine only for our own interests. But at the close of 1987 more requests were received so here it is. It will be presented in four parts, corresponding to each quarter.

One incentive for doing PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS was that as we traveled the Commonwealth in 1986 and talked with birders about the lack of a state-wide journal, more and more felt it was a super idea that was past the "yeah, it should be done some time" stage. We drove more than 29,000 miles that year, which provided us ample time to discuss what would be appropriate to include in such a publication.

Equally important is the opportunity to demonstrate the potential Pennsylvania has for birders. Each year approximately 300 species are found. Naturally, some years are better than others. In 1986 there were 308 species reported; in 1987, 298 species. As inveterate Pennsylvania birders for over two decades, when we hear that a lot of birders consider it a "boring" state our hackles are raised. Although we have seen almost 600 species in the AOU area, we are equally or more excited to see a new Pennsylvania bird; we currently have 323 species. Needless to say, we do not consider it a boring state. Our New Jersey lister friends equate finding 300 species in Pennsylvania with 350 for that state. Lack of an ocean is an obvious reason. Another is its larger size and the amount of traveling one must do in order to find a significant number of species each year.

As mentioned in the last issue, the time has come to form a State Records Committee, and steps are being taken to have one in operation by the end of this year. The Pennsylvania Biological Survey (to be described in a future issue) has agreed to be the organizational umbrella under which the committee will operate. It will be a sub-committee of the Ornithological Technical Committee (OTC). A set of by-laws and procedures has been drafted and is currently undergoing review by the OTC. We will keep you posted on the developments.

We invite you to submit letters/articles for inclusion in future issues. Material should be sent to us by the end of the month following the reporting quarter, *i.e.*, 30 April, 31 July, 31 October, and 31 January.

This is the first issue that includes advertising, and we hope that you will support these companies. This would help convince others of the marketing potential from this publication. If you know of any company or organization that

might be interested, please advise.

We would like to thank Karen Atwood once again for her able editorial assistance with several of the articles. Elsewhere you will find a listing of those individuals who contributed more than the subscription fee to help defray expenses. You cannot believe how much this was appreciated. A few were assigned a Patron designation for their support. PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS is quite unusual, if not unique, for a State journal, in that it is not funded by any organization and is therefore dependent on you for its existence.

Next issue will cover at least five known sightings of Mississippi Kite in Pennsylvania in April and May. There will be a lot of breeding bird atlas information, migration reports, and, we hope, more articles from you.

**Barb & Frank Haas**  
**Co-editors**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

### Red-bellied Woodpeckers in the 1700s

To the Editors:

**PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS** gets better and better and I want you to know that I feel privileged to play my small role in its production.

I thoroughly enjoyed your article on the spread of the Red-bellied Woodpecker in Pennsylvania. You might be interested in a few further items of interest concerning the bird in Pennsylvania. Peter Kalm, a student of Linnaeus, who visited Pennsylvania in 1748-1751, seems to have been the first to publish a note of the bird. His book of American travels, Vol. 2, appeared in Swedish in 1756 and therein you find, "*Picus Carolinus*, the Carolina woodpecker. It lives here also..." The translation into English was made as early as 1770.

Kalm spent a good deal of time in and around Philadelphia and one of his favorite visits was with John Bartram, whose son William, no doubt, was influenced by the exotic European naturalist. William appears to be the next to mention this bird in Pennsylvania. In fact, he classifies it among the resident birds of Pennsylvania in his "Travels...", which were published in 1791.

Neither Wilson (1808) nor Nuttall (1832) mention the bird specifically in Pennsylvania, but their range descriptions clearly include Pennsylvania. Both authors had access to a specimen (#1944) of the bird in Peale's Philadelphia Museum, but, alas, we do not know where it was collected, or what became of it.

Audubon (1842), declaring the Red-bellied Woodpecker "less common" than the Hairy Woodpecker, adds..."I have found their nest in orchards in Pennsylvania..."

These few additional items establish the bird in the state at least as early as the mid-18th Century and support your view that its population has exploded only in the mid-20th Century.

Keep up the valuable work you are doing for Pennsylvania birders.

Edward D. Fingerhood  
Philadelphia, PA

---

### Chickadee Separation

To the Editors:

I have a few comments concerning Kenneth Parkes' article on chickadee separation. While I agree with his recommendation that chickadee (sp) be more widely used, I disagree with his contention that visual characteristics are less reliable than voice. The songs probably are diagnostic but are not much use except in spring. As Parkes suggests, there is a great deal of convergence in call notes in the overlap zone of the two species. When I moved here from Massachusetts, I thought all Lebanon and Lancaster County chickadees were Carolina. It took some time before I learned that most of the chickadees in the northern half of this area are Black-capped. I think some chickadees are identifiable by calls but there is so much overlap that I rarely try.

Visually, the bib edge does seem to be unreliable in separating the two species in the field. However, the white feather edging in the flight feathers and particularly in the wing coverts does seem to provide a reliable method, at least from fall through late spring. In spring, some Carolinas acquire silvery, but not white, edges to the flight feathers while the coverts remain gray. This mark, as suggested by E. S. Thomas (*Birding* 11:8-9, 1979) almost always allows separation.

The only time it may fail is in late summer when the white feather edgings may wear away enough to make some Black-caps unrecognizable. It is certainly true that a very good look is required to see this mark and therefore many chickadees should remain unnamed.

Steve Santner  
Elizabethtown, PA

---

### Major Improvements

To the Editors:

I was a bit concerned about the viability of your magazine after the first two issues. But in for a dime, in for a dollar. The third issue made for easier reading...finally. But the fourth (issue) was not only a delight to read, but addressed issues pertinent to birding in Pennsylvania.

The publication has the potential to be "best in its class" across the nation. Do other states concern themselves with county reports? Do they write articles for all levels of birding? Not the six state journals I subscribe to. But maybe I am biased, living and birding in Pennsylvania.

Let us all get out and generate interest in **PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS**. The publication has been long overdue and now that the Haases have gotten the ball rolling it is up to us as charter subscribers to do something to make sure it continues. For example, we can all go to our local library and ask them to subscribe. We can support the advertisers (if that gets going) and say, "We saw your ad in PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS." We can even try and enlist new subscribers to ensure its longevity.

Thanks for what you have done - I hope this letter will get others to help you.

T. B. Atkinson  
Philadelphia, PA

## Stony Valley Remembered

To the Editors:

(Steve Santner's article on Stony Creek Valley appeared in Vol. 1, No. 4. and this letter was sent to us for inclusion here and forwarding to Steve.)

Wow! Did you bring back some fine memories from 1986. In that year during June and most of July I walked Stony and surrounding areas almost every day. Laid off from my job and in need of vacation, went out to Perry County (my Dad has a summer place there) for some time off. Finding the forest canopy almost non-existent due to Gypsy Moths, I set out to find some "new" areas to roam, somehow ending up behind Dauphin.

The first trip was the start of almost two months of exploration. I observed most of what you mentioned and much, much more! Saw my Black Bear at the site of Yellow Spring Village. Also two Rattlesnakes - yes, they may still be with us as I do not kill snakes. Many coyotes - also seeing three pups with adults. Did not see Bobcat, but I found (believe it or not) a Bobcat claw on the fringe of Devil's Race Course. Could go on and on! You know 'cause we both know the area. Since then, of course, I'm working and again in need of some time in Stony! I go back when I can, one day at a time.

So, thanks Steve. I really enjoyed the memories! Perhaps later, farther down the trail, our paths will cross? You really got a lot of good information into an article of this length. Keep up the fine writing. And, Steve, don't tell too many people about Stony. Let's be selfish. Some of this is true "wilderness." Jus' kidding!

Did sight an adult Bald Eagle at Dehart. And, Steve, I thought I heard a Mountain Lion too?

Don Orris  
Levittown, PA

---

## Thanks

To the Editors:

My goodness, what a wonderful issue of PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS! That piece of work should certainly recapture all of your current subscribers and attract many new ones. We didn't expect to be the star of the show. It was so good of you to give us the plug, and it was so prominently placed that it won't be missed by a single reader.

I was dumbfounded to learn that progressive Pennsylvania does not have a bird records committee. It is good that you are working to get one started. To be able to list controversial sightings with a "pending acceptance by committee" note will make your work a lot easier.

One question - was the frog story true? It was a terrific vehicle for giving people an outlet for their outrage.

Thanks again for mentioning us in the magazine. Maybe it will help - our subscriber base is particularly poor in Pennsylvania, considering the population.

As for **PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS** - keep up the good work. You are making a really important contribution and are doing it very well.

Pam and Bob Odear  
Bob-O-Link, Jamestown, NC

*Yes, the frog story was true, Arlene confirms.....eds.*

---

## On the Right Track

To the Editors:

Good work! Print in the last issue is a great improvement, and the extra articles add variety. I find that I read **PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS** much more thoroughly than American Birds (when AB comes, that is), and I'm much more likely to send observations to **PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS**. I wonder if the latter is also true of

other readers. Given the number of reports, it probably is. Looking forward to next year.

Rudy Keller  
Boyetown, PA

---

## \*\* NEWS \*\*

### Cedar Waxwings

Since 1969 Cedar Waxwings, both adults and juveniles, have appeared in several states with orange, rather than the normal yellow, tail tips. The color of the tail-feather tips on the most intensely colored individuals is approximately burnt orange. Various stages of intermediacy between this color and the normal rich yellow have been observed. Researchers at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Natural History are planning an investigation of the nature of this pigment. If you see such a bird, please let them know. They are interested in geographic distribution of these waxwings. Please send information to Kenneth C. Parkes or D. Scott Ward, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

Reprinted from the Lancaster Bird Club "Call Notes."

\*\*\*\*\*

### An aerie sight

#### Two red-tailed hawks alter plans for bridge repair

by Ken Fisher

Two red-tailed hawks have nested in the girders of the Swindell Bridge on the North Side, prompting construction crews to proceed cautiously on a \$3.4 million repair project.

If there are eggs in either of the two nests, workers won't be allowed to tamper with them or repair bridge

girders nearby for about 10 weeks, according to state Game Warden Dale Hockenberry.

The birds commonly nest in bridges throughout Western Pennsylvania, according to Chuck Tague, education coordinator of the Pittsburgh Aviary.

John Perri, the city's supervisor for the bridge project, said he doubts the project will be delayed because there is enough work scheduled for the 15-month project to keep crews busy elsewhere on the span. He said there are more than 138,000 pounds of structural steel and 6,200 rivets to be replaced by high-strength bolts on the 1,100-foot-long bridge.

After the bridge was closed Tuesday morning, Mosites Construction Co. engineers were notified that the two birds had nested among the X-shaped girders on the Northview Heights side of the East Street Valley.

Hockenberry looked at the nests with binoculars from a hillside but couldn't tell whether there were eggs in them. He estimated the nests to be nearly 2-1/2 feet wide. He'll make another inspection next week.

The birds breed between February and June and their incubation period is 34 days. Hockenberry said the young birds remain in the nest for about six weeks. Hockenberry said it is illegal to harm the birds or their nests.

Reprinted from the Pittsburgh Post Gazette: Friday, March 18, 1988.

\*\*\*\*\*

## PENNSYLVANIA NEEDS

by

*Paul and Glenna Schwalbe  
Jersey Shore, PA*

The birding community of Pennsylvania has made great strides forward over the past several years. We now have at least twenty-nine

active bird clubs or societies (Rickert, 1978), one of which, the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club (DVOC), is about to celebrate its 100th anniversary. Many excellent regional bird-finding guides have been published for various parts of the state, and now the atlas of the breeding birds of Pennsylvania is all but complete.

A wonderful development has taken place in a state whose birding community historically has been divided by more than one natural barrier, as well as by regionalism, for whatever reasons. It may well be noted in the chronicles of Pennsylvania ornithology that 7-8 November 1986 were of great significance. It was on those dates that, for the first time ever, according to the knowledge of those present, there was a state-wide meeting of ornithologists from every part of the Commonwealth.

This was at the annual Coordinator's Meeting for the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project, which was held at Sieg Conference Center near Lamar in Centre County. There were 62 people present, including most of the top birders of the state and the coordinators for all of the state's 35 atlas regions. Thus representation was complete and state-wide. A similar event occurred on 6-7 November 1987 at the same location, with most of the same people present. At both meetings the desire for a state-wide ornithological organization was strongly expressed. This is definitely one of Pennsylvania's needs.

We feel that for any state to be as it were - "Ornithologically Complete" - at least from an organizational perspective, it needs at least four different organs. As indicated above, a state-wide ornithological organization, *i.e.*, club, society, or whatever it may be called, is one of the four. The other three

are as follows: a state-wide publication, a records committee of similar scope, and a repository for state records.

The Pennsylvania birding community, as you all well know, thanks to the capable leadership of Frank and Barbara Haas, now has its publication which you are reading at this very moment: PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS. We now also have lines of communication established across the state, thanks again to the atlas effort, through which a state organization could be established. This state organization could serve its members as a vehicle for the sharing of birding experiences and information, and could be a nucleus for the outgrowth of other ornithological endeavors. It may also turn out to be a conservation force within the state, and perhaps have an educational outreach as well. However, its true nature would be determined by its founders. Will the leadership please step forward!

With a broadened scope of birding effort throughout the state, more accidentals and extralimitals are being found. Guidelines for what is and what is not acceptable evidence for such rarities must be established, as well as the treatment of the evidence obtained to be considered by a body of referees created for this purpose. This would be, at least in part, the function of a Records Committee.

The state Records Repository would be for photographs and other documentation of important records of rare birds, etc., as well as for the deliberations of the Records Committee itself. Perhaps this could be achieved, at least in part, with the cooperation of VIREO.

We would hope that a forum has now begun for the consideration of the three aspects listed above, which Pennsylvania now lacks in its birding community.

# The Joys of Atlasing

by

*Skip Conant, Springfield, PA*

As a small boy I was fascinated by birds and by the time I was twelve I had acquired a modest (very modest) life list.

Then came the terrible teens and between sports and peer pressure the birds were all but forgotten. When I was a teen-ager birdwatching was for wimps and was even lower than playing on the tennis team.

Marriage, with its inherent responsibilities followed, and it wasn't until seven years ago that I became re-acquainted with my old feathered friends. By this time the family was raised and the allure of sports was wearing thin. (They kept moving first base further back every year.)

The first thing to do was to bring my life list up to a degree of respectability so I wouldn't have to "hem and haw" when asked, "How many lifers do you have?" The next few years I concentrated on "lifers," enjoying every birding moment, but knowing something was missing.

Then in the summer of 1985 I met Dan Brauning. In the course of conversation I mentioned I had a summer cottage on the Sullivan-Wyoming County line. Dan's eyes lit up like a Roman candle. He explained the Breeding Bird Atlas project and before the conversation was over I had agreed to do two blocks in the immediate vicinity of my cottage in 1986. It seems birders are few and far between in the northcentral counties and Doug Gross, the coordinator for the area, was trying to cover Sullivan County by himself.

It never ceases to amaze me that people living in one of the loveliest areas of our state know so little about their surroundings. They know four animals: Deer, Turkey, Trout, and Catfish. And every hawk is a chickenhawk.

In May of 1986 I started working on my two blocks and now I

was no longer just listing, but actually studying birds. Was that singing male Blackburnian on territory? Did that Hermit Thrush have food in its mouth and where was it heading? Suddenly new avenues of enjoyment were opening up.

I particularly enjoy the bird songs and with this knowledge and being on almost a first name basis with the birds around my cottage I was able to confirm a high percentage in my two blocks.

All this was so enjoyable and challenging that in 1987 I agreed to do eight more blocks. Lots of surprises were in store. A singing Hooded Warbler showed up on Reese's Mountain at 1700 ft. elevation. I heard and saw it three weekends running. Louisiana Waterthrushes were found to be fairly common at higher elevations. A pair of Tufted Titmice were heard and seen at 2000 ft. on top of Dutch Mountain. A singing Grasshopper Sparrow turned up in a field near Dushore.

I remember well a June morning in Dushore #6. I was walking along a small bubbly woodland stream when a Louisiana Waterthrush flushed from the bank just ahead of me. I quickly sat down and in turn the waterthrush alit just ahead of me. Then a second one appeared. The two birds were working the stream edge for insects and taking them to a noisy youngster perched atop a rock further downstream. I sat entranced for perhaps a half an hour watching the two adults bobbing up and down, looking like a pair of mechanical wind-up toys as they continued to catch food for junior.

Then on Memorial Day weekend I visited a small State Game Lands pond in Lopez #6. As I stood watching Wood Ducks and Mallards, another small duck flew in. I got on it and it was a male Green-winged

Teal. Waterfowl migration was long over and I had never seen a teal in the area during the summer months. A check of the breeding range map in Peterson's Field Guide showed nothing for Pennsylvania. What was it doing here?

The following weekend I revisited the pond and this time there were two males and a female. One male was alternately displaying to the female and chasing the other male. On subsequent visits I continued to see one male but not the female.

Then in early July as I stood surveying the pond, Mama teal came swimming out of the reeds followed by 10 ducklings. I was so excited I felt as if I'd just reached the summit of Mt. Everest.

To be safe, I appraised Doug Gross and he verified the sighting a few days later. By this time Dan Brauning knew about it and advised me it was only the second known nesting record for Pennsylvania.

My only disappointment is the Atlasing Program has only a year to go and that I wasn't involved from the very beginning.

What surprises lie in store for 1988?

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Landowner - Best Source of Information

by

Dick Mock, Davidsville, Pa.

On 4 May 1986 as Mike and Noreen Senkovich traveled toward Powdermill Nature Reserve to enjoy a day of bird banding, they observed a "dove-like" long-legged bird land on an electric line, and saw it touch the elbows together as it folded its wings over its back. Mike thought this action was unusual and told Mr. Robert C. Leberman, of Carnegie Museum of Natural History fame, about this weird yellowlegs (?) landing on a wire. Mike quickly learned that a sober yellowlegs most certainly would not land on a wire, and if one had landed on an electric line it most certainly would not be sober, and therefore unable to clap its elbows together before folding its wings. Bob explained that the observed specimen was most likely an Upland Sandpiper, *Bartramia longicauda*.

On the following weekend, I rode along with Mike and Noreen to Powdermill and they informed me of the incident. I had lived two school terms in western Nebraska, and two in Ohio, and had never observed an Upland Sandpiper. This bird from the Argentine pampas had always remained a mythical unknown to me. We observed all the wires and poles and posts in the region that morning, and left with mythical *Bartramia* still a myth. This could be the end of the story - but maybe God loves birdwatchers after all!

On June 22nd, my brother and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Gregory D. Mock, took an evening walk after a trying weekend in Pittsburgh. Greg is a medical doctor and rather well-practiced in matters of observation. He informed me that as they walked past the John Lehman farm, these funny, strange

birds kept swooping the tops of their heads. He said they were quite different, and that he had never seen a bird like this before.

He described them as brownish like a Killdeer, flew like a gull, landed on a pole or wire like a dove, looked a little pigeon-like, and held their wings over their backs when they folded them. I thought he was reading to me from a field guide. Then he said that when the birds were agitated they made a loud "prrrrrrr r r r r," like a Spaniard rolling his "R's." Greg can do a real good imitation of the bird. He doesn't take after his brother. Much to the dismay of my Spanish teacher, I still cannot roll "R"s.

Trying to sound real professional and not displaying my excitement, I said, "I think I know what you have there. It sounds as if it 'might be' Upland Sandpipers," while thinking, "The very creature that has evaded my eyesight for 26 years!" It had been 9 p.m. when Greg called. I told him that I would check the sighting first thing in the morning.

I didn't sleep very well during the humid overcast night, and was up a 6 a.m. After arriving at the farm, and stepping out of the car, the first thing I heard was the Spaniard. My heart was in my throat. It took me 15 minutes and a half-mile walk to find the birds. I had almost given up when I spotted a bird walking through the pasture grass. As I focused on the sandpiper, I also spotted two downy young running for cover, about three feet from the adult. My total observation time was seven minutes. As I turned to walk back to the barn, one adult landed on the wire above me, another adult landed on the pole in front of me, another was hovering in the wind over my head, and I heard others behind me down by the pond.

I was so excited. I had to tell

someone. It is hard to find people to tell at 6:30 a.m. I stopped at Greg's and told him that they were definitely Upland Sandpipers. I went home and filled out the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Verification Form. I then went to Dr. Tom Dick's and told him of the find, called work, and swapped days off.

I called Mr. John Lehman to ask permission to park along his field edge, and to let him know what I would be doing. He seemed rather intrigued that someone would be interested in Upland "Plovers", and I was shocked that he knew what an Upland Sandpiper was.

Later that day, when I returned to the farm for another opportunity to look for the birds, I decided to introduce myself before pursuing the sandpipers. He and his wife invited me out on the porch, where we sat and talked until 4:50 p.m. During our discussion I learned that he was an avid birdwatcher for more years than I am old, a "retired" school teacher from the Johnstown Christian School, and one of Stan Shetler's (Curator of Systematic Botany, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.) natural science mentors. He told me that he has 350 species of birds on his life list. Then he said, "Actually it is more than 350. I started my life list at the age of 70 to show people that life isn't over at 70."

John is a diabetic, and doesn't get around as well as he used to. He drives the car down to the pond area and uses it as a blind from which he has made some remarkable observations. Some of them he would not allow me to share because, as he said, "There was no one here at the time to verify them." A sign of a truly good ornithologist. By the way, he has had past personal observations printed in American Birds.

Mr. Lehman keeps records of his observations. He dug out his annual records on the Upland Sandpiper (plover). These gave both the date and location on the property of each first sighting. They date back to 20 April 1961. From his detailed observations he believes that the sandpipers nest on the mild sloping pasture.

I noted some traditional practices that he employs to assist wildlife on the farm. Fields are not cut all at the same time. Even with individual fields, cuttings are staggered. Mr. Lehman always used a flushing bar, and when possible someone would walk in front of the bar to check nest sites at the flush. This helps to save tight-sitting birds like the Upland Sandpiper. Most of the fence rows on the barn side of the farm are traditional hedge rows. The farm still supports an old orchard and tree lot. The pond has between 20 and 50 feet (more in some places) of natural field border. On the two bordering farms there are also various stages of pasture growth.

You might think that land management does not matter to wildlife. Consider this. Besides Upland Sandpipers, the farm also supports healthy populations of Bobolinks, E. Meadowlarks, E. Bluebirds, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Savannah Sparrows. In the past, the pond has hosted such unusual visitors as Bewick's Wren, Bohemian Waxwing, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Water Pipit, Sora, and Virginia Rail. Land management does matter.

Consider this also. Practically everything of scientific value listed in this article was gained by asking permission to enter private property! Remember that the land owner can be your best source of information.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Green-tailed Towhee in Bucks County *First Pennsylvania Record* by *Bruce McNaught***

On 23 December 1987 several staff members of the Bucks County Audubon Society briefly saw an unusual bird at the feeding station outside our office at the Honey Hollow Environmental Education Center. They described the bird to me as having a greenish-gray back, no streaking, white throat and rufous crown. After some discussion we concluded that the bird may have been a Green-tailed Towhee. However, the view was so brief and under such poor weather conditions, that we wanted to confirm the sighting.

We continued to keep an eye out for the bird over the holidays. On 6 January 1988, the morning after an evening snow storm, the bird reappeared on the ground at the feeding station in full sunlight, confirming our sighting. We immediately got the news on the hotline, notified folks from the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club and other birding friends.

From that date on, the towhee appeared regularly at our feeding station (about every hour), allowing hundreds of birders to get a good look over the next several weekends. We even put up signs and a map directing our many visitors where to park and view the towhee. This was the best thing that ever happened to put Honey Hollow Environmental Education Center and the Bucks County Audubon Society on the "map."

The bird stayed mainly in several thick tangles of brush near the feeding station, often coming in with White-throated Sparrows to feed on cracked corn. This period of regular feeding continued through the cold weather, until a warm spell starting in mid-January melted the remaining snow. From then on the bird came to the feeding station much more sporadically, about once or twice per day during warm spells and more often in cold weather. (The bird was last reported on 2 May 1988, eds.) It seemed to be quite accustomed to people watching and was unperturbed about the comings and goings at the Center.



Green-tailed Towhee, Honey Hollow Nature Center, Bucks County, January 1988. Photo Bob Mitchell.

## Waterfowl Watcher Alert! Neck-collared Geese and Swans Being Sighted

by

*Tony Marich, Markleton, PA*

The following sightings were all in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, and based on my notes at the time of observation.

24 November 1985 at Somerset Lake: I saw a pair of Tundra Swans mid-lake. As I walked along the shoreline, I noticed a black collar on one individual's neck. After an hour of shivering and trying to hold 20 power binoculars steady, I still could not read the yellow markings on the collar. Christmas of that year found a 15X-45X zoom spotting scope under my tree.

21 June 1987 at Somerset Lake: It's not always convenient to carry the scope through the brush, so it sits in the pick-up until I see something needing a closer look. A hundred feet away a large Canada Goose steps up onto a mudbar and a glitter of metal on its leg gets my attention. Now with my 7X binoculars (I own 4 pair of binoculars and one scope - got to have something in each vehicle and at my office window) I take a closer look and realize this bird also has a reddish-gray collar. It is resting just at the point of the neck where the gray of the breast meets the black neck. The iron-stained, faded markings were impossible to read with those binoculars. I still wonder what markings were on the collar as the goose stepped back into the water and swam away.

9 September 1987 along a county farm road: A flock of about 50 Canada Geese are standing in a yard between the road and farmpond. Thirty feet away stands a goose with a gray collar. It's relatively easy to read the faded black letter/number code on the

reddish iron mineral stained gray collar. I wonder if this might be the same bird seen in June. I look back as the bird walks over to the pond and into the midst of the other geese. I scan the moving mass of birds looking for other collars. No bird is more than a hundred feet away. I look for my collared bird. Five minutes of scanning with the 7X binoculars and I can't find it. That's how easy it can be to miss a collared bird. It was somewhere among the 50 or so birds swimming, dipping and doing what geese do. It was time for me to move along and I had the code jotted down on my notepad. A report on this sighting will be mailed in as soon as I get home.

18 November 1987 at the same pond: While driving along, a yellow collar is spotted on a goose's neck. The code is easily noted and gets reported that evening. No other collar was seen in the flock.

12 January 1988 at Meyersdale: My curiosity is aroused by the more than 200 Canada Geese staying at a safe area along the Casselman River, so I make a special effort to get a closer look. Thanks to the cooperation of the Meyersdale Municipal Authority's Wastewater Plant operator, I am advised as to the proper time to make a visit to scope the wintering flock. I find what I've been looking for when I recognize the two collared birds in the flock as being the same ones spotted earlier in the Fall. A report of the re-sighting is sent in.

22 March 1988 at Somerset Lake: Cold weather has coated the lake with a skim of ice. Three flocks of waterfowl are on the lake. About a hundred puddle ducks stand on the ice in a shallow cove; about 150 divers keep a small area free of ice along the west shoreline. Across the lake, just off the point of the most remote cove, is a flock of about 100 Tundra Swans. Most

have arrived since the previous day. They are standing on the ice, many with heads tucked in. Thinking of the swan that got away two and one-half years earlier, I carry the scope to the water's edge on the west shore. I see two birds with bands on both legs. I know this is a tip off to watch for a collar. Tucked heads don't lend well to seeing collars, but finally a head goes up and a gray collar is seen. It's a long way across the lake, but 45X helps and so does good lighting. I jot down the code and the birds begin to move about. As I continue watching, the collar is periodically seen. I jot down the code again...same code. This assures me that I've gotten it correct. That's essential. After twenty minutes of watching for a collar on the other double leg-banded bird or elsewhere in the flock, I decide only one collar was present.

Sending in my record of collar sightings made me a participant in research projects covering the Atlantic Flyway from Canada to South Carolina. These projects hope to unravel some of the mysteries of waterfowl migration in this flyway, specifically how and why migration and wintering distribution are changing significantly. Comparing data between Canada Geese (a heavily hunted species) and the Tundra Swan (a relatively non-hunted species), may reveal the solution. I think it's worth the extra effort to look for the collars.

A report of sightings should include collar color and code, date and time seen, flock size, type habitat where seen, specific location (waterbody, municipality, county, state) and your name, address, and phone number.

This information should be sent to: Danny Bystrak, Biologist, Bird Banding Lab, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Laurel, MD

20708. For goose sightings a copy of your report to: Dr. R. A. Malecki, New York Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, 206 Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853. Or in the case of swan sightings, send a copy of your report to: Dr. Roland J. Limpert, Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, P.O. Box 1745, Easton, MD 21601. You will then be sent a report on the sighting history of the bird you saw.

I learned that one of my geese was a bird from a local effort to establish a resident breeding population in an adjacent county, the other was a New York bird which had spent the previous winter in Virginia, but decided to vacation in Somerset County, PA, this past winter. My swan stopped in Somerset on its northward trip from Pungo National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina. My report was the first sighting since it was collared 11 February 1988. You could help find where it is going, just look closely for those easily missed collars.

I feel fortunate to live in an area which, as these studies are showing, is a major waterfowl crossroads and to be able to help out in the efforts to increase knowledge of our waterfowl resources.

Tony is a supplier of wood carving materials and active in the Alliance for Wetlands & Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, Waterfowl U.S.A.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Big Ma Ma** *by* **Barbara Dean, New Castle**

I am an artist and have the good fortune to be able to work out of my home. This has given me the opportunity to record observations at our feeders for several years. We monitor six hummingbird feeders in our yard.

In May of 1983 a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird came into our garden in Lawrence County. Her white cap, a result of partial albinism, made her easy to identify. We named her "Big Ma Ma." On 26 August she brought two young birds in to feed. It may have been their first trip from the nest because their legs seemed weak and when they perched to feed this first time they appeared to be shivering. We enjoyed them until they departed on 21 September.

She returned the following Spring and defended the feeders and the bed of cardinal flowers. She showed up with her offspring on 20 August.

I started an all red still life on 11 September. I was using a lot of cadmium vermilion, which is a very intense red, and had hung a red bandanna over the easel. Big Ma Ma would feed at my elbow on the other side of the window and glide along it, looking in. Her companionship was such that I titled the painting, "You Loved Red."

In May of 1985 I made a point of glancing out the window expecting/hoping to see her arrive. Early on the morning of the ninth I caught a glimpse of a male English sparrow knocking something into the hedge. I grabbed my binoculars. That "something" was Big Ma Ma. Several other English sparrows became alert and before I could remove the seed feeder, she was knocked to the ground. She preened in the hedge and each time she

made a run for "her" feeder, the sparrows gave chase. They lined up on the fence and even perched on the hook that held her feeder. After a few hours the sparrows lost interest.

That summer Big Ma Ma was dominant over three other females and occasionally we'd see a male hummer at dusk.

Once again on 26 August she came in with a youngster tailing a few feet behind her. In her usual manner, she barely cleared the fence, but the inexperienced youngster plowed right into the honeysuckle that covered the fence. I watched the vines shake as the young bird worked its way through and then down to the bed of impatiens.

