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Page 6, Dorothy Bordner
from the Editors...

PIPING PLOVERS

Those of you who did not attend the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology annual meeting at Presque Isle this May missed a great weekend of birding. Warblers and other passerines were abundant in both quantity and variety. Mourning Warblers, Lincoln Sparrows, and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were just some of the species easily found that weekend. But the most important sightings involved a Piping Plover which had shown up a few days before. Not only did it hang around for several days, it acted territorial, chasing other shorebirds (especially Semi-palmated Plovers) and calling.

Piping Plovers have not nested in Pennsylvania since the early 1950s (at Presque Isle). And, the entire Great Lakes population has been in serious decline for decades (At last count there were only 11 pairs). The good news is that he was still there in early June. The bad news is no female has been seen. Let’s hope a late migrating female hears his plaintive call.

NOT ANOTHER BIG YEAR!

Bob Schutsky apparently got bit by the Big Year bug. He is racing around the state trying to beat Deuane Hoffman’s recently set record of 293. He has 267 as we go to press and welcomes reports of any rare birds. The following is a list of birds for which he would appreciate a call: Eared Grebe, White Ibis, Gr. White-fronted Goose, Barnacle Goose, King Eider, Harlequin Duck, any kite, Black Rail, Purple Gallinule, Sandhill Crane, Black-necked Stilt, Am. Avocet, Willet, Whimbrel, Ruff, Black-legged Kittiwake, Sabine’s Gull, Arctic Tern, Least Tern, Black Skimmer, Chuck-will’s-widow, Black-backed Woodpecker, Say’s Phoebe, Western Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee, Bewick’s Wren, Mountain Bluebird, Varied Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing, Western Tanager, Painted Bunting, Lark Sparrow, Lark Bunting, Seaside Sparrow, Harris’ Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, Pine Grosbeak, any crossbill, any redpoll. And, of course, any other unusual bird.

He may be reached at (215) 593-5924 (h) or (717) 548-2121 (w).

SUBSCRIPTIONS LAG

We had high hopes as we planned for the sixth year of Pennsylvania Birds. This would be the year that we would finally get to that magical break-even point. But, unfortunately, it was not to be. We topped at 753 subscribers in 1989 (including reciprocals). Things were looking up. In 1990 we dropped to only 709 subscribers, but we continued to upgrade the quality (and quantity of pages) of the magazine in the hopes that more birders would be interested. However, we finished 1991 with only 658 subscribers.

As it stands today (early-June) we only have 543 subscribers, a loss of over 200 subscribers since 1989. Did we send out renewal notices to all of those people? YES, TWICE. Did anyone write us as to why he/she was not renewing? NO. You, as subscribers, must be as tired of reading about this plight as much as we are of writing about it. So, in point of fact, this is actually meant for those of you who will not be reading it anyway. But, if you talk to anyone who did not renew, ask them why. The cost increase, if that were the reason, was only $1.50 (only to cover increased printing and postage costs) as $1.00 of the $2.50 difference from 1991 goes to the state for its new sales tax on magazines.

Our sincere thanks to each and every one of you who sent extra to help defray expenses. If subscriptions don’t pick up, there will be changes. What exactly, we do not know.

THE ATLAS

The Atlas is coming. By the next issue we will have an announcement giving particulars for availability and ordering. We are assured it will be worth the wait.

ANNOTATED LIST

The new Annotated List of the Birds of Pennsylvania will be available soon. Steve Santner, Dan Brauning, and Glenna and Paul Schwalbe have worked diligently to get this together and the final steps are being completed as we write this. More details in the next issue.

Barb and Frank Haas
Co-editors
Bald Eagles (Haliaeetus leucocephalus) historically nested widely along Pennsylvania's major rivers and extensive marshes. They were said to nest commonly along the Susquehanna River in the last century (Beck 1924) and nested in Lancaster County until 1954, although unsuccessfully since 1948 (Amico et al. 1984). The shore of Lake Erie was a stronghold into the early 1900s and sites were known in Erie County until the late 1950s (Stull et al. 1985).

The creation of Pymatuning Reservoir in Crawford County during the early 1930s provided ideal conditions for Bald Eagles. The first aerie was found in 1937 (Oudette 1938), and one or more pairs have nested there and at nearby Conneaut Marsh every year since (Grimm 1952; Leberman, in press). For more than 30 years, beginning in the late 1950s, these Crawford County birds were the only nesting Bald Eagles in the state.

The Bald Eagle is one of three large birds of prey (including Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) and Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus)) which have undergone major recent population declines (as result, in part, of pesticide contamination) and recoveries (through the use of a reintroduction procedure known as "hacking"). Unlike the Osprey and Peregrine Falcon, which were extirpated from Pennsylvania during the middle decades of the twentieth century, the Bald Eagle apparently continued to "hold on" as a nesting species. However, most pairs had abandoned historic sites in Pennsylvania before DDT became widespread.

The population remained relatively constant at one or two pairs through the 1970s (see graph). There was considerable concern that the remaining adults, which are long-lived, may have reduced reproductive success because of organo-chlorine pesticide effects. Therefore, the Pennsylvania Game Commission initiated the Bald Eagle Recovery Program, with support from the Richard King Mellon Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Program involved importing 12 to 14 nestling eagles from Saskatchewan, Canada, and hacking them at two stations in Pennsylvania between 1983 and 1988. A total of 88 Bald Eagle nestlings were hacked. Seven young birds from the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center were also fostered into active eagle nests between 1979 and 1988.

Table 1. Summary of 1991 Successful Nest Sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>NESTS</th>
<th>YOUNG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crawford County</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler County</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tioga County</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dauphin County</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York County</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS

1991 was the most successful nesting season of any since before the population declined. A total of six nests successfully fledged 12 young (Table 1), more than were naturally produced since well before 1960 (Figure 1). In addition to active and successful nests, two nesting pairs in Crawford County failed following hatching and an additional pair there attempted, but never established, incubation. The pair in Lancaster County, although successful last year, apparently took a break this year and never established incubation. In total, nine pairs of Bald Eagles attempted nesting this year (Figure 2), in addition to several other pairs and individuals around the state where nesting has not been established. Note on Figure 1: the number of nests before 1980 is underestimated because it only reflects successful nests, and the number of young is overestimated because it reflects hacked young, not fledglings.

On the basis of identifying eagle leg bands, it is known that six of the nine active nests this year involved at least one adult which had been released in a hacking effort (Table 2). The origin of other birds is not known. Nine of the 12 young produced in 1991 came from nests with at least one hacked adult. Clearly, without Pennsylvania's and New York's hacking programs, Bald Eagle annual production would be insufficient to maintain the population and the species would be nearly extirpated in Pennsylvania.

Active Bald Eagle nests have been monitored by the Pennsylvania Game Commission on at least a weekly basis through the breeding season for a number of years. The status of nest sites is tracked, beginning in February, by observing behavior from a distance in order to avoid disturbance to the birds. Estimated dates of incubation, hatching, and fledging are determined. The primary objective of this work is to determine the number of hatchlings and fledglings.

The work has been conducted by Game Commission employee Brenda Peebles in the northwest and Jack Miller, Wildlife Conservation Officers, and volunteers in the Susquehanna River drainage.
Nesting was initiated over a broad time frame (six weeks) this year (Table 3). The majority of nests are begun in March. The Hartstown pair have consistently begun nesting early. They initiated incubation two weeks before any other eagle pair. The brooding dates reflect the behavior change of a sitting adult several days after eggs hatch, following the 35 day incubation. Eaglets can typically be seen reaching for food within a week. Fledging occurs a remarkable 12 weeks after hatching. Since incubation is initiated upon laying the first egg, eaglets appear and young fledge asynchronously, sometimes several days apart.

The Pine Creek pair were particularly late this year, yet successfully fledged one young. The importance of getting an early start is dramatically illustrated by that nest—the young did not fledge until early August. With many additional weeks after fledging necessary for a young eagle to become independent, the fall and winter months rapidly approach for a young hatched later than early May.

The prospects for Pennsylvania's Bald Eagle breeding population appear excellent. Productivity since 1988 has been above 0.7 young per active breeding pair (Table 4), the rate generally thought to be necessary to maintain a stable Bald Eagle population (Sprunt et al. 1973). Similarly, the recent average is near the recovery goal of 1.0 bird/occupied nest for the Northern States' Plan (Nickerson 1989). The nesting population can be expected to continue growing as a result of the hacking program until 1994, when the last hacked young will have reached breeding age (see Figure 1). At that point, population growth will depend strictly upon natural production and immigration. It appears that the transition will be a smooth one, since natural eaglet production in 1991 reached the level at which young were being hacked during the 1980s. Most significantly, the steady increase in young per nesting attempt reflects a healthy population.