Meanwhile, Big Ma Ma was making a big deal of clearing birds away from her favorite perches and driving goldfinches away from the zinnia bed. She moved chickadees, house finches, sparrows, and even jays. She began by flying to the bird that she wished to move out. She would stop directly in front of the bird at eye level and a foot or so away, assuming an upright position with her body perpendicular to the ground and (with her blurred wings, you might picture a cross) facing that bird, she would do a side-to-side flight. The width of this side-to-side flight varied from six feet to ten feet. She would pass from one side of the bird to the other, always facing the "intruder." Her tail was always fanned and she accompanied this behavior with a loud ticking sound. After six or eight passes the bird would leave. This behavior lasted through the end of the season. She used a different approach for woodpeckers. She simply startled them by "buzzing" past. She would fly at top speed very close to their heads and the woodpecker would hitch up the snag and fly off.

The last week of August was very hectic here. Big Ma Ma seemed to be involved in constant face-offs and high speed chases with the other adult females, who were also trying to get their young in to feed. By 30 August she had driven off all the other females.

The next day Big Ma Ma fed at the feeder while her young one fed at the nicotiana and canna. They flew up to their favorite perch and Big Ma Ma fed it. The last thing I saw her do surprised me. She ate a bee.

We had both males and females here on a regular basis in 1986, but we didn't see Big Ma Ma until 19 June. Her appearance was drab and scaly and when she came into the yard it was on a very low flight path. She was low in the pecking order. She never challenged for ownership of any feeder and she stayed clear of the invisible territorial boundary zones. Fortunately I had scattered the cardinal flowers around the yard, because they were her favorite and she was able to enjoy them without any hassle. The last time I watched this delightful bird she was working one of the lilies on 22 July.

In 1986 and 1987 both males and females were here on a regular basis and a pattern unfolded. Early in May the males were dominant over all the females. A round, roly-poly male took dominion over all the males and females.

Roly Poly was the dominant male. We called our new dominant female "Lucy," so named for her exceptionally clear white throat. Male English sparrows harassed our hummingbirds for a few days at the end of May. Once I observed a male English sparrow cut across the flight path of a visiting female hummer and they both went down behind the fence.

Roly Poly and Lucy displayed courtship behavior in June and then my personal favorite hummer

of 1987 appeared on 15 July. She was a sturdy looking bird and the tiny dots on her throat were visible from across the yard. Now Roly Poly was still boss, but each time this sturdy female visited she vigorously challenged Roly Poly at his feeder and temporarily would force Lucy over to another feeder. We called her "Mean Jean."

Mean Jean allowed her son, Junior, to perch with her at the fence feeder. Soon Mean Jean began instructing Junior to take her place at the fence feeder, sit tight, and stand guard. This is how she did it. She flew off her perch beside Junior. Facing him, she assumed the vertical position and moved just slightly above him. In a non-threatening gesture and with her tail fanned, but minus the ticking, she did the side-to-side flight. She made three to four passes at a very slow pace in an area about 3-feet wide. You might say she "crowded" him for a few seconds. Junior obeyed and Mean Jean moved about 15 feet away to a new perch at the edge of Lucy's territory. She repeated this behavior with Junior over the next five days.

On 22 August Mean Jean did the side-to-side "stay put" maneuver with Junior and then she flew to the hemlock at the edge of Lucy's territory. She then flew inside Lucy's territory. They faced off with tails fanned and made the loud ticking sounds. They rose up only about a foot and they both flopped over, bill to bill with bellies horizontal to the ground. After one wobbly revolution, they looked like a silent, immobile green flying saucer with a whitish outer band. A short time later, Mean Jean flew right to Lucy's feeder. They faced off with tails fanned and silently rose up about six inches. They rose up and down eight times together directly above Lucy's feeder in a blur of green. Then they both

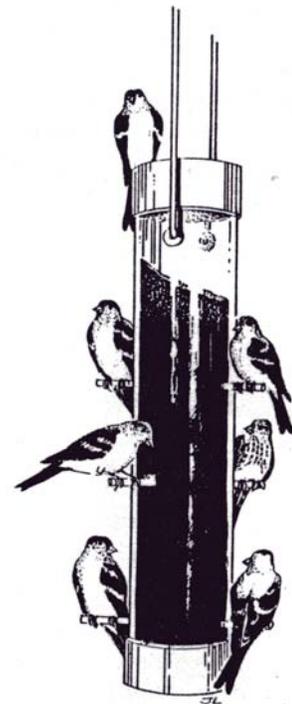
settled down on the feeder and fed side by side. A few minutes later they did the same behavior, but as they fed side by side, a third female challenged Lucy. Lucy left Mean Jean feeding there while she chased the third female out with the loud ticking sounds.

Mean Jean gained access to Lucy's feeder, but Lucy retained ownership of it for the rest of the season.

Junior finished up the season looking menacing as he guarded his feeder, but in reality, he would watch an adult feed at his feeder and only give chase as the adult started to leave. Just as in a game of Monopoly, Mean Jean had acquired the east fence feeder and two of the studio feeders. After she gained access to Lucy's feeder she took no further interest in it.

15 September was their last day here. Now, I find myself eagerly anticipating the hummers of the 1988 summer!

\*\*\*\*\*



## Personality Profile:

Harold B. Morrin

by

Barbara M. Haas

(*PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS* is starting a new feature to acquaint our readers with some of the top birders across the state.)

We have been privileged to know Harold for over 20 years and know that many of you, especially in the Lancaster area, have had the privilege of birding with him or reading of his accomplishments.

The Lancaster County Bird Club is a vibrant and vigorous organization blessed with highly capable leaders who travel widely, are expert birders, and are talented in many ways. Many of them are nationally or internationally known as professional ornithologists, including Ted Parker and Andy Mack, and nature photographer Jeff Lepore.

Harold Morrin did not begin birding until the mid-1950's, when he was in his thirties, but once hooked he pursued his hobby with incredible enthusiasm. Perhaps his birthplace, Bird-In-Hand, PA, contributed to this hobby. He has observed 676 species in the AOU area (the 48 contiguous states, Canada, and Alaska) and has close to 3000 species on his World List. Harold has traveled to 40+ countries and 4 continents, birding in North America, South America, Africa, and Australia. His careful attention to detail makes him respected by top-flight birders wherever he goes. He does his homework prior to visiting a new location and is always honing his skills to add to the knowledge of local avifauna.

Harold received a B.S. degree in Economics from Franklin and Marshall College. He was employed by Lancaster Press, Inc./Tapsco, Inc., for 39 years, where he served

as Secretary/Treasurer prior to his retirement in 1985.

Harold served as President of the Lancaster County Bird Club; his administrative skills provided guidance and professional stature, whether serving at the helm or leading field trips. He is a natural teacher, and those who participated on his field trips note that he always tried to make sure that each person got to see all the birds. He revived the Club's newsletter, named it Call Notes, edited the publication for many years, and still is a contributor.

Most recently he conceived the idea, and served as Chairman of the Editorial Committee for the book published by the LCBC in 1984, "A Guide to the Birds of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania." Unfortunately, the book is now out of print. The latest word is that the authors are considering updating and we look forward to hearing that it is again in print.

But perhaps his most important contribution, one that gives Harold much satisfaction, is teaching and encouraging young people to understand, appreciate, and preserve our natural heritage, particularly birds. I heard about Harold before I met him from one of his proteges, Andy Mack. Harold and Andy had just returned from a marathon weekend drive to Florida chasing some vagrant. Virtually all of the individuals in the van were young, intense birders who would not have been able to get there any other way...they were too young to drive. Although soft-spoken, when he speaks you listen. And he can get young people to listen; but he more importantly makes them think and become independent thinkers. Just because there are field guides printed, does not necessarily mean that all the information about a species has been written and not all field characteristics are listed. His

students are taught to observe the bird and all around it, get to know the bird, and not just worry about checking it off a list.

Harold's interests are not limited to birds. His taste in music covers jazz to symphony, he supports the theater, loves baseball (he has been to all but five major league parks and plans to decrease that number this year) and other sports, and all aspects of nature. He is comfortable in discussing flowers, mammals, and insects.

Somehow with all his activities he found the time to author the book, "Birding the 49th State: an Alaskan Saga," published by the American Birding Association. We vicariously enjoyed a trip to that state just by reading the book. It is fun to read and informative.

When we met up with Harold out at the Barnacle Goose site while doing our Big Year in 1986, we asked if he had taken photographs. We knew his to be an avid photographer as well. He related that his camera equipment had been stolen a few years back and he lost the interest he once had. We knew he had been the first to photograph a White-faced Storm-Petrel in the United States in 1971. For as sensitive an individual as Harold, I can well imagine his feelings that someone would actually steal something from him. He has presented programs to more than 16 bird clubs in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

*PS. by Frank Haas.* I first met Harold in 1963 at Hawk Mountain and later was able to introduce Barb to him. Every good birder we know in Lancaster County has been influenced by him. He seemed to have the knack of getting sharp youngsters interested in birds and being proud of their accomplishments. He is renown for driving umpteen hours with a vanload of birders, old and young,

to see new birds in Florida, New England, or wherever the rare bird is. When we call him, albeit infrequently, the first thing he wants to know is, "What is the rarity?" I feel confident he would be willing to drop everything else on his busy agenda to chase that bird, either something new for Pennsylvania or his impressive life list.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Our Pennsylvania Big Year - 1986 PART ONE**

*by*  
**Barbara M. Haas**

It might be appropriate here to discuss just exactly what a Big Year is. A Big Year is attempting to see the greatest number of species in a prescribed area in a calendar year. One can do a Big Year for all of the AOU area, for example the one Benton Basham did in 1983, when he was the first person to see more than 700 species. Or it can be confined to the boundaries of a given state, as ours was. Or it can be ever further defined to a county list, etc. While we were doing our Big Pennsylvania year, Merrill Wood was doing a Centre County Big Year.

It is fun, but it is also grueling, especially when one considers the two best birding areas in Pennsylvania, Presque Isle State Park and Tinicum National Environmental Center, are at opposite corners of the State, with more than 400 miles separating them. But, of course, a rarity can be found anywhere in between -- and was. One must also forget about enjoying "normal" social engagements and not make any plans with the exception of being ready to leave to chase a new species for the year. A dependable vehicle is also important, as we found out

almost too late. Adequate sleep almost becomes a luxury. The only "outside" commitment we kept was to continue our atlas blockbusting in Clinton and Pike Counties.

But first some specific introductory remarks. We did our first Big Year in 1977 and saw 254 species. This record was broken by Sam Stull of Erie County in 1979 when he saw 278 species. His record was particularly impressive when we learned that he had seen 245 birds on Presque Isle and 264 in Erie County. He had traveled to our neck of the woods and we were able to help him find a few needed birds. Later he and his family were of significant help to us in our quest. Their hospitality was terrific. We would not have been able to afford all the extra motel rooms and food necessary for the year's travels without them. We always seemed to be exhausted when we arrived with our umpteen pillows; No matter the time of day or night, they were gracious. Sam gave us moral as well as tangible support by advising what had been seen recently, where to check for specifics, etc. Our goal, unrealistic as it seemed, was 300 species for the year!

We knew that spending time birding Presque Isle would be the key to our success. There are just too many birds found there that are not reliable elsewhere in the state. Birding with the Stulls and Jerry McWilliams was a treat. When our energy seemed to lag they were right in there pulling for us, giving us that incentive to continue. It is difficult to describe the emotional highs and lows of an entire year. When we found a new bird it was elating, when we missed one it was depressing. Sam, having been there himself, was particularly encouraging and even when we were zeroing in and then passed his record, he was our major supporter.

The logistics. We ranked all birds likely to be seen in Pennsylvania on a seven-point system. The 1's and 2's were almost guaranteed with minimal effort. We knew we should see any 3 with a bit of work, *i.e.*, getting to the breeding area at the appropriate time for such species as Alder Flycatcher. That's the first 220. To find anything coded 4 through 7 would require us being aware of the bird's presence. We sent out letters to many birders across the state asking that they contact us on any bird coded 4 or higher. We followed up on this by sending out a monthly newsletter indicating our status. The mailing list grew as the year went on and by October we were sending out 75 newsletters. We also kept records of miles driven; motel, food, gasoline and tolls costs; checklists of every trip, and other miscellaneous items.

Another important thing to mention is that we wanted to have any rare sightings documented in one of two ways, 1) be with another competent birder at the time of observation or 2) take a photograph. The reason for this is simple. We would (with luck) be setting a new State record and documentation for same should accompany any submission to Birding for inclusion in this American Birding Association's publication. Benton had done the same thing, following in the steps of Jim Vardaman, who attempted to be the first one to see 700 species in one year in the AOU area. We were able to meet our goal of documentation for all but one species, a Sandhill Crane at Presque Isle. Somehow Frank is able to carry our heavy camera and scope and still use his binoculars effectively.

But let's get on with the birding.

JANUARY. Before dawn on New Year's Day we left with Al Guarante to try for the Say's Phoebe which had been found on the Kempton (Berks) CBC. We had to race home, but not before stopping in Lima (Delaware) for the Clay-colored Sparrow found the day after the Glenolden CBC. Because we had to get home for Frank to attend to some Park business, we did not have time to go for the Mountain Bluebird at Beltzville SP (Carbon) that day. Nor could we go for it the following weekend (it was seen) because Park business was in order. Little did we know that this previously reliable bird would elude us. That same night while playing bridge with some birding friends we heard a Barred Owl in Ridley Creek State Park (our home). Since this owl is not recorded every year in Delaware County we felt it was a good omen.

We were also fortunate that this was a very good year for gulls on the Susquehanna River (Lancaster). Last year, 1987, was not a good year for gulls or for anyone thinking about a Big Year. We were with Bob Schutsky and John Ginaven on an exceptionally cold day (6 January) and had not only the expected common gulls, but Lesser Black-backed Gull, Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull, and a Long-eared Owl. The Glaucous Gull was particularly rewarding and memorable. Frank had just watched a gull apparently commit suicide. To explain, he was watching a Ring-billed Gull dive into the water, presumably to get one of the surface-feeding fish, and decided to see what it would come up with; it never came up. He came over to relate his experience. A minute or two later most of the gulls put up and there flying around was a large "ghost-like" bird, a Glaucous Gull. We were ecstatic. This bird, at least in Lancaster County, has a very small window of time when it can be

found. Apparently it is seen only on its migration through the area and rarely stay very long. his time with Schutsky.

We joined a Delaware Valley Ornithological Club outing on the 11th and found Common Redpoll and Pine Grosbeak at Beltzville SP, but not the elusive Mountain Bluebird, although it was seen later that month. The rivers and lakes had not yet frozen over, so our waterfowl numbers already were quite respectable.

We departed the next weekend for the first of nine trips to Erie County. Our first stop was at Bald Eagle State Park (Centre), where we joined Paul and Glenna Schwalbe in hopes of finding the N. Shrike that had been seen on the Bald Eagle CBC. It took some time, in fact the Schwalbes were just about to go back home when Frank said, "I think I have it." In the scope was the shrike. We also found our first Short-eared Owl for the year. We found enough pellets to suggest there was a significant wintering population.

Speaking of owls, as we were driving through McKean County Frank spied a Barred Owl sitting in a tree along the side of the road. Road conditions made it impossible to slam on the brakes and by the time we had returned to the spot, it was gone. I missed it. I have read and heard about Barred Owls sitting out in daytime, but still have yet to witness it.

At Presque Isle Jerry McWilliams scoped out an Iceland Gull on the lake, although we were unable to find some of the December goodies, Little Gull and Snowy Owl. We did have another Short-eared Owl.

We went down to Pymatuning S.P. (Crawford) to find our Bald Eagle. Also reported there was Snow Goose. We found one in a field near Miller Pond. We decided to check out the causeway and about halfway across we found a flock of Snow

Buntings that I was also able to add to my Ohio list (that must be all of 25 birds!). Since we had already seen the buntings at Presque Isle, there was no conflict as to where the dividing line is for the states.

Peregrine Falcons have been nesting on the Commodore Barry Bridge in Chester, but, unfortunately for the Atlas Project, on the New Jersey side. In winter, however, they frequently roost or hunt from the Pennsylvania side and that's where we first recorded ours for the year.

We had a call from Chris Walters that he had a Sandhill Crane almost in our backyard, Springton Reservoir (Delaware). We spent two evenings after work watching the thousands of Canada Geese that come in daily. We alerted the water company personnel, but there was no further sighting of the bird.

We ended the month with a composite 99 species. The "lead" see-sawed back and forth all year when either one of us could get out birding without the other.

FEBRUARY. Typically this is the "slowest" month. One cannot expect to add a great number of species, but there are certain birds that should be searched for. Snow cover also makes it easier to locate such field birds as Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, and Water Pipit. Eric Witmer (Lancaster) called about an excellent location for all of the above species, plus Horned Lark. We headed out there, despite the fact that Frank was quite ill. This is something else that always lurks in your mind. Stay healthy. We were fortunate that the birds were cooperative, although as usual it took a bit longer to find the longspur.

At this point I should mention that a young birding friend, Deuane Hoffman of Harrisburg, has really gotten into state listing and birding.

He needed the longspur, pipit, and bunting for lifers, so we called and he got his father to drive him over for them. He also was trying for a Big Year, but not being old enough to drive didn't help.

This is probably the best month to go looking for Great Cormorant, so we left on the 15th in search of same. Until the winter of 1982/1983 this species was considered accidental in the state. That is until Frank Windfelder found them that year on the Delaware River at the Bucks/Philadelphia County Line. They are now considered regular at that location each winter. Last December the first record for this species away from the Delaware River was of one bird on the Susquehanna River in Lancaster County. We saw six cormorants.

Probably one of the best birds of February was the White-winged Crossbill that was coming to a feeder in Lebanon County. Steve Santner gave us a call as soon as he heard about the bird, which had been visiting the feeder for about a month. Mr. and Mrs. Elmer King invited us into their home for what turned out to be a three-hour wait for the bird. Just as they asked us to join them for Sunday dinner, the bird appeared. It was a male and fed only a few feet away. And dinner was delicious too. Deuane's father had dropped him off at the Kings and we were going to take him home after some more birding. But while at Middle Creek we made plans for him to spend the weekend with us.

On the 18th we did a Delaware River excursion and had the Peregrine Falcon again. Deuane needed the Great Cormorants so we headed north and found them plus our first Red-necked Grebe. That weekend he had 3 lifers and added 11 state birds, including a Lesser

Black-backed Gull at Penn Manor (Bucks).

Frustration was beginning to build. A Fieldfare had been sighted in Montgomery County (by an English woman who is quite familiar with the bird) and we, and many others, spent several days looking for it. It had been associating with robins and we really thought we had checked every robin flock in the county, but to no avail. This was the same year the species made a noticeable incursion in the Northeast. We were now down at least two rare birds that had been seen this year.

Good news, bad news. We found the Greater White-fronted Goose at Muddy Run (Lancaster), but could not get to Presque Isle for the Thayer's Gull that McWilliams and Stull had seen.

We put in an answering machine. It was one of our better ideas and came in handy throughout the year. By the end of February we had 108 species.

**MARCH.** We were trudging through snow and slipping on ice at the beginning of March but by the end of the month we were birding in short sleeve shirts. The highlight of the month was the Barnacle Goose found in Millersville (Lancaster) by Harold Morrin. The bird was well-studied by many independent observers who all felt the bird to be wild. Coincidentally there was another individual at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge about the same time. For any of you who saw the PBS program on the Arctic (Greenland) breeding waterfowl, you may recall that the Barnacle Goose starts its life by jumping out of the nest and falling several hundred feet to the rocks below. As one of our friends stated, any bird that survives that beginning can certainly fly southwest instead of southeast to winter!

We added more waterfowl species to the total in March. Wood Duck, both teal, White-winged Scoter, and Red-breasted Merganser were checked off. The only regularly occurring waterfowl that we needed were Brant, Eurasian Wigeon, Oldsquaw, and Surf and Black Scoter. Actually, Eurasian Wigeon might be better classified as irregular; there have been precious few sightings these last several years. While observing some waterfowl at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area (Lancaster/Lebanon) on the 8th, we watched an immature Golden Eagle make several passes through the flocks.

Bill Stocku had found a Ruddy Shelduck, and although we did not count it, could not help by comment on how attractive a duck it is. As luck would have it, we could not find the Eurasian Wigeon that had been seen by a single observer at Muddy Run earlier that week. Another missed bird. But E. Meadowlarks were establishing their territories at Middle Creek. They used to nest in decent numbers in the Tinicum area and other areas of Delaware County, but the massive development has all but eliminated them as a local breeder. Fortunately, other surrounding counties (except Philadelphia) still have adequate habitat - but for how long?

A visit to Hawk Mt. Sanctuary gave us the opportunity to hear and see N. Saw-whet Owl and Barred Owl. It also gave us the opportunity to visit briefly with Jim and Dottie Brett.

Am. Woodcock were performing in our yard on the 5th. We never tire of going out on windless evenings when the temperature is at least 50 degrees and watching them. What better free entertainment. Our earliest Park record is 14 February. One year in the Park we found a parent with young on what seemed

to be an early date. We reviewed the data in Bent and by counting back to when the eggs were laid and, even if the young were only a day old, it bettered the Pennsylvania record for egg dates listed in his publication by a day!

But migration was underway. Our phoebes were back and a trip to Tincum yielded the first shorebirds, Greater Yellowlegs and Pectoral Sandpiper. Tree Swallows had returned and were selecting nest boxes and Rusty Blackbirds were readily heard squeaking their way around the impoundment.

We had a call on the answering machine from Margaret and Roger Higbee that they had seen a Loggerhead Shrike at the Elders Ridge strips that straddle the Indiana/Armstrong County Line. We could not go for it. When other birders, some of whom were on the original trip, went out later in the week the only shrike found was a Northern. This bird was approximately one-half mile from the Loggerhead. Margaret's letter to us was very complete, as usual, with details including not only the field marks, but behavioral characteristics as well. The strips are quite extensive and productive as reading the Armstrong and Indiana County reports will corroborate.

Then came the first report of our nemesis bird, Yellow-headed Blackbird. We have chased them all over the state without success. Bob Schutsky called us to report an adult male had been seen at Willow Point at Middle Creek on the 29th. John Ginaven joined us for the chase. He

also wanted it badly for his Pennsylvania list. We had been oh-so-close several times and thought maybe this would be the day. Off we went. But no bird. Adding insult to injury, our car broke down on the Pennsylvania Turnpike and we spent two and one-half hours waiting for repair service. While waiting for the repair truck I said, "Tomorrow we're going to buy a new car." They laughed. The next evening we ordered our Nissan Stanza 4X4 Station Wagon!

Merrill Wood sent us a copy of his first quarter's results: 92 species, 107 hours, 2029 miles driven, and 2.4 miles walked. His per species cost (for gasoline) worked out to \$0.88. Ours was a bit higher! He wrote, "In January 1985 I had a heart attack (in church!), and now my activities are greatly restricted - no driving alone on lonely mountain roads, climbing hills, or running, etc.; lots of etc. We have a housekeeper from the Centre Co. Home Health Service to take care of us, and a man who takes care of the yard. All I have to do is to take care of the bills!"

Our list of missed birds now included Thayer's Gull, Sandhill Crane, Mountain Bluebird, Loggerhead Shrike, Eurasian Wigeon, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. But we ended the month and first quarter of 1986 with 124 species.

We will continue the saga next month. Stay tuned. I will reiterate... Pennsylvania is NOT boring.

\*\*\*\*\*

## PLEASE NOTE!

We still need to increase our subscription base in order to make some long-range plans. With your support we can do this. How many fellow birders do you know who are presently not receiving the journal? Can they really afford to miss out on a journal which is destined to become one of the best of its kind? The reference material and contacts alone are more than worth the \$10.00. How many times have you wanted to bird in another part of the state, but did not know anything about where you wanted to go? **PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS** can help solve that problem by providing names of contacts and bird-finding locations. That bird you have always wanted to see might just be in the next county.

Spread the word!



## Summary of the Season

The winter quarter was marked by less than normal snowfall in most locations and highly variable temperatures throughout. The general feeling from the compilers was that the winter was mild.

The season began with reports of rarities, such as **Green-tailed Towhee**, **Varied Thrush**, and **Brewer's Blackbird**, and ended with the arrival of early migrants. One comment should be made about Brewer's Blackbird. Although there are many reports for the state over the past 30 years by competent and reliable birders, there is still no photograph or specimen. This is something that should be remedied.

**Red-necked Grebe** reports came from Crawford, Lehigh, and York. A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was found in both Lancaster and York and two were seen in Chester. **White-winged Scoter** reports were restricted to Luzerne and York.

**Rough-legged Hawk** were reported in lower than usual numbers or were not even found in traditional locations (Schuylkill Co.). There were, however, several wintering **Osprey** reports. Equally exciting was the fact that there may be a new nesting location for Osprey (Northampton). Except for the wintering Ospreys, this species arrived back in Pennsylvania during the last week of March, with 11 counties reporting dates of 23-30 March. Several reporters indicated **Turkey Vulture** arriving later than usual. But more and more winter sightings of **Black Vulture** are being made in such western counties as Huntingdon. Best raptor sighting had to go to Erie County for its **Gyr Falcon**.

White-winged gulls were also quite difficult to find for the second winter in a row.

Wintering finches were scarce, except for **Pine Siskin**, which seemed to be everywhere. There were very few reports of **Evening Grosbeak** or **Common Redpoll**. The reports of low numbers were not limited to wandering finches. The **Am. Tree Sparrow** continues its decline throughout the state. Perhaps the reason will be found; we have noticed a 250% decrease over the last 14 years in Delaware County. In keeping with our feeder observations, this is the first winter we did not have at least one **Purple Finch**. When we moved here in December 1974 we did not have a single **House Finch** and did not have any for the first several years. Now we have up to 300 on any given winter day. Is there a correlation? Other compilers remarked on fewer **White-crowned** and **White-throated** sparrows. Many compilers also noted the scarceness of **Cedar Waxwing**. **Red Crossbill** were found in several counties, but only Bradford reported any **White-winged Crossbill**.

Although the birds did not come down from the north, there certainly appeared to be an invasion from the west. **Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco** were reported from five counties and two **Rufous-sided "Spotted" Towhee** were seen at Presque Isle (Erie). Were the reports of **Yellow-headed Blackbird** in Berks, Delaware, Montour Counties more than normally found in a winter or part of the western invasion? **PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS** is the perfect vehicle to monitor such occurrences.

The three **Common Raven** reported in York County were quite out of place and barely outdid the sightings from Middle Creek WMA (Lancaster) and the cooperative Armstrong/Indiana boundary flyby.

The mild winter probably contributed to the survival of the **Ovenbird** in Warren County until the end of January. The **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** found in Erie County last quarter remained through the end of this quarter.

As you read this quarter's reports, perhaps at the end of a long day of atlas work, keep in mind that your sightings may be significant in determining trends in Pennsylvania's avifauna and should be reported to the county compiler for consideration.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Abbreviations Frequently Used in County Reports

ad.: adult, Am.: American, BBS: Breeding Bird Survey, c.: central, C: Celsius, CBC: Christmas Bird Count, Cr.: creek, Co.: county, Cos.: counties, *et al.*: and others, e.: eastern, Eur.: European, Eurasian, F: Fahrenheit, *fide*: reported by, Ft.: Fort, imm.: immature, indiv.: individual(s), I.: Island, Is.: Islands, Jct.: Junction, juv.: juvenile, L.: Lake, max.: maximum, min.: minimum, m.ob.: many observers, Mt.: Mountain, Mts.: Mountains, NF.: National Forest, NWR: National Wildlife Refuge, BBAP: Breeding Bird Atlas Project, PGC: PA Game Commission, Res.: Reservoir, R.: River, S.F.: State Forest, SGL: State Game Lands, S.P.: State Park, sp.: species, spp.: species plural, ssp.: subspecies, Twp.: Township, w.: western, WMA: Wildlife Management Area, v.o.: various observers, N,S,E,W,: direction of motion, n.,s.,e.,w.: direction of location, >: more than, <: fewer than, ±: approximately, or estimated number, ♀: imm. or female, \*: specimen, ph.: photographed, ft: feet, mi: miles, m: meters, km: kilometers, date with a + (e.g., May 4+): recorded beyond that date. Compilers may also abbreviate often-cited locations or organizations.

## ALLEGHENY COUNTY

*Locations: Beechwood Farms (BWF), Bell Acres, Deer Lakes Park (DLP), Elizabeth, Fox Chapel, Frick Park (PGH), SGL #203, Homewood Cemetery (PGH), Monroeville, North Park (No.P.), Pittsburgh (PGH), Round Hill Park (RHP), Shaler Twp., South Park (So.P.), West Deer Twp, Whitehall.*

The big items of this relatively mild, open winter were the disastrous oil spill on the PGH rivers (not on the Allegheny R. fortunately) and the continued presence of **Pine Siskin** at practically everybody's feeder.

**GREBES THROUGH HAWKS.** One **Pied-billed Grebe** was found on the Allegheny R. at Oakmont 1/16 (VD *et al.*). There were only 3 **Great Blue Heron** sightings during January; none reported thereafter.

The ASWP Beechwood Farms Nature Center staff and volunteers coordinated with municipalities, PGC, and others to rescue and attempt to save a variety of birds, victims of the 1/2 oil spill. Of the 81 birds brought in, mostly **Canada Geese** and **Mallard** were treated. However there were grebes, mergansers, gulls, domestic waterfowl and kingfisher examined. Sadly, by official estimates, as many as 4000, perhaps 5000 birds, could not even be retrieved from the Monogahela and Ohio Rivers -- diving to elude rescue by hapless PGC personnel.

On the Ohio R. (PGH) some two weeks after the oil spill, Panza *et al.* counted, apparently healthy, 42 **Canada Geese**, 11 **Am. Black Duck**, 90 **Mallard**, 4 **Redhead**, 22 **Common Goldeneye**, and 2 **Bufflehead**. By 2/28 some 35-40 Canada Geese were swimming up river on the Ohio at Glenfield near Sewickley (CGH).

On 1/31 a **Snow Goose** was discovered in No.P. (JH *et al.*). It had not been there two days earlier when Floyd and Olson checked, seeing "regulars like **Mute Swan**, Canada Geese, Am. Black Duck, and Mallard." One Canada Goose had taken up with a mixed flock of semi-domestic geese and Mallards in a cemetery in Monroeville eking out an existence with this motley crew during the entire period (GK). Mallards were pairing off on Big Sewickley Cr. as early as 3/2 (CMc). Floyd and Olson at No.P. 1/29 found single, ad. male **Am. Wigeon**, **Redhead** (other observers meanwhile also found a female) and **Ring-necked Duck**. Sixteen **Common Goldeneye**, some "doing courtship behavior," on Highland Park Res. (PGH) were observed 2/16 (VD).

**Turkey Vultures** were only reported 3/24 in the Library area (MM). **Sharp-shinned Hawk** were seen, some at feeders, by a number of watchful observers throughout. A scattering of **Cooper's Hawk** sightings were reported (JH,MM,M&EW). **Red-tailed Hawk** reports came in from all parts of the county (v.o.). A **Rough-legged Hawk** report at Snowden was undated as were the **Am. Kestrel** reports for that area (MM). Homewood Cemetery produced the first dated kestrel 1/1 (VD).