Pennsylvania's own natural production, as well as immigration from growing populations in neighboring states, assures a growing breeding population, barring unforeseen disasters. A simple prediction model (Table 5) suggests the population growth that should be expected over the next four years.

Assumptions for these projections include: a 50% mortality in the first year of life, 10% thereafter; 80% of adult pairs will attempt to nest; an average of 53% of nesting pairs will be successful; and that 1.7 young will be produced per successful pair. Reproductive rates are based on data gathered on Pennsylvania's Bald Eagle nests during the past 5 years (Table 4). Actual productivity parameters vary considerably, as is illustrated in 1991 when an average of 2 young were produced per successful pair, producing 3 more young than predicted by the model and in 1992 when the number of active nests increased by 44% and the percent of pairs that were successful reached an astonishing 92%! These conservative projections suggest that Pennsylvania will remain well within the state's recovery goals (Nickerson 1989).
Figure 1. Bald Eagle Nesting History

Figure 2. 1992 Bald Eagle Nest Locations.
See Table 5 for reference numbers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackjack</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossingville</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cussewago</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duck Farm (10)</td>
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<td>2/2</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>x/0</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erie NWR (12)</td>
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<td>3/2</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glades (13)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haldeman Is. (5)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>3/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holtwood Res. (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muddy Run (3)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muddy Run (3)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octoraro Res. (1)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>1/1</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Harbor (4)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>2/2?</td>
<td>2/1</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shohola Lake (7)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tionesta (8)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hatch/Fledged</td>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>6/6</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>13/12</td>
<td>21/#21</td>
<td>67/58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Active Nests</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av young/active pair</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Av young/success pair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>% pairs successful</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key to Table 4.**

- = 1 young introduced into nest from outside source, not figured into production averages or totals.

(x) = Number on Figure 1

// = inactive pair

x/0 = failed nest

x/ = “x” number of eggs hatched

/x = “x” number of young fledged

# = not all of the hatchlings have fledged as of this date, but it appears they all will.

Table 4. List of Breeding Eagle Pairs for past 6 years.

For Your Library

The following is a list of regional guides/annotated checklists to Pennsylvania that are still available for purchase.


REFERENCES:


Dark-Morph "Western" Red-tailed Hawk  
*Buteo jamaicensis calurus*  
Centre County  
Ted Floyd

Jeff Hoover and I saw an adult dark-morph "western" Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis calurus*) in Centre County at 1200 h. on Sunday 23 February 1992. This form is rare in eastern North America during the winter (Clark and Wheeler 1987), and there are occasional records from Pennsylvania's Kittatinny Ridge in fall (Wiltraut 1991). A recent record is from Northampton County during the winter of 1991 (Wiltraut 1991).

The bird was in a small field along Atherton Street about 3 kilometers north of State College. We observed the bird perched and in flight for about thirty minutes. Skies were clear, and viewing conditions were very good. A light-phase Rough-legged Hawk (*B. lagopus*) was nearby.

We viewed the perched bird at a distance of 30 meters. Its entire body was very nearly black. Its cere and feet were bright yellow. When it flushed, its evenly-colored bright red tail was evident. The tail struck me as being more of a solid red than the rufous-red that is characteristic of "eastern" Red-tailed Hawks.

When the soaring bird was viewed from beneath, it imparted a two-toned appearance, very much like a Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*). Its flight feathers were gray, and its underparts and wing coverts were entirely black. The underside of the tail was a pale rosy color. On banking, the bird's brightly colored dorsal tail surface was evident. I could not discern the U-shaped dihedral that is thought to be characteristic of "western" Red-tailed Hawks in flight (Dunne et al. 1988).

We observed the bird with 8.5X44 (TF) and 7X35 (JH) binoculars. The bird was observed on subsequent dates by other area birders.

Pesticide Research Lab.  
Penn State University  
University Park, 16802

**Literature cited:**


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4th Pennsylvania and 4th Lancaster County Record of Ross' Goose.  
*Chen rossii*  
Lancaster County  
Jonathan Heller

On Sunday 8 March 1992 I got a call from Randy Miller, who told me that he had found a Ross' Goose (*Chen rossii*) with a small flock of Snow Geese (*C. caerulescens*) at Middle Creek WMA in Lancaster County.

The next day I there by 1400 hours. Almost immediately I found a flock of Snow Geese that numbered about 600. I was able to view them from the road just beyond Stop 1, where they were at a distance of several hundred yards. The sky was mostly cloudy, but occasionally the sun would break through; then the heat waves would make the viewing conditions almost impossible.

After scanning the Snow Geese for 45 minutes, I finally found the Ross' Goose. Some field marks that made it stand out were the small stubby bill, the more rounded head, the shorter neck, and the overall smaller size. I had the bird in view for only ten seconds when it was obscured by a bush. Fortunately, I quickly relocated the bird and was able to study it for several minutes.

This was the fourth Pennsylvania record and also the fourth record for Lancaster County.

194 Newcomer Road  
Mount Joy, PA 17552
Date: 2 January 1992
Location: Lake Ontelaunee along Route 73 in Berks County, Pa.

The bird was first found by Jonathan Heller at 1555 who noticed that the mantle was slightly darker than Ring-billed Gull (Larus delawarensis) but not as dark as the two adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls (L. fuscus) seen earlier. The gull was of similar size to Ring-billed Gull. It was immediately identified as a Common Gull (L. canus canus), the European race of the Mew Gull, by David Rich, an experienced birder from the United Kingdom. Then it was confirmed by Harold Morrin. A little later it was seen by Berks County compiler for Pa. Birds, Rudy Keller, and his friend Dean Kendall. The following notes were taken while observing the bird without reference to field guides.

Time: 1555 to 1640 h.
Equipment: Questar Telescope 50X and Bushnell zoom 15–45X.
Weather: Perfect light conditions. It was overcast, calm, and cold. The water on the lake was mostly frozen.
Distance: About 300 yards.
Other birds present: The bird was seen in direct comparison with Ring-billed Gulls and Herring Gull (L. argentatus), and it was in close proximity to two adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls. The bird was seen standing on the ice, swimming in the water, and preening but was not seen flying.

Identification Points:
Size: Similar in size to Ring-billed Gull. Some observers thought the bird may have been minutely smaller than the Ring-billed Gulls.
Head: Head was noticeably rounded in comparison with the Ring-billed Gulls. Top of head, nape, and the side of the neck were speckled/smudged. The speckling/smudging was slightly darker by the eye and on the side of the neck.
Eye: Dark.
Bill: Totally yellow and unmarked. Also smaller and narrower than Ring-billed Gull.

Breast: Speckled light gray.
Mantle and wing coverts: Uniform gray, darker than Ring-billed Gull but lighter than the two adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls in close proximity. Two small white patches in mid-back. Between the gray mantle and the black primaries there was a noticeable white crescent which was noticeably much wider than on the Ring-billed Gulls.

Primates: Only seen closed. Black with white patches.

Legs: Yellow.

On 3 January 1992 Jonathan Heller found the Common (Mew) Gull again and had it confirmed by Harold Morrin, David Rich, Jerry Book, Frank Haas, Barb Haas, Chris Pederson, Ed Pederson, Jan Witmer, Pat Witmer, and other birders. It was photographed by Frank Haas and others.

David Rich
52 Heol West Plas
Colty, Bridgend
Mid-Glam. CF 35 6BA
United Kingdom

Jonathan Heller
194 Newcomer Road
Mount Joy, PA 17552

Harold Morrin
29 Kready Ave.
Millersville, PA 17551
Pennsylvania's First Mew Gull, With Notes on Its Racial Identification

by Ed Kwater

The adult Mew Gull (*Larus canus*), found by Jonathan Heller and identified by David Rich at Lake Ontelaunee (Berks) on 2 January 1992 was Pennsylvania’s first record of this species, pending acceptance by the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee. The bird was present for several weeks but was rather elusive during the first few days of its stay. Eventually it could be found more reliably on the shore at Blue Marsh Lake only a few miles from Lake Ontelaunee. The bird would often appear soon after midday in the company of Ring-billed Gulls (*L. delawarensis*) and Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*) which provided an excellent comparison.

Identification of the bird as a Mew Gull was relatively straightforward. However, assigning it to one of the four races of Mew Gull was less easy. More prolonged views were needed before it could safely be identified as the nominate European race, *L. c. canus*. To most observers it appeared slightly smaller than many of the Ring-billed Gulls present. The head was more rounded than in Ring-billed Gull and the crown peaked slightly just behind the eye. The head and neck were heavily streaked with brownish-gray, particularly on the nape. In Ring-billed Gulls in basic plumage the nape is usually spotted, not streaked, a subtle difference but nevertheless evident in the field at close range. Most of the markings on the neck and breast were brownish-gray crescents on the feather edges. The coarseness of the markings indicated that the bird was still in full basic plumage. The rest of the underparts were pure white. The character which made the bird immediately obvious in a flock of Ring-billed Gulls was the mantle color. This was a noticeably darker gray than in Ring-billed and Herring gulls, approaching a pale Laughing Gull (*L. atricilla*) in shade (Fig. 1).