**GROUSE THROUGH KINGLETS.** The most interesting observations of the gallinaceous species were of several **Ruffed Grouse** during February and March in the south (MM). The same reporter also lists small groups of **Wild Turkey** (3 and 4) scattered in favored spots. But the larger flocks appear in northern areas, such as No.P., when 39 were counted 1/7 (JH *et al.*). Near the Park's west side, 16 are a daily occurrence at Mueller's feeders (*vide* Grom). Ruth Grom counted 16 in No.P. 3/6 -- perhaps the Mueller flock!

A **Killdeer** was noteworthy at RHP 1/12 (M&EW). No other was reported until March when 1-2 were seen at Bell Acres (CMc) and up to 4 were found in Monroeville and s.e. Allegheny Co. (GK). **Am. Woodcock** appeared simultaneously 3/7 at North Park (JG) and at Snowden (MM), who noticed a "strong migration".

The highest counts of **Ring-billed Gull** in s.e. Allegheny Co. happened just two and three days after the infamous oil spill, when an estimated  $\pm 100$  were at McKeesport 1/4 and very

abruptly down to 10 at the same place 1/5 (GK). During the remainder of this quarter his count deteriorated to 2's and 1's. On the Ohio R. (PGH) in mid-January, Panza's figure was just 3.

Three owl species play a prominent role in the report by MM from s. Allegheny Co. **E. Screech-Owl** dates for Snowden are a single bird 1/7, a pair found in So.P. 1/9, and all February and March. **Great Horned Owl**, a duet, were performing at Snowden 1/7 and throughout the period. A **Long-eared Owl** report was received for 1/7 at Snowden. The well-observed pair of **Barred Owl** in Ohio Twp. were cajoled into view 1/15 by Hoffmann, Nickel, and Combs.

Single **Belted Kingfisher** in West Deer Twp 1/24 (HRL *et al.*), at Elizabeth Twp. 2/21 (M&EW), and at Bell Acres 3/4 (CMc) were the only three recorded.

A **Red-headed Woodpecker** spent the month of January living in Homewood Cemetery (VD). There were nine reports of **Red-bellied Woodpecker**, the most interesting being of a female in No.P. excavating a cavity 1/29 (TF,LO). Two **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** were spotted in Frick Park 1/1 (TF). A single sapsucker was located wandering in nearby Homewood Cemetery 1/31 (VD). The 6 reported **N. Flicker** were from widely separated areas in the county: Elizabeth Twp., No. Park, Bell Acres, East McKeesport. A number of **Pileated Woodpecker** sightings at No.P. Latodami Nature Center were probably of the same pair (R&JG). Numerous observations were reported over the period in s. Allegheny Co. although it was thought they were of the same individuals, considering their large territorial needs (MM). One was found during the entire quarter at So.P. (WH).

Fifteen **15 Am. Crow** were listed in So.P. 2/20 (WH) and 70 were in No.P. 2/28 (RG). On 1/11 in Shaler Twp. there was a singing **Carolina Chickadee** (JH). "An hour or so at Frick Park 1/1 "turned up" numerous Carolina Chickadees -- greatly out-numbering **Black-caps** (TF).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** in small numbers wintered in the county. This was a typical year. Ditto **Brown Creepers**: 3 at BWF 1/28 (TF); 1 at So.P. 2/8 (WH). Floyd felt **Carolina Wren** numbers "encouraging." The few reports helped substantiate that feeling. **Golden-crowned Kinglet** made a good showing. Some reports: 3 in West Deer Twp. 1/24 (HRL *et al.*); 6 were listed for BWF 1/28 (TF) and 10 more at No.P. later that day! M&EW chipped in with 10 at RHP 3/29. DLP yielded 2 to the McGarys 2/21. Panza had 32 Golden-crowned Kinglets at SGL #203 on 1/15.

**BLUEBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES.** The McGarys were enthralled by 10 **E. Bluebird** at DLP 1/9. At Snowden 4 were counted 1/17, up to 6 on 2/14 (MM). The **Hermit Thrush** at No.P. Braille Trail had its eremitic existence interrupted by finder JC (and subsequent m.ob.) from 1/26+. Five **Am. Robin** were found at West Deer Twp. 1/24 (HRL), while 6 were listed 1/16 at Snowden (MM). Despite this report MM gives an arrival date of 2/13 for his first spring robin, after which they began passing through "literally" by the 100's; up to 1000 "on one hilltop field." Shirley Zeiler gives 2/2 as an arrival date at Wexford, although R&JG did not see migrating flocks until 2/28 when 40 were counted at the nature center in No.P. The few **N. Mockingbird** sightings come from s.e. Allegheny Co. at Elizabeth Twp. 1/2 and 2/10 and in RHP where 2 were found 1/12 (M&EW).

A few **Cedar Waxwing** reports should suffice for these nomads of the berry shrubs. A small flock of 15 was found 1/15 in No.P. (JH *et al.*). At the same locale 1/29 TF & LO counted four times that at 69 birds. On 2/15 in Fox Chapel (PGH) 40 were counted 40 (CL). JH, near her home in Shaler Twp., counted 65 on 2/19.

Two **Yellow-rumped Warbler** appear in the Watkos' report, being listed for 1/16 at RHP.

HRL and companions discovered 20 **N. Cardinal** during their 1/24 trek through West Deer Twp. A number of reports came from feeder watchers where it is often difficult to get a true picture, although one contributor, Joann Maier of Glenshaw near BWF, did send a photograph showing clearly at least 10 cardinals in one bush.

Further cause for celebration is the submitting of a count of 19 **Am. Tree Sparrow** and 14 **Field Sparrow** by the HRL party as they scoured West Deer Twp. 1/24. Throw in 21 **Dark-eyed**

**Junco** and you see they had a fair day! Eight juncos were seen at Bell Acres (CMc) and up to 8 listed for Whitehall all February (WH). Floyd found them "scarce to very scarce."

The first **Red-winged Blackbird**, 2 males, were found 1/28 at No.P. (JH) and the first -- and only -- reported **Rusty Blackbird**, 2 on 3/3, also at No.P. The Watkos contributed the first seen **Common Grackle** 2/13 in their Elizabeth Twp. backyard and on 2/3 in the same yard 4 **Brown-headed Cowbird**, first of the year.

Ruth Grom spotted the first **Purple Finch**, a male and a female, at her feeders in No.P. 2/25, but M&EW come in a close second in their Elizabeth Twp. backyard with 1 male 3/13. CMc entertained 10-20 in Bell Acres throughout the winter. Jean Miller in Natrona Heights ran a feeding marathon for **House Finch**, e.g. 12 (a modest count) on 2/21 and **Pine Siskin**, e.g. 50 on 2/21. These numbers fluctuated wildly all winter. Other House Finch and Pine Siskin counts were even more dramatic. BWF, so busy a center that only casual counting is done, unfortunately, had a steady stream of 25 or so of each at the many feeders (JH *et al.* 1/13 and TF 1/28). As many as 30 were "here all winter" in West Deer Twp (T&NM). HRL's group "totted up" 46 House Finch and 20 Pine Siskin in the same locale 1/24. A Bell Acres feeder hosted "at least 50" Pine Siskins (CMc). Many reports came in on hearsay so that is safe to assume that House Finch (to some extent Purple) and Pine Siskin by the hundreds ate well in Allegheny Co. this winter.

**OBSERVERS:** Jim Clark, Vickie Dziadosz, Ted Floyd, Joe Grom, 9360 Babcock Blvd., Allison Park 15101, Ruth Grom, Walter Hammond, Catherine Hay, Joyce Hoffmann, Glenn Koppel, Carol Labarthe, Herschel Leapman, Cindy McClain, Tom & Nellie McGary, Matt Mezinze, Lester Olson, Joe Panza, Mike & Evaleen Watko, Shirley Zeiler.

Please note Joe Grom's new address which is effective after 15 June 1988.

#### **ARMSTRONG COUNTY**

*Locations: Elders Ridge strips (The Indiana-Armstrong Co. line runs through the strips; some of these birds were in both counties), Keystone Res. (K.R.), Kittanning (KTN).*

January through March was unseasonably mild in Armstrong County. Once again, few birders reported; more data are needed. Of note was the tremendous invasion of **Pine Siskin**, which literally seemed to be everywhere! Best find of the period was a roadside **N. Saw-whet Owl**. The **Common Raven** at the strips pleased the county listers in the group as it flew from Armstrong into Indiana County.

The only **Pied-billed Grebe** was reported at Manorville 3/19 (DL). A **Great Blue Heron** near Crooked Cr. Park (*vide* JV) 1/16 was the lone report. **Canada Geese** maxima were 109 at Apollo 2/7 (GW) and 61 at Manorville 2/27 (GW). First **Wood Duck** was found at KTN 3/11 (NK). Two **Am. Black Duck** appeared at Manorville with a flock of 18 **Mallards** 2/27 (GW). Two March visits to the K.R. produced only open water and 2 **Mallards** (MH,RH). A **Common Goldeneye** on the Allegheny R. 1/16 (JV) was a nice find.

Single **N. Harrier** were observed 1/9 near South Bend and 2/14 near Elderton (MH,RH). Up to 3 wintered at the strips (m.ob.). A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** made raids at feeders in the Ford City area between 1/3 and 2/21 (FE,GW). First **Ring-billed Gull** appeared at Ford City 2/29 (JV) and 8 were tallied near the K.R. 3/13 (MH,RH).

**Great Horned Owl** were reported from various parts of the county, but 1 near KTN had an owlet in the nest by the end of March (NK). Only 1 **Barred Owl** near KTN 3/19 was listed (CD). Best **Short-eared Owl** tally at the strips was 8 on 1/9 (BC,KG,MH,RH). Highlight of the month was a well-described **N. Saw-whet Owl** found sitting along a back road late at night near KTN 1/30 (CD,CHD); a search of nearby conifers the next day was nonproductive (CD,NK *et al.*).

A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, visiting a KTN feeder consistently after 1/11 (CD), was still present at the end of the quarter. **Red-bellied Woodpecker** reports continue to increase. First **N. Flicker** was spotted 1/13 at KTN (CD).

The first **E. Phoebe** was not found until 3/21 (CD). Two **Horned Lark** were listed, both singletons, 1 near Elderton 2/15 (MH,NK); the other near Slate Lick 3/22 (CD,NK). The **Common Raven** 1/28 at the strips was both seen and heard (CD,DG,MH,NK). **Brown Creeper** were plentiful throughout the quarter; 1 repeatedly visited a peanut butter feeder at KTN (CD). Three **E. Bluebird** near KTN 1/23 (MH,RH,NK) were the first report, but 2-3 were found at Crooked Cr. 2/10 (FE) and near Elderton 2/14 (MH,RH). After mid-February bluebirds were commonly seen in the county. Few **Am. Robin** wintered in the area, but a singleton near KTN was seen almost daily after 1/9 (NK). Other reports include 5 at the strips 1/31 (MH,RH,PM); and 12 appeared at Ford City 2/7 (FE). **Cedar Waxwing** again were not plentiful this winter; 20 were reported at Pyrra 1/19, where 30 were counted 1/27 (RH). Best count was 35 at Ford City 2/28 (GW).

First **Rufous-sided Towhee** arrived near Crooked Cr. 3/14 (FN). **Fox Sparrow** put in a good spring appearance with singletons first reported from Crooked Cr. 3/14 (FN) and from KTN 3/15 (CD). First **Red-winged Blackbird** were listed 2/2 near KTN, where 50 were counted 2/8 (MG). The only **E. Meadowlark** reported wintering were of 20 found at the strips 1/9 (MH,RH). Meadowlarks have been found consistently on the same hillside during the past five winters. Included with the 12 blackbirds on 2/2 were 107 **Brown-headed Cowbird** (MG). Top **House Finch** count was 85 at Ford City 2/21 (GW). **Pine Siskin** were found at almost every feeding station. Estimates at a KTN feeder reached 200 by end-March. On the other hand, **Evening Grosbeak** were difficult to find; 2 were seen 1/7 at Cowansville (DG). Singletons were observed sporadically at the same feeder during January.

**OBSERVERS:** Bruce Courter, Caroline Davies, Chester H. Davies, Florence Emmonds, Denise Garrott, Kevin Georg, Mary Greenbaum, Margaret and Roger Higbee, RD #2, Box 166, Indiana 15701 (412-354-3493), Nancy Karp, Debbie Livengood, Pam Miller, Frances Norris, Joe Valasek, Gloria Winger.

#### **BEDFORD COUNTY**

*Locations: Shawnee S.P. (SSP), Juniata R., Woodbury Dam, Three Springs.*

Bedford County is largely farmland with ridges running NE to SW bisecting fertile valleys. Typical of counties to the east of the Allegheny Front, Bedford is underlaid with limestone and exhibits typical karst features such as springs and sinkholes. The springs maintain constant temperatures throughout the year and therefore provide water in time of drought and open water in winter.

On 2 January the temperature was 15 degrees and the only open water was spring-fed creeks, ponds, and rivers. At Three Springs, a location where three cavern-fed springs emerge and converge to form a creek, was the following concentration of birds: 150 **Mallard**, 7 **Am. Black Duck**, and 1 **Am. Wigeon**. Also present were 4 **Great Blue Heron** and 3 **Belted Kingfisher**. This unusual assemblage appeared to be packed into two acres of meandering stream.

Spring waterfowl migration began 3/3 with the following being counted on the lake at SSP: 45 **Ring-necked Duck**, 2 **Canvasback**, 12 **Lesser Scaup**, 3 **Redhead**, 50 **Hooded Merganser**, and 3 **Tundra Swan**. Over at Woodbury Dam, an impoundment on Yellow Cr., also 3/3, were: 3 **Ruddy Duck**, 25 **Am. Black Duck**, and 1 **Pied-billed Grebe**. **Am. Coot**, in small scattered groups of 2-4 indiv., were observed along the Raystown Branch of the Juniata R., also 3/3. By 3/7 the waterfowl count at SSP had changed with the arrival of 4 **Bufflehead**, 2 **Am. Wigeon**, 37 **N.**

**Pintail**, and the swan count had increased to over 100 birds. The waterfowl migration was normal in species and diversity with peak counts occurring around 3/15.

Several roadside surveys 1/20 and 2/15 produced average numbers of **Red-tailed Hawk**, **Cooper's Hawk**, **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, and **Am. Kestrel**. No **Rough-legged Hawk** was found despite extensive coverage of good habitat; this compares to the 3 found last year during the same time period. The first **Osprey** along the river was reported 3/29. **Wild Turkey**, **Ruffed Grouse**, and **Ring-necked Pheasant** overwintered well, having enjoyed a relatively mild winter and good wild food crop. By 3/10 large flocks of 100-200 **Ring-billed Gulls** were appearing in fields and flying over the area.

Through the winter the **Pileated Woodpecker** did well with a high count of 12 on 2/15. **Downy** and **Hairy** woodpecker remained common through the winter, less common but always present were **Red-bellied Woodpecker**. **N. Flicker** began arriving in earnest 3/15, with 40+ counted at SSP.

Throughout the month of January large flocks of **Horned Lark** could be found on freshly-manured fields in Cove Creek Valley. One flock on 1/10 consisted of 290 Horned Lark, 3 **Snow Bunting**, and 2 **Water Pipit**. **Pine Siskin** remained the bird of the year, with small flocks found throughout the county at feeders and along the roads. **Am. Goldfinch** were common winter residents, while **Evening Grosbeak** were sporadic and scarce. Surprisingly, no **Common Redpoll** was reported.

**OBSERVERS:** Thomas Dick, 1003 Eisenhower Blvd., Johnstown 15904 (814-266-7912), Sally Dick, Charles Voytko.

## BERKS COUNTY

*Locations: Blue Marsh Lake Rec. Area (BMLRA), Charles Evans Cemetery in Reading (CEC), Hawk Mt. Sanctuary (HMS), Kaercher Creek L. (KCL), Lake Ontelaunee (L.O.), Moselem Springs Country Club (MSCC), Nolde Forest Env. Ed. Center (NFEEC), Tulpehocken Creek (T.Cr.).*

The Bernville Christmas Bird Count (BCBC) was held on 3 January. The first quarter of the year had average winter weather, with no great extremes. The winter finches never arrived, except for **Pine Siskin**. One **Evening Grosbeak** was seen on the three-year-old BCBC, but no other was reported. A **Bufflehead** on Big Spring Pond was a first for the count. This pond is spring-fed and is open year-round. Hundreds of **Canada Geese** and **Mallards**, as well as a few more interesting birds from time to time, take advantage of the open water. Most other bodies of water were frozen by the count day. Another notable open-water area was an active quarry near Oley which has water in the bottom, as well as settling ponds which are kept open by warmer water being pumped from below.

There were a number of unusual birds found this quarter. An ad. **Glaucous Gull** was seen at L. Ontelaunee 2/10. An ad. **N. Goshawk** was seen at Nolde Forest Env. Ed. Center 3/26. A **Say's Phoebe** originally found on the Hamburg CBC was seen 1/2. A **Gray-cheeked Thrush** seen by CS near Birdsboro 3/3 was certainly early for this uncommon bird. Last, but not least, 2 male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** were present in Morgantown from 3/28 through at least 4/12 (RC, m.ob.).

In response to my plea for detailed information about 'unrare' birds such woodpeckers and field birds, I got a number of reports. The status of the population of these birds in Berks Co. is becoming a little better defined. Please continue to send these records in order to help us keep an eye on the effects of all the development in the county. They give us some more detailed knowledge of our county's situation.

**GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL.** The first **Pied-billed Grebe** was seen on the T.Cr. 3/19 (IW). Several individuals were seen on lakes around the county, but the peak was 9 birds on KCL 3/26 (KG). There were two reports of **Horned Grebe**: 2 on KCL 3/26 and 4 on L.O. 3/27 (MW). A lone

**Double-crested Cormorant** was also at L.O. 3/27 (MW). Eight **Great Blue Heron** were present at L.O. 1/1 (MW) and 6 were seen on the BCBC; smaller numbers were found elsewhere during the quarter. Best **Tundra Swan** were 24 at L.O. 3/6 (MSP) and 5 in a field near Lenhartsville 3/12 (KG).



Yellow-headed Blackbird, Morgantown, Berks County, 5 April 1988. Photo Barbara Haas

Several **Snow Geese** were on L.O. from 3/6-20 (MSP). Wintering **Canada Geese** were present in good numbers, as shown by the 1900+ on the BCBC and 150-500 at the quarry the end of January through February (RK). A strange looking goose that may have been a Canada x White-fronted hybrid (or some cross with a domestic goose) was at the quarry; it looked like a washed out Canada Goose with white around the base of the bill, but no belly markings like a white-fronted.

**Wood Duck** arrived in March, with 2-4 on the T.Cr. from 3/12-22 (IW), 3 at the quarry 3/27 (RK), and 2 near HMS 3/18 (LG). **Green-winged Teal** were reported at the end of March from 2 locations: 3 at KCL (KG) and 7 at BMLRA (BP). Some **Am. Black Duck** wintered in the county, notable were 55 present at the quarry 1/31 and 60 were there 2/21 along with several hundred **Mallard** (RK). The only **N. Pintail** reported was 1 bird at KCR 3/12 (KG). Two **Blue-winged Teal** and 4 **N. Shoveler** were at the same location 3/27 (KG). **Gadwall** wintered in the county with 60+ at MSCC (RK) and 25 were there yet on 3/31 (MW). Three **Am. Wigeon** were seen on the BCBC, 1 at Peter's Cr. 2/14 (MW), 2 on a pond near Oley 3/6 (RK) and 2 at KCL 3/31 (KG).

One **Canvasback** was on KCL 3/12 (KG) and 2 were on L.O. 3/13 (MSP). Up to 4 **Redhead** were on L.O. 3/27 (MW, MSP). **Ring-necked Duck** wintered at MSCC, with 3-8 from 1/9 to 2/8 (IW, RK, MW). Migrants were present at KCL from 3/12-31, with a peak of 110 there 3/19. The quarry had 41 on 3/27 (RK). A single **Greater Scaup** was at the Maiden Cr. Pump Station 2/20 (MSP). Fifty **Lesser Scaup** were on L.O. 3/27 (MW). Two **Common Goldeneye** were on KCL 3/12 (KG) and 3 were on L.O. the next day (MSP). A single **Bufflehead** was at KCL 3/26 and 3 were there the next day (KG). Eight were on L.O. 3/29 (MSP). Four **Hooded Merganser** were on L.O. 1/1 (MW) and up to 2 were at KCL in late March (KG). Two

**Common Merganser** were at BMLRA 2/24 (BP) and 20 were at L.O. 3/27 (MW). The only **Ruddy Duck** report was of 2 at L.O. 3/27.

**VULTURES AND HAWKS.** A roost of vultures was found at a quarry off the Oley Tpk. Two **Turkey Vulture** were there 1/1 with up to 14 through February. Two **Black Vulture** were also present 1/24 (RK). An **Osprey** was seen n. of Kutztown 2/8 (S&MG); 1 was also spotted 3/30 along the T.Cr. (IW). An imm. **Bald Eagle** was seen flying s. of Birdsboro 2/22 (CS *et al.*). **N. Harrier** reports include 6 seen on the BCBC, 1-2 in the Kempton area from 1/2 to 2/5 (LG), 1 at BMLRA 1/24 (IW) and 1 near Bernville 2/20 (BP). **Sharp-shinned Hawk** were scarce compared to last December, with 12 seen on the BCBC, 1 imm. at a feeder in Pike Twp. (RK), 1 on 1/30 at NFEEC and 2/18 over Reading (IW). **Cooper's Hawk** were well reported with 5 sightings: 1 on the BCBC, 1 in Washington Twp. 1/16 (GLF), 1 in the same location 1/31 (GF), 1 at Kempton 2/19 (LG), and 1 on 3/31 in the CEC (IW). A **N. Goshawk** was well seen at NFEEC 3/26 (SS). An ad. **Red-shouldered Hawk** was seen near Kempton 1/9 (LG) and another near BMLRA 2/5 (BP). **Red-tailed Hawk** were abundant again this year with 106 seen on the BCBC. **Rough-legged Hawk** numbers were down, only 10 on the BCBC. All the other sightings were in the Bernville-Womelsdorf area or in the Fleetwood area, where 1-2 were seen on four occasions between mid-January and 3/6 (IW, MW, MSp). A **Golden Eagle** was seen near Kempton 2/9 (LG).

**GROUSE THROUGH OWLS.** Nine **Ruffed Grouse** were at two roosts in Pike Twp. 1/31 (RK), 1 was heard at NFEEC 2/11 (MSI, SS) and 4 were eating apple tree buds in District Twp. 2/21 (RK). **Killdeer** were reported throughout the quarter in good numbers (m.ob.). Thirty **Common Snipe** were found on the BCBC, this was down by 50% from the previous two years. Wintering snipe were also reported in the e. part of the county, with a high of 10 in Washington Twp. 1/31. The first **Am. Woodcock** of the year was in District Twp. 3/7 (RK).

A large number of **Ring-billed Gulls** were in the area with the highest reports being 1300 on Angelica L. 2/17 (MSp) and 1500 in the Oley Valley 3/6 (RK). An ad. **Glaucous Gull** at L.O. 2/10 was a very unusual sighting (MSp).

A "gray phase" **E. Screech-Owl** was seen in a Wood Duck box at BMLRA 3/25 (BP, MR). A **Great Horned Owl** near Kempton was first seen on its nest 2/19 (LG). Another was seen preening one of its young in an unusual nest sight, the top of a broken off hemlock with no sticks added by other birds. This is the third year this site has been used.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH THRUSHES.** A **Red-headed Woodpecker** was seen near Oley 1/24 (RK). **Red-bellied Woodpecker** were reported as regular at several locations in the s. and e. section of the county, with 1-2 each day. The 40 seen on the BCBC is average. Five **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** were seen on the BCBC and then none was reported until the 3/31, when single birds were seen at the CEC (IW) and at Hamburg (KG). **Downy Woodpecker** appear to be present in most wooded areas of the county (m. ob.) Are there any woods which don't have Downys? The number of Downys on the BCBC increased to 166, up from ±100 the year before. **Hairy Woodpecker** are much less common; several pairs were in Pike Twp. during the quarter (RK); at least 2 were at NFEEC (MSI, SS); 11 were seen on the BCBC. They were also present at the HMS feeders this quarter (LG). The BCBC saw 22 **N. Flicker**, but no other was reported. One **Pileated Woodpecker** was seen on the BCBC and at least one was heard at NFEEC during January (SS).

The first **E. Phoebe** report was 3/13 along the T.Cr. (IW) and rather commonplace thereafter. **Horned Lark** numbers were down on the BCBC to 648 from last years 2847. A flock of 500 was in the Oley Valley 2/14 (RK) and a few other small flocks were reported. A **Purple Martin** was seen at HMS 3/25 (LG). A **Tree Swallow** was at KCL 3/27 (KG) and 4 were seen at BMLRA the next day (BP).

Eight **Red-breasted Nuthatch** were seen on the BCBC and 1 was present at a feeder in Brecknock Twp. from 1/16 until 2/21 (MSI). No other reports of nuthatches were received. Six **Brown Creeper** were seen on the BCBC, 4 were present at SGL #110, near Shartlesville, 3/5 (KG), with several other reports of 1-3 birds widely

scattered around. There were only two reports of **Winter Wren**, 1 at NFEEC 3/28 (SS, MSI) and 1 at Antietam L. 3/31 (MSp). The highest number of **Golden-crowned Kinglet** reported was 8 near Birdsboro 2/25 and only a few others were reported. The BCBC tallied 82 **E. Bluebird** and many were reported in the same area through the period (BP, MSt).

**WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES.** A **Pine Warbler** was seen in good light feeding in a small group of pine trees at Gring's Mill (IW). Two **Palm Warbler** were seen along the T.Cr. 3/30-31 (IW). **Am. Tree Sparrow** were down on the BCBC, with only 124 seen. Six were at BMLRA 1/24, while 1 was at a feeder in Pike Twp. all quarter until 3/8 (RK) and 3 were at a feeder in Brecknock Twp. during February (MSI). Seventy-one **Field Sparrow** were high for the BCBC, but there were no wintering reports from anywhere else in the county. A **Fox Sparrow** was seen in Hamburg 3/3 (KG) and 1-2 in Pike Twp. 3/5-21 (RK). A **Swamp Sparrow** along the T.Cr. 3/30 (IW) was the only one reported. The count of 13 **White-crowned Sparrow** on the BCBC was low. Thirty were in Washington Twp. 1/16 (GLF) and 30 were still there 2/20 (GF). The 595 **Dark-eyed Junco** on the BCBC were a very low number, but up to 50 were present at a feeder in Brecknock Twp. for most of February. There was 1 **Lapland Longspur** seen near Fleetwood 2/14 (MSp). About 100 **Snow Bunting** were with the longspur (or maybe the reverse). A few other small groups of up to 24 buntings were seen feeding in freshly manured fields around the county.

Thirteen **E. Meadowlark** were seen on the BCBC, 8 were in the Lyme-Fleetwood area 2/14 (MSp), and 2 were in the Oley Valley the same day (RK). A **Rusty Blackbird** was along the T.Cr. 3/31 (IW). Only 3 individual **Purple Finch** were reported: they were 1/18 in Pike Twp. (RK), 2/24 at HMS (LG), and 3/6 at the T.Cr. (IW). One to a dozen **Pine Siskin** were at feeders all over the county from mid-January through the end of March, with a notable high count of 100.

**OBSERVERS:** Robert Cook, George Franchois, Gary L. Freed, Laurie Goodrich (HMS), Kerry Grim, Sam & Mary Gundy, Rudy Keller, Barry Pounder, Marylyn Rogers, Scott Schreiber, Mike Slater (MSI) RD #4, Box 4106, Mohnton, PA 19540, Cyrell Smith, Matthew Spence (MSp), Mike Staggs (MSt) Matt Wlasniewski, Ira Weigley.

## BLAIR COUNTY

*Locations: Brush Mt. (B.M.), Canoe Creek S.P. (CCSP).*

A mild winter, with few major storms, highlighted the "winter weather report" from Blair County. Several weeks of cold February weather were followed by a warming trend in March. No rare or unusual species was reported for the quarter. All of the following information was provided by the compiler unless otherwise noted.

**Horned Grebe** were present at CCSP 3/19 and again 3/29, with 2 and 12 individuals respectively. **Tundra Swan** were reported over Brush Mt. in two flights, the first on 3/8 holding 30 in number, the second consisted of 81 individuals (MB). Migrating **Canada Geese** were flying over the mountain 2/26 and 1 lone Canada Goose was at CCSP 3/29.

Other waterfowl reports include: 4 **Am. Wigeon**, 4 **Ring-necked Duck**, 2 **White-winged Scoter**, 15 **Bufflehead**, 5 **Red-breasted Merganser**, all seen at CCSP 3/19. Twenty **Lesser Scaup** were present there 3/29.

A **Turkey Vulture** first appeared over the mountain 2/29 (MB). Raptors for the quarter include an imm. **N. Harrier** near Spruce Cr. 1/10, a **Cooper's Hawk** over Brush Mt. 2/29 (SB), and a **Rough-legged Hawk** in Sinking Valley 1/9.

**Ring-billed Gulls** were observed moving N over Brush Mt. 3/12 in two flights (MB).

A pair of **Red-bellied Woodpecker** remained at a Brush Mt. feeder all quarter. An **E. Phoebe** returned to Brush Mt. 3/10. **Horned Lark** flocks were once again found in large numbers (70+) in Sinking Valley.

The following species were all seen by MB at Brush Mt.: 1 **Brown Creeper** 1/4, a **Winter Wren** 3/24, six **Golden-crowned Kinglet** 1/10, 100+ **Am. Robin** 3/8, 150+ **Pine Siskin** 1/10, 7 (unusually low in numbers and sightings during the quarter), 1 **Louisiana Waterthrush** 3/25, two **Purple Finch** 3/25, 1 male **Rufous-sided Towhee** 3/27, and completing the report, 1 **Fox Sparrow** found 3/27.

**OBSERVERS:** Marsha Bonta, Steve Bonta, David Kyler, RD #4, Box 159-A, Huntingdon 16652 (814-643-6030).

### **BRADFORD COUNTY**

This report also includes sightings from Luzerne (40), Susquehanna (58), and Wyoming (66) Counties.

Large numbers of **Pine Siskin** were found throughout the 4-county area through the entire period; at Beach Haven, *Luzerne*, they were singing and in courtship activity as early as 2/17 (DG), and in March they were singing in many localities. **Evening Grosbeak** were spotty; (unrecorded at Tunkhannock, *Wyoming*,) and 50 regularly at a feeder at Spring Hill, *Bradford*, (EB). The only other winter finches reported were 34 **White-winged Crossbills** at Wapwallopen, *Luzerne*, 2/11 (DG); and two flocks of **Red Crossbill** at Tunkhannock: 20 on 1/25 and 6 on 3/10 (WR).

Waterfowl numbers along the Susquehanna R. were well above average through March, with a very heavy flight noted 3/26. On that date, in W. Pittston, *Luzerne*, there were 100 **Horned Grebe**, 9 **Oldsquaw**, 40 **Bufflehead**, 25 **Common Goldeneye**, and 12 **Red-breasted Merganser** (BT,KM,JS); on that same date in Wyoming, *Luzerne*, there were 2 **Snow Geese**, 50 **Wood Duck**, 3 **Green-winged Teal**, 12 **Blue-winged Teal**, 12 **N. Pintail**, 2 **Gadwall**, and 6 **Bonaparte's Gull** (JH,JS). Also on 3/26, in Bradford Co., there were 22 **Horned Grebe** at Spring Hill and 43 **Oldsquaw** at Rummerfield (WR).

**Bradford:** A **Horned Lark**, singing at Rummerfield 3/26 may have been nesting (WR). A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** appeared at a feeder at Spring Hill in mid-January and remained through March (EB).

**Luzerne:** Wintering birds at Harveys L. included 2 **Pied-billed Grebe**, 3 **Ring-necked Duck**, 3 **Lesser Scaup**, and +30 **Am. Coots**. A **Horned Grebe** was present 1/2 (WR); a **Greater Scaup** was seen 1/22 (WR); and a **White-winged Scoter** was present 1/16-22 (m.ob.).

### CANADA GOOSE PIRATING COOTS

On Friday, 16 January 1987, near Pole 160 at Harveys Lake, I watched a **Canada Goose** in the act of pirating coots, a behavior which I have never observed in geese before.

There were 12 geese mixed in with a flock of 30-40 coots. The coots were diving into the shallow waters of the lake near the shoreline. Very often they would come up with a grass of some kind in their bills. One of the geese was chasing coots as they came up with grass. Some of the coots could out-swim the goose, and others skittered off across the water in their weak flight. Sometimes, however, a coot would drop the grass as it swam away from the goose, and the goose immediately grabbed the grass and swallowed it. In the 20 minutes in which I watched this activity, I never saw the goose actually make contact with any of the coots. I did see the goose get food from the coots about 10-15 times. None of the other geese engaged in this activity. (WR)

Wintering birds at Wyoming included up to 40 **Common Goldeneye**, a **Hooded Merganser**, up to 20 **Horned Lark**, and a **Killdeer** (JS,JH,BT).

The earliest date for **Wood Duck** was 3/2 at the Riverlands (JF). On 3/11, at Wyoming, there were 50 **N. Pintail**, 40 **Am. Wigeon**, and 25 **Ring-necked Duck** (JS). Two **Green-winged Teal** were at Wilkes-Barre 2/26 (WR). Unusual were 4 **N. Shoveler** at the Riverlands 3/30 (JF). **Bufflehead** wintered at Wapwallopen and 50 **Common Goldeneye** were seen there 1/19 (DG).

Two **Turkey Vulture** at Huntingdon Mills 2/20 were early (TS). No **N. Harrier** was seen in w. Luzerne Co. until 2/22 when 1 came in at Nescopeck and another at E. Berwick. Likewise, not a **Rough-legged Hawk** in that area until 2/10, when individuals turned up at both Nescopeck and E. Berwick (DG). A **Greater Yellowlegs** at Wyoming 3/18 was very early (WR). A wintering **Am. Woodcock** was seen at Wapwallopen 1/29 (DG); and another, either wintering or an early migrant, was at the Riverlands 2/16 (JF).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker** continues to expand. One wintered at the Riverlands (DG); and another was present in late March at Wilkes-Barre (v.o.). **Tree Swallows** arrived at the Riverlands 3/24; and there were many overwintering **E. Bluebirds** in the same area (DG). At Wyoming on 3/13, 25 **Water Pipits** were observed (JS). On 3/26 there were 2 **Rusty Blackbirds** at W. Pittston (KM,BT,JS).

**Susquehanna:** There were 2 **N. Harrier**, 50 **Horned Lark**, and 250 **Snow Bunting** n. of Meshoppen 2/16. A "dark phase" **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen 6 mi n. of Meshoppen 1/16 (WR).

**Wyoming:** Five **N. Pintail** and 2 **Hooded Merganser** were observed near Tunkhannock 3/10-11 (WR). A "light phase" **Rough-legged Hawk** was present at Meshoppen through January (RD). The only **Fox Sparrow** reported in the 4-county area was at Tunkhannock 3/1 (WR).

**OBSERVERS:** Elizabeth Beebe, Robert Daniels, John Fridman, Doug Gross, Jim Hoyson, Kevin McGuire, William Reid, 73 W. Ross St., Wilkes-Barre 18702 (717-836-2525), Jim Shoemaker, Terry Soya, Bruce Troy.

### **BUCKS COUNTY**

**Locations:** *L. Galena (in Peace Valley Park)*, *L. Nockamixon in Nockamixon S.P.*, *Pine Run Reservoir (PRR)*.

The **Green-tailed Towhee** which was reported last quarter at Honey Hollow Environmental Education Center was a regular at the feeding station throughout the period (see article). Apart from this rarity and several other good sightings, there was nothing unusual about the period.

The 13,000 **Canada Geese** at L. Galena had dwindled to 2000 by 1/11 due to 99% ice cover, 5" of snow and -4°F (FM). Many other reservoirs froze-up during the period and waterfowl moved to the open water of the Delaware River. By the end of February some thawing of ice was evident and Canada Geese returned to the large county reservoirs. During the second week of March the ice melted off the larger lakes in the area and peak numbers of waterfowl were recorded.

**SWANS THROUGH MERGANSERS.** Fifty **Tundra Swan** (unusual for Bucks Co.) and 100 **Snow Geese** were seen at L. Galena 3/12 (FM). Four **Green-winged Teal** were found at NSP 3/15 (RM). A 100 **N. Pintail** and 100 **Am. Wigeon** were on L. Galena 3/5 and 37 wigeon were on PRR 3/21 (BM). Good numbers of **Ring-necked Duck** were seen in the county in the middle of March: 126 at Milford Trumbauersville Sewer Authority (formerly Kendall L.) 3/19 (GF), 60 at PVP 3/3 (FM), 16 at Ingham Springs 3/10 (BAM), and 19 on PRR 3/21. **Hooded Merganser** were reported on Pine Run all during the month of March, 13 on 3/18 and 14 on 3/24 (BM). Four Hooded and 8 **Common Merganser** were at NSP 3/15 and 26 Common Merganser were found at PVP 3/9.

VULTURES THROUGH HAWKS. **Black Vulture** were common all during the winter along the Delaware R. and 2 were reported inland at PVP 3/11. The first **Osprey** of the season was seen at PVP 3/25 (FM), the 4th earliest date there in 27 years. A **Golden Eagle** was seen in upper Bucks Co. 3/2 in Kintnersville (RH) and an ad. **Bald Eagle** was at PVP 1/6. An imm. **N. Goshawk** was seen in Upper Bucks Co. 3/8 (RH). Very few **Red-shouldered Hawk** were seen, 1 on 2/20 was at PVP. **Red-tailed Hawk** were reported nest building and in courtship display in many parts of the county in early March.

TURKEY THROUGH SWALLOWS. **Wild Turkey** reports were from many areas, including 6 seen 3/10 in the upper part of the county (RH). Four **Common Snipe** were at PVP 3/31 (BM). Although **Am. Woodcock** did not appear there until 3/2 they were numerous there and elsewhere for the next three weeks. **Great Horned Owl** remains abundant, with many reports of nesting birds. One **Long-eared Owl** was seen in a pine grove outside of Carversville 2/23, apparently there most of the winter (BAM).

**Red-bellied** and **Downy** woodpeckers and **N. Flicker** wintered in normal numbers for recent years, with a high of 16 N. Flicker in one group at PVP in late February (FM). **Hairy Woodpecker** continues to be scarce. A flock of 40 **Horned Lark** was seen near Kintnersville 2/22 (RH). Several **Fish Crow** were heard at PVP and along the Delaware R. in March. Large flocks of **Tree** and **N. Rough-winged** swallows began migrating along the river at the end of March.

BLUEBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES. **E. Bluebird** are doing great. Large numbers were here all winter and many nesting pairs are reported throughout the county. A **Brown Thrasher** that wintered at PVP was last seen 3/12 (FM). Numbers of **Cedar Waxwing** were unusually low, even in areas where they have been abundant in other years. Also **Yellow-rumped Warbler** were below recent 1st quarter counts. Two **Savannah Sparrow** came to feeders at Peace Valley Nature center after snowstorms of 1/27 and 2/13 and the first **Fox Sparrow** of the season was there 3/5 (FM), with others reported at feeding stations in mid-March.

**Red-winged Blackbird**, **Common Grackle**, and **Brown-headed Cowbird** returned to various places in the county in mid-February shortly after a snow and ice storm. A **Rusty Blackbird** was seen at L. Galena 3/12. Numbers of **E. Meadowlark** appear to be down. Also noted were poor counts of **Purple Finch**, with only 1 seen at PVP 3/21 (FM). A small movement of **Pine Siskin** occurred in the first week of March, with 4 at PVP, 3 at Honey Hollow and 2 at Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve, as well as some at other places.

EXOTICS. An ad. **Eur. Goldfinch** was seen at a feeding station at Ottsville 3/5. The bird fed on sunflower seed with about a dozen House Finch for about 10 minutes. It briefly reappeared the next day, but was not seen again (KK). Another unusual bird, a **Rose-ringed Parakeet**, came to a feeding station in Doylestown 3/27. The bird only remained for approximately one-half hour, just long enough for McClintock to take a couple of quick photographs. Who lost a pet parakeet?

**OBSERVERS:** George Franchois, Ray Hendrick, Ken Kitson, Bruce A. McNaught, RD 1, Box 263A, New Hope 18938 (215-297-5880), Don McClintock, Fred Mears, Bob Mitchell.

#### BUTLER COUNTY

*Locations: Butler City Area (BCA), L. Arthur (L.A.), McConnell's Mill S.P. (MMSP), Moraine S.P. (MSP), New Castle Area (NCA), Slippery Rock Area (SRA), Slippery Rock Univ. (SRU), Thorn Cr., Butler Co. (T.C.).*

This report also includes sightings from Lawrence (37) and Mercer (43) Counties. Sightings are by the compiler unless otherwise noted.

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS. One **Common Loon** in breeding plumage was observed 3/28 on L.A. (MW,GW), the first of the year. Two **Pied-billed Grebe** were on L. Wilhelm 3/26 (BR). Two **Horned Grebe** were seen 3/31 on L.A., the only report for the quarter.

**Great Blue Heron** were present the entire quarter in the tri-counties, no doubt a reflection of the relatively mild winter temperatures. A half dozen were seen standing on nests at the Brucker Heronry 2/29 (BR). They became noticeably common 3/15+.

**Tundra Swan** migrated on time, flying over SRA night and day between 3/5-10. **Canada Geese** were more common during the quarter when compared with last year. About 75 birds were observed 1/10 in NCA (BD,GD), and some 13-33 indiv. were recorded there throughout February. A small wintering flock of 45-75 indiv. were counted at MSP during the quarter, but geese waves went through the tri-counties during the 5" snow on 3/20 and frigid temperatures of 10-12°F on 3/22. Pairing was established at MSP by 3/15.

Dabbling ducks were more or less on time and in appreciable numbers, considering the freezing-thawing conditions of March. **Wood Duck** wisely waited for the spring thaw after 3/23. Pairs were observed throughout the tri-counties along with an apparent flock of 31 migrating birds in the NCA 3/23 (BD,GD). **Green-winged Teal** continued their downward trend this quarter, only one pair being reported 3/19 in the NCA (BD,GD). **Am. Black Duck**, however, were more common than last year with several reports of pairs on L.A. and in the NCA (BD,GD) during March. **Mallard** peaked early, with 100-295 indiv. observed on various occasions at L.A. and in the NCA during February. The **N. Pintail** continued its steep decline for the tri-counties with one report of a single male at L.A. 3/28 (MW,GW). **Blue-winged Teal** were observed on L.A. and in the NCA from 3/13-31 (BD,GD), the highest count being 21 indiv. on L.A. 3/28 (MW,GW). No report of **N. Shoveler**, but **Gadwall** and **Am. Wigeon** occurred on L.A. 3/28 (MW,GW) and in the NCA 1/17 (pair of wigeon) and 3/27 (BD,GD).

Diving ducks were best represented by the **Ring-necked Duck** which peaked in the NCA between 3/13-26 with 700+ indiv. (BD,GD) and by the **Red-breasted Merganser** on L.A. which peaked between 3/28-31 with 850+ indiv. (MW,GW). Mixed rafts of **Greater** and **Lesser** scaup were reported on L.A. 3/28, with 9 of the former and 150+ of the latter species (MW,GW). Surprisingly, 21 **Common Goldeneye** were observed 3/28 on L.A., along with 15 **Bufflehead** (MW,GW). **Ruddy Duck** peaked on L.A. between 3/15-28 with rafts of 50-95 indiv. counted (MW,GW). There was no report of **Oldsquaw** or any scoter species this quarter.

VULTURES THROUGH GULLS. **Turkey Vulture** returned somewhat later than usual, mostly after the cold spell of 3/20-22. MSP continues to be one of the best localities for this species, but few nests are found. A lone **Osprey** was observed 3/28 over MSP (MW,GW), unusually early for our region. A **N. Harrier** lingered in the BCA most of the quarter (MK). Many reports of wintering **Sharp-shinned Hawk** in the quarter reversed the trend of recent years. On the other hand, reports of **Cooper's Hawk** were scarce, especially in the BCA, NCA, and SRA. The first report of **Red-shouldered Hawk** came 3/5 from NCA (BD,GD). Other single birds were observed in the SRA after 3/22. A "light phase" **Rough-legged Hawk** lingered in the NCA 1/3 to 2/28 (BD,GD), the only report for the tri-counties. The **Am. Kestrel** definitely has declined in Butler Co., but seems to be doing well in Lawrence and Mercer Cos.

**Ring-necked Pheasant** were observed in the NCA between 3/12-26 with pairing evident. Three **Ruffed Grouse** were recorded 1/12 at T.C. (MK) and a single bird in the NCA 2/14-21 (BD,GD). A lone **Wild Turkey** lingered in the NCA throughout February (BD,GD).

**Am. Coot** were on time and in appreciable numbers: 2 on 3/12-13 in NCA, 40 on 3/12, 67 on 3/19, and 300+ on 3/28, all on L.A. (v.o.). **Killdeer** arrived on the SRU staging area on time in late February, but in far fewer numbers. Two Killdeer were observed 2/14 to 3/14 in NCA (BD,GD) and 1 heard flying over Greenville 3/8 (BR). Pairs became commonplace after 3/22.

**Common Snipe** were scarce, the only report being 2 on 2/13-14 in the NCA (BD,GD). One **Am. Woodcock** was in the SGL 1 mi s. of Sandy Lake 3/26 (BR).

**Ring-billed Gulls** were common with each thawing of the ice on L.A. during the quarter, then disappeared with each lake freeze-up. The **Herring Gull** was unusually scarce, probably because of the milder temperatures overall. One was recorded 3/20 and 3 on 3/28 on L.A. (BD,GD,MW,GW).

DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS. **Mourning Dove** were nesting in February in the SRA and NCA. The **E. Screech-Owl** continues its rebound in our region, with many reports from the tri-counties. The Deans report 15-20 locations for the species around NCA and BCA-SRA have had several reports of birds calling. This is encouraging news. **Great Horned** and **Barred** owls continue to hold their own in their favorite haunts. No report of **Short-eared, Long-eared,** or **N. Saw-whet** owls received. There were unconfirmed reports in the Lawrence Co. area of **Common Barn-Owl**, but most often these reports are difficult to prove.

**Belted Kingfishers** were reported sparingly, with 1 on 1/12 at T.C. (MK) and another single bird 2/1 on SR Creek. The species was common on L.A. and in the NCA after 3/22, the Big Spring Thaw.

No report of **Red-headed Woodpecker** for the quarter, but 1 **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was recorded 3/5 in NCA (BD,GD). **N. Flicker** returned in numbers after 3/22, although a few scattered indiv. were present throughout the tri-counties in late February/early March. This species is most dependent upon ants for food in our region, a fact noticed by many observers after 3/22. A single **Pileated Woodpecker** was observed 3/28 at MSP (MW,GW).

The first **E. Phoebe** of the season occurred 3/13 in NCA (BD,GD) followed by an influx of indiv. after 3/22 throughout the tri-counties. **Horned Lark** was conspicuous by its absence in Butler and Mercer Cos., but common in Lawrence Co: 100+ on 2/13-14 and a few 2/28 in the NCA (BD,GD).

**Tree Swallow** appeared after 3/21 throughout the tri-counties and were examining nest sites by the end of the month. **Blue Jay** were building nests in mid-March. An **Am. Crow** roost was discovered 1/16 in NCA with 100+ indiv. (BD,GD). **Black-capped Chickadee** were building nests by the end of March, as were the **Tufted Titmouse**. No report for the **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, but **Brown Creeper** were unusually common: 1 on 1/10 to 2/14 in NCA (BD,GD), 3-4 throughout February in SRA, and 3-4 throughout February/early March in BCA. Even more spectacular, however, were the numbers of **Golden-crowned Kinglet** reported from the tri-counties. As many as a dozen indiv. lingered for days, even weeks, in the BCA, NCA, and SRA during the quarter.

**E. Bluebird** remained through the winter in good numbers and were choosing nesting boxes in early to mid-March. Some unusually high counts included: 8 on 1/10, 10 on 2/20, and 9 on 3/12, all in the NCA (BD,GD). A **Hermit Thrush** was observed 1/28 in BCA (MK), the only report. **Am. Robin** were unusually late and scarce until 2/29. Females appeared throughout the tri-counties after 3/10. **Cedar Waxwing** were scarce overall, with only a flock of 25 observed 2/28 to 3/13 in NCA (BD,GD), a flock of 35 on 2/1-9 in SRA, and 9 in Greenville 3/5 (BR).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES. **Yellow-rumped Warbler** did not winter in large numbers in our region this year: 1 on 1/3-10 in NCA and 3 on 2/20 in NCA were the only reports. **Rufous-sided Towhee** were late: 1-2 on 3/22 in NCA (BD,GD) and 1 male on 3/23 in SRA were the forerunners of an influx the last two days of March. **Am. Tree Sparrow** were scarce in Butler and Mercer Cos., but 150+ were a pleasant surprise 2/21 in NCA (BD,GD). A few **Chipping Sparrow** appeared on their breeding grounds after 3/21 but were much more evident after 3/25, unusually late. A few **Field Sparrow** wintered (4 on 1/2 in NCA) but did not appear in numbers until after 3/21. The only **Fox Sparrow** report came from the SGL 1 mi s. of Sandy Lake (BR). **White-throated** and **White-crowned** sparrows were conspicuous by their absence everywhere, as were **Vesper, Savannah, Grasshopper,** and **Henslow's** sparrows. **Song** and **Swamp** sparrows were heard singing after 3/1 in the tri-counties.

**Red-winged Blackbird, E. Meadowlark,** and **Rusty Blackbird** went virtually unreported until the last few days in March, unusually late, and the same was true for **Common Grackle** and **Brown-headed Cowbird**. The only exception was Ross' report of a medium-sized mixed flock of Red-winged Blackbirds and grackles 2/29 near Agway and 2 cowbirds at his feeder in Grenville 3/4. Male **Purple Finch** were singing on their territories after 3/21. **Pine Siskins** were widespread and common: 42 on 2/4 in NCA being the high count (BD,GD). No report of **Evening Grosbeak** for the quarter.

**OBSERVERS:** Barbara Dean, George Dean, Mark Krenitsky, Bob Ross, Madge Weber, Gene Wilhelm, RD 3, Box 8, Slippery Rock 16057 (412-794-2434).

*Gene Wilhelm will be out of the area most of the next quarter (April to June) so please send your reports to Barbara Dean, 321 E. Meyer Ave., New Castle 16105 (412-658-3393).*

## CARBON COUNTY

*Locations: Beltzville S.P. (BSP), Wild Creek Res. (WCR).*

A record early **Common Loon** was at WCR after a storm 3/27 (BLM). This is the only March date for this species. A flock of 6 **Horned Grebe** was also there that day. This is one of the largest groupings of this rapidly vanishing species that I have seen in years! A single **Oldsquaw** was seen at BSP 3/27 (BLM). On 3/13 a flock of 10 **Common Merganser** was on a small patch of open water at the mostly frozen WCR. (BLM).

An ad. **Red-shouldered Hawk** was seen at BSP in January and February (RW,BLM). During the annual Delaware Valley Ornithological Club Pocono Weekend, 1/16-17, an **Osprey** was seen at the lake (DB,AKr). The water was still open on the lake at this time, but it froze up shortly thereafter. This is the only January record of Osprey from our area. A **Peregrine Falcon** spent most of the winter near Weatherly (SB).

A **Barred Owl** was heard on the Little Gap CBC 1/3 near Penn Forest Res. (RW). A very early **Tree Swallow** was at Mauch Chunk L. 3/16 (RW). A female **Red Crossbill** was found on a road near Weatherly in mid-March (SB). It had been hit by a car, but was apparently only stunned, because it recovered and flew off shortly after being picked up and placed in a bush.

**OBSERVERS:** Steve Bartol, Dick Bell, Al Kronschnabel, Bernie L. Morris, 825 N. Muhlenburg St., Allentown 18104 (215-435-9134), Rick Wiltraut.

*CORRIGENDUM: Wiltraut writes that the 50 Red-throated Loons reported at Beltzville L. 11/11/87 were in fact only 5.*

## CENTRE COUNTY

*Locations: Bald Eagle S.P. (BESP).*

January began with the first cold blast of the winter, with sub-zero readings occurring each day until the middle of the month. The 11th and 12th had lows of -3, the coldest of the entire period. More normal conditions prevailed during the remainder of January, but the average temperature of 20.4 degrees was 6.6 below normal. Precipitation for January was 2.82 inches (1.21 below normal). February began with a touch of spring with record temperatures during the first couple of days, but was followed by a wide swing to sub-zero temperatures a few days later. The last half of the month was more normal. Average temperature was 26.6 degrees (1.5 below normal), and total precipitation of 2.46 inches was just about normal, with little snowfall. March was relatively warm, dry, and free of snow

cover with a normal average of 36.6 degrees and 2.1 inches of precipitation (1.25 inches below normal).

**WATERFOWL.** It was a better than average period for waterfowl migration, with most of the expected species being recorded. The usual hotspots for waterfowl were BESP and Colyer L. **Horned Grebe** were seen at BESP 3/15 (PS) and 15 were at Colyer L. 3/26 (HH). Flocks of **Tundra Swan** began moving through the area in early March with reports from BESP of 27 on 3/2 (GB) and 75 on 3/6 (BD,KE). On 3/6, six **Snow Geese** were at BESP (BD,KE).

Notable duck records included 2 **Wood Duck** 1/3 (HH,CS), and records of early-arriving ducks; a **N. Pintail** 2/18 at BESP (MW), a **Ring-necked Duck** near PA Furnace 2/23 (SB,RH), 2 **Gadwall** 3/3 (PS), and a **Ruddy Duck** 3/4 at BESP (EZ). Reports of **N. Shoveler** included 2 at BESP 3/23 (MC), 7 at Colyer L. 3/26 (HH), and 8 at BESP 3/29 (PS). Two **Canvasback** were present at BESP 3/23 (PS) and 2 were at Colyer L. 3/15-17 (KJ,JJ), but on 3/26, 75 to 100 Canvasback were at BESP, along with 12 other waterfowl species including 12 **Ruddy Duck**, 100+ **Lesser Scaup**, **Gadwall**, **Redhead** (2 pr.), and **Oldsquaw** (MC).

**RAPTORS THROUGH SWALLOWS.** At least four different **Bald Eagle** were present at BESP during the period. An imm. was observed 1/18 (BPa), 1 imm. and 1 ad. perched in the same tree 2/18 (MW), 2 imm. 2/25, and 2 ad. 3/6 (BD,KE). A **N. Goshawk** was observed in State College 2/17 (DP). The first **Red-shouldered Hawk** for the spring was at Colyer L. 3/6 (KJ,JJ). **Rough-legged Hawks** were present in lower numbers this winter, so it was unusual for 5 to be seen 2/9 in the Colyer L. area (KJ,JJ). Most departed shortly after that date. With the exception of the **Bonaparte's Gull** observed at BESP 3/29 (PS) and the occasional **Ring-billed Gulls**, few gulls were seen during the period. No **Great Black-backed Gull** was reported. Four **Am. Woodcock** were displaying at Rock Springs 3/6 (JP,BP).

Besides the **Short-eared Owl** on the BESP Christmas Count, 1/3 (DB,AF,RF), single reports of this species came from near Colyer L. 1/3 and 1/30 (KJ,JJ). The 2 **N. Saw-whet Owls** near Mingoville 1/3 were the only ones reported (JP). Three **Tree Swallows**, the first observed for the spring, were dodging snow flurries at Colyer L. 3/27 (JP,BP).

**CORVIDS THROUGH FINCHES.** **Fish Crows** arrived in the State College area around their expected dates in early to mid February, with a report during the first week in February on the Penn State Campus, 1 there 2/12, 2 in Houserville 2/16, and 5 along Spring Cr. 2/20 (JP,BP). One **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was seen 2/14 along Spring Cr. (JP,BP), but one of the best species of the period was the imm. male **Common Yellowthroat** seen 2/6-8 (BD,KE,BR), 2/14 (JP,BP), and still present until at least 2/20 (HH). This is only the second February record for this species in the State College area, the last being in 1983. An early **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was at Toftrees Pond 3/31 (ES). **Pine Warbler** had returned to Centre Co. by 3/30 (HH).

The first **Chipping Sparrow** arrived 3/31 (JP), while single **Savannah Sparrow** were reported from Rock Springs 3/19 (JP,BP) and BESP 3/27 (DB). The only **White-crowned Sparrow** that was reported during the period was 1 seen 2/5 along Red Mill Rd. (KJ,JJ). Flocks of **Red-winged Blackbird** and **Common Grackle** returned 2/24 near PA Furnace (RH,EZ) and Red-winged Blackbirds were on territory 2/29 at Fairbrook (JP).

The only **Common Redpoll** report was of 2 at a State College feeder during the first week in February (DP). No **Pine Grosbeak** was reported, but **Red Crossbill** began appearing during March with sightings of 20 on 3/3 at Colyer L. (KJ,JJ), 11 at Colyer L. 3/27 (JP,BP), and 3 at Walnut Spring Park 3/29 (GB). **Purple Finch** were in low numbers until the last week in March, but **Pine Siskin** were abundant throughout the period, with flocks of 150-200 being fairly common. Small, scattered flocks of **Evening Grosbeak** were present, but many seemed to move out of the area after the end of January.

**OBSERVERS:** Steve Bonta, Dorothy Bordner, Gail Butler, Morton Claster, Bob Dickinson, Kirk Eakin, Alice Fuller, Roana Fuller, Randy Harrison, Harry Henderson, Katherine & Jennings Jones, Bill Palmer (BPa), David Pearson, Becky and John Peplinski,

4 Beaver Branch Rd., Box 364, Pennsylvania Furnace 16865 (814-238-6541), Brian Rollfinke, Conrad Schmidt, Paul Schwalbe, Edgar Spalding, Merrill Wood, Eugene Zielinski.

*CORRIGENDUM: We struggled and struggled with the alignment of tables for the Hawk Watch summaries and thought we had it correct, but there is a tab mistake for the Bald Eagle Fire Tower (Centre County). The Golden Eagle and Rough-legged Hawk totals should all be pushed over one column.*

*A few typos always seem to get through despite rereading many times. We apologize.*

## CHESTER COUNTY

*Locations: Hibernia Park (HBP), Kurtz's Fish Farm (KFF), Marsh Creek S.P. (MCSP), Nottingham Park (NHP), Octoraro Lake (O.L.), Struble Lake (S.L.).*

**LOONS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS.** A single **Common Loon** was at MCSP until 1/8 (m.ob.). A **Horned Grebe** was there 1/9 (BB) and then the species disappeared until 3/13 when 3 were observed; single birds were reported at S.L. 3/18 and 3/30 (LL). **Pied-billed Grebe** were at MCSP until 1/9 and then 2 were sighted at MCSP and another pair at S.L. 3/21 (LL). **Tundra Swan** first appeared at S.L. 3/1, when 4 were seen, then 125 were observed 3/3 at MCSP and S.L. The last report was of 30 at MCSP 3/26 (LL,GS). **Two Greater White-fronted Geese** were seen at and around S.L. from 3/3-16. Lewis reports that this species has been observed in 11 of the last 13 years at that location. **Canada Geese** appeared to be in fewer numbers and did not stay as long.

Most species of waterfowl disappeared after the freeze-up in early January. On 1/9 the following were all at MCSP: **N. Pintail**, **Canvasback**, 6 **Redhead**, 13 **Ring-necked Duck**, **Greater Scaup**, 5 **Lesser Scaup**, and **Hooded Merganser**. By late February the ice had thawed and the following were observed at S.L. and MCSP 3/3: **Am. Wigeon**, **Canvasback**, **Ring-necked Duck**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Bufflehead**, **Common Merganser**, and **Hooded Merganser** (LL). Three **Canvasback** were at S.L. 3/9 and 89 **Ring-necked Ducks** were at MCSP the same day (JP). A **Blue-winged Teal** (AG) and 1 **Oldsquaw** (m.ob.) were found at MCSP 3/13. The first **Wood Duck** was reported 2/20 near Landenberg (SH,DN); another 7 were at S.L. 3/13 (AG). The only report of **Common Goldeneye** was of 2 individuals at S.L. 3/10 (LL). **Common Merganser** were tallied at +300 at O.L. 3/10 (LL). At least 15 **Hooded Merganser** were at KFF 3/10 (JP). **Red-breasted Merganser** were at S.L. 3/21-23 (LL).

**Am. Coot** returned to MCSP in mid-February with about 200 counted. **Common Snipe** were found in good numbers in their usual haunts; 10 were in one spot near S.L. 1/9 (BB,JP). **Am. Woodcock** first displayed 3/5 near Mortonville and stayed until 3/20 when a very cold air mass hit the area and they either departed or just stopped displaying (JP); 3 were also seen at S.L. 3/11 and at NHP 3/19 (LL).

A single **Bonaparte's Gull** was at the Honey Brook Sewage Treatment Plant 3/1 (LL). **Fifty Herring Gull** were present at O.R. 3/26. Also there 3/19 and 3/26 was a **Great Black-backed Gull** (LL).

**RAPTORS THROUGH WOODPECKERS.** As previously reported, **Black Vulture** continue to be seen throughout the area, especially near Elverson. An **Osprey** was observed at MCSP 3/26 (GS). **Bald Eagle** reports were as follows: An ad. flying over Exton 3/7 (JP), an imm. bird at O.L. 3/19, an ad. male there 3/20 and an ad. female there as well 3/27 (LL). This pair is still there as of this writing. Another ad. was observed flying over Honey Brook 3/22 (GS). A single **Cooper's Hawk** wintered in the S.L. area and 1 stayed all season at HBP (LL). A pair of **Red-shouldered Hawk** remained all winter at O.L., and another 2 each at both S.L. and NHP (LL).

**Ring-necked Pheasant** numbers were very low this winter. A **Wild Turkey** showed up on 1/6 on the grounds of a domestic turkey farm and this apparently love-sick gobbler has been hanging around there all season! Another was heard gobbling in NHP 3/19 (LL).