The folded primaries extended well beyond the tail when the bird was at rest giving it a long-winged appearance. The visible primary tips were jet black with large subterminal white mirrors on the two outermost feathers. The mirror on P1 was slightly larger than that on P2 (Figs. 2 & 3), but both mirrors were larger than the corresponding mirrors on the accompanying Ring-billed Gulls. Small white tips on the second to fifth primaries (P2–P5) showed as a line of spots on the folded wing tips. The prominent white tertial crescents were much more noticeable than in Ring-billed Gull, due to the relatively dark mantle and wing coverts. The bird also had small white scapular crescents which were more noticeable than in Ring-billed Gull. The tail was all white.

In flight, or when the bird flapped its wings, the upperwing pattern eliminated *L. c. brachyrhynchos*, the North American race of Mew Gull. The large white mirrors on the outer two primaries were immediately obvious. The amount of black decreased toward the mid primaries with only a subterminal black spot on P6. Apart from a white trailing edge to the inner primaries and secondaries, the rest of the upperwing was uniformly gray. In *brachyrhynchos* the amount of black on the wing is less than in *canus* particularly on P3–P5. There is a distinct, crescent-shaped white area in *brachyrhynchos*, separating the black tips of P3–P6 from the gray of the rest of the upperwing (Grant 1986, p. 56). It was clear from flight observations of the Berks County bird that the upperwing pattern matched that of *canus* perfectly. The large size of the wing mirrors and the lack of any black in the outer upperwing coverts confirmed the bird as an adult rather than a second-year bird.

The eye was noticeably larger in relation to the size of the head in the Common Gull than in the accompanying Ring-billed Gulls and the iris was very dark. In an adult *brachyrhynchos* the iris is usually pale yellow as in Ring-billed Gull, but may sometimes be dark. The bill was noticeably shorter and thinner than in Ring-billed Gull. At first glance it appeared to be unmarked yellow with a slightly paler tip. Closer scrutiny revealed a small gray smudge on the gonys and a second one on the culmen directly above the gonys. Adult *canus* usually shows at least some subterminal gray marking...
on the bill in basic plumage. While this often appears as a complete bill ring it is not normally as thick or as black as in Ring-billed Gull. Adult \textit{brachyrhynchus} usually lacks any dark subterminal bill marking in basic plumage (Grant 1986). The tarsus was slightly shorter than on the accompanying Ring-billed Gulls. The legs were grayish-green in color, duller than in Ring-billed.

There are two other subspecies of Mew Gull which should be considered— \textit{heinei} and \textit{kamtschatschensis}. \textit{Heinei} breeds from central Russia to central Siberia (Grant 1986). It is larger, on average, than either \textit{canus} or \textit{brachyrhynchus} and noticeably darker on the upperparts (Cramp & Simmons 1983, Grant 1986). \textit{Kamtschatschensis} which breeds in northeastern Siberia (Grant 1986, Harrison 1983) is the largest of the four subspecies, approaching Herring Gull in size and is also darker than either \textit{canus} or \textit{brachyrhynchus} (Grant 1986). Because of their ranges, neither of the larger subspecies would be a likely candidate for vagrancy to the eastern United States. Almost all previous records in this area have been due to transatlantic vagrancy by \textit{canus}.

In conclusion, identification of the Berks County Mew Gull as an individual of the nominate race was clinched by the diagnostic upperwing pattern. The dark iris color and presence of faint gray subterminal bill markings were also highly suggestive of Common Gull.

REFERENCES


ADDENDUM: Although it took several trips by several birders to get confirmatory photographs as to which race of \textit{Larus canus} the Berks County bird was, the original conclusion stated in the previous article was correct.

Our review of the literature indicates that all but one record of \textit{Larus canus} in the East are of the nominate race \textit{L. c. canus}, known as Common Gull in Europe. The Mew Gull (\textit{L. c. brachyrhynchus}) is the race that breeds on the Pacific coast from Alaska to British Columbia and winters along the U.S. Pacific coast. —eds.
First Live Record of Great Gray Owl in the 20th Century in Pennsylvania

Warren County

by Ted Grisez

A Great Gray Owl (Strix nebulosa)—apparently only the second confirmed record for western Pennsylvania (Todd 1940) and the first live Pennsylvania record for the twentieth century (see editor’s note below)—was discovered 28 January 1992 on the grounds of the United Refining Co. in Warren, Warren County, Pa. Dan Zdarko, an employee at the refinery, took a Polaroid photograph of the owl and showed it to Mike Toole who also works there. Mike tentatively identified it, and that evening showed it to Chuck and Marjorie Neel and me. In spite of the small image, the yellow eyes and white "bow tie" showed.

The next morning I searched the outside of the west end of the refinery without success. Since the location is across the Allegheny River from Oakland Cemetery, I went up there and found it about 10 AM. I left to make phone calls, and when I returned, it had gone. But Marjorie Neel found it, with the help of crows, along the railroad that follows the river bank below the Route 6 by-pass and the cemetery. From that time to 13 February, it was seen daily, all day, except 30 January.

The owl couldn’t have been more convenient and obliging. There was ample parking at the end of Crescent Park Rd., and it ranged from about 200 feet to a half mile out along the railroad from the parking area. The railroad company even tolerated the crowds until 11 February, when the tracks were posted and a warning issued in the local newspaper. I estimated well over 2000 people saw it in this period. Forty-seven cars were parked there at one time the second Sunday. It was a birders’ reunion, with people from Cleveland, Ontario, Rochester, Long Island, Virginia, and points between. It was encouraging to see so many local people, only mildly interested in birds or just curious, come out to see the cause of all the publicity. Many other city newspapers reported it; an Erie TV station had lengthy coverage with excellent pictures. A local drug store had a contest for the best photograph, with voting by dollars and the proceeds going to the Warren Humane Society. A shop created a commemorative plaque for sale.

Through the end of March it was only seen on nine dates (about once every four days) that I know of, ending 27 March when it was seen and photographed by Walter Atwood. All but one of the observations were along a .3 or .4 mile stretch of Mohawk Ave. It was difficult to find the owl here because of the homes and woods.

Curiously, another Great Gray Owl spent much of the same time period just ten miles north of the state line near Jamestown, N.Y., and about 26 miles from "our" Great Gray. The Jamestown owl was larger, so speculation was that it was a female and the owl in Warren a male.

Great Gray Owl, Warren, 2/8/92. Photo by Wayne N. Laubscher

The owl had the species’ legendary tameness. It was alert and hunting most of the time. Some people offered it mice, which it readily accepted. It picked wild mice out of the snow while we watched, although I never saw a mouse on top of the snow. It caught one mouse (or vole) actually at Dan Doherty’s feet! He thought he was going to be the target. Someone reported that it flew down to the railroad and pulled a mouse out from beneath a tie plate.

The excitement was about over when it was only seen about 4 PM on 13 February. We thought it had left for points north when it wasn’t seen for a week. But on 22 and 23 February, it was reported along Mohawk Ave., about one-half mile uphill and south of the river. It was also seen once more along the river on the 23rd.

LITERATURE CITED


NOTE: Most interesting is the fact that the only other confirmed record for western Pennsylvania is of a bird shot in Greene County in 1898. Todd writes, “The occurrence of this owl as far south as Greene County is somewhat surprising; it might be expected instead along our northern border.” The only other documented twentieth century record for Pennsylvania is of a bird found dead in a snow bank in Nockamixon State Park (Bucks) in March 1979, a year when there was a significant invasion of this species in the Northeast. That bird may have been the southernmost individual known from that invasion.—eds.
Great Gray Owl, Warren, Feb/92. Photo by Ed Kwater.

About the Cover Artist

Randy Miller

Randy joined the Lancaster County Bird Club in September 1987 and began birding in 1988 after his first Southern Lancaster County Bird Count and several field trips with the Club. His hobbies include birding, photography, hiking, and drawing.

In January 1989 he became interested in photographing rare birds in Pennsylvania after the Thayer's Gull was found at Safe Harbor. Harold Morrin had the idea for a Lancaster County Rare Birds Photographic Committee, which he now heads. He presently has 81 species photographed to date.

Several of Randy's photographs have appeared in PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS, and we look forward to receiving more as he travels the state with binoculars and camera at the ready.
Looking for Gulls in Berks County
(Nine species of gulls)
by Jonathan Heller

So far we were having an excellent day. Harold Morrin and I had been able to show David Rich of Wales several new birds for his North American list. We had started the day with Snowy Owl in New Holland (Lancaster) and then went on to Struble Lake (Chester) where we saw both Short-eared (Asio flammeus) and Long-eared (A. otus) owls. Our next and last stop at Lake Ontelaunee, north of Reading, also proved to be our best stop.