A **Long-eared Owl** was at HBP 1/23. At least 4 **Barred Owl** were heard at O.L. 3/10 and another continued near Westtown School at least until 2/21 (JP). A **Snowy Owl** was seen and photographed at HBP from 2/29 through 3/2 (LL). A **N. Saw-whet Owl** was seen at Westtown School from mid-January until at least 2/21 (JP).

One **Red-headed Woodpecker** has been on Pleasant View Rd. near S.L. throughout the season (m.ob.) and another was at a feeder at the Charlestown Nature Center 1/2 (JP). Only a few reports of **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** were received. Numbers of most woodpeckers did seem to be up according to most observers. A pair of **Pileated Woodpecker** still remains at HBP, even with the extensive woodcutting going on.

PHOEBE THROUGH FINCHES. **E. Phoebe** first returned 3/5 when I awoke to hear and see 4 in my yard. Good numbers of **Horned Lark**, with as many as 300 counted, were near S.L. until mid-March. The first **Tree Swallow** returned 3/19 at S.L. (LL). It seems that the most numerous crow at NHP is the **Fish Crow**; there are at least 50 there (LL).

**Black-capped Chickadee** were only found in the northernmost part of the county this winter. A **Brown Thrasher** spent all winter in Berwyn (PBS). Many observers commented on the absence of **Cedar Waxwing** all season. A **Pine Warbler** was seen 3/19 at NHP and by 3/26 there were 13 sighted (LL).

Seven **Chipping Sparrow** were at O.L. 3/26. **White-crowned Sparrow** were in fewer numbers this season. Reports of **Fox Sparrow** were of 1 at West Chester 3/4 (JG) and 1 at a feeder near Parkesburg from 3/3-30 (LL). **Lapland Longspur** were seen in with the flocks of Horned Larks near S.L., with 5 counted 3/3 (BB,LL,JP). Also in the area was a single **Snow Bunting** (LL,JP). **Rusty Blackbird** were observed in this area as well throughout the season (m.ob.).

**Pine Siskin** were reported throughout the quarter at feeders and elsewhere with flocks of 100+ seen 3/19 and 3/26 at O.L. (LL) and at Westtown School 2/21 (JP). Some birders commented on the scarcity of **Purple Finch** and one observer even noticed a lack of **House Finch** at his feeders (DN). Lucky guy! The only report of **Evening Grosbeak** was of a flock of 20 at NHP 3/19-23.

**OBSERVERS:** Barry Blust, John Ginaven, Al Guarente, Sophie Homsey, Larry Lewis, David Niles, Jerry Pasquarella, 2209 Cranberry Lane, Coatesville 19320 (215-486-6440), Grier Saunders, Phillips B. Street.

#### CLEARFIELD COUNTY

Much of this report will be concerned with overwintering species, but the **Am. Bittern** flying over Brady Twp. 3/27 was definitely a migrant (JS). The single report of **Canada Goose** was 3/2 (MA). The only other waterfowl seen were **Mallard** 1/3 and 3/24-29.

The first **Turkey Vulture** was seen near DuBois 3/11 (JS). A pair of **N. Harrier** stayed throughout February and March in Brady Twp. (JS). **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was reported only once in January and twice in February (MA,JS). **Cooper's Hawk** was reported at least twice in each month of the quarter (JS,MA). **Red-tailed Hawk** reports came regularly from the DuBois area (JS,MA) and from Frenchville 2/14 (ES). The only reports of **Rough-legged Hawk** were from Brady Twp. 1/7 and 2/16 (JS). An **Am. Kestrel** overwintered there as well (JS).

The only **Ruffed Grouse** reported were on the DuBois CBC, 1/3, and 2/28 (JS). **Wild Turkey** was reported on the CBC and 1 was near Kylertown 3/2 (ES). The first **Killdeer** seen were 3/7 (MA) and 3/9 near DuBois. **Am. Woodcock** were first reported 3/24 (JS).

The 3 **Ring-billed Gull** seen flying over 3/2 were the only of their kind reported (JS).

Rewarding was the response to Atkinson and Smrekar's public appeal for information on owls. JS summarized as follows. "We received about 50 phone calls from all over the county informing us of **Great Horned Owl** mostly, and a few **Barred Owl**. In the process we also received reports of 2 **Snowy Owl** and 4 or 5 **Short-eared Owls** at Shucker's Orchard near Luthersburg. The Snowys stayed about one week in late February. They eluded me each time I went to look for them. The reports come from the mailman Gary Gluczyk, who is quite an outdoorsman and so are reputable." The Short-eared Owls stayed through February. A **N. Saw-whet Owl** was found dead at the DuBois Reservoir 1/3 (*fide* JS).

A **Belted Kingfisher** was seen infrequently throughout the quarter near DuBois (MA). **Downy Woodpecker** was well-reported throughout the county, but only 6 **Hairy Woodpecker** were reported (JS,MA,ES). The first **N. Flicker** report was 3/30 in Brady Twp.(JS). A **Pileated Woodpecker** was reported 2/14 and 2/24 (JS). A sure sign of Spring in these parts is the return of **E. Phoebe**, which was noted 3/24 (JS). **Horned Lark** were notably absent in the DuBois area this winter (JS), but were conspicuous in the SE portion of the county; 60+ were seen in one field near Kylertown 2/14 (ES). Eight were seen singing on their breeding grounds near Frenchville 2/28 (ES).

**Am. Crow** is an abundant species here (100+ in a field in Drifting 2/14 (ES). **Fish Crow** appears to be almost entirely absent from this area (no reports this quarter) despite its significant presence in adjacent Centre Co. Observers in Clearfield Co. should be aware of the possibility of seeing this species. **Common Raven** was seen on the DuBois CBC and 1 was seen n. of Kylertown 2/14 (ES).

**Black-capped Chickadee** were abundant as usual in and out of towns. **Tufted Titmouse** reports were scattered throughout the quarter (MA,JS). The only **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was seen 3/11 in Brady Twp. (JS). **White-breasted Nuthatch** was regularly reported throughout the quarter. A **Brown Creeper** was seen 3/1 near DuBois (MA). The only **Carolina Wren** reports were 3/9, 3/24, and 3/26 (MA). Only 2 **Golden-crowned Kinglet** were reported; 1 on 2/10 in Brady Twp. (JS), and 1 on 2/28 near Kylertown (ES).

JS reported the only **E. Bluebird**, beginning on 3/9. Reports of **Am. Robin** were infrequent during January and February (MA,JS,ES), but became daily after 3/2. MA reported two different **N. Mockingbird** in DuBois 2/22, one apparently overwintering with the help of a barberry shrub - one of their favorites. The infrequent sightings of **Cedar Waxwing** during the winter (1/3, 2/1 near DuBois (JS) and 25 at Drifting 2/14 (ES) became daily after 3/12 (MA).

The only **Rufous-sided Towhee** was seen 3/26 in Brady Twp. (JS). **Am. Tree Sparrow**, present throughout the winter, were last seen 3/26 (MA). The first **Field Sparrow** of the year was seen 3/31 in Brady Twp. (JS). A **Fox Sparrow** was seen daily from 3/11-22, which are typical migration dates (JS). **Song Sparrow** were well reported as usual, and were singing by late February (MA). The only **White-throated Sparrow** sighting was 1 on 2/14 near Frenchville (ES). **Dark-eyed Junco** were sighted daily in the DuBois area (MA,JS). Small flocks were seen in the woods near Frenchville 2/14 and 2/28 (ES). An interesting sighting was that of a **Lapland Longspur** 2/14 at Drifting (ES). The bird was in the flock of Horned Larks mentioned above, and was not present 2/28.

A flock of 150 **Red-winged Blackbird** near Philipsburg 2/28 (ES) were the first true arrivals. They became regular in the DuBois area in early March (JS,MA). **E. Meadowlark** were first seen in the DuBois area 3/21 (JS). **Common Grackle** quickly became regular after the first sighting 2/28 (MA). After first appearing 3/3, **Brown-headed Cowbird** were frequently seen (MA,JS).

The **Purple Finch** seen 2/14 at Drifting was urging on spring with song (ES). Five reports were received from the DuBois area in March (JS,MA). **House Finch** were as common as ever. **Pine Siskin** appear to be unusually common this year.

Marianne Atkinson related an alarming story. A large number of the siskins she was feeding began to die. In a two-week period, she estimated 50 had died. The same thing happened at a different feeder across town that used different food. No word has come back yet from the authorities who are conducting tests.

**Am. Goldfinch** were attending feeders in the DuBois area well into March. Some **Evening Grosbeak** were present in the DuBois area through the end of the reporting period (MA,JS).

**OBSERVERS:** Marianne Atkinson, Jocelynn Smrekar, Edgar Spalding, 115 Old Houserville Rd., State College 16801 (814-238-7973).

#### CLINTON COUNTY

*Locations: Bald Eagle Creek, Castanea, Lock Haven Area, Mackeyville, McElhattan, Susquehanna R., Woolrich.*

Some 7 **N. Pintail** were at Mackeyville 2/23 (PS) and **Ring-necked Ducks** were common on the river through March, with an imm. **Greater Scaup** at McElhattan 2/9 (PS). Other than the usual **Mallard**, **Am. Black Duck**, and **Common Goldeneye**, these were about the only ducks found in the area for this period.

**N. Harrier** were seen several times (P&GS) and CH had a **Red-shouldered Hawk** in Lock Haven Area 1/13. Flocks of **Wild Turkey** were seen by several observers: 25 in Lock Haven Area (CH), 18+ on 2/25 (PS), and 17 near Woolrich 2/7 (PP).

An early **Am. Coot** was on Bald Eagle Cr. near Castanea 1/21 (PS). **Bonaparte's Gull** at McElhattan 3/23 were the first of the season (P&GS). **Common Raven** was present all winter in the valley area (P&GS) and **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, along with **Golden-crowned Kinglet**, were seen much more often than usual in winter for this area. There was a flock of from 20-25 **Yellow-rumped Warbler** that wintered along Bald Eagle Cr. (P&GS).

The **Am. Tree Sparrow** was very low in numbers this year and hard to find, **White-throated Sparrow** were also low but not nearly as bad as the Tree. No **White-crowned Sparrow** nor **Snow Bunting** was reported during the quarter.

The only **Purple Finch** were in Lock Haven Area 2/7 (CH). Two **Common Redpoll** in the same area 2/11 were the only ones seen in the county (AR). As last winter was the winter of the redpoll, this winter was the winter of the **Pine Siskin**. More were present in the area this year than anyone can remember, and they were here all winter (P&GS). Whereas the **Evening Grosbeak** were few and scattered.

**OBSERVERS:** Cecil Hazlett, Parker Peer, Amy Richerts, Glenna Schwalbe, Paul Schwalbe, 546 Wilson St., Jersey Shore 17740 (717-398-4514).

#### COLUMBIA COUNTY

*Locations: Briar Creek Lake (BCL).*

Many observations made by the Columbia Co. based NBBC are reported in the Luzerne Co. report. Generally it can be stated that trips to the traditionally rewarding winter hot spots were not rewarding.

**WATER BIRDS.** The only **Pied-billed Grebe** was on BCL, 3/28 (ND). A few **Great Blue Heron** and **Belted Kingfisher** stayed the winter. Over 150 **Canada Geese** overwintered near Bloomsburg and

Catawissa, but were less common than usual near Berwick (NBBC). **Am. Black Duck**, **Mallard**, **Common Merganser**, **Bufflehead**, and **Common Goldeneye** overwintered in lower than average numbers near Berwick (DG). **Ring-necked Ducks** staged a good migration in the county with 90 at BCL on 3/20 (KH). **Hooded Merganser** were also well represented with 8 at BCL, 3/20 (ND). **Herring Gull** visited Berwick on 2/2 (KH) and **Ring-billed Gull** were occasionally seen all winter (DG).

**UPLAND GAMEBIRDS.** **Wild Turkey** continued to be seen by many observers in a variety of places. **Ruffed Grouse** and **Ring-necked Pheasant** were relatively scarce, but **Mourning Doves** abundant (NBBC).

**RAPTORS.** **Red-tailed Hawk** were common all winter and paired off by late February. Both **Sharp-shinned** and **Cooper's** hawks were also frequently seen, especially around feeders, but no **N. Goshawk**. In contrast to some prior reports, many observers felt that **Am. Kestrel** were more common than the last several winters and may be undergoing a rebound. On the other side of the coin, **N. Harrier** and **Rough-legged Hawk** were practically nonexistent until 2/10 when they moved into the Orangeville-Rohrsburg area (DG). A **Barred Owl** was occasionally seen in the Mainville SGL #58 near JF's home. Rumors sent the NBBC on a wild **Snowy Owl** chase in the Benton area in February (they got skunked!). The sole **Short-eared Owl** was seen crossing I-80 near Lime Ridge, 2/21 (DG).

**WOODPECKERS AND SONGBIRDS:** **Red-bellied Woodpecker** were more commonly reported than in past winters and may be increasing in this region. Some **N. Flicker** stayed in towns and farmlands.

**Horned Lark** were found only in manured fields near Benton (a poor substitute for a Snowy Owl). **Tree Swallow** returned 3/27. **Red-breasted Nuthatch** stayed in some conifer groves, but were not unusually common. **Golden-crowned Kinglet** were commonly reported. **Carolina Wren** were reported to be in good numbers by many observers. **Am. Robin** were noticeably absent in the Millville SGL #226, but two did show up near Rohrsburg 2/2, staying the month (DG), and at least 20 stayed near Berwick in a big staghorn sumac patch in MO's neighborhood. **E. Bluebird** continued their splendid comeback. **Cedar Waxwing** were uncommon and scattered in small flocks. **Eur. Starling** were nesting in Bloomsburg Town Park in late March (NBBC). **N. Cardinal** were common throughout. **Purple Finch** were only found at feeders near Millville SGL #226, **House Finch** were common and sometimes abundant. Some **Field Sparrows** stayed in weedy fields near Rohrsburg (DG). Only a few **White-throated Sparrow** were observed. Many NBBC members thought that **Dark-eyed Junco** and **Am. Tree Sparrow** were also below their usual winter numbers, but DG saw large flocks of Tree Sparrows in weedy fields near Rohrsburg throughout February.

**Evening Grosbeak** were relatively scarce and in fairly small flocks, however, **Pine Siskin** were abundant and omnipresent throughout the county. Siskin winter populations were as high as has ever been observed in this region. **Common Redpoll** were also present but not in exceptional numbers. **Pine Grosbeak**, **Snow Bunting**, and **Lapland Longspur** went unreported. **Red Crossbill** were observed in the village of Central by visiting members of DVOC (details lacking).

**OBSERVERS:** Nancy Dennis, John Fridman, Douglas Gross, Susquehanna Biological Laboratory, R.D. 1, Berwick 18603, Doyle Harris, Karen Hiller, Sheila Lunger, Hugh and Diana McFadden, Mona O'Neal, North Branch Bird Club, Robert and Tanya Sagar, David and Linda Unger.

## CRAWFORD COUNTY

*Locations: Conneaut Marsh (C.M.), Linesville Fish Hatchery (LFH), Meadville (MDV), Pymatuning S.P. (including the Causeway, Goose Mgmt. Area, and Spillway) (PSP).*

All sightings are by Ronald and/or Mary Leberman unless otherwise indicated.

One **Common Loon** was stranded on the ice-bound lake at PSP. **Pied-billed Grebe** were found there through the end of February, with the first migrant noted at Woodcock L. 3/13. Also at Woodcock L. 3/27 was the first **Horned Grebe** migrant. The **Red-necked Grebe** at the Jamestown Dam end of Pymatuning L. 3/19 was an excellent find.

The first migrant **Great Blue Heron** was found 3/23 at Woodcock L. (RFL,MNL), followed by 18 at Clear L., Spartansburg 3/29 (KP). A **Tundra Swan** wintered at the LFH from 1/16+. Spring numbers were better this year than 1986 with 80 counted at C.M. 3/9 and 70 at Woodcock L. 3/13.

About 5000 **Canada Geese** were tallied in mid-February at PSP. The 2 **Wood Duck** at C.M. 3/29 were our first migrants. **Am. Black Duck** numbers were better than usual, especially in the Hartstown Swamp (LJ) and also were located at PSP on several trips. **Mallard** wintered in the usual numbers. **Gadwall** were noted to be down from the past few years and the 1 found at PSP 1/2 could not be relocated after the freeze-up about 1/5. Two **Am. Wigeon** were at the C.M. 3/19. Best count for **Ring-necked Duck** was 30 at Hartstown Marsh 3/19. The 7 **Lesser Scaup** at PSP 3/19 increased to 15 by 3/25. Five **Common Goldeneye** at the Spillway 2/20 was the best count for the year after the lakes froze over. Twenty-five **Hooded Merganser** were at C.M. 1/2 and 1 was found at PSP 2/10. Five **Common Merganser** were flying over Ford Is. 2/20. Seven **Red-breasted Merganser** were found at Tamarack L. 3/27.

The single **Turkey Vulture** at Harmonsburg 3/23 was our first sighting and much later than the last several years. Two **Bald Eagle** were at the Spillway 2/10 (RFL,MNL) and 3 were reported at C.M. 2/22 (MG). One **N. Harrier** was n. of Saegertown 1/8 and another was found at the C.M. 3/16. Single **Cooper's Hawk** were seen at PSP 1/2 and 1/23 and near Spartansburg 2/8. An ad. **N. Goshawk** seen near Cambridge Springs 3/16 was a good find (SR). One **Red-shouldered Hawk** was found w. of Saegertown 1/10 (RFL,MNL,TP) and 4 were n. of Titusville 2/8. **Red-tailed Hawk** numbers were typical. All sightings of **Rough-legged Hawk** were at the Goose Mgmt. Area.

Ten **Am. Coot** were at C.M. 1/2, but none remained after the 1/5 freeze-up. The first **Killdeer** noted 3/13 at the LFH also seemed later than normal.

**Bonaparte's Gull** numbers which were as high as 2575 in Dec, were down to zero by 1/2 and only 2 were found off the Causeway 2/20. **Ring-billed Gull** were equally hard to find until 2 were located 2/2, but the 850+ at PSP 3/19 represented a good total. The 12 **Herring Gull** at the C.M. 3/19 were unusual for both location and numbers.

Lower numbers of **Mourning Dove** were noted this winter, although **Am. Crow** seemed in better numbers. The **Barred Owl** remains reliable at Saeger Hill, Meadville (RFL,MNL,RC). Perhaps the best bird to visit our feeders this winter was a **Brown Creeper**, which spent most of the winter. A pair of **Carolina Wren** returned to a Meadville feeder 2/17 (JW) and another was at a separate Meadville feeder 3/16 (SF). Three **E. Bluebird** were found n. of Adamsville 2/20. Twelve migrating **Am. Robin** were seen near Westford 2/20.

All sparrows seemed scarce or harder to find than usual this winter. Once the **Pine Siskin** found our thistle feeders 1/1 they came in flocks of 20-40 birds. Perhaps our usual wintering **Am. Goldfinch** went further south this year as we had lower than the usual numbers at local feeders. We only had 1 **Evening Grosbeak** at our feeders on two or three occasions, while others only 6 mi away in Blooming Valley had more than they wanted (WS).

*OBSERVERS:* Robert Criswell, Sarah E. Flaugh, Marguerite Geible, Larry Johnson, Ronald F. Leberman, RD #1, Saeger Hill, Meadville 16335 (814-724-5071), Mary N. Leberman, Thelma Patton, Karen Prather, Stella Reiners, William Smith, Jack Walton.

## CUMBERLAND COUNTY

*Locations: Boiling Springs L. (BSL), Big Springs (BGS), Conodegunit Cr. (CONO), Creek Pond Rd. (CPR), Kings Gap S.P. (KGSP), Huntsdale (HDL), Mud Level Rd. (MLR), Newville SGL (NSGL), Pine Grove Furnace S.P. (PGFSP), West Fairview Boat Launch (WFBL).*

All in all, the quarter was good in the county. Many species were seen and the additions of such birds as **Snowy Owl**, **Red Crossbill**, and **Lapland Longspur** made this quarter quite special.

**WATERFOWL.** An imm. **Common Loon** spent the quarter on BSL; this bird was probably one of the birds from the November fall-out (m.ob.). **Horned Grebe** loved WFBL on 3/28; a high count of 34 were seen that day (RK). A **Horned Grebe** was also seen at O.L. 3/26 (DHe). **Pied-billed Grebe** seemed to enjoy the cattails at O.L., with at least 1 there every trip from 3/16 to the end of the period (DHe). The pair of **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at HDL 3/27 were most likely the first pair back (DHe).

In the waterfowl area we start with **Tundra Swan**. High counts for various locations are: 5 at HDL 3/18 (DHe), 15 at NSGL 3/24 (DHe), 10 at CPR 3/29 (DHe), and 40 at WFBL 3/7 (RK). A single **Snow Goose** was at BSL from 2/20 through the end of the period (m.ob.). A high of 8 **Gadwall**, 4 pair, were at BSL 1/29 (DH). **N. Pintail** were recorded for the area's quarter high at CPR 3/4, with a total of 4 seen (DHe). Four **Green-winged Teal** were at O.L. 3/16 (DHe). A high of 20 **Am. Wigeon** were at WFBL 3/28 (RK); 12 were also seen 2/4 at BSL (DH), where a small group of 6-10 indiv. stayed for the quarter. A single **N. Shoveler** was spotted at O.L. 3/26 (DHe). **Wood Duck** are doing nicely in the county, with reports of sightings from CONO, BGS, O.L., WFBL, and HDL (DH,DHe).

**Redhead** were seen at WFBL, with 4 on 3/6 (RK) and 3/17 (JW,DH,JWe). A single **Redhead** was also seen at CPR 3/4 (DHe). An average of 20 **Ring-necked Duck** were seen at CPR 3/4-24 (DHe). The **Lesser Scaup** high was 8 at WFBL 3/28 (RK), while O.L. held single birds on 3/14, 3/18, and 3/27 (DHe). Four **Greater Scaup** were at WFBL from 3/7-11 (RK,DH,JW). A high of 128 **Common Goldeneye** were at WFBL 3/10 (DH). **Bufflehead**, meanwhile, topped out at WFBL with a total of 250+ on 3/28 (RK). All three mergansers were at CPR 3/4 (DHe). A high of 9 **Hooded Merganser** were seen 1/17 at WFBL (RK); 27 **Common Merganser** were at WFBL 3/15 (DH), and 6 **Red-breasted Merganser** at WFBL 3/28 (RK) are all noteworthy.

**RAPTORS THROUGH FINCHES.** A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was found 3/19 at O.L. (DHe). A single **Rough-legged Hawk** was at MLR from 1/24 to 2/10 (RK,DHe).

The first **Greater Yellowlegs** was at NSGL 3/24 followed closely by 3 **Lesser Yellowlegs** at BGS 3/28 (DHe).

Big news for Cumberland County was the **Snowy Owl** seen at MLR, near Shippensburg, from 1/13-25 (m.ob.). A **Long-eared Owl** was at O.L. 1/1 and 2 were found at the same location 1/16 (DHe). A **Barred Owl** responded to DH 3/24 in Means Hollow.

**Pileated Woodpecker** numbers seem to be increasing in the South Mt. area (DH). Up to 150 **Horned Lark** were at MLR from 1/1 to 3/11 (DHe) and DH had a flock of 130 on Rt. 233 s. of I-81 on 1/17.

The first **E. Phoebe** was 1 on 3/17 at KGSP (DH). **Tree Swallow** returned 3/27 to WFBL (DH). **Winter Wren** were seen at various places on South Mt. 3/17 (DH). One **Hermit Thrush** was at PGFSP 1/17 (DH). A solitary **Water Pipit** was seen near Rt. 15 s. of Mechanicsburg 1/10 (GR).

A **Yellow-rumped Warbler** and a **Palm Warbler** were seen 1/16 at BGS (DHe). Awfully early for that Palm!

**Red-winged Blackbird** and **Common Grackle** made it back in numbers during the warm weekend of 3/4-6. A flock of 10-15 **Rusty Blackbird** was seen at BGS from 3/21 to the end of the quarter (DHe).

A flock of 45 **Red Crossbill**, almost equal in males and females, was seen 1/15 at Tumbling Run (SS,DH). This was an exciting winter finch find!

**Snow Bunting** made appearances on 1/13, 1/26-27 in pairs at MLR (DHe). Also a solo Snow Bunting was seen on Rt. 233 on 1/17 (DH). Two **Lapland Longspur**, in near breeding plumage, were seen 3/10 at MLR (DHe). This was the first recorded sighting for the county.

A large flock of 225+ **Pine Siskin** were seen at Tumbling Run 1/15 (SS,DH). This is a new high count for the county.

**OBSERVERS:** Deuane Hoffman, 3406 Montour St., Harrisburg 17111 (717-564-7475), Don Henise (DHe), Ramsay Koury, Grace Randolph, Steve Sillett, Jeanne Waldner, Justin Weaver (JWe).

#### DAUPHIN COUNTY

*Locations: Stony Creek Valley (SCV), Susquehanna River, Wildwood Lake Nature Center (WLNC).*

The weather was relatively mild with more precipitation falling as rain than as snow. The river which is normally frozen for four to six weeks was frozen for only two weeks and Wildwood L. which usually freezes for about 2 to 2-1/2 months was frozen for just over a month.

No rarity was reported. Most of the better finds were in the hawk group, as mentioned below. The waterfowl migration was below average for diving ducks and average or a bit above for the dabblers. The winter finch migration (excluding Pine Siskins) was non-existent and that included the normal wintering finches.

A **Horned Grebe** was found in an open pool on the mainly frozen river 1/19 (DH). At least 2 **Great Blue Heron** remained for the winter while a **Great Egret** was found 3/9 at WLNC (EC), which is two to three weeks early for this species.

A 1000+ **Tundra Swan** were seen flying north 3/3 with another 300-400 seen 3/9. This appears to be a few weeks early as well. **Wood Duck** arrived in good numbers (20-30) at WLNC by mid-March while the **Green-winged Teal** were peaking (120-140) and by then the 48 **N. Pintail** which had arrived by 2/20 were gone. Thirty-five **Blue-winged Teal** and a pair of **N. Shoveler** were found in the last week of March. Ten to 12 **Am. Wigeon** were on Spring Cr. in Hershey in early January (S&SR). Roughly the same number were being seen at WLNC at the end of the period. The diving ducks, including **Common Goldeneye**, **Bufflehead**, **Common** and **Hooded mergansers**, were in lower numbers than normal and only 1 **Canvasback**, 2 **Ring-necked Duck** (JC), 1 scaup sp? (DH) and 1 **Red-breasted Merganser** (G&CW) were reported.

Two **Black Vulture** were seen in SCV 3/1 and 3/3 (BH). As many as 6 **Bald Eagle**, both ad. and imm., were seen during the period at Dauphin (EC). A **Cooper's Hawk** spent the winter in Hershey picking off **House Finch** and doves (S&SR), while 2 **N. Goshawk** were seen moving through SCV 3/17 (BH). S&SR had the best bird of the season - a **Merlin** - in Hershey 2/21.

In a previous issue of PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS I mentioned the loss of a field to bulldozers where **Common Snipe** gathered in March. It seems the snipe are willing to use nearby WLNC, where 16 were found 3/27. **Am. Woodcock** were doing their mating flight at at least three locations by the end of the period.

**Bonaparte's Gulls**, which use the Susquehanna to migrate at the end of March and the beginning of April, were seen but only in small numbers by the end of the period. The number of **Belted Kingfisher** on the river and at WLNC is nearly double what it has been in past years. The first **E. Phoebe** were reported 3/19 at WLNC (EC) and 3/30 in Hershey (S&SR). A mixed flock, including **Horned Lark**, was found along Meadow Lane in Hershey on 2/26; S&SR

report this is the first time they have seen the "Prairie" race there. **Tree Swallow** usually arrive by the end of March at WLNC, but this year **N. Rough-winged Swallow** were with them 3/24, which is about three weeks early. The Dauphin **Common Raven** were back by 3/10.¶

The **White-breasted Nuthatch** and **Brown Creeper** were around in fair numbers in early January, but by February were no longer being found at WLNC. The **Hermit Thrush** reported in the previous issue was still at the same location 3/31. Ten to 12 **Yellow-rumped Warbler** were at WLNC 3/27 and a **Pine Warbler** was found there as well. The earliest warbler reported was a Pine in SCV 3/18 (BH).

A single **Fox Sparrow** was at WLNC 3/27. At WLNC **Am. Tree Sparrow** were not found at all and **White-throated Sparrow** and **Dark-eyed Junco** were in extremely low numbers throughout the period. **Pine Siskin**, on the other hand, were reported at a couple feeders, with S&SR in Hershey reporting a daily average of 40-50 and a high of about 80 birds.

**OBSERVERS:** Ed Chubb, Joe Church, 129 Lucknow Rd., Harrisburg 17110 (717-236-1868), Deuane Hoffman, Barb Huffman, Steve & Sharon Rannels, George & Catherine Wertz.

#### DELAWARE COUNTY

*Locations: Crum Creek Res. (CCR), Ridley Creek S.P. (RCSP), Tyler Arboretum (T.A.).*

Most of January was cold, with temperatures in the high 20s to low 30s, which kept most water areas under ice. Two snowfalls in January gave us moderate amounts of snow cover, but did not remain on the ground very long. February continued cold, but no snow, and March was warmer than usual.

GREBES THROUGH HAWKS. A single **Pied-billed Grebe** was at CCR (E&GK) 3/12 and 6 were at Tinicum NEC (JCM) 3/8. Seven **Tundra Swan** were seen at Gov. Printz Park on the Delaware R. (AG,JL). Thirty-five **Snow Geese** were seen winging their way towards the river 1/5 (HMc). **Wood Duck** were back in the area on schedule when 4 were seen at CCR 3/6 (E&GK) and a pair at the T.A. 3/16 (JG). Two **Hooded Merganser** were also at CCR the same day (G&EK).

A female **N. Harrier** was at Elwyn Institutes hunting in the fields throughout March and was last seen 3/30; probably the same bird was seen at the Media Water Works 3/18 (CS). A male harrier coursed the fields at RCSP throughout most of the quarter. **Sharp-shinned Hawk** seemed to have a heyday at feeders this year, with many observers reporting them taking cardinals, juncos, blue jays, and even pigeons. A **Cooper's Hawk** was seen 2/17 at the Delco Sportsmen's Club in Media and again 2/21 at Linvilla Orchards, probably the same individual given the proximity of locations. Many observers had a fine opportunity to study 2 **Red-shouldered Hawk** at T.A. on the annual census held 1/9. The hawks circled the area giving all present a nice view.

KILLDEER THROUGH SAPSUCKER. A lone **Killdeer** was flying over the T.A. 3/5 (AG,JL). A large flock of 75+ **Common Snipe** were at Tinicum 3/8 (JCM). **Am. Woodcock** arrived back at Tinicum 3/2 (JCM) when 10 were found, while at RCSP they started displaying 3/10 (F&BH).

The Tinicum **Common Barn-Owl** was still present under I-95 during the month of January (JL,JCM). A nice find was a **Barred Owl** heard during the months of January and February along Wawa Rd. in Wawa (WC). It was not heard in March. A **N. Saw-whet Owl** was another super find at T.A. 3/30 (JG). Could this be the same bird that was present last year from 3/23-26? This year's bird was probably around at least a few days before being discovered, as evidenced from the amount of whitewash that was found. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** were present at T.A. and in Swarthmore in February (HMc).

PHOEBE THROUGH WARBLERS. The many **E. Phoebe** reports from 3/19+ brought with them the long-awaited warm weather. **Tree Swallow** were just a little ahead of the phoebes this year, as usual, arriving at Tinicum 3/12.

Two **E. Bluebird** were at Smedley Park 3/19 (E&GK), perhaps setting up territory there. If so, this would be a new breeding site for the county. **Hermit Thrush** were scarce, as very few were reported. **Cedar Waxwing** were conspicuous only by their absence, however small flocks started to appear again in mid-February in Media (AG,W&AT).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** were somewhat hard to find this quarter, but 1 was present in an Upper Providence backyard 1/16 and 1/21. It appears that the **Pine Warbler** at T.A. over-wintered as it was found during the last quarter of 1987, then 1/24 and 2/28 (JG), and again 3/25 (HMc) when at least 3 were heard singing at one time and 2 were heard 3/28 (TR).

SPARROWS THROUGH SISKINS. A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was migrating through RCSP 3/21 (F&BH). A **Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco** was at a Swarthmore feeder 1/8 in the company of a large flock of regular juncos (HMc). Although many observers felt the **Fox Sparrow** was rare this year, they apparently came through RCSP in better numbers than in past years, at least at feeders (B&FH,GL). On 3/20 at least 5 were counted (F&BH,GL). Otherwise they were only reported as singles at Tinicum 1/18 (AG) and Swarthmore 3/21 (HMc).

A male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was reported at a feeder in Ridley Park 2/13 for a very short time and not seen again (CW). An ad. male **N. Oriole** was found at T.A. 1/29 sitting on top of a spruce tree (SC). Later searching was in vain as the bird could not be found subsequent to that date.

**Purple Finch**, crossbills, **Evening Grosbeak**, and redpolls were non-existent this winter, however **Pine Siskin** were everywhere and in large numbers, *e.g.*, 50+ at a Swarthmore feeder (HMc) and in Springfield (BC).

**OBSERVERS:** Bill Church, Skip Conant, Walt Cressler, John Ginaven, Al Guarente, 421 Old Middletown Rd., Media 19063 (215-566-8266), Frank & Barbara Haas, Evelyn & George Kopf, George Link, Jim Lockyer, Helen McWilliams, John C. Miller, Tom Reeves, Charles Smith, Walt & Andy Thurber, Cal Woods.

## ELK COUNTY

*Location: Allegheny Nat. Forest (ANF).*

This report also covers McKean County (42).

The only rarity to visit the area during the quarter was the **Snowy Owl** that continued at Kane through at least the beginning of March. A Snowy Owl was seen 3/9 at Marshburg. This bird was moving through the area. Possibly the same bird?

Many flocks of **Pine Siskin** were present throughout the winter with numbers up to 75.

Marshburg and the surrounding ANF experiences winter long past the rest of the area, so some "first" dates for here are not unusual when compared to the rest of the state, but are very early for here because we still have 5-12" of snow, with a few scattered bare spots.

Five flocks of **Canada Geese** totaling some 200+ birds were seen 3/11 at the ANF. A **Killdeer** was there 3/5. One **Cooper's Hawk** was found 2/29 and by 3/3 most hawks were more vocal.

A **House Wren** was at Bradford 3/12 (RL). Three **E. Bluebird** were seen 3/17 in the ANF on a bare spot within 8" of snow. **Am. Robin** were observed all winter at Kane (DZ) and 2 were at Marshburg 3/9 (LA).

One **Fox Sparrow** was in the ANF 3/17. An early pair of **Red-winged Blackbird** was found 2/29. Three **Common Redpoll** were in Bradford all winter (JH).

**OBSERVERS:** Leif Anderson, Box 88, Star Route 1, U.S. Forest Service, Bradford 16701 (814-362-4613), Jim Higgins, Robert Luke, Dominic Zampogna.

## ERIE COUNTY

*Locations: Presque Isle S.P.*

Vast areas of open water on L. Erie throughout this period may have been a contributing cause for the scarcity of local wintering diving ducks. A maximum of 3500 birds was recorded this winter around Presque Isle compared to the 24,000 that were recorded last winter. The 1300 **Red-breasted Merganser** which congregated at the Erie Public Dock 9 January was an unusually high number compared to the fewer than 15 birds which is the norm for the species in January.

The highlight of the period, aside from a few rarities, was the vulture flight. On Saturday, 26 March, along L. Erie just west of Presque Isle 200+ **Turkey Vulture** were seen at one time, migrating en masse only minutes after a severe thunderstorm. There were 50 raptors scattered amongst them (JM).

The larger gulls were uncommon, particularly **Herring Gull**. Without Herring Gulls, white-winged gulls can rarely be expected, as the few individuals noted in the following bird sightings indicate.

Snowfall for the most part was sufficient to encourage ground-dwelling birds to search for food at feeding stations. **Pine Siskin** were reported in fair numbers, but **Evening Grosbeak** were scarce. This scarcity may have resulted from a good wild food crop, which made it unnecessary for grosbeaks to come to feeders. Flocks of 10 or 15 birds were regularly observed flying over forested areas of the southeast portion of the county.

A warm spell during the latter part of January triggered a premature spring migration of a few **Horned Lark** and several **Red-winged Blackbird**.

All sightings are from Presque Isle S.P. unless noted otherwise.

A **Snow "blue phase" Goose** found 3/29 remained at Siegel Marsh through quarter's end (JM). As many as 5 **N. Shoveler** wintered at the Public Dock (JM,LM). **White-winged Scoter** observations were a single 1/4 (LO), 7 on 3/4, and 1 on 3/13 (JM).

One **N. Goshawk** was w. of Erie 3/26 (JM). An ad. **Broad-winged Hawk**, viewed in flight from less than 200 ft away 3/8, was extremely early (JM). The earliest record prior to this date was 3/18. Three "light phase" **Rough-legged Hawk** were found s. of Erie 1/17, 1/26, and 1/31 (DD,KP,RG). A "gray phase" **Gyr Falcon** put on a good show 1/31 off Beach 11 as it circled Thompson Bay twice, harassing a **Great Blue Heron** and a group of **Gadwall** (JM). This is the fourth county record.

A **Pectoral Sandpiper** 3/12 was earlier than usual (JM). A **Greater Yellowlegs** 3/11-13 was also very early (LM, *et al.*).

Two ad. **Little Gull** were at the Public Dock 1/10 (EK). A first winter **Iceland Gull** was at the Dock 2/6 (JM), and 1 second winter bird was found 3/13 at Gull Point (EK). One first winter **Glaucous Gull** was at the Dock 1/9 and 1/23 (JM,LM).

One **Snowy Owl** was observed at the Lake View Landfill 1/15 through the end of February (SS) and another was seen at PISP 1/16 to 2/3 (DS,JM). The **Long-eared Owl** found 1/3 was likely the same indiv. seen on the CBC. Two **Short-eared Owl** 1/6 were found in the SW portion of the county (SH).

A **Tree Swallow** observed 3/13 sitting on the ice on Edinboro L. was a little early (JH). Single **Hermit Thrush** sightings were 1/14 (JHS) and 1/17 (JM). A **N. Shrike** was observed periodically at PISP from December until 3/27 (JM,LM) and another was seen from 3/17-22 at Union City Dam (JM).

One of the male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** that was coming to a feeder in Waterford last December was last seen in early February (DM, *vide* JHS). A female **Rufous-sided Towhee** of the *western* race was discovered at a PISP feeding station 1/3 and was joined by another female for a single day (16 January). One of the birds remained until the end of the period (JM,LM,SS,EK). This was the first county record of the race. (*Photo by McWilliams was received -Eds.*)



*Rufous-sided (spotted) Towhee, Presque Isle State Park, January 1988. Photo Jerry McWilliams.*

One **Fox Sparrow** was seen 1/14 (JGS) and 1/17 (JM). Two separate **Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco** were found. One was present until at least the end of February in Waterford (JHS, JGS) and the other was observed from mid-January to at least mid-March at Union City (DT).

The 14 **Red Crossbill** which appeared in Edinboro 3/9 were approached to within four ft as they fed on hemlock cones on the ground (JH). This is the first occurrence of this species since the Fall of 1981. The only **Common Redpoll** reported were 1 at Union City 1/19 (DP), 1 at Millcreek 1/28 (SS), and 2 at Union City in mid-February (DT). All sightings were at feeders.

**OBSERVERS:** Dave Darney, Bob Grubbs, Rod Gehrlein, Jamie Hill, Shayne Hoachlander, Ed Kwater, Jerry McWilliams, 3142 W. 12th St., Erie 16505 (814-833-3169), Linda McWilliams, Dot Messenger, Lester Olson, Dora Porter, Karen Prather, Don Snyder, Jean Stull (JHS), Jim Stull (JGS), Sam Stull, Dorothy Thomas.

#### **FOREST COUNTY**

A "dark phase" **Rough-legged Hawk** was found at Frills Corners 1/2 (Jerry McWilliams).

#### **GREENE COUNTY**

Unless otherwise noted, all observations were on or near the Bell farm near Jefferson.

There was very little snow here during the quarter, with the greatest amount being approximately 3" on 21 March. Below zero readings were recorded only on the mornings of 6 and 11 January and 5 February.

Our wintering **Golden-crowned Kinglet**, **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, and **Carolina Wren** all survived the rather mild winter.

Only 1 **Am. Kestrel** wintered on the farm, but 3 were observed here 3/2. Sixteen wintering **Am. Robin** were noted eating holly berries 1/30 and 8 **Cedar Waxwing** were observed eating the berries 2/5.

The first **Louisiana Waterthrush** was noted singing here 3/29 and a male **Purple Martin** showed up at our box the next day. Two **Tree Swallow** were first seen 3/26.

The first migrant **Red-winged Blackbird**, 4, flew over 3/1 and 5 **Common Grackle** flew over the same morning, migrating in the usual n.e. direction.

The first **Chipping Sparrow** was in our yard 3/30, while the first **Field Sparrow** and **Vesper Sparrow** were both singing the day before. The Vesper Sparrow was once a common species here (until 1965), but is now considered rare (probably due to the widespread use of herbicides).

**OBSERVERS:** Ralph Bell, RD 1, Box 229, Clarksville 15322 (412-883-4505), Jean Osso.

#### **HUNTINGDON COUNTY**

*Locations: Juniata R., L. Raystown Aitch Access (LRAA), L. Raystown Entriken Overlook (LREO), Shaver's Creek Environ. Center (SCEC), Stone Valley L. (SVL).*

As average worldwide temperatures rise, a result of the "greenhouse effect," I believe that we can see a gradual warming trend in our winters here in Pennsylvania. Reflecting back, it seems that our winter quarter was a relatively mild one.

No rare or unusual species was reported for this first quarter. All entries are by the compiler unless otherwise noted.

**Pied-billed Grebe** was first noted at LREO 3/26 and again 3/28 with 1 and 3 individuals respectively. Thirty-three **Tundra Swan** were at LRAA 3/22, with 2 on alert and the remainder sleeping on the ice. Nine **Canada Geese** were at LRAA earlier in the quarter, 2/25, with many night flights reported. Other waterfowl were 4 **Wood Duck** 3/10 at LRAA, 4 **N. Pintail** 3/8 at LRAA, a single female **Canvasback** at the L. Raystown spillway 1/15, 3 **Lesser Scaup** on the river at Huntingdon 2/17, and flocks of **Common Goldeneye** (70+) in the river at Mill Creek in the company of **Hooded Merganser**. **Red-breasted Merganser** were found at LREO 1/15 (9), 3/2 (2), and 3/28 (22).

**Black Vultures** continue to be seen during the winter months, as evidenced by 3 on 1/4, 1 on 2/16, and 1 on 3/14. Interesting raptor sightings include an ad. **N. Goshawk** seen at LRAA moving north 3/22; a pair of **Red-shouldered Hawk** exchanging nesting material (*location deleted -Eds.*) 3/10; an ad. **Bald Eagle** seen on perch in Donation 3/4 (LB); and an ad. **N. Harrier** also seen near Donation 3/18.

**Am. Woodcock** had arrived on territory by the first of March and were displaying on that date. **Ring-billed Gull** continue to use L. Raystown as an over-wintering site due to the abundant food supply. An **E. Phoebe** was first seen tail-bobbing in the Alexandria area 3/10.

150+ **Horned Lark** were found on fresh manure spreads in Shaver's Cr. 1/12.

One drawback to collecting manure in pits, then spreading the liquid manure at a later date, is that the liquid spreads attract absolutely no feeding winter birds.

**Tree Swallow** made an early appearance along the river in Huntingdon 3/28. **Common Raven** were recorded on 1/4 over Piney Ridge and again 3/1 at Mapleton. **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and **Brown Creeper** were seen 3/22 at SVL and the first returning **Pine Warbler** was seen in Donation 3/27 (EB).

Sparrow records include **Am. Tree Sparrow** 2/4, **White-throated Sparrow** 2/5 in Huntingdon, 3 **Fox Sparrow** in Donation 3/18 (EB), and a territorial **Swamp Sparrow** in the Brumbaugh cattails near Marklesburg 3/8.

Six **Rusty Blackbird** were observed at a marsh near Mill Cr. 3/24. Another early arrival, at the same location, was **Common Grackle** 3/1.

**Purple Finch** were again found over-wintering at SCEC and **Pine Siskin** were plentiful everywhere throughout the quarter. **Evening Grosbeak** were seen throughout the period in small flocks in the immediate vicinity of McAlevy's Fort, SVL, and Petersburg.

**OBSERVERS:** Ellen Benner, Lois Braun, David Kyler, RD #4, Box 159-A, Huntingdon 16652 (814-643-6030).

## INDIANA COUNTY

*Locations: Indiana (IND), Shelocta (SHL), Yellow Cr. S.P. (YCSP), Elders Ridge Strips (The Indiana-Armstrong Co. line runs through the strips; some of these birds were in both counties).*

The weather in Indiana County during the period was rather mild with little snow cover. A good variety of waterfowl was reported, but few reports included large flocks. The "bird of the season" was a **Brewer's Blackbird** found in Center Twp. Interesting, too, was a **Common Raven** at the strips, which was both seen and heard calling.

All waterfowl reports are from YCSP unless otherwise indicated. One **Common Loon** was sighted 3/30 (GS). First **Pied-billed Grebe** was listed 3/19 (LH). **Horned Grebe** were first reported on 3/11 (LH), but top count was 26 on 3/26 (MH,RH *et al.*). An early **Great Blue Heron** appeared at Brush Valley 1/11 (AB,GL,GS). Another was reported at Clarksburg 3/11 (MC).

Best **Tundra Swan** count was 105 on 3/8 (AH,MH), but 12 swans were still present on the lake 3/26 (MH,RH). A lone **Canada Goose** was observed flying over IND 1/12 (GS); 75 on 3/22 was a good tally (AB,MH,GL,GS). Twelve **Wood Duck** were observed 3/22 (AB,MH,GL,GS). First **Green-winged Teal** were observed 3/9 (GS). Only 11 **Am. Black Duck** were counted 3/25 (AH,MH,BM). Top **Mallard** count of 125 occurred 3/12 (GL,GS). Nine **N. Pintail** were located 3/8 (AH,MH), but 20 was a better count 3/12 (GL,GS). Only 2 **Gadwall** reports were received -- 3/22 (MH,GS *et al.*) and 3/26 (MH,RH *et al.*). **Am. Wigeon** were reported in small flocks until 3/22 when 27 were counted (MH,GS *et al.*). Three **Ring-necked Duck** at Musser's Pond 3/2 were the first listed. The largest flock reported contained 32 individuals 3/22 (MH,GS *et al.*). Two **Greater Scaup** were present 3/22 (MH,GS *et al.*). Highest **Lesser Scaup** count was 48 on 3/21 (LH). A raft of 20 **Oldsquaw** 3/26 (MH,RH *et al.*) was a nice find. Better yet was a lone **White-winged Scoter** 3/19 (AH,GS). Few **Bufflehead** were listed, the top count being 11 on 3/23 (LH). A 3/26 outing produced 14 **Common Goldeneye** (MH,RH *et al.*). Best **Hooded Merganser** tally was 36 on 3/22 (MH,GS *et al.*), while 25 **Red-breasted Merganser** were found 3/19 (LH). Only one raft of 22 **Ruddy Duck** was reported 3/16 (MH,RH *et al.*).

First **Turkey Vulture** arrived 3/1 near Shelocta (MH). An **Osprey** was seen at YCSP 3/29 (GS). A **N. Harrier** was found at Nolo 1/7 (GS), and 2-3 wintered at the strips (MH,RH *et al.*). **Sharp-shinned Hawk** were reported from three locations in the county; **Cooper's Hawk** from four. Rumors of a possible **N. Goshawk** in IND surfaced again in early January, but one was well seen flying through the downtown area 1/28 (RH). A trip from Nolo to Brush Valley yielded 11 **Red-tailed Hawk** 1/11 (AB,GL,GS).

Five **Ruffed Grouse** at Nolo was the best count (DS). A flock of 42 **Wild Turkey** near Homer City was seen regularly after 2/8 (BM,KM). **Am. Coot** numbers were unusually low at YCSP, with maximum count a mere 8 on 3/26 (MH,RH *et al.*). First **Killdeer** report was late -- 3/8 at YCSP (AH,MH). A **Greater Yellowlegs**, accompanied by a **Lesser Yellowlegs**, simplified identification at YCSP 3/27 (GS). A **Ruddy Turnstone** at YCSP 3/28 was a nice find (AB,GL,GS). **Common Snipe** was first listed 3/18 (GL,GS), but 4 were tallied on 3/26, 29 (MH,RH *et al.*). First **Am. Woodcock** was not heard until 3/8 at Clarksburg (MC); woodcock near SHL did not begin courtship until 3/20 (MH,RH). Five woodcock at YCSP 3/22 was a good count (MH,RH).

**Bonaparte's Gull** numbered 4 on 3/29 (AH,GS). First **Ring-billed Gull** were 5 standing on the ice at YCSP 1/31 (GS), but top count there was 34 on 3/12 (GL,GS). Only 2 **E. Screech-Owl** were reported, 1 near SHL until 2/11 (MH,RH); the other near Rochester Mills throughout the period (KB). **Great Horned Owl** were listed at 4 areas (m.ob.). **Barred Owl** were calling near Nolo 2/29 (DS,GS), near Rochester Mills in late March (KB), and near SHL 3/30 (MH,RH). **Short-eared Owl** at the strips numbered 8 on 1/9 (BC,KG,MH,RH).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker** are still increasing in the county with new reports from Bolivar (MM), Brush Valley (AB,GL,GS), Nolo (GS), and Marion Center (MH,TJ). First **N. Flicker** was spotted 1/22 near SHL (MH). **Pileated Woodpecker** were found at five locations.

**E. Phoebe** arrived at Nolo 3/4 (GS). March 26 was the arrival date for approximately 30 **Tree Swallow** at YCSP (MH,RH *et al.*). A **Common Raven** at the strips delighted county listers by flying from Armstrong into Indiana County (CD,DG,MH,NK). **Red-breasted Nuthatch** were reported only near SHL where 2 were present throughout the period (MH,RH). **Brown Creeper** reports were numerous, and **Carolina Wren** once again are expanding their range with reports from SHL (MH,RH), Creekside (MH), IND (P,J,T,J), and YCSP (LH). Top **Golden-crowned Kinglet** tally was 12 near SHL 1/29 (MH). First **E. Bluebird** found were 2 near Lewisville 1/12 (RH). Few **Am. Robin** wintered in the area, but 50 appeared near Plumville 1/19 (BJ,CJ); most arrivals were reported after 2/13. One **N. Mockingbird** was located near IND 2/18 (P,J). First **Cedar Waxwing** listed were 50 near Blairsville 2/28 (AJ). A **Yellow-rumped Warbler** appeared 3/30 near SHL, the lone report (MH).

A lone **Am. Tree Sparrow** lingered near SHL 3/31. **Chipping Sparrow** arrived at the same location 3/26, where **Field Sparrow** were singing 3/12 (MH). First **Savannah Sparrow** was present at YCSP 3/29 (AH,GS). **Fox Sparrow** arrived near SHL 3/16 and lingered until 3/21 (MH,RH). Another was found at Nolo 3/18 (GS); a third, at YCSP 3/19 (AH,GS). **Swamp Sparrow** at YCSP was found regularly after 3/19 (AH,GS *et al.*). A partial albino **Dark-eyed Junco** was photographed and banded at IND 2/5 (DW). The bird's crown, nape, and throat were white; but much of the bird's face was gray. It also had a gray band across the upper breast. The remainder of the bird appeared normally plumaged.

Twenty wintering **E. Meadowlark** were observed at the strips 1/9,31 (MH,RH). A male **Brewer's Blackbird**, found with a flock of grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds, and cowbirds, was well described near IND 3/17 (BM). The bird was seen in bright sunlight, so the iridescent colors were included with the description as well as bill shape, eye color, and tail length. First **Brown-headed Cowbirds** were 6 sighted with the Brewer's Blackbird 3/17. Few **Purple Finch** were reported until late March. **Pine Siskin** invaded the county in the largest numbers birders remember ever seeing. Two hundred were regularly visiting a feeder near SHL (98 were present at one feeding station alone on two occasions); Nolo reported a maximum of 53 (GS); 30+ wintered near Rochester Mills (KB); smaller flocks were found in various parts of downtown IND (AH,PJ,TJ). Siskins were still present in numbers at the end of the quarter. Top **Am. Goldfinch** count was 44 near SHL 1/26 (MH). **Evening Grosbeak** reports were widespread, but most reports indicated small flocks flying overhead rather than at feeders. Top count was 40 near Rochester Mills through mid-January (KB).

**OBSERVERS:** Alice Beatty, Kathy Bennett, Bruce Courter, Marcy Cunkelman, Caroline Davies, Denise Garrott, Kevin Georg, Anne Hedgpeth, Margaret and Roger Higbee, RD #2, Box 166, Indiana 15701 (412-354-3493), Leon Hue, Pat Johner, Betty Johnson, Carl Johnson, Aino Johnston, Timmi Jones, Nancy Karp, Gloria Lamer, Beth Marshall, Ken Marshall, Mary McClure, Dan Syster, Georgette Syster, Dick Waechter.

### **JUNIATA COUNTY**

*Locations: Clearview Res. (C.R.), Hammer Hollow (H.H.), Juniata R.*

This was a mild winter, albeit with some very cold days. January's light to moderate snows brought birds to feeders where they remained faithful through the end of the period. Mild temperatures welcomed **Am. Robin** in February and **Red-winged Blackbird** in March. Despite these conditions, skunk cabbage was late blooming but was soon enough to greet migrating waterfowl in mid-March. This period ended with days warming, the earth greening, flowers blooming, and birds singing.

Most exciting of all this period was the report of a pair of **Red-winged Blackbird** forced into a feeder by a January snowfall. Sighted several times on 8 January by Bill and Isabelle Hubler at their home in Spruce Hill, the birds did not return on subsequent days (BM). The Hublers also were visited several days in March by a **Turkey Vulture** which was unable to fly; they fed the bird which when last sighted was flexing its wings (BM).

The **Black Vulture**, which roosted near Lauver Valley Rd. last winter, did not return this year; perhaps the timbering of their ridge roost discouraged them. However 7 **Red-tailed Hawk** and 2 **Turkey Vulture** were seen about a quarter mi from the roost 1/31 (LW).

For the first time in five years **White-throated Sparrow** stayed all winter in Hammer Hollow (LW). Numbers of **Pine Siskin** and **Am. Goldfinch** were up, while no **Common Redpoll** was reported and very few **Evening Grosbeak**. **Blue Jay** continued to be scarce.

Winter waterfowl resident reports were normal (DW). Of note was 1 **Greater Scaup** at Muskrat Springs Access Area of the river 1/17 (LW). Lone or sparse numbers of **Herring Gull** were often sighted on the river in February and early March (LW).

Other winter residents included 1 **Rough-legged Hawk** at Oakland Mills 2/21 and 2 nesting **Great Horned Owl** 3/13 with 2 owlets seen 3/27 (DW). **Wild Turkey** flocks were in abundance, but individual flock numbers were down from last year's 10-15 to 4-10 this year (LW). **Ruffed Grouse** sightings were regular in number and **Am. Woodcock**, which had returned by 3/2, are up in number this year (LW). One **Fox Sparrow** was at a feeder 1/8 (DW) and 1 migrant was seen 3/31, also at a feeder (LW).

Migration was in full swing in March. The eastern part of the county between the Juniata and Susquehanna Rivers had several flocks of **Canada Geese** and **Tundra Swan** (DW). Other observations included: **Wood Duck**, **Gadwall**, and **Ring-necked Duck** on Greenwood L. 3/13 (DW); 1 **Pied-billed Grebe** at C.R. 3/29, 1 **Blue-winged Teal** on the Juniata R. 3/31, and at Clearview Res. 2 **N. Shoveler** 3/29, 4 **Am. Wigeon** 3/18, 2 **Lesser Scaup** 3/29, and 2 **Hooded Merganser** 3/8 (LW). **Ring-billed Gull** flocks were reported in fields near Thompsettown the week of 3/13 (DW).

The quarter ended with the welcomed return, for the third year, of a **Field Sparrow** on 3/28, recognized by his atypical song of a trill followed by 2-3 clear notes sometimes leading into another trill.

**OBSERVERS:** Berniece Miller, Dusty Weidner, Linda Whitesel, RD #1, Box 356A, Mifflintown 17059 (717-436-8048).

### **LACKAWANNA COUNTY**

*Locations: Clarks Summit, Dalton Area, Dunmore, L. Scranton, Lackawanna S.P. (LSP), Scranton, Springbrook.*

Five **Horned Grebe** were at Dalton 3/26. **Canada Geese**, **Mallard**, and **Wood Duck** were migrating through LSP 3/1 and 6 **Am. Wigeon** were found in Dalton 3/27.

The first **Turkey Vulture** was noted at L. Scranton 3/7. A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was in Dalton 1/9. **Red-tailed Hawk** were visible all winter in the L. Scranton and Dalton areas. Only single **Am. Kestrel** sightings were in the same areas just cited.

The first **Killdeer** was found 2/24 in Springbrook; there was 1" of freshly fallen snow on the ground as it searched for food near a small pond. **Ring-necked Pheasant** was reported twice near Dunmore. More surprising were 6 **N. Bobwhite** in Dalton, a rather uncommon bird for the area.

There were more sightings of **Downy** and **Hairy** woodpeckers this winter. Are they increasing in the area? The first **N. Flicker** was seen the first week of March in Scranton.

A **Belted Kingfisher** was seen in Dalton 3/14. The first **E. Phoebe** was reported 3/28 in Dalton. Encouraging were the many reports of **Carolina Wren** from various locations. Mixed flocks of **Black-capped Chickadee**, **Tufted Titmouse**, **White-breasted Nuthatch**, and **Golden-crowned Kinglet** were seen, some of which contained 1-2 **Brown Creeper**. The first **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was seen 3/25 in the Dalton area.

The earliest **Am. Robin** sighting was in Scranton 2/25. A pair of **E. Bluebird** wintered in the Springbrook area, with increased sightings reported in late winter/early spring.

**Red-winged Blackbird** and **Common Grackle** were moving 3/7-8 and **Brown-headed Cowbird** were in the area 3/31. This winter the **N. Cardinal** was reported as fairly common. **Am. Tree Sparrow** numbers were small all winter and the first **Fox Sparrow** was seen 3/28 in Dalton. Although no redpoll was reported, **Pine Siskin** were found throughout the county in excellent numbers. **House Finch** and **Am. Goldfinch** numbers were high at most feeders.

**OBSERVERS:** Nancy & Derry Bird, Rosann Bongey, Mike Friedlin, Gerald Klebauskas, 1301 Blair Ave., Scranton 18504 (717-344-4690), Jane Shulenberg, Sue & Tinka Zenke.

### **LANCASTER COUNTY**

*Locations: Middle Creek WMA (WCWMA), Muddy Run, including Fisherman's Park.*

An ad. **Black-crowned Night-Heron** wintered at Oregon along the Lititz Run 1/22 to 3/18, with a second bird joining it 3/18 and continuing together until the end of the period (EW). **Tundra Swan** moved north in the county somewhat early, with 5000+ at MCWMA 2/15-29 (m.ob.). Staging at the traditional Washington Boro area, however, was non-existent (RMS, *et al.*). A **Gr. White-fronted Goose** was at MCWMA 3/19 (TG). The 125 **Snow Geese** at Muddy Run 2/18 increased to 1100 by 3/4 (TF, AS *et al.*). High numbers of the next two species included 5 **Canvasback** at MCWMA 3/2 (JB) and 4 **Redhead** at Muddy Run 3/4 (RMS, HM). A **Greater Scaup** and 17 **Hooded Merganser** were at MCWMA 3/2 (JB). Single drake **Red-breasted Merganser** were at MRFP 2/14 (EW, JW) and at MCWMA 2/28 (TG, EW).

A personal high count of 9 **Bald Eagle** (4 ad., 5 imm.) were at MRFP 2/1 (RMS). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was seen on the e. side of Lancaster 1/1 (TP, EW, JW). A "dark phase" **Rough-legged Hawk** was at Weidmansville Rd., Clay Twp., through the period until mid-March (m.ob.). A **Virginia Rail** was taped at Alcoa Marsh 1/1, but could not be relocated after the marsh froze (EW, JW). Four **Pectoral Sandpiper** were at MCWMA 3/22 (JB). One **Common Snipe** was

found in the New Holland area 1/17 (SC). A third winter Iceland Gull was at MRFP 1/11 (RMS, HM) and an ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull was also there 1/25 (RMS, KL *et al.*).

Two sightings of a Snowy Owl, one which appeared briefly at Intercourse in early January and the other in New Holland at the end of February, left observers pondering if all the sightings were of the same bird. Up to 3 Short-eared Owl were at MCWMA 2/21 (JB). Single N. Saw-whet Owl were noted 1/1 (SS) and mid-January (EP, JP) at MCWMA and another at Muddy Run 1/18 (RMS).

A lingering E. Phoebe was on the Lancaster CBC (1st record since 1973) 1/2 (EP, JP). An excellent find was a calling Common Raven at MCWMA 1/12 (PM). It was a non-flight year for Black-capped Chickadee in the county, however Carolina Chickadee could be found n. of Lancaster more easily than normal. Am. Robin made the "annual residential invasion" 3/8-9.

Good numbers of Yellow-rumped Warbler (50+) were found at one spot in the Serpentine Barrens, Fulton Twp., 2/14 (EW, JW).

An early Grasshopper Sparrow was well described at MCWMA 3/18 (JB). Lapland Longspurs were somewhat scarce outside of the Amish farm country, with 2 in Clay Twp. 1/17 (FH) and 20+ near Groffdale 1/16 (RMS, KL *et al.*). A high count of 200+ Snow Bunting was made at Lime Rock Rd., Clay Twp. (FH).

Purple Finch, crossbills, Common Redpoll, and Evening Grosbeak were scarce or not observed, however good numbers of Pine Siskin remained through the end of the period.