In scanning through the flock of gulls, we had already found one Iceland Gull (Larus glaucaoides) and two Lesser Black-backed Gulls (L. fuscus) when I noticed a gull that looked different from the others. It was the same size as the nearby Ring-billed Gulls (L. delawarensis), but the mantle was a little darker. The head and breast were smudged and speckled, and I could see that the bill did not have a ring on it. By now both Harold and I knew we had something very different, but we were not certain what. I quickly called David Rich to come look at the bird, and he soon found it in his Questar. Through the Questar we were all able to see that it had an unmarked yellow bill. Almost immediately, David identified it as a Common Gull (L. canus canus) [v. Mew Gull (L. c. brachyrhynchus)], a first record for Pennsylvania!

As we continued to study the bird we were able to see other field marks; especially noticeable was a broad white crescent between the mantle and the black primaries. As we were watching the Common Gull, we were glad to see Rudy Keller and his friend Dean Kendall walking toward us. Together we wrote up a report which has been sent to the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

The next day, 3 January, we decided to come back to the same area to look the gulls over again. One of the first places we visited was the pig farm near Strausstown. It was an incredible place for gulls; we estimated 20-30,000 were present! Included in this mass of birds were several white-winged gulls. In just one flock we had three Iceland Gulls and one Glaucous Gull (L. hyperboreus). It was really quite thrilling watching these birds through David's Questar.

After success at the pig farm, we headed on to Blue Marsh Recreation Area's lake with the hope of seeing a Snow Bunting (Plectrophenax nivalis) which had been seen there several days earlier. Not finding the Snow Bunting, Harold and I settled down to look through the gulls. Several minutes later I located a strange looking gull that was sitting on the ice a couple hundred yards in front of us. It appeared similar to an Iceland Gull, but was slightly darker in color with dark primaries and some smudging through the eye. With our curiosity aroused we decided to call to David.

Unfortunately, just as he got it in his scope, it decided to fly—the whole way to the other side of the lake at that. However, as it was flying across the lake, we did see a few details: namely, the frosty white underwing primaries and secondaries, totally dark brown tail, and evenly colored pale brown upperparts. The primaries and secondaries seemed a little darker than the rest of the upperwing although we did not get a really good view. These details would indicate that the bird was either a Thayer's Gull (L. thayeri) or possibly one of the hybrids roaming the area.

After this excitement we resumed sorting through the gulls in the hope that the gull might have flown back within view. In about fifteen minutes I came upon a gull the size of a Ring-billed Gull but with a darker back and unmarked yellow bill. It was the Common Gull! After watching it for a few minutes, we took off for Lake Ontelaunee to tell the other birders who were waiting there. We did not have time to follow them over to Blue Marsh Lake, but that evening we learned that everyone got to see it and that it was photographed by Frank Haas.

On 3 January 1992, nine species of gulls were seen at either Lake Ontelaunee and/or Blue Marsh—Laughing (L. atricilla), Ring-billed, Common Gull (first state record), Herring (L. argentatus), Glaucous, Iceland, a possible Thayer's, Ls. Black-backed, and Great Black-backed (L. marinus) gulls. Surely, never before had there been such a variety of gulls in Berks County!
The Subspecies of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow and the Re-identification of a Western Pennsylvania specimen

by Kenneth C. Parkes

The Sharp-tailed Sparrow (Ammodramus caudacutus) has five quite distinctive subspecies. Two breed in the interior of North America: A. c. altera Todd of the marshes bordering James Bay in Ontario and Quebec, and A. c. nelsoni Allen of fresh-water prairie marshes from northeastern British Columbia and central Manitoba south to northern South Dakota and Minnesota. Three subspecies are confined to coastal salt-marshes, with successive north-to-south essentially linear breeding ranges. From the mouth of the St. Lawrence River south to Maine the subspecies is A. c. subvirgatus Dwight; in Maine its range adjoins that of A. c. caudacutus, which breeds south to southern New Jersey, where it intergrades with A. c. diversus Bishop, which breeds south to North Carolina (ranges abridged from American Ornithologists' Union 1957). The northern races are strongly migratory; caudacutus and diversus are harder; a few of the former regularly winter as far north as Long Island, and many diversus move only a short distance down the coast.

The Carnegie Museum of Natural History has a series of 13 Sharp-tailed Sparrow specimens taken at Presque Isle, Erie County, Pennsylvania, in late September and early October 1900. Of these, 8 are nelsoni and 5 are altera. Fall migrants of these two subspecies are not hard to identify in the hand, and a good close look might even separate them in the field, although only if the observer knew what to look for. The back of altera is olive-brown, with grayish-white streaks with little or no black on their edges. The tertials are dark gray, edged in buff. There is no black in the crown. In nelsoni the pale streaks of the back have distinct black edges, and the centers of the tertials are black rather than dark gray. There are longitudinal black dashes in both the gray central and brown lateral crown stripes. Both races are orange-buff on the breast and flanks (paler on the throat), with longitudinal streaks on the breast and flanks. The streaks are gray and somewhat blurred in altera, black and more sharply defined in nelsoni.

The three coastal races, in turn, are quite distinctive. The northern subvirgatus looks more like altera than it does its neighbors to the south, but is olive-gray rather than olive-brown above, and its streaking is much more blurred. In caudacutus the breast and flanks are paler buff than in the inland subspecies, and the black streaks of the underparts, especially on the flanks, are much heavier than in nelsoni. Dorsally caudacutus is not unlike nelsoni, having the pale streaks edged with black; the base color of the back is a somewhat warmer brown in nelsoni, grayer and more olivaceous in caudacutus, but this is subtle. The southernmost race, diversus, is an exaggerated version of caudacutus, with still heavier black streaking on the underparts and much blacker upperparts.

Photographs of caudacutus ("typical coastal form") and nelsoni ("inland form") appear in Farrand (1983:257). Peterson (1980:288-289) portrayed, top to bottom, caudacutus ("typical form"). subvirgatus ("maritime ['Acadian'] race"), and nelsoni ("inland ['Nelson's'] race"). The text and plate are both erroneous in indicating that the breast of nelsoni is "almost devoid of streaks." In Diane Pierce's plate (p. 391) in the National Geographic field guide (Scott 1987), the colors of subvirgatus and caudacutus are reasonably accurate, but, again, nelsoni is shown as too clear-breasted. In the Carnegie series of 20 adult nelsoni from the breeding area in Saskatchewan, none is wholly unstreaked on the breast. In 8 of the 20, the streaks are present but faint, and breast streaking is obvious in the rest. The black flank streaking is present in all. However, in the fall and winter (the basic plumage), nelsoni is heavily streaked on the breast, and this is the time of year when most Pennsylvania birders will encounter that subspecies.

On 3 October 1972, Robert C. Leberman collected (under my permit) a Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Powdermill Nature Reserve, near Rector, Westmoreland County, one of the few records in western Pennsylvania away from the glaciated northwestern corner. This specimen, an immature female, was reported by Leberman (1976), and identified as the James Bay subspecies altera on my authority.

I recently had occasion to reexamine the Sharp-tailed Sparrows in our collection in connection with identifying some recently catalogued specimens to subspecies. While so doing, I looked at the Powdermill specimen, no. 144952, for the first time in some years. To my amazement and chagrin, I found that I had probably called it altera in 1972 because that was what I expected it to be. Instead, it proves to be a perfectly typical specimen of the Atlantic coast salt marsh subspecies caudacutus. It differs from altera in all diagnostic characters. There are black marks in the crown stripes, the dorsal streaks are edged with black, the buff
of the breast is paler and less orange, and the sides and flanks are heavily streaked with black. Although size was not mentioned earlier, the bill of *caudacutus* is noticeably longer than that of *altera*; exposed culmen ca. 12 mm as compared to ca. 10 mm. The Powdermill specimen's culmen measures 12 mm. The bird is virtually identical with a 12 October specimen of *caudacutus* from Westport, Massachusetts (no. 163719); a 16 November specimen (no. 26146) from Amelia Island, Florida, is also an excellent match, although its plumage, as might be expected, is slightly more worn.

I have no explanation for the occurrence of this bird of a strictly salt-marsh form in western Pennsylvania. It is paralleled by the record of the equally salt-marsh-restricted Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris crepitans*) in Latrobe, Westmoreland County, on 13 September 1988 (Mulvihill and Leberman 1989). Although probability of occurrence is certainly one of the factors to be taken into consideration in field identification of birds, these two specimens demonstrate that the improbably must not be completely discarded.