*OBSERVERS:* Jerry Book, Skip Conant, Todd Fellenbaum, Tom Garner, Fred Habegger, Keath Leidich, Pat McElhenny, Harold Morrin, Ted Parker, Ed Pederson, Jo Pederson, Steve Santner, Robert M. Schutsky, Allen Schweinsberg, Eric Witmer, 805 Pointview Ave., Ephrata 17522 (717-733-1138), Jan Witmer.

#### LAWRENCE COUNTY

Please refer to the Butler County report for sightings.

#### LEBANON COUNTY

*Locations:* Memorial Lake (M.L.), Stony Creek Valley (SCV).

This season was colder than normal locally, although without any prolonged periods of intense cold, and was somewhat drier than normal. Bird activity was very quiet with few unusual sightings. This was a moderate "winter finch" year. The top sightings of the season were the Red Crossbill seen by two observers in the northern part of the county. Even more unusual was the report of 3-4 Bobolink near Ono, s. of Indiantown Gap 3/25. These birds were seen only one day by one observer. Nevertheless, the sighting followed two very warm days with strong southwest winds and the observer has been birding for many years.

The last weekend of March was the peak for grebe numbers at M.L. There were 4 Horned Grebe 3/26 (JK, KL), while 6 were there 3/27 (JL, KL, SS). Close study of the plumages indicated that these were not the same birds as seen the previous day. Pied-billed Grebe numbers peaked at 9 on 3/26 (JL, KL, PM, VM, SS), dropping to 4 the next day (JL, KL, SS). Tundra Swan began migration through Lebanon Co. in mid-February when a flock was seen over Lebanon 2/14 (MC).

A Redhead was found at M.L. 3/26 and remained until the end of the period (m.ob.). Ring-necked Duck numbers peaked at 40 on 3/5, the highest in many years (JL, KL, SS). Common Goldeneye was reported twice this year, on 3/5 (DZ) and again 3/27

(JL, KL, PM, VM, SS), both times at M.L. Ruddy Duck were reported throughout March at M.L. (m.ob.). Hooded Merganser was still at the lake 3/27 (JL, KL, PM, VM, SS). Most years they leave by early March.

The Second Mt. Hawk Watch (SMHW) was manned sporadically this spring, with 100+ hawks, mostly Red-tailed Hawk, being seen 3/25 (EB, MC). One Cooper's Hawk came several times to a feeder in a paved, enclosed school courtyard in Palmyra and waited for small birds to appear (GB). Few did. Two additional Cooper's Hawk were reported 3/25 at Second Mt. (EB, MC). Red-shouldered Hawk apparently wintered near Colebrook, being reported there 1/2 and 1/17 (DW). An early Broad-winged Hawk went past the hawk watch 3/25 (EB, MC).

The Wild Turkey was better able than this reporter to find acorns and berries this past winter; despite the near total lack of wild food, as reported in *PAB 1:134-135*, many made it through the winter. A flock was being seen in late winter at Indiantown Gap (MC). A Snowy Owl was found in early January near Steelstown (DZ) and 1-2 Short-eared Owl were at the roost site near Lawn (SR, SS). The ELCO high school roost site was not used this year.

Common Raven was first seen 3/25 when 2 were observed at the SMHW. Only 1 flock of Am. Robin could be found this winter. This flock, along with the only Hermit Thrush reported, spent the winter at Colebrook (DW). The very low number of berries did seem to reduce the number of overwintering frugivorous birds. Cedar Waxwing went unreported this winter.

As usual, Pine Warbler was the first returning warbler, after Yellow-rumped Warbler. This year it returned 3/26, a typical return date, and was seen at M.L. (JL, KL). As mentioned in the introduction, 3-4 Bobolink were found near Ono 3/26 (DZ). One Rusty Blackbird was found at the drained lake at Mt. Gretna 3/27 (JL, KL, SS).

This was a good winter for many of the "winter finches." Although no redpoll or Pine Grosbeak was located, Evening Grosbeak were in good numbers at feeders in the northern part of the county in addition to being present in the SCV (SS). Purple Finch reports were scattered while Pine Siskin could be found at many feeders, although in lower numbers than were present last fall (m.ob.). Red Crossbill were reported twice, the weekend of 2/13-14 at Indiantown Gap (CH) and 2/20 on Sharpe Mt. (SS). A flock of 15-20 Snow Bunting was seen near Palmyra 1/29 (MC).

*OBSERVERS:* Ellis Blauch, Gerry Boltz, Morris Cox, Chuck Hill, Jane Light, Ken Light, Pat McElhenny, Val McElhenny, Steve Rannels, Steve Santner, 3 Overbrook Village Green Apt., Elizabethtown 17022 (717-367-5857), Dennis Wingle, Del Zimmerman.

#### LEHIGH COUNTY

*Locations:* L. Muhlenberg, Leaser L., Spring Cr., Walter Tract.

The winter season was not a particularly good one. The good flights of "northern" finches that passed by in November just kept on going (except for Pine Siskin). Species that were found in larger than average numbers include: Great Blue Heron, Tundra Swan, Downy Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Swamp Sparrow, and Am. Goldfinch.

GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL. Following a storm on 3/26, both Red-necked Grebe and Horned Grebe were at Leaser L. (SS). Pied-billed Grebe found on a small nearby pond that same day made it the first time that all three species of grebe were seen in a single day within the county (SS). A group of 4 Tundra Swan were at Spring Cr. on the unusually early date 2/7 (DN), and 4 others were there 2/21 (RW). A flock of 83 was in a corn field off Schantz Rd. near Fogelsville 3/6 (RW), and another 25 were seen near Ranger L. 3/12 (PZ).

A flock of 500+ **Snow Geese** flew high over the Walter Tract 3/25 (FB). This is the highest count of these birds in flight anywhere in this region. About 20 "blue phase" were with them. Three more Snow Geese were seen with **Canada Geese** in Orefield 3/27 (RW). Leaser L. hosted 9 **Common Goldeneye**, 9 **Common Merganser**, and 8 **Hooded Merganser** 3/19 (BLM). A flock of 60 **N. Pintail** was seen in a flooded field near Macungie 3/25 (RW). A **Wood Duck** was found at L. Muhlenberg in early February (TF, BLM). A pair of **Ring-necked Duck** spent most of the season at Dorney Pond (BLM). About 30 Common Mergansers were on the Lehigh R. in Allentown in mid-January (PZ).

**HAWKS THROUGH OWLS.** A record high count of 5 **Black Vulture**, flying south, was seen at the Walter Tract 3/13 (FB). Three others were seen the day before. Two Black Vultures were seen in a large roost of **Turkey Vulture** near Slatington in early March (BS). Turkey Vultures were reported from many areas starting the second week of February.

An ad. **Bald Eagle** was seen sitting on a power line in open fields at Greenwalds, just n. of Allentown, 1/4. The man who found the bird was not a birdwatcher, but he reported it to the *Call-Chronicle*, and its picture appeared on the front page. The next morning it was seen chasing the ducks at L. Muhlenberg, a small pond in a city park (PZ). Unfortunately it was not seen at all after that date. An early migrant **Cooper's Hawk** was seen flying over Allentown 3/19 (BLM).

**Sharp-shinned Hawks** are known to visit feeders to see what they can find, but one seen near Wescosville was observed intentionally driving small birds into a window. They were stunned and easy prey (JAF).

As many as 4 **Am. Woodcock** were found near Henningsville in December (PS). A **Common Snipe** was at Spring Cr. 1/1 (BLM). A record early **Greater Yellowlegs** was at Spring Cr. 3/19 (BLM, SS), along with 2 **Pectoral Sandpiper** and 3 snipe. Another 2 Pectorals and 9 snipe were there 3/25 (RW).

A flock of 80+ **Ring-billed Gulls** was at L. Muhlenberg 2/28 (BLM). This is at least a month earlier than they usually come through our area. An ad. **N. Saw-whet Owl** was heard calling, and later seen and photographed, on top of South Mt. in Emmaus 2/29, and stayed through 3/23 (JH, m.ob.).

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH FINCHES.** A **Pileated Woodpecker** was regularly seen coming to a roost tree near the Alburdis Res. (DS). The usual good numbers of **Horned Lark** were found throughout the area. A **Winter Wren** was present all season at the Walter Tract (FB, PZ). At least 20 **Red-breasted Nuthatch** were in the Trexlertown Pines 1/1 (BLM). A **Brown Thrasher** was seen at the Walter Tract 1/1 (FB).

Five **Savannah Sparrow** seen in late January on Grim Rd. were very unusual for this location (SS, RW). A **Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco** was reported 1/6 at a feeder in Allentown (TF). Two **Fox Sparrow** spent the winter at a feeder in Whitehall (RW). A flock of 25-30 **Red Crossbill** flew by Whitehall 3/26 (RW). **Pine Siskin** were present in very large numbers in most areas. **Evening Grosbeak**, and many of the other "northern" finches, however, were considered to be scarce.

**OBSERVERS:** Fritz Brock, Janet A. Firley, Ted Fritzing, Jason Horn, Bernard L. Morris, 825 N. Muhlenberg St., Allentown 18104 (215-435-9134), David Newcomer, Peter Saenger, Brad Silfies, Steve Smith, David Stauffer, Rick Wiltraut, Peter Zakrewski.

#### LUZERNE COUNTY

Please refer to the Bradford County report for sightings.

#### LYCOMING COUNTY

Two western strays, a **Varied Thrush** in male plumage and a **Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco** were found at the same feeding station this winter along Mosquito Creek in south-central Lycoming County. Was this mere coincidence, or did they arrive there during the same period? The "Oregon" junco was seen as early as 2/19, but was probably there prior to this date. The **Varied Thrush** arrived sometime in December and stayed through 3/26; (more next quarter). In late March it began "attacking" the Blue Jays (MA). The birds were seen by many birders and photographed.



*Varied Thrush, Duboistown, 28 February 1988. Photo Morton Claster.*

An **Osprey** was reported near Halls Station along the Susquehanna R. 3/23 (WE).

One **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and 1 **Carolina Wren** were at a Jersey Shore feeder all winter (P&GS).

**Am. Tree Sparrow** numbers were down this winter, with fewer in Jersey Shore than P&GS can remember. First **Chipping Sparrow** reported 3/30 (P&GS). A **Fox Sparrow** was found at a residence in the low hills n. of Montoursville 3/20-23 (ER); another was in Jersey Shore 1/27 (PP). The only **White-crowned Sparrow** in Jersey Shore was 2/5 (PP).

Ten **Common Redpoll** in Jersey Shore 1/20 were the only record (PP). **Pine Siskin** were widespread and numerous throughout the quarter, with "never before had so many for so long ...at feeders all winter" communicated by P&GS. **Evening Grosbeak** were considered few and spotty all winter.

**OBSERVERS:** Marge Aten, Wes Egli, Parker Peer, Ed Reish, Paul & Glenna Schwalbe, Stanley C. Stahl, 610 Chestnut St., Montoursville 17754 (717-368-1194).

**MCKEAN  
COUNTY**

Please refer to the Elk County report for sightings.

**MERCER  
COUNTY**

Please refer to the Butler County report for sightings.

**MIFFLIN  
COUNTY**

We had a rather typical winter in the county. Birds flocked to backyard feeder operations and seem to indicate coming weather changes by their feeding patterns. During January and February, **Great Horned Owl** and **E. Screech-Owl** were quite vocal, sometimes even calling on dreary, misty days. We found a small pellet in our carport that contained the skull bones and hair of a meadowvole. It was most likely from a screech-owl, as occasionally we see one sitting just under the roof during the day. There is a good food source there, squirrels and mice, which feed on the seed that drops to the ground. **Barred Owl** were not heard after 1/20.

Birds that were found to be in higher numbers than usual included: **Red-bellied Woodpecker**, **Downy Woodpecker**, both nuthatches, **N. Cardinal**, **White-throated Sparrow**, **House Finch**, **Pine Siskin**, **Am. Goldfinch**, and **House Sparrow**. On the other hand, **Black-capped Chickadee** were in very low numbers, only 2 seen.

As must be being reported elsewhere, this was the year for siskins. They appeared early and are still being seen at the end of the quarter. Groups ranging from dozens to 100 were found at several locations. No **Common Redpoll** was reported this season.

An unusual nest site: **House Finch** constructed a neat nest on top of suet which was hangin in a plastic bag on our porch on 3/18. In not so unusual nesting activity, **House Sparrow** have stuffed nest building materials into four of the **E. Bluebird** boxes and three of the **House Wren** houses and the majority of the **Purple Martin** apartments are filled with grasses, etc. They are seriously trying for a takeover at the present time. Surely the balance of nature will intervene soon for their demise!

One lone **Am. Robin** called from the top of a walnut tree 2/14; there was no further sighting until mid-March, which is very late in this area. By the end of March **Dark-eyed Junco** and **White-throated Sparrow** were in full song. Our winter feeder birds were joined by **European Starling**, **Brown-headed Cowbird**, and **Blue Jay**. On 3/19 on the Dunmires property, 100+ **Turkey Vulture** were observed as they flew into the ridge to roost (MK,LW). Upon inquiry of Dunmires we learned they had already spent four weeks in the trees above their home and were heard fluttering and changing positions during late evenings and nights. They were off hunting at early daybreak.

A **Great Blue Heron** fished our small stream until it froze over, but by the end of the quarter it had not been seen again. The Juniata R. waterfowl migration was unspectacular; the usual numbers of **Tundra Swan**, **Canada Geese**, teal, **Mallard**, **Bufflehead**, and mergansers were observed.

One **E. Phoebe** broke the early morning silence 3/5, but has not returned. Starlings and House Sparrows could be responsible as they were battling for the same spot in the carport.

Large flocks of **Red-winged Blackbird** appeared 3/1, followed by **E. Meadowlark** 3/4, and **Brown-headed Cowbird** 3/15. **Chipping Sparrow** returned 3/24. An imm. **Bald Eagle** was seen flying over the river below McVeytown 3/27. Another was observed soaring above Mattawan 3/21 (AMK).

As promised last issue, here is the report on the new **E. Bluebird** feeder. Included for consumption are frozen blueberries and raisins. It was a great success here! They, and several other species, supplemented this diet with rose hips, which were plentiful along the streambank. C. Wray, whose idea this was, reports that she also had great success. She used meal worms, apples, and raisins. The usual group of 6 bluebirds waited in turn, especially for the purchased meal worms. They were easily photographed from her residence. She also had **Pileated Woodpecker** at the suet all winter.

Two **Yellow-rumped Warbler** were observed 3/29. **Am. Woodcock** were displaying 3/17. This was a great relief because their usual display area was bulldozed this winter; they moved over to the weedy fields and thicket nearer to our home. By this time last year, **Killdeer** had been on nest -- no nests have been located but the birds have been calling continuously since 3/8.

An interesting report was of a **Cooper's Hawk** which plucked the feathers from a frozen starling and heartily ate the bird as AMK watched. Other January feeding station reports by Mrs. Kaufmann were of **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, **N. Flicker**, **Red-bellied Woodpecker**, and 3 **Am. Tree Sparrow**. Toward the end of March **Fox Sparrow** and **Purple Finch** were observed and a phoebe returned 3/21.

We are working diligently in the county to try and finish our Atlas work. Already owls and woodcock have been recorded and safe dates being checked.

**OBSERVERS:** Amanda M. Kaufmann, Margaret Kenep, Box 343, RD 2, McVeytown 17051 (717-899-6252), Linda Whitesel.

**MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY**

*Locations: Green Lane Res. (GLR), Unami Creek Valley (UCV), Upper Perkiomen Valley Park (UPVP), Valley Forge National Historic Park (VFNP).*

Except for a sprinkling of unseasonably warm, humid days, it was a cold quarter, with temperatures dropping to near zero the second half of January and ponds and lakes fully frozen. The quarter opened with snow cover, and there was fresh snow in both January and early February. February closed cold, and temperatures held in the low 40's during March.

Highlights of the season, divided between GLR and VFNP, were **Oldsquaw**, **N. Goshawk**, **Wild Turkey**, **Barred Owl** and **Redheaded Woodpecker**. A first-year Oldsquaw was at VFNP 1/10 (RG) and 2 were at GLR 3/26 (GLF). The former was a first record for the park and the latter were a great rarity for the area. The N. Goshawk was first seen at VFNP 3/25, and was still there 3/29 (RG). Four Wild Turkey, 1 ad. and 3 young, were surprised at GLR 3/13 (GAF), again not a first for the reservoir, but extremely rare. In February a Barred Owl was heard several times at GLR (GAF, GLF) and was finally seen 3/12 (GLF). Similarly, a Barred Owl was heard several times at VFNP in March, and seen 3/31 (HM). It was another first record for the park, and yet another first for that area was the Red-headed Woodpecker seen 3/4 (RG).

Other unusual sightings reported included no less than 12 **Horned Grebe** in a full range of plumages at GLR 3/27 (GLF). At VFNP a lone male **Canvasback** lingered on the Sch. River from 1/13 to 2/26 and 5 male **Redhead** were present 1/15-16 (RG). Both were rarities for the river, which was one of the few bodies of open water in the county during much of January. Also rare for VFNP was a wintering **Killdeer** throughout the quarter. Two were seen 1/15 (RG).

**Tundra Swan** were present at GLR in good numbers throughout February, and peaked to a high count of 75 by 3/4, just before their departure 3/6 (GAF).

Nine **Snow Geese** were at UPVP 1/24 (GAF) and 7-9 were at VFNP through most of January (RG) -- high counts for both areas. Numbers at GLR were average: a maximum of 14 on 3/17, 9 of them the "blue phase" (GAF). Anywhere from 2-12 were there during the preceding weeks of March. But the most spectacular high count of Snow Geese was an estimated 275 flying over Hatfield 3/29 (GAF).

**Am. Black Duck** were low in numbers, with a high of 75 at GLR 2/27 and 40 at VFNP 1/15, compared with a high of 214 last year at UPVP.

From the Wyncote area DT reported a "more than usual" number of **Am. Kestrel**, plus a **Ring-necked Pheasant** that came to his yard which is in a densely populated area.

The usual assembly of **Ring-billed Gull** at GLR showed a sharp decline, a high of about 70 being counted compared to last year's estimated 1000. **Pileated Woodpecker** continue very scarce, only one individual being heard and seen at upper UCV (GAF,W&NM). Some 200 **Horned Lark** were seen in Douglas Twp. (Miller Road, near Niantic) 1/31 (GAF). It's worth noting that this is the same estimated number seen in the same location on very nearly the same date as last year.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** and **Golden-crowned Kinglet** seemed to be in good supply, with about 10 of the former and 25 of the latter spending the winter at GLR (GLF) and both species reported "easy to find" all quarter at VFNP (RG). No **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was reported, and **Hermit Thrush** were scarce, 1 being seen at FWSP 1/2 (DT), 1 at GLR 1/17 (GLF) and 1 at VFNP 1/29 (RG).

About 200 **Am. Robin** and a flock of about 30 **Yellow-rumped Warbler** also wintered at GLF, and 30 **Am. Tree Sparrow** were seen there 1/17 (GLF). **Fox Sparrow** were almost entirely missing, the only one reported being at VFNP throughout the quarter (RG). In healthier numbers were **E. Meadowlark**, 14 at GLR 1/24 (GAF), and **Rusty Blackbird**, 12 at upper UCV 3/20 (W&NM). **Pine Siskin** were in relatively low numbers, flocks of only 6 or 7 coming to feeders (DT&NT) and a high of 12 at VFNP 3/29 (RG).

The freezing weather may account for RG's observation that **Turkey Vulture** and **Red-bellied Woodpecker** seemed scarce and **Cedar Waxwing** totally absent until late in the period.

SUSPECTED ESCAPEES: 6 **N. Bobwhite** were seen off and on in GAF's yard in Pennsburg throughout the quarter.

**OBSERVERS:** George A. Franchoise, Gary L. Freed, Ron Grubb, Helen Matuskowitz William & Naomi Murphy, Neal Thorpe, Box Q, Mont Clare 19453 (215-933-2127), Dale Twining.

## MONTOUR COUNTY

An unusual mid-winter **Turkey Vulture** was spotted near Limestoneville 2/7 (MB). On 2/6 a **N. Harrier** was seen at Montour Preserve (MB). A female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was present in Liberty Twp. 1/16 in the company of **Brown-headed Cowbird**. It was observed for only five minutes and never seen again (DC).

**OBSERVERS:** Mark Berryman, Dave Conrad, Allen Schweinsberg, RD 3, Box 203, Lewisburg 17837 (717-524-0432).

## NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

*Locations: East Bangor Dam (EBD), Little Gap Bird Observatory, Minsi L.*

**LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL.** Two early **Common Loon** were observed at Little Gap 3/27 (SB). Nine **Tundra Swan** were observed at Klecknersville 3/27 and 2 **Snow Geese** were seen at Little Gap 3/24 (SB).

**Wood Duck** were reported in good numbers, including 18 near Bath 3/23 (DW) and 10 at Green Pond 3/27 (BLM). Ten **Ring-necked Duck** were at EBD 3/25 (SB) and 10 **Hooded Merganser** were seen at Hecktown Quarry 3/27 (BLM). Five **Oldsquaw** were seen after a storm at Minsi L. 3/26 (KS).

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS.** An early **Common Snipe** was at EBD 3/8 (SB). A **yellowlegs**, unidentified as to species, was observed flying N at Little Gap 3/29 and 8+ **Am. Woodcock** were in courtship near Minsi L. 3/8 (SB). A **Bonaparte's Gull** was observed in a field near Green Pond 3/27 (BLM).

**RAPTORS.** A **Turkey Vulture** at Portland 1/24 (PZ) was unusual. Three more early Turkey Vultures were at Little Gap 2/21 (BS). An **Am. Crow** and an imm. **Cooper's Hawk** were observed chasing each other near the ABE airport 1/17 (RW,GY).

A pair of **Red-shouldered Hawk** was observed along Mountain Rd. near the Blue Mt. 3/8 (BS). **Rough-legged Hawk** were reported in low numbers, with single birds at Weaversville and Willow Brook Rd. 1/12 (BS) and 1 throughout the period in Williams Twp. (AK).

An early **Osprey** was seen at Minsi L. 3/25 (SB), but the pair building a nest on a transmission tower at Martins Cr. near the end of March was the highlight of the season (*vide* BLM).

**Am. Kestrel** seemed down in numbers in a study area in northern Northampton Co. (SB,BS), although they seemed to be found more frequently southwest of this area in Lehigh Co. (RW). Land development threatens this species in both counties.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH FINCHES.** A **Pileated Woodpecker** was seen at Danielsville 2/29 (BS). 150+ **Horned Lark** were found at Graver's Hill 1/12 (BS) and **Tree Swallow** were first noted at Minsi L. 3/25 (BS).

**Fish Crow** were noted at EBD 3/8 and at Little Gap 3/29 (SB). Twenty **Golden-crowned Kinglet** were at Minsi L. 3/25 (SB) and 20 **Water Pipit** were observed at Marsh's Pond 3/25 (BS).

An early **Chipping Sparrow** was found at Danielsville 3/28 (BS) and 3-4 **Fox Sparrow** were seen at EBD 3/8 (SB). A **Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco** was at Williams Twp. 1/7-10 (AK). About 100 **Pine Siskin** were seen at Little Gap 3/27 (SB).

**OBSERVERS:** Steve Boyce, Arlene Koch, Bernie Morris, Kath Sieminski, Brad Silfies, Doug Wiltraut, Rick Wiltraut, 54 Pershing Blvd, Whitehall 18052 (215-435-8632), Gordon Yoder, Peter Zakrewski.

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

As is often the case each spring, **Tundra Swan** (51 of them 3/10) were seen in the fields of the Kepler Farm near Montandon (MB). Five **Common Merganser** were found on the Susquehanna R. south of Montgomery 3/19 (MB). An **Osprey** seen along the river s. of Milton was unusually early on 3/24 (MB). Many observers watched an ad. **Bald Eagle** consume a waterfowl at Shikellamy S.P. 2/7.

The need for public education on birds never vanishes. Witness this excerpt from a Sunbury Daily Item report on farmer concerns brought to the attention of Rep. George Gekas: "Farmer Cliff LeVan of Northumberland County asked Gekas what could be done about the swarms of crows that roost in Milton State Park and descend on his cornfields. There are so many crows 'that the trees look like they have black leaves on them,' LeVan said. He said he asked for Gekas' help because of a supposed treaty with Mexico that protects the birds.

Gekas answered that 'it would astound me that the treaty would prevent us from taking action in Milton.' He promised to look into it. Federal officials from the Department of Agriculture's animal and plant inspection service, which helps rid farmers of nuisance animals, were not available for comment about whether such a treaty exists."

Complaints such as this one occur from time to time concerning the Milton Island crow roost, which contains an estimated 50,000 - 100,000 birds between October and March.

**OBSERVERS:** Mark Berryman, Allen Schweinsberg, RD 3, Box 203, Lewisburg 17837 (717-524-0432).

#### **PERRY COUNTY**

A flock of 18 **Red Crossbill**, 8 male and 10 female, in the Hemlocks Natural Area were found 2/13. On this same day a **N. Goshawk** was seen close to a place one was presumed to have nested (*location deleted -Eds.*).

**Common Raven** seem to be increasing in w. Perry Co. as 4 were in the area of Big Knob 2/21. A flock of 150+ **Pine Siskin** were seen near the Kansas Valley Picnic Area 2/21.

**OBSERVER:** Deuane Hoffman, 3406 Montour St., Harrisburg 17111 (717-564-7475).

#### **PHILADELPHIA COUNTY**

*Locations: Carpenter's Woods (C.W.), Tinicum National Environmental Center (TNEC).*

The mild Fall gave way to a freeze-up as the New Year started. Extreme cold lasted from 2 January through the end of the month. A brief thaw from 30 January to 2 February (in the high 50s) quickly reverted to seasonal freezing temperatures through most of February. Snowfall during these two months was less than usual. March came in "like a lamb" and, surprisingly stayed unseasonably warm, reaching the 60s on 12-13 March and continued warmer than expected throughout the month.

The seasonal birding event was the yearly mid-winter bird census on 16 January. Highlights of that day will follow the body of this report.

**Pied-billed Grebe** were evident at TNEC, 8 being observed 3/8 (JCM) and 4 on 3/13 (SS). Hundreds of **Canada Geese** and a good variety of ducks began to fill the impoundment at the TNEC as the March thaw created more open water. Some selected duck species stayed a short time as illustrated in two counts taken 5 days apart by the two observers on the dates noted above. **Gadwall**, 4 to 2; **Ring-necked Duck**, 45 to <6; **Lesser Scaup**, +800 to "hundreds;" **Common Merganser**, 55 to 4; **Ruddy Duck**, 788 to "hundreds."

Other ducks of interest at TNEC during the period were **450 Canvasback** 3/8 (JCM), 3 **Common Goldeneye**, and a pair of **Hooded Merganser** 3/13 (SS).

The outstanding raptor of the season was **N. Goshawk**. An ad., probably the same bird, was reported by numerous observers for the whole winter season at TNEC. Six **N. Harrier** cruised the Philadelphia airport grounds 3/11 (JCM), while 25+ **Ring-necked Pheasant** evaded them at Ft. Mifflin 3/5 (JCM). Sherman found 6 **Am. Coot** at TNEC 3/13.

**Common Snipe**, 50+, and **Am. Woodcock**, 10+, had already arrived at TNEC by 3/2 (JCM), but no other shorebirds were reported during the season. Two **Short-eared Owl** were seen at the airport 3/11 (JCM).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** were seen in the W. Mount Airy section of the city 1/7-9 and 1/11 (EB). But the highlight woodpecker, a pair of **Pileated Woodpecker**, put in a surprise visit to C.W. 1/11 (EB). Another, or same, pair was seen some miles away up the Wissahickon Cr. 1/22 (B&NM).

Few passerine reports of note reached us this season. **Tree Swallow** arrived with the March thaw, numbers being seen at Ft. Mifflin by 3/5 (JCM). A **Cape May Warbler** came to a feeder all quarter, and was observed molting into breeding plumage (*vide* BS). A moderate-sized flock of 40 **Snow Bunting** was in the airport area 3/11 (JCM). A scarce lingerer or vanguard **Rusty Blackbird** was found at Chestnut Hill 1/18 (RF), but the bulk of the migration did not arrive until 3/2 when 10 were found at TNEC (JCM).

No unusual winter finch activity was reported, but a high of 60 **Pine Siskin** came to a W. Mount Airy feeder 3/14 (EB.)

Some winter census highlights, courtesy of Keith Russell, who so ably organizes and compiles the count. The count day, 1/16, was clear, calm and cold, 10-34°F. A 4-6 inch cover of snow was on the ground.

Most ponds, lakes and the two rivers (Schuylkill and Delaware) were frozen. The 38 observers found 78 species, plus 1 **Gray Catbird** seen 1/15 in the count area. Birds of note included 3 **Pied-billed Grebe**, 11 Great Cormorant, 5 **Double-crested Cormorant**, 7 **Wood Duck**, 1 **N. Goshawk**, 1 **Peregrine Falcon**, 1 **Am. Coot**, 2 **Common Barn-Owl**, 16 **Great Horned Owl**, 2 **Pileated Woodpecker**, 2 **Fox Sparrow**, and 2 **White-crowned Sparrow**. Further details and a list of participants can be requested from Keith at 131 W. Hortter St., Philadelphia, PA 19119.

**OBSERVERS:** Erica Brendel, Edward Fingerhood, 541 W. Sedgwick St., Philadelphia 19119 (215-843-5818), Ron French, John C. Miller, Bill Murphy, Naomi Murphy, Bob Sehl, Sandra Sherman.

#### **SCHUYLKILL COUNTY**

*Locations: Deer L. (D.L.), Dreherstown (DRV), Hawk Mt. Sanctuary (HMS), Landingville Dam (LVD), New Ringgold (N.R.), Port Clinton (P.C.), Pottsville (PTV), Schuylkill Haven (S.H.), Schwartz Valley Rd. (SVR), Tumbling Run Dam (TRD).*

This was a banner winter for **Pine Siskin** for the second consecutive year. Unlike last winter, however, there was a marked decrease in **Evening Grosbeak** reported and only one report for **Common Redpoll**. A probable, but not confirmed, report of a **Snowy Owl** from the Rock area was most notable.

**GREBES THROUGH RAPTORS.** Four **Horned Grebe** were seen at the LVD 3/26 (TC). A **Pied-billed Grebe** was present near SVR from 3/15-26 (SW). Two **Great Blue Heron** were at LVD 3/26 (TC).

The big **Canada Goose** push came through between 3/2 and 3/6, with 10,000+ reported over PTV 3/6. Two **Wood Duck** were at LVD 3/12 and 3/26. A pair of **Ring-necked Duck** were at LVD 3/26 (TC) and 1 was reported near SVR 3/28 (SW). Best count for **Lesser Scaup** was 20 at LVD 3/26 and 4 **Bufflehead** were with them (TC). Two **Hooded Merganser** were found at TRD 3/24 and D.L. 3/26 (TC).

Five **Common Snipe** were reported near SVR 3/25 (SW). **Am. Woodcock** arrived at N.R. 3/5 (DK) and a lek of 6-10 males was observed near the Upper Little Swatara Cr. 3/7 (SW); the earliest return to the usual Calvary Cemetery area in PTV was 3/9 (TC).