**LITERATURE CITED**


**Carnegie Museum of Natural History**

4400 Forbes Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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**January**

by Steve Santner

January, the first month of the year, is also the low point in terms of the number of species present. However, it can still be one of the most exciting months of the year. During years of food scarcity to the north, many species may irrupt into Pennsylvania. Depending on what food is in short supply, Snowy Owl, Northern Shrike, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, Pine Grosbeak, or Red and White-winged crossbills may be found. On very rare occasions birds like Gyrfalcon or Hawk Owl may enter the state. Rough-legged Hawk, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Evening Grosbeak, and Purple Finch are always around but may be much more common than others. Seen every year, but only in winter, are Tree Sparrow, Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting. The bunting is sometimes seen in flocks but usually it, and the longspur as well, must be searched for among the large flocks of Horned Larks found in large, windswept fields. Those fields spread with manure are the most likely to contain these birds.

January is a good month for beginning birders to start. There are fewer species present and there are no leaves to block the view and little bird song. January is also a good month to search for owls. Great Horned Owls begin nesting and are calling frequently just before dawn or just after dusk. Eastern Screech-Owl can be induced to call by using a tape recording of its call. However, if this is done, do not overuse the call as Screech-Owls are territorial all year and overuse may result in the owl deserting its territory. Long-eared, Short-eared and Saw-whet owls all winter singly or in roosts. To find the rare Saw-wet, try looking into thick brushy areas, especially those containing cedars or low pines. Sometimes the presence of droppings or pellets will aid in locating the bird or birds, which prefer to sit in the thickest parts of evergreens, about 4–12 feet above the ground. A potentially good area is the cedars at the White Oak picnic area at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area in Kleinfeltersville. Long- and Short-eared owls are more common and are usually found in taller pines. The Short-eared Owl can also be found flying over open grassy fields just before sunset, sometimes as early as 3:30 or 4:00 on winter afternoons.

Very little movement takes place during January. Waterfowl are often forced to leave this area in early January as the water freezes over. If a thaw occurs, some will often return, to be pushed out again if the water again freezes. The end of the month brings the coldest temperatures of the year, but the first sign of spring is at hand; the House Finch begins to sing!

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The Red-bellied Woodpecker Tumbled in 1990 on Southeastern Pennsylvania Christmas Bird Counts

by Paul Hess

The Red-bellied Woodpecker's (Melanerpes carolinus) recent population trend in Pennsylvania has been phenomenal. Haas (1987) traced its rise from 1954 to 1984 on Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). He found steady range expansion from the state's southeastern and southwestern corners, plus greatly increasing numbers in those two long-colonized areas.

The trend continued impressively through 1989, then 1990 brought a surprising reversal. Numbers dropped 39% overall on Pennsylvania CBCs with comparative 1989–90 data.

Major decreases were by no means statewide; the 1990 change was decidedly minor in most of Pennsylvania. But southeast of the mountains, the Red-bellied tally fell to half its 1989 level.

This report updates Haas' findings to 1990 and suggests that the southeast's sudden plunge was not merely a result of poor CBC weather. On the other hand, no evidence points to a lasting downturn. Even if population losses were real, the woodpeckers may simply have shown a larger one-year CBC fluctuation than usual.

Three notes on method:

* All comparisons use birds per party-hour, including feeder hours because the Red-bellied is a fairly regular feeder visitor in winter. The figures represent total birds divided by total party-hours for the area involved, not an average of individual CBCs' birds per party-hour.

* Long-term analysis for 1970–1990 uses a consistent base of 37 Pennsylvania CBCs with data for the entire period. They are split into two regions: 15 CBCs mainly southeast of the mountains (SE) and 22 elsewhere in the state (non-SE). See Table 1.

* The 1989–1990 comparison uses all 58 Pennsylvania CBCs with data for both years, including 21 SE and 37 non-SE counts. See Table 2.

The Rise to 1989

Some background puts the 1990 decrease into perspective. Red-bellied Woodpeckers have advanced northward not just in local thrusts but in a movement spanning the whole range, nearly half the continent wide.

Haas documented expansion in Pennsylvania as early as the mid-1950s, when the species began to appear on a fast-growing percentage of CBCs. Substantial movement north occurred about the same time in West Virginia (Hall 1983) and Ohio (Peterjohn 1989). By the 1960s numbers were increasing sharply across most of New York (Temple and Temple 1976, Bull 1985). The vast advance gained momentum during the '70s and '80s. It continues to draw attention farther and farther north from the Western Great Lakes, through southern Ontario, to New England (Powell, Weir, Perkins 1991).

Factors influencing the expansion probably include periods of mild winters, good year-around food resources, availability of preferred semi-open habitat, tolerance of human presence, and a tendency for pioneers to wander northward after the breeding season. Perhaps population pressures within the traditional range were also involved; a significant upward trend occurred during 1965–79 even in the southeastern states, heart of the species' abundance (Robbins et al. 1986).

Pennsylvania's spectacular trend is shown by CBCs with continuous data for the last two decades (Table 1a, Fig. 1). The statewide level in 1989 was four times that of 1970, and the average annual rate of increase for 1970–89 was 7.6%. That corresponds closely to the 8.0% average rate for 1966–89 on Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Surveys (USFWS 1991). Only House Finch (Carpodacus mexicanus) and Canada Goose (Branta canadensis) rose faster among all species with significant BBS increases during the period.

Reflecting the range expansion, Red-bellied numbers grew tenfold from 1970 to 1989 on non-SE CBCs (Table 1b) at an average yearly rate of 13.2%. Even on SE CBCs, where it was already fairly common, the tally more than tripled (Table 1c) at an average annual rate of 6.9%.

The Tumble in 1990

That trend stalled dramatically in 1990 when a 35% decrease left the long-term Pennsylvania CBCs with their lowest Red-bellied Woodpecker count since 1984. The loss was quite limited geographically. On non-SE CBCs, the count edged up 2% to a new high. But the SE count plunged 48% to its lowest level since 1980. This drop was twice as great as the SE's largest previous percentage decrease in 1975.

A more complete basis for the two-year comparison uses all 58 Pennsylvania CBCs with 1989–90 data, and the following analyses refer entirely to these (Table 2). The net Red-bellied decrease was 39%, again with a striking distinction between...
the two regions. The non-SE downturn was only 10% with a loss on 18 CBCs, a rise on 17, and no change on 2. In contrast, the SE drop was 49% with a decrease on all 21 CBCs.

Was the sudden SE plunge a result of count-day weather conditions? CBCs ordinarily offer a credible index of major long-term population changes, and even a single year's change as large as this can be meaningful. But 1990 was not an ordinary year. Exceptionally poor birding weather, with fog and/or rain ranging from light to heavy, plagued 15 of the 21 SE CBCs.

However, I see no sign that Red-bellied numbers were affected either by a lag in observer effort or by poor counting weather itself. Total party-hours, including feeder hours, actually rose slightly from 1989 on the 15 bad-weather SE CBCs. More to the point, hours on foot decreased only 8%. That's a tribute to birders who braved the soggy conditions, an it certainly indicates no major lapse in effort.

The most telling argument against a weather factor is that Red-bellied losses were almost exactly the same on the SE's good-weather and bad-weather CBCs, 50% vs. 49%.

Wet weather also showed little effect on other areas' Red-bellied counts. In southwestern Pennsylvania the 1990 decrease was just 1% on 6 CBCs hit by rain (Beaver, Buffalo Creek Valley, Bushy Run, Clarksville, Pittsburgh, and Washington; ironically the count fell 77% on the southwest's only good-weather CBC, Raccoon Creek). Directly east of us in New York and New Jersey, 14 of 23 CBCs had wet weather yet the Red-bellied level dropped only 16% there.

Wind is another factor to consider. Robbins (1981) reported a 25-year correlation between Red-bellied counts and wind speed on a Maryland CBC. He also found substantial drops in breeding birds counted generally when wind speed reached about 8–11 mph. Of the SE Pennsylvania CBCs in 1990, 11 listed wind in that range and 10 did not. Again little or no effect appears. Red-bellied losses were almost the same for each group, 50% vs. 47%.

If count-day weather was not involved, then perhaps the Red-bellied Woodpecker population really decreased. Was 1990 a sign that the species is reaching its maximum density for SE Pennsylvania?

Future years will answer that, but bits of evidence indicate only a one-year anomaly limited to CBCs. Good numbers returned in 1991 to the few SE CBCs for which Red-bellied were mentioned in Pa. Birds. Furthermore, Breeding Bird Surveys in the same SE zone showed no Red-bellied dip at all, maintaining a virtually constant average of birds per route in 1989, 1990, and 1991 (USFWS 1992). BBS data wouldn't tell much about young, which suggests two possible reasons for the low CBC levels: poor production of young in the cold and wet 1990 nesting season, or more young than usual leaving SE Pennsylvania to join the great northward advance.

In any case, 1990 marked a notable interruption of the Red-bellied Woodpecker's long-term CBC trend in Pennsylvania. For future analyses it will be important to remember the big drop's confinement to CBCs in the southeast corner of the state.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to Dan Brauning, Pa. Breeding Bird Atlas Project, for data on distribution and to Bruce Peterjohn, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for local Breeding Bird Survey data.

LITERATURE CITED

Table 2. Red-bellied Woodpecker on 58 CBCs in PA.
(Birds per 1000 party-hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State (58 CBCs)</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-SE (37 CBCs)</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE (21 CBCs)</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>rain/fog (15)</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear (6)</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**SE:** CLEAR WEATHER: Bernville, Gettysburg, Reading, SO Lancaster Co., Upper Bucks Co., York.


1412 Hawthorne St. 
Natrona Heights 15065
This report covers all decisions on the occurrence of rarities in Pennsylvania made by the Pa. Ornithological Records Committee (PORC) from May 1991 to April 1992. Reviewing records of rarities will remain a major function of the PORC. During the above period 95 records were reviewed. This is a substantial increase from the 14 records covered by the second PORC report in May 1991 (Pa. Birds 5:1) and thirty records covered by the first report in May 1990 (Pa. Birds 4:1). This reflects a far greater awareness on the part of birders of the need to document the occurrence of rare birds in Pa., either by photographs, tape recordings, or written descriptions. The PORC wishes to express its appreciation to all those who submitted documentation of rarities.

Of the 95 records reviewed, 67 (71%) were accepted. This compares favorably with an acceptance rate of 75% for records covered by the second report and only 43% for records covered by the first report. The standard of documentation has improved substantially since the PORC first began receiving records for review in 1989. Not only have written descriptions become more detailed and thorough, but an increasing number of records qualify for consideration for Class I status (those supported by either a specimen, photograph, or recording—see Pa. Birds 3:1). Of the 67 accepted records, no fewer than 32 (48%) qualified for Class I status, compared to five (28% of all accepted records) in 1991 and only one (8% of all accepted records) in 1990. The increasing proportion of Class I records is largely due to the number of photographs now being submitted to PORC. Photographs, even relatively poor ones, are an excellent way of documenting the occurrence of a rarity and the need for them cannot be overemphasized. However, a photograph should not be used as a substitute for a written description, but as a supplement to the description. Photographs cannot show a bird from every angle and frequently do not illustrate hidden areas such as the wing coverts or rump. There are a few species for which photographs can never be absolutely diagnostic. A classic example of this is the Pacific Slope Flycatcher record from Lancaster Co. in 1990. This species belongs to the Western Flycatcher complex and was recently split from Cordilleran Flycatcher. These two species are only safely separable in the field by voice. The occurrence of this individual was well documented by photographs, written details, and tape recordings to clinch its acceptance as the first Pennsylvania record of Pacific Slope Flycatcher.

This report adds several new species to the Official List of the Birds of Pennsylvania (Pa. Birds 1990 4:2, 4:3). Apart from the Pacific Slope Flycatcher, there were first state records of Ross' Goose (quickly followed by an accepted record in Lancaster Co. in 1991; Vermilion Flycatcher in Tioga Co. in 1991; Black-legged Kittiwake in Chester Co. in 1983, followed by a more recent record in Berks Co. in 1991; Black-tailed Godwit in Philadelphia Co. in 1979; and Lark Bunting in Westmoreland Co. in 1980. The godwit and kitiwake are prime examples of how first state records can be accepted based on two written descriptions (Class II) or one written description (Class III) respectively. The written documentation must be extremely detailed in cases such as this however, and the PORC always welcomes photographic evidence of species which appear in Class II or II of the Official State List.

It should be noted that accepted records are only credited to the people who submit adequate documentation. In many cases these people are not the ones who originally found and/or identified a rarity. For this reason, finders are strongly encouraged to submit their own descriptions, photographs, or recordings so that they can be credited with their find.

The PORC not only reviews records of rare species in the state, but also records of rare subspecies such as Oregon Junco, Bullock's Oriole, and Spotted Towhee, and rare hybrids such as Lawrence's Warbler. Unseasonal records of otherwise common species are also reviewed. Examples of such species included in this report are the Great Crested Flycatcher in Butler Co., Ruddy Turnstone and Forster's Tern in Erie Co., and Nashville Warbler in Lancaster Co. All of these species were recorded in Pennsylvania in late fall or winter and at least the first three established record late dates.

Of the records which were not accepted, most did not have adequate documentation in the collective opinion of the PORC. The committee comprises seven members and six positive votes are needed in order for a record to be accepted. Pacific Loon, Western/Clark's Grebe, Barnacle Goose, Long-tailed Jaeger (the PORC Chairman is not immune from having records rejected!), Three-toed Woodpecker, and Boat-tailed Grackle would have been first state records if they had been accepted. Two records of Barnacle Goose were not accepted. Records of Barnacle Goose were not accepted. Two records of Barnacle Goose were not accepted. The occurrence of rare species as thoroughly as they can with particular reference to plumage topography and with photographs and/or recordings whenever possible.

There are still a relatively large number of rarities for which documentation has not been submitted to PORC by the observer(s). This is especially important since 1989 when PORC was founded, but also applies to records before then, some of which would be first state records if accepted. These species are covered in PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS 1990, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 53. Documentation for a few of these species (e.g., Barrow's Goldeneye, Band-tailed Pigeon, Le Conte's Sparrow) has now been submitted to PORC. All observers with records which have not yet been reviewed are urged to submit documentation. The Ornithological Technical Committee (OTC) of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey (PBS) has recently voted two new members onto the PORC. The seven member committee now consists of the following members:

Barbara Haas - Secretary
Franklin Haas
Roy Ickes (new)
Willow Warbler - Chairman
Jerry McWilliams
Steve Santner
Jerry Skinner (new)

Bob Leberman and Paul Schwab have recently completed a three-year period of service. The PORC wishes to thank them for their hard work. Special thanks go to Paul Schwab for acting as Treasurer. A new Treasurer will be appointed at the next PORC meeting in June 1992.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF ACCEPTED RECORDS, BY CLASS (AOU ORDER).

CLASS I


ROSS' GOOSE (Chen rossii). Lancaster Co. At least one b at Middle Creek WMA from 3–16 March 1991 (T. Garner). This is the second accepted record for Pa. (see below)


HARLEQUIN DUCK (Histrionicus histrionicus). Erie Co. A female at Presque Isle SP 17 February 1991 (J. McWilliams, D. Darney).


WILLET (Catoptrophorus semipalmatus). Indiana Co. A flock of 12 at Yellow Creek SP 30 April 1991 (photo G. Lamer).

HUDSONIAN GODWIT (Limosa haemastica). Cumberland Co. One at Kuhn L. on 9 November 1989 (D. Holland). An extremely late bird near Slippery Rock 18–20 November 1990 (P. Hess, F.C. Haas, B.M. Haas). Originally thought to be an Ash-throated Flycatcher (M. cinerascens) the identification of this bird was clinched by excellent field notes and photographs.


THAYER'S GULL (Larus thayeri). Erie Co. The remains of a b in definitive plumage at Presque Isle SP 22 April 1991 (J. McWilliams).

NORTHERN HAWK OWL (Surnia ulula). Wayne Co. A well watched individual near Lookout probably present from late October 1990 and last seen on 17 March 1991 (F. Haas). The first fully documented (photographed) twentieth century record for Pa.


RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD (Selasphorus rufus). Westmoreland Co. A male in basic plumage at Ligonier from 17 October to 21 November 1990. It was trapped and positively identified on 15 November (R.S. Mulvihill, R.C. Leberman).

PACIFIC SLOPE FLYCATCHER (Empidonax difficilis). Lancaster Co. A bird was present in East Drumore Township from 16–26 December 1990 having been found on a Christmas Count. The bird was photographed and recorded. This extraordinary extralimital record is the first for Pennsylvania (F.C. Haas).


GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (Myiarchus crinitus). Butler Co. An


Lehigh Co. One is Salisbury Township 30 April to 1 May 1989 (S. Smith).


CLASS II


CLASS III

TRICOLORED HERON (Egretta tricolor). Lancaster Co. A juvenile on the Susquehanna River at Marietta 14 August to 15 September 1991 (J. Heller).


EURASIAN WIGEON (Anas penelope). Lancaster Co. An alternate definitive male on Chickies Creek 8 February 1991 (J. Heller).


MARbled GODWIT (Limosa fedoa). Lancaster Co. Two at Marietta 3 August 1991 (J. Heller).


Lancaster Co. Up to 3 at a sod farm near Landisville 6–19 September 1991 (J. Heller).


PARASITIC JAEGER (Stercorarius parasiticus). Erie Co. A juvenile at Presque Isle SP 5 October 1991, the first of several records that fall season (E. Kwater).


THAYER’S GULL (Larus thayeri). Erie Co. One in basic 1 plumage at Presque Isle SP 13 January 1990. One in basic definitive plumage at the same location 17 February 1991 (J. McWilliams). Two in alternate definitive plumage at Presque Isle 5 March 1991 (T. Floyd).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (Rissa tridactyla). Chester Co. Three in definitive basic plumage at Marsh Creek SP 24 December 1983 (P.B. Street). First accepted Pennsylvania record.


LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (Lanius ludovicianus). Erie Co. One at Presque Isle SP 31 March 1991 (J. McWilliams).


NASHVILLE WARBLER (Vermivora ruficapilla). Lancaster Co. One at Landisville 17 February 1991 was an extremely unseasonal bird, probably a wintering individual (S. Santner).


CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (Spizella pallida). Erie Co. One at Presque Isle SP 6 May 1991 (J. McWilliams).


Erie Co. One at Presque Isle SP 23 November 1990 (T. Floyd).

List of Records Not Accepted

Pacific Loon—13 May 1990, Penn Forest Reservoir, Carbon Co. Details submitted did not rule out Arctic Loon.

Eared Grebe—30 March 1991, Conneaut Lake, Crawford Co. Description did not rule out Horned Grebe. Details of head and bill shape were not given.

Western/Clark’s Grebe—1–3 November 1987, Somerset Lake, Somerset Co. Conflicting documentation submitted. It was not certain which of the two spp. was involved or even if the bird was definitely an Aechmophorus sp.

Barnacle Goose—4 February 1989, Peace Valley Park, Bucks Co. The submitted account does not include a description of the bird.

Barnacle Goose—28 January 1989, Pymatuning, Crawford Co. Photograph of a definite Barnacle Goose submitted but the status of the bird as an escapee is uncertain.

(Common) Green-winged Teal—27 December 1989 to 13 January 1990, Peace Valley Park, Bucks Co. The submitted account does not include a description of the bird.
Barrow's Goldeneye—4 March 1991, Presque Isle SP, Erie Co. Description does not conclusively rule out Common Goldeneye.
Mississippi Kite—31 March 1991, Tuscarora Summit, Franklin/Fulton Co. line. Description does not rule out several spp. of falcon, notably American Kestrel.
Mississippi Kite—7 April 1991, Mt. Gretna, Lebanon Co. Details very brief and did not rule out other species of raptor.
Swainson’s Hawk—6 October 1990, I-176 near Green Hills, Berks Co. No details submitted by original observer.
Long-tailed Jaeger—2 September 1990, Presque Isle SP, Erie Co. Description did not conclusively rule out Parasitic Jaeger.
Franklin’s Gull—14 April 1991, Memorial Lake, Lebanon Co. Description does not eliminate Common Black-headed and Bonaparte’s gulls.
Royal Tern—14 April 1991, Memorial Lake, Lebanon Co. Description does not conclusively eliminate Caspian Tern.
Least Tern—29 May 1990, Presque Isle SP, Erie Co. Details submitted were extremely brief.
Black Skimmer—22 October 1989, Pipersville, Bucks Co. Details submitted do not include a description of the bird.
Three-toed Woodpecker—15 December 1984, Presque Isle SP, Erie Co. The possibility of confusion with a Hairy Woodpecker (maybe an aberrant individual) was not ruled out.
Bewick’s Wren—6–8 May 1988, Mount Holly Springs, Cumberland Co. Insufficient detail. Description did not rule out Carolina Wren.
Townsend’s Solitaire—12 May 1984, Presque Isle SP, Erie Co. A close vote. Not accepted because at the time it would have been a first state record and the observation period was extremely brief.
Varied Thrush—10 January 1985, North East, Erie Co. Details submitted were very brief and did not conclusively rule out American Robin.
Blue Grosbeak—22 May 1988, Bell’s Farm, Greene Co. No written description of the bird itself was actually submitted.
Painted Bunting—15 May 1986, Lititz, Lancaster Co. Details submitted were very brief.
Lark Bunting—29 December 1990, Maple Grove Dairy, Bethlehem, Northampton Co. Description did not match any known plumage of the species at that season.
Grasshopper Sparrow—30 December 1989, U.S. Rt. 6 and Standing Road, Bradford Co. Brief description did not rule out LeConte’s Sparrow. An seasonal report.
Harris’ Sparrow—2 May 1987, SGL 46 near Hopeland, Lancaster Co. Description brief and written several years after the sighting.
(Oregon) Dark-eyed Junco—15 December 1990, Tioga Co. Description does not rule out female Dark-eyed Junco.
Brewer’s Blackbird—16 December 1989, Menges Mills, York Co. Description does not rule out Rusty Blackbird.
Boat-tailed Grackle—17 December 1977, Bucks Co. Description very brief and does not rule out Great-tailed or Common grackles.
Bullock’s Oriole—13–29 December 1990, Knox, Clarion Co. The committee vote was deeply split on this one, with some members holding the view that a female Western Tanager was not eliminated.

Feeding Hummingbirds

Apparently the jury is out as to whether or not the red dye used in commercial hummingbird mixtures is good/bad/neutral for hummingbirds. A safe alternative is to use the following formula:

2 cups sugar
8 cups water

Boil the above together for about 4–5 minutes. Allow to cool. Then pour into a glass container and refrigerate. Use as needed. Make more solution when the last is used to fill the feeder(s). The dilution can go to 5:1 at the height of summer flowers and humidity, but the 4:1 ratio should be maintained at the beginning and at the end of the season.

Apt. 108
9828 Presidential Dr.
Pittsburgh, PA 15101
1991 was the year of the Big Year—the biggest ever in Pennsylvania. Deuane Hoffman's total of 293 species is really spectacular considering that most of us have not seen that many species of birds in Pennsylvania in our lifetime! Not to be overlooked are outstanding annual lists submitted by Joyce Hoffman and Randy Miller, both among the top ten largest annual lists for Pennsylvania.

In Erie county, Jerry McWilliams is still searching for his 300th species in Erie County. He did, however, see a Mew Gull, both among the top ten largest annual lists for Pennsylvania. Steve Santner still reigns supreme in the county lifelist category with top lists in twelve counties to his credit. He's followed by Deuane Hoffman and William Reid each with five top lists and Margaret Higbee with four.

Congratulations to all of you!

Each Christmas I travel home to Pennsylvania hoping to add a new species to my state list. This year a Mew (Common) Gull turned up and most of you were there to look for it. It was great seeing birding friends I hadn't seen in years, and it was a real pleasure meeting many of you for the first time. Now if only I had met that Mew Gull as well...

**Pennsylvania Birdlists**

Compiled by Terry Schiefer

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**Pennsylvania Lifelists**

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**County Lifelists (Top 50)**

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COUNTY LIFELISTS (BY COUNTY)

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131 Steve Santner 61 Jonathan Heller
CAMBRIA
144 Geoff Malosh 272 Merrill Wood
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124 George Malosh 244 Terence Schiefer
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BEAVER
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BEDFORD
122 Steve Santner 268 Larry Lewis ('88)
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BERKS
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203 Terence Schiefer 193 Neal Thorpe ('90)
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PENNISYLVANIA BIRDS 23 VOLUME 6 NO.1
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132 Barbara Haas ('89)
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80 Deuane Hoffman

VENANGO
212 Gary Edwards
96 Steve Santner

WAYNE
227 Harris Johnson ('86)
217 Ted Grisez ('90)
112 Steve Santner

WASHINGTON
210 Margaret Higbee
209 Roger Higbee
190 Roy Ickes
161 Russ Ruffing
141 George Malosh ('89)

WESTMORELAND
122 William Reid
93 Steve Santner

WYOMING
231 William Reid
118 Skip Conant
107 Steve Santner
95 Barbara Haas ('89)
61 Al Guarente

PA ANNUAL LISTS 1991

293 Deuane Hoffman
273 Joyce Hoffman
266 Randy Miller
261 Gerald McWilliams
252 Ed Kwater
251 Steve Santner
246 Jonathan Heller
246 Charles Tague (Birding)
236 Walter Shaffer
233 Jerry Book
231 Don Henise
230 Nick Pulcinella
227 Steve Farbotnik
227 Mike Fialkovich
227 Bernard Morris
225 Ronald Leberman
224 Robyn Henise
220 Al Guarente
220 Margaret Higbee
217 Dave DeReamus
216 Devich Farbotnik
213 Skip Conant
208 William Reid
205 Greg Grove
202 Carl Garner

177 Kenneth Gabler
175 Ernest Schiefer
170 Matt Wlasniewski
163 Larry Brown
163 John Salvetti
158 Arlene Brown

PA ANNUAL LISTS (TOP 50)

1 293 Deuane Hoffman 1991
2 288 Barbara Haas 1986
2 288 Franklin Haas 1986
4 278 Sam Stull 1979
4 278 Gene Wilhelm, Jr. 1983
6 273 Joyce Hoffman 1991
7 268 Terence Schiefer 1985
7 268 Deuane Hoffman 1986
9 266 Randy Miller 1991
10 263 Gerald McWilliams 1983
11 261 Gerald McWilliams 1991
12 259 Gene Wilhelm, Jr., 1982
13 255 Franklin Haas 977
13 255 Ed Kwater 1989
15 254 Barbara Haas 1977
16 252 John Ginaven 1978
16 252 Bonnie Baird 1979 (Birding)
16 252 James Baird 1979 (Birding)
16 252 Gerald McWilliams 1988
16 252 Ed Kwater 1991
21 251 Gerald McWilliams 1989
21 251 Steve Santner 1989 (Birding)
21 251 Steve Santner 1991
24 250 Gerald McWilliams 1979
24 250 Ed Kwater 1990
26 249 David Freeland 1984
26 249 Steve Santner 1990
28 248 Gerald McWilliams 1985
29 247 James G. Stull 1976 (Birding)
29 247 Gerald McWilliams 1982
29 247 Terence Schiefer 1986
32 246 Barbara Haas 1979
32 246 Gerald McWilliams 1980
32 246 Gerald McWilliams 1981
32 246 David Freeland 1981 (Birding)
32 246 Gerald McWilliams 1984
32 246 Jonathan Heller 1991
32 246 Charles Tague 1991 (Birding)
39 245 John Ginaven 1979
39 245 Terence Schiefer 1984
39 245 Gene Wilhelm, Jr. 1985
39 245 Larry Lewis 1986
43 244 Franklin Haas 1979
43 244 Steve Santner 1986
43 244 Ed Kwater 1988 (Birding)
43 244 Gerald McWilliams 1990
47 241 Bonnie Baird 1978 (Birding)
47 241 James Baird 1978 (Birding)
49 240 Bernard Morris 1981
49 240 Franklin Haas 1982
49 240 Gerald Book 1986 (Birding)

COUNTY ANNUAL LISTS (BY COUNTY)

ADAMS
140 Carl Garner 1991
86 Kenneth Gabler 1991

ALLEGHENY
96 George Malosh 1982
93 George Malosh 1974

ARMSTONG
142 Margaret Higbee 1986
139 Margaret Higbee 1987
131 Margaret Higbee 1990
122 Margaret Higbee 1991

BEAVER
110 George Malosh 1974
105 George Malosh 1975

BEDFORD
70 Kenneth Gabler 1991

BERKS
170 Terence Schiefer 1981
167 Terence Schiefer 1982
162 Matt Wlasniewski 1991
152 Matt Wlasniewski 1990
145 Matt Wlasniewski 1989
142 Ernest Schiefer 1991

BLAIR
126 Beryl Sternagle 1990
121 Beryl Sternagle 1989

BRADFORD
82 Skip Conant 1988

BUCKS
203 Steve Farbotnik 1991
196 Devich Farbotnik 1991
156 Bruce McNaught 1987

BUTLER
245 Gene Wilhelm, Jr. 1983
229 Gene Wilhelm, Jr. 1985
225 Gene Wilhelm, Jr. 1982
224 Gene Wilhelm, Jr. 1981
218 Gene Wilhelm, Jr. 1984
217 Gene Wilhelm, Jr. 1980
215 Gene Wilhelm, Jr. 1979

CENTRE
224 Terence Schiefer 1985
214 Terence Schiefer 1986
211 Terence Schiefer 1984
191 Terence Schiefer 1983
180 Merrill Wood 1986

CHESTER
225 Larry Lewis 1988
221 Larry Lewis 1983
219 Larry Lewis 1986
216 Larry Lewis 1984
215 Larry Lewis 1982
214 Larry Lewis 1987
209 Larry Lewis 1985

CRAWFORD
202 Ronald Leberman 1989
183 Ronald Leberman 1990
100 Terence Schiefer 1984
89 George Malosh 1974
81 George Malosh 1973

CUMBERLAND
227 Deuane Hoffman 1989
221 Deuane Hoffman 1986
214 Don Henise 1991
| COUNTY ANNUAL LISTS (TOP 50) |
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The snows in mid to late March were particularly devastating to a few known species: Killdeer, Am. Woodcock, E. Phoebe, Am. Robin, and E. Meadowlark. Space here does not allow for complete coverage of comments, but we direct you to the reports of Bedford, Clarion, Columbia, Elk, Juniata, Mifflin, Somerset, Tioga, and Westmoreland for more details and accounts.

Two Eared Grebes were found in Crawford, and singles in Erie and York. Best shot for finding a Great Cormorant is Philadelphia. Gr. White-fronted Goose were found in Bucks, Lancaster, and Tioga. For the second year in a row (1991 was the first state record), a Ross’ Goose was found in Lancaster; a report from Chester had no details submitted. No less than five counties had sightings of Eurasian Wigeon! A Canvasback in Columbia was noteworthy writes Gross. Unprecedented for Erie was the flock of 40 Black Scoter in February. A C. Goldeneye in Lackawanna was a good find, but finally Barrow’s Goldeneye was photographed and this will bring it off the Hypothetical List pending acceptance by the Pa. Ornithological Records Committee.

A Turkey Vulture was a surprise visitor in a snow-covered Butler driveway at 8 PM in January. Osprey set record early dates in Bucks, Erie, and Tioga. Please refer to the separate article on Bald Eagles for an up-to-date summary of activity in the state. A number of leucistic Red-tailed Hawk were reported plus a dark form found in Centre, and quite remarkable was the one adding suet to its diet in Clearfield. Rough-legged Hawk numbers in Erie were outstanding. Peregrine Falcon made their presence known in several areas away from the Delaware River, in Clarion, Columbia, Lancaster, Lycoming, Venango and York.

January records of Virginia Rail are very rare, so one in both Blair and Erie (dead) were indicative of the mild winter. Four counties had sightings of Sandhill Crane (Bucks, Clarion, Huntingdon, Venango). A Gr. Yellowlegs in Huntingdon in early March may not have survived the later snow storms. Pectoral Sandpiper and Dunlin were both noteworthy in Erie for early and late dates.

Gulls and more gulls. Berks became the hotspot with Jonathan Heller seeing nine species in one day and finding the first state record of a Mew Gull! See separate articles. He also had a Laughing Gull, always a good bird in January. For the first time in 17 years in Erie, no Little Gull was found. Lancaster recorded its first C. Black-headed Gull. Thayer’s Gull was restricted to Erie, Lesser Black-backed more widespread than ever, and both species of white-winged gulls found in several counties.

Could it be there was a humblingbird in Huntingdon during our warm February? There certainly was a Great Crested Flycatcher in Berks to start the year. To the best of our knowledge this represents the first true winter (January/February) record of this species in the entire Northeast. Pennsylvania, in our opinion, is fast developing into a good spot to look for flycatchers in winter. The Barn Swallow in Indiana in late February seemed doomed, note the Higbees, unless it had the foresight to go back south. Marich was able to locate a C. Raven nest in Somerset. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Cumberland was fighting the odds of survival, but the Brown Thrasher in Delaware may have fared better.

A Loggerhead Shrike was reported from Tioga and N. Shrike may have had their best showing across the state in many years. Eight species of warblers were found: Orange-crowned, Black-and-white, and C. Yellowthroat (Philadelphia), Yellow-rumped all over, Pine (Delaware, Huntingdon), Ovenbird (Huntingdon), Louisiana Waterthrush (Lawrence), and Yellow-breasted Chat (Delaware).

Dickissel were noted (Chester, Crawford), a first in the state for Ron Leberman. Was it the mild winter that kept numbers of Am. Tree Sparrow low once again, or their continued decline in the state? Early records of Chipping Sparrow (Greene, Northampton) were probably due to the mild winter. Chester hosted a Clay-colored Sparrow while Delaware had a rare March record of Lincoln’s Sparrow. Going out in one of the March snow storms, to look at the birds that were trying to cope with the adverse conditions, gave Keneppe her life Lapland Longspur.

The only Yellow-headed Blackbird report came from Lancaster. A N. Oriole was found in Montgomery and we received a late report from Smrekar who tells of one in Clearfield that was noted in late December until it fell prey to a Red-tailed Hawk. The days of many Purple Finch visiting your feeders in winter seem about over. Oh, for those days of yesteryear when House Finch were not the dominant species! Only White-winged Crossbill report was a brief sighting in Lehigh. The few C. Redpoll sightings were restricted to the northern tier (Elk, Erie, Warren), with the exception in York of one at a feeder.

All in all, a quarter with a lot of variety, many surprises and a few sad notes. We, like many of you, basking in the marvel of migration, did