Very unusual **Ring-billed Gull** sightings were reported by Weidensaul. One ad. was seen near the Schuylkill Mall during a snowstorm 1/25 and another ad. was observed near SVR after an 8" snowfall 1/26.

Three **Turkey Vulture** were seen at DRV 1/23 (MB). A **Black Vulture** was observed over the traditional roost area near P.C. 2/27 (SW) and 1 was seen flying by HMS 3/24 (LG). A male **N. Harrier** was at PTV 3/6 (TC). An imm. **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was seen by many devouring a **House Sparrow** at the City Hall in PT 1/15 (SW) and 1 was at PTV 1/26 (TC). A **N. Goshawk** was at N.R. 3/20 (DK). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was present all winter at N.R. (DK). It was reported that the usual 6 **Rough-legged Hawk** which frequent the SVR area every winter were not seen this year (SW). Two **Osprey** arrived somewhat early at LVD 3/26 (TC).

A **Snowy Owl** was reported belatedly from the Rock area. The owl was seen throughout December and January on private farmland. Unfortunately no one was allowed access to the area for possible confirmation.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH FINCHES. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at PTV 3/31 and a male **Hairy Woodpecker** was seen at TRD 3/24 (TC). *Note: I would like to have observers send in more of their woodpecker reports, especially Hairy and Pileated sightings.*

The first **E. Phoebe** reports were at TRD 3/24 (TC) and HMS 3/24 (LG). A flock of **Horned Lark** was observed near Rock 2/24 (TC). The first **Purple Martin** report came from HMS 3/24 and **Common Raven** were reported there 1/19 to 2/1 (LG).

A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was at TRD 1/19. **Brown Creeper** were uncommonly numerous throughout the quarter (TC). A **Carolina Wren** was at a S.H. feeder 1/16 (Clara Clauser) and arrived at a favorite PTV nesting area 3/27 (TC). It should be noted that no **Winter Wren** was reported for the quarter.

**E. Bluebird** arrived in the Rock area 2/20 (BAM). A **Hermit Thrush** was at PTV 3/23. A **Pine Warbler** was found at D.L. 3/31 (TC).

The **Am. Tree Sparrow** was reported as "very light" during the quarter. A **Fox Sparrow** was at N.R. 3/20 (DK) and 1 was at TRD 3/22 (TC). The only **Common Redpoll** report came from N.R., where 10 were found 3/20 (DK). A **Purple Finch** was seen at PTV 3/29 (TC).

**OBSERVERS:** Marcia Bachman, Tom Clauser, 213 Deerfield Dr., Pottsville 17901 (717-622-1363), Laurie Goodrich, Dan Knarr, Ann MacClay, Bob MacClay, Scott Weidensaul.

**SNYDER  
COUNTY**

A pair of **Barred Owl** was located along Swift Run near "Tall Timbers" 3/31 (AS). This represents a new, but not surprising, location.

**OBSERVER:** Allen Schweinsberg, RD 3, Box 203, Lewisburg 17837 (717-524-0432).

**SOMERSET  
COUNTY**

*Locations: Casselman R. Confluence (CR-C), High Point L. (HPL), Hooversville (HVL), Jennerstown (JNT), L. Somerset (L.S.), Laurel Hill Cr., Ursina (LHC-U), Markleton, Meyersdale (MDL), New Centerville (NCV), Quemahoning Dam (Q.D.), Stoughton L. (S.L.), Youghiogheny R. Confluence (YR-C).*

The first quarter of 1988 had below-average snowfall, several days in each month with heavy rains, and few nights when temperatures dropped to zero. Many days were unusually warm and temperatures in the 50-60 degree range. After the first day of Spring, some daytime temperatures hit the 70's.

Although most were in low numbers, the county had a good variety of waterfowl. **Common Loon** made a late showing with a lone report of 1 at L.S. 3/27-30. **Pied-billed Grebe** were seen as follows: 1 on YR-C 3/6, 1-2 at L.S. 3/13-21, and 2 at Q.D. 3/31. **Horned Grebe** were less obvious, with 2-3 at L.S. 3/14-24 and 6 there 3/26.

One or two **Great Blue Heron** were first observed at HPL 1/10, with others found at L.S. and Q.D. Thirty-six **Tundra Swan** flew over Q.D. 2/25, with up to 40 through March at L.S., MDL, and Q.D., and a max of 102 at L.S. 3/22. One was noted to have Gray Collar #P-290. A lone **Mute Swan** was on the CR-C 1/17. Of the multiple **Canada Geese** sightings around the county, there were at least two with collars (Yellow Z1F1 and Gray K075) found at the MDL lagoons.

Single **Turkey Vulture** at HVL and Markleton arrived 3/5 with average sightings thereafter. One **Osprey** was found 1/11 at the MDL Lagoons. **Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Red-tailed** hawks were all in normal numbers. One **Rough-legged Hawk** was at NCV 1/19. Regular sightings throughout the period suggest that **Am. Kestrel** were above average.

It was unusual that no **Ring-necked Pheasant** was reported. **Ruffed Grouse** were drumming from 3/28+ at HVL. Twenty **Wild Turkey** were reported at Markleton 3/19. **Am. Coot** were reported only from L.S. 3/14-24, with an uncommonly low maximum of 15 on 3/17.

**Killdeer** were reported in good numbers, with first reports of 2 at HVL and 1 at MDL 3/8. Ten **Common Snipe** in Milford Twp. were found 3/16. **Am. Woodcock** was first reported displaying at HVL 3/8 and from various locations through the end of the month.

Nineteen species of ducks were found throughout the county. All reports are from March and no one particular body of water seemed favored. The best count for **Wood Duck** was 14 at L.S. 3/20-24. Three to 5 **Green-winged Teal** were found at L.S. 3/20-24. The first **Am. Black Duck** was seen at HPL 1/10, (but a max. of 9 on the CR-C 1/17 does not seem like very many for this species, which may be in trouble --Eds.). Contrast with 100 to several hundred **Mallard** on the Youghiogheny and Casselman rivers' confluences, with a max. of 300+ on the Casselman R. 1/17, although there were some domestic hybrids mixed in.

Best counts are listed below:

Species	LS	HPL	LHC	SL	QD	YRC	CRC	NCV
Wood Duck	14	-	-	-	x	-	-	-
Gr-wnged Teal	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Am. Blck Duck	-	4	4	-	-	4	9	-
N. Pintail	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bl-wnged Teal	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Gadwall	4	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Am. Wigeon	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Canvasback	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Redhead	10	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Ring-nckd Dk	34	x	-	x	x	-	-	x
Greater Scaup	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Lesser Scaup	100	-	-	-	x	x	-	-
Oldsquaw	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Com Goldnye	x	-	-	x	2	-	-	-
Bufflehd (low)	8	-	-	-	-	10	-	-
Hdd Mergnser	30	x	-	-	x	12	-	-
Com Mergnser	-	-	-	-	16	-	-	-
R-b Mergnser	50	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ruddy Duck	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Ring-billed Gull** were reported from many locations in decent numbers, e.g., 100 at Q.D. 3/6, 45 at MDL High School 3/7, and a max. of 100 at L.S. 3/14. Several hundred **Mourning Dove** were at NCV 1/7, but flocks with a max. count of 20 in other locations suggest a decline in numbers.

**Great Horned Owl** and **E. Screech-Owl** were reported in lower numbers and **Barred Owl** was completely missed. **Belted Kingfisher** was reported as singles at Q.D. 1/7, on CR-C 1/17, and at L.S. 3/14. **Red-bellied Woodpecker** continue to increase as winter residents. Only 1 **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was seen from 1/6-10 at Markleton. **Downy, Hairy,** and **Pileated** woodpeckers were found in good numbers, but **N. Flicker** reported only at HVL beginning 2/18. An early **E. Phoebe** was at JNT 2/25 with the general arrival, in good numbers, from mid-March. Over 75 **Horned Lark** were found at Kingwood and smaller flocks in Milford Twp. and NCV. Two **Tree Swallow** were in HVL 3/29.

**Blue Jay** were also in good numbers and flocking by mid-March in groups of 30+ at HVL. **Am. Crow** flocks of >500 were seen in early March in n.e. Somerset Co., feeding by day in cornfields and gathering in roosts for the nights. They were dispersing from the winter roost of 10,000+ in Johnstown (Cambria Co.). **Common Grackle** joined the roosting crows at HVL from 3/4-9, peaking at over 300 on 3/7. This same area in a pine plantation was used by **Am. Robin**, building in numbers from 60 in late January to several hundred when the group moved on in mid-March. A number of **Common Raven** reports include nest building on strip mines high walls near Listie, Fort Hill, and Windber.

**Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse,** and **White-breasted Nuthatch** were abundant; no **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was reported; **Brown Creeper** and **Carolina Wren** were above average, and a few **Golden-crowned Kinglet** were seen throughout the period.

**E. Bluebird** were seen several times in January and February at HVL, 6 at Listenburg 2/2, and by 3/1 were reported throughout the county in good numbers. Only 1 **Water Pipit** was reported, at NCV 3/20. **Cedar Waxwing** flocks of up to 50 birds were seen irregularly from 1/15 to 3/31.

Two **Louisiana Waterthrush** were at Q.D. 3/17. Over 50 **N. Cardinal** at a HVL feeder in mid-February was one of many reports indicating a peak year for the species. One **Rufous-sided Towhee** was reported 3/9 at Markleton and by the last week of March they were being seen in most locations.

**Am. Tree Sparrow** counts were low, a max. of 30 at HVL 1/9, where the last 3 were seen 3/29. From 1-3 **Chipping Sparrow** and **Field Sparrow** were found beginning 3/27. Numbers of **Fox Sparrow** were 1-5 from 3/7-20 at HVL and from 3/14-29 at Markleton. **Song** and **White-throated** sparrows were in average numbers, while **Dark-eyed Junco** was considered above average.

Two **Red-winged Blackbird** were in Milford Twp. 1/28, 25 found at a roost in JNT 2/27, and flocks of several hundred in various locations by early March. The first **E. Meadowlark** was seen at HVL 3/21. Five **Brown-headed Cowbird** were at the JNT roost 2/29 and numbers remained low in March.

**Purple Finch** numbers were very low with only 2-7 from January to March at HVL and 1-6 at Markleton 3/15-29. **House Finch** reports were all low, but very high for **Pine Siskin** with counts of 100 not uncommon throughout the period at JNT. The max. count of **Am. Goldfinch** at HVL was 12 on 1/20, while **Evening Grosbeak** appeared sporadically in flocks of up to 40 individuals.

**OBSERVERS:** Doris Brown, Shirley Jensen, Alberta Long, Anthony Marich, Robert Mulvihill, Michael & Evaleen Watko, Glenn and Ruth Sagar, RD 1, Box 176-B, Hooversville 15936 (814-798-3242), Carl Yoder.

## SULLIVAN COUNTY

Unfortunately, no report was received by the compiler for Sullivan Co. in the first quarter, but there will be a report for the second quarter. Birders with any records in Sullivan Co. are cordially invited to send reports to the address below.

Douglas A. Gross, Susquehanna Biological Laboratory, R.D. 1, Berwick, PA 18603

## SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

Please refer to the Bradford County report for sightings.

## TIOGA COUNTY

*Locations: Roundtop area (R.A.), Tioga-Hammond Dam (THD), and Wellsboro area (W.A.).*

A **Great Blue Heron** was at the THD 3/25 in the company of **Mallard** and **Am. Black Duck**. Although the lakes were still frozen, flocks of **Tundra Swan, Canada Geese,** 2 pair **Ring-necked Duck,** and 1 **Killdeer** were found on a pond 2 mi e. of Wellsboro 3/23.

The first **Turkey Vulture** were seen 3/11 at THD where a **Red-shouldered Hawk** was seen 3/21. **Rough-legged Hawk** were observed from 1/11 through 3/22. One "dark phase" was found at Shumway Hill. In this county both **Red-tailed Hawk** and **Great Horned Owl** are fairly easily found.

**Horned Lark** were found at higher elevations 2/11. Our feeder counts were typified by a 1/31 listing: 1 **Am. Kestrel,** 14 **Mourning Dove,** 4 **Downy Woodpecker,** a pair **Hairy Woodpecker,** 6 **Blue Jay,** many **Black-capped Chickadee,** 4 **White-breasted Nuthatch,** a few **European Starling,** 2 **N. Cardinal,** 6 **Dark-eyed Junco,** 20 **Pine Siskin,** 12 **Am. Goldfinch,** 20 **Evening Grosbeak,** and 8 **House Sparrow.** Migration was in evidence 3/4 when 2 **Tufted Titmouse** and a mixed flock of **Red-winged Blackbird,** **Common Grackle,** and **Brown-headed Cowbird** appeared at the feeder. On 3/30 **E. Phoebe, E. Bluebird,** and **Song Sparrow** had returned.

**OBSERVER:** Martha Copp, R.D. 3, Box 197, Wellsboro 16901 (717-724-7751), Tiadaghton Audubon Society.

## UNION COUNTY

Sixteen **Common Snipe** were flushed from a single wet ditch in Kelly Twp. 1/2 (A&JS). Just as unusual was a lone snipe along Fairbrook Rd. 2/26, which represents the county's first known February record (AS).

Two **Common Barn-Owl** eggs were found on a tarpaulin covering silage in a silo on Hoffa Mill Rd. 3/28 (JS). The silage was being extracted at the rate of about one foot per day, leaving the fate of the nest in doubt. A pair of **Barred Owl** was found at a new location along White Deer Cr. near the water company 3/6 (MB).

A shrike of undetermined species was seen briefly near Mifflinburg 2/15 (MB). The shrike was carrying a **House Sparrow.** As many as 18 **Rusty Blackbird** resided at the Holman Sanctuary in January and early February (RH).

**OBSERVERS:** Mark Berryman, Mark Holman, Robert Holman, Joanne and Allen Schweinsberg, RD 3, Box 203, Lewisburg 17837 (717-524-0432), Joe Southerton.

### **VENANGO COUNTY**

*Locations: Allegheny River, Kahle Lake (K.L.), Oil Creek S.P. (OCSP), Two-Mile Run Lake (TMRL).*

The relatively mild weather and the flood control device on the river above Oil City insured open stretches of water and, consequently, good numbers of waterfowl throughout the period. **Common Merganser** and **Common Goldeneye** were present in the greatest numbers each month, but January also provided sighting of a **Wood Duck** (1/2), **Mallard**, a **Pied-billed Grebe** (1/10), **Hooded Merganser**, **Am. Black Duck**, **Ring-necked Duck** (1/31), and **Canada Geese**. A **Bufflehead** was added in February (2/14) and a **Great Blue Heron** was on the river 2/28. The first **Horned Grebe** was seen 3/6 and 95 **Tundra Swan** were sighted over OCSP 3/10 (NK). March 26 was a banner day for waterfowl with a total of 17 species sighted, including a rare, for this area, **Canvasback** (GE,KE).

The only uncommon hawk sightings were a **Rough-legged Hawk** 2/14, an early **Red-shouldered Hawk** 2/28, and an ad. **Bald Eagle** on TMRL 3/12.

Three **Common Snipe** were at TMRL 3/14 (RS). A pair of **Am. Woodcock** was seen at OCSP 3/10 (NK) and courtship was observed 3/23 (RS).

**Ring-billed Gull** were present on the river at Oil City in numbers ranging from 50-150 from 2/27 through 3/8. Smaller numbers were present sporadically throughout the quarter.

Three **Great Horned Owl** were heard at OCSP during January (NK) and a **Belted Kingfisher** was observed along Oil Creek in all three months. **Horned Lark** remained in some strip mine areas all winter. The first **Tree Swallow** sighting was in the s. part of the county 3/26 (GE,KE). No wren of any species was found this quarter. In fact, there was no unusual song bird sighting.

**Pine Siskin** were exceptionally numerous, while **Evening Grosbeak** were scarce.

**OBSERVERS:** Gary Edwards, 450 Stevens Dr., Apt. 304, Pittsburgh 15237 (412-931-4379), Kevin Edwards, Nick Kerlin, Russ States, 24 E. 5th St., Oil City 16301 (814-676-6320).

### **WARREN COUNTY**

A **Great Blue Heron** was found in Saybrook 1/17 (CN). A **Tundra Swan** was found at Starbrick 1/15 and 1/18 (MB) and another single was at Tidioute 1/16 (JK). Only 1 was seen in February, at Youngville 2/20 (BHi). Migration dates and numbers were average for March, with 5 at Pittsfield 3/7 (RL) and 125 flying over Akeley 3/12 (DD,BH).

**Canada Goose** observations were 1 at Warren's west end 1/12 (CP) and 3 there 1/14 (DD). On the Allegheny R. s. of Irvine 2/19, six of the 33 **Canada Geese** had yellow neck bands which were able to be read (CA). Three **Oldsquaw** were on the river s. of Irvine in mid-March (TG). One flock of 69 **Common Goldeneye** were found at Putnam's Eddy e. of Warren 1/8 (TG).

**Bald Eagle** sightings in the area remain excellent. Two imm. were seen between Hemlock and Kinzua Dam 1/8 (TG) and an ad. was at the dam 1/16 (WS). Two observers reported 1 at Tidioute in January and an ad. was seen there 2/6 (MC). Throughout February, there were several sightings for the area (MC,DW). Best count was 2 ad. and 3 imm. below Kinzua Dam 2/26 (BH,DD). One ad. was observed soaring over Glade Run heading across the ridge toward Hemlock (HF), where 1 was seen about the same time; Hemlock is about 3 mi below the dam (GB).

A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was in Warren 2/20 and 2/27 (BHi). **Cooper's Hawk** at various locations in Warren were observed taking a **Dark-eyed Junco** and two **Mourning Doves** during the period (RR,TG,DW). Twenty-three **Wild Turkey** were near Grand Valley 2/17 (RL) and 22 were at Saybrook 2/24 (CN).

One **Red-headed Woodpecker** was found in North Warren the first week of February (QS). A **Red-bellied Woodpecker** was at a feeder in Warren all February (BHi). A flock of 15 **Horned Lark** was reported NW of Warren 3/22 (DD). One **Common Raven** was seen at Sheffield 1/7 (DD).

**Carolina Wren** were fairly regular at feeders throughout the quarter in Saybrook, Sheffield, and Barnes (DBD,TG,CN). The **Ovenbird** reported in December was last seen 1/27 in "ragged condition" (RR). It fed on finely cracked corn, but at least once managed to open a sunflower seed and swallow the kernel.

A **Rufous-sided Towhee** was found n. of Tidioute 1/16 (JK). **Pine Siskin** reports were mixed. They were observed all quarter in decent numbers, but in March several were obviously sick. Neel counted 12 dead at his feeders in Saybrook and Rieder counted 10 dead in Warren. Grisez had up to 35 through March, all apparently healthy. The high number for **Am. Goldfinch** was 45 at Saybrook (CN). Mixed in with a flock of 100+ **Evening Grosbeak** in Saybrook, was an all yellow and white indiv. observed 2/2 and 2/16 (CN).

**OBSERVERS:** Curt Anderson, Mike Bleech, Greg Burkett, Merle Caldwell, Dan Doherty, Don & Brita Dorn, Howard Flick, Ted Grisez, 8 Belmont Dr., Warren 16365 (814-723-9464), Bill Highhouse, Bill Hill (BHi), Jim King, Rick Lyle, Chuck Neel, Chase Putnam, Ron Rieder, Quay Strandburg, Wadek Swartz, Don Watts.

### **WASHINGTON COUNTY**

Although there is no specific report for the county this quarter, Roy Ickes would love to receive sightings from county observers. Please send to him at the Dept. of Biology, Washington & Jefferson College, Washington 15301 or call (412-223-6118).

### **WESTMORELAND COUNTY**

*Locations: Donegal Lake (D.L.), Green Lick Dam (GLD - in Fayette Co., just south of the Westmoreland Co. line), Latrobe Res. (L.R.), Powdermill Nature Reserve (PNR).*

The following observations are by the compilers, unless otherwise indicated. The Rector CBC (RCBC) was held 3 January.

**LOONS THROUGH SANDPIPERS.** No **Common Loon** had been recorded in the county by the end of the quarter. We had two mid-winter records of **Horned Grebe**: 1 at D.L. 1/31 (MEW) and 1 on a small stream just west of PNR from 1/26-29, until it was killed by a **Red-tailed Hawk** (LB). First migrant **Horned Grebes** were noted 3/19 at L.R. (MEW). First **Pied-billed Grebe** was at GLD 3/6 (MEW). First **Tundra Swan** were seen 3/8 at L.R. (MEW) and near PNR (JW). Small flocks were noted on local lakes to the end of the period.

First **Wood Duck** were seen at D.L. and near Latrobe 2/18 (RCL,JW). Eight **Green-winged Teal** were seen at GLD 3/6 (MEW). The only **N. Pintail** record was of 2-3 birds at D.L. from 3/5-7 (RCL,RSM,LB). Up to 9 **Blue-winged Teal** were at GLD 3/16 (MEW), after a 3/6 arrival. First **Gadwall** was seen at D.L. 3/6 and scattered individuals were seen throughout the quarter. First **Am. Wigeon** were 3/5 at D.L.; no large flocks of this species were noted. The only **Canvasback** record was of 5 birds at Mammoth Park 3/6 (MEW). First **Redhead** was at D.L. 3/5; up to 6 were seen at mammoth Park 3/6 (MEW). First **Ring-necked Duck** were 2 at GLD 3/6; maximum was 28 there 3/22 (MEW).

One **Greater Scaup** was seen at Ethel Springs L., near Derry, 3/19 (RSM, LB). Only a few **Lesser Scaup** were seen during the quarter. The only **Oldsquaw** record for the region came from GLD 3/26 (MEW). There was no report of any scoter. Only 2 **Common Goldeneye** were reported, at Acme Dam 3/26 (MEW). First **Bufflehead** was at D.L. 3/5; no large flocks were reported. **Hooded Merganser** were widespread in small flocks after 3/1 (RCL, RSM, MEW). Five **Common Merganser** were at D.L. 3/7 and 2 were there 3/16 (MEW). First **Red-breasted Merganser** were seen at D. L. 3/14; a maximum of 38 was recorded there 3/19 (RSM, LB, MEW). No **Ruddy Duck** was found.

First **Turkey Vulture** was noted 3/27 near PNR (JW). An **Osprey** was seen at Laurel Hill S.P. 3/30 (MEW). **Red-shouldered Hawk** returned to PNR 2/28. One **Rough-legged Hawk** wintered a few miles south of Ligonier (MEW). An imm. **Golden Eagle** was found at Laurel Hill S.P. 3/30 (MEW). In general, raptors seemed to have wintered in better than average numbers, at least in the Ligonier area (including **Red-tailed**, **Sharp-shinned** and **Cooper's** hawks and **Am. Kestrel**).

A very early **Greater Yellowlegs** was present at D.L. 3/12 (MEW, LB). Also early were 3 **Pectoral Sandpiper** there 3/23 (RCL, RSM, LB). **Am. Woodcock** returned to PNR 3/4, about a week later than usual for the past several years. **Ring-billed Gull** were numerous between 3/4 and 3/8; up to 300 were seen feeding on a golf course near Blairsville 3/4 (RSM).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWING. First **E. Phoebe** were recorded just w. of PNR 3/10 (LiB), at PNR 3/11, at L.R. 3/14 (MEW), at GLD 3/16 and at Mammoth Park 3/19 (MEW). First **Tree Swallow** were seen at PNR 3/26. More than the usual numbers of **Carolina Chickadee** records for the quarter indicate that this species is continuing to expand its range eastward in Westmoreland Co. A few **Red-breasted Nuthatch** were noted at scattered localities during the period. **Brown Creeper** apparently wintered in their best numbers since the unusually cold winters of 1976-1977; 14 were recorded on the RCBC. **Carolina Wren** were perhaps not as numerous or widespread as we might have expected given the mildness of the season; only 7 were recorded on the RCBC. Three **Winter Wren** were found at PNR for the CBC.

Like the Brown Creeper, **Golden-crowned Kinglet** seemed to be especially numerous and widespread during the Winter and early Spring. We received no record of wintering **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, and the first migrants had not been recorded by the end of the quarter. A very early **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was seen at Guffey Hollow, near Irwin, 3/23 (PW).

With the exception of robins and bluebirds, we recorded no wintering or early migrant thrushes. Both robins and bluebirds were probably more numerous than usual as wintering birds this year, and migrants of both species were in evidence after early February. A large flock of **Am. Robin** numbering +100 birds, was noted near Donegal 2/2 (JG). **Cedar Waxwing** were only found in small flocks of up to 10 birds during the quarter, with the notable exception of a large flock of 300 in Ligonier 2/24 (NW).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES. Despite the mildness of the winter season, only 1 **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was recorded on the Rector CBC; no other warbler had been recorded by the end of the quarter. At least 1 **Rufous-sided Towhee** wintered successfully near Jones Mills (EM); first migrant of this species was recorded at PNR 3/24. **Am. Tree Sparrow** were apparently fewer in number than usual this winter, but an unusually large number of **Field Sparrow** was recorded on the RCBC (27 birds). First **Fox Sparrow** was noted at PNR 3/8. **White-throated Sparrow** and **Dark-eyed Junco** were both scarcer than usual this winter, according to many feeder watchers.

First **E. Meadowlark** was recorded at GLD 3/6 (MEW) and near PNR 3/13 (JW); a flock of 20 was seen at Acme Dam 3/14 (MEW). Large mixed flocks of blackbirds were present at many localities during the latter half of February, although **Rusty Blackbird** were not recorded until the late date of 3/28 at PNR.

One **Common Redpoll** was recorded on the RCBC (RTR), but there was no other record of this species during the period. **Pine Siskin** were very numerous throughout the winter, and their numbers

continued to build to the end of the quarter. Many local feeders hosted flocks of 100+ individuals. **Evening Grosbeak**, on the other hand, were only irregularly present during the period, mostly in flocks of fewer than 25 birds. Numbers of this species began increasing, however, during the last few days of the quarter.

**OBSERVERS:** Larry Barth, Linda Barth, Jim Goebel, Robert C. Leberman and Robert S. Mulvihill, Powdermill Nature Reserve, Star Route South, Rector 15677 (412-593-7521), Eleanor Morris, Ron & Theresa Rohall, Mike & Evaleen Watko, Nevin Weller, John Whiting, Peggy Wisner.

## WYOMING COUNTY

Please refer to the Bradford County report for sightings.

## YORK COUNTY

*Locations: Brunners I. (B.I.), Canadochly School (C.S.), Codorus S.P. (CSP), Gut Rd. (G.R.), Lauxmont Farms (L.F.), Long Arm Dam (LAD), Muddy Cr. (M.C.), Wrightsville (WVL), York Haven (Y.H.).*

Weather: There was very little snow, but winds were strong and freezing temperatures prevailed much of the time. Ponds, lakes and the Susquehanna R. were frozen over except a few spots below the dams. The York side of the river at WVL was open all winter.

For the past several winters, blackbirds have been gathering and roosting in the pine trees of a residential development about 240 acres in size near West York High School. The roost does not develop before January and keeps building until the birds' departure in March. A York newspaper reported them as **Eur. Starling**, but upon investigation it was determined these birds were mainly **Common Grackle**. The direction of arrival and departure was always from the S or SE. On 2/26 I estimated a maximum of 20,000 birds present at dusk as they settled in for the night (AS).

Two observers were able to find 63 species at CSP in January, with another two species found near the perimeter (RR, LR).

Unusual or Uncommon Sightings: Three **Common Raven** were sighted near bird feeders in Wilshire Hills near Stony Brook 2/21. They were last seen the morning of 3/1. They were always together and were feeding on large pieces of suet put out for their convenience. They were also sighted during this period in Andrew Leader's yard, about 3 mi e. of the original location (*vide* AS).

Three **Common Loon** were found through January at CSP (LR, RR) and 3 also were at Shenk's Ferry 2/3 (JS). A **Red-necked Grebe** was found at LAD 3/13. An excellent find was 1 **Greater White-fronted Goose** mixed in with a large number of **Canada Geese** at CSP 3/6 and 3/25 (RR, BDG). First arrival of **Tundra Swan** was of 15 indiv. 1/11 which remained until 2/2 (AS). Two **N. Shoveler** were at CSP 3/5 (LR, RR) and 1 **White-winged Scoter** was there 3/26 (RR).

An ad. **Bald Eagle** was at CSP 1/15 (GS) and an imm. was found there 3/13 (BDG). Both ad. and imm. were seen along a stretch of about 50 mi of the Susquehanna R. from York Haven to the Maryland line. The latest report was of 1 at Muddy Cr. 3/20 (RB). A **Golden Eagle** was flying in the area of the Canadochly School 3/30 (JD). In addition to the 4 **Merlin** seen last quarter, 1 was seen at Thomasville Quarry 1/16 (AS). During February and March, 4 **Wild Turkey** were seen along Detter's Mill Rd.

Seven **Bonaparte's Gull** were found at B.I. 1/1 (JoP, JeP). A **Barred Owl** was seen at Pahagaco L. 2/16 (AS), the same area where 2 were found for the CBC. A maximum of 2 wintering **Rufous-sided Towhee** were seen at three separate locations 1/12+ (AS, RR). The first **Savannah Sparrow** was found on Gut Rd. 3/30 (RR). An estimated 35 **Snow Bunting** were seen at Lauxmont Farms 1/15 and another 35 were found several miles distant near Cool Cr. Rd (JD). An estimated 50 **Red-winged Blackbird** were at Y.H. 3/17, all females (AS).

Early/late sightings: First **Great Egret** was found at B.I. 3/25 (AS). A drake **Wood Duck** was at CSP 2/17 (RR). The drake **Blue-winged Teal** at B.I. 3/10 seemed as much as two weeks early (AS). Other firsts at CSP included 1 **E. Phoebe** 3/7 (KL,RR) and a singing **Pine Warbler** 3/7, which was one of several sightings for the month (RR).

Highs and lows: A max. of 5 **Pied-billed Grebe** was found at CSP from January through the end of the quarter (LR,RR). A flock of +200 **Snow Geese** was flying over the river below WVL 3/11 (AS). The 70 **Hooded Merganser** found at B.I. 3/10 was an excellent count (DH). About 200 **Am. Coot** remained during the period at CSP (LR,RR).

The **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was reported from numerous locations. Best counts for **Horned Lark** were 150 at Lauxmont Farms (AS) and 400 near CSP 1/27 (RR). While good numbers of **Pine Siskin** continued somewhere in the county all quarter, with most feeder watchers having at least a few, only 2 **Evening Grosbeak** were reported, and those from feeders in Hanover.

Trends: Reports of wintering **Am. Robin** have been good in scattered locations the past few years, with 40+ seen at CSP (RR,AS). By contrast, **Yellow-rumped Warbler** numbers have been reduced in recent years. **Song Sparrow** seems to be more common as a wintering bird.

*OBSERVERS:* Ron Billet, Bill Del Grande, Jack Downs, Dick Humbert, Karen Lippy, John & Jean Prescott, Larry Rohrbaugh, Russell Ryan, John Shue, Gloria Straus, Al Spiese, 4086 Old Orchard Rd., York 17402 (717-755-8309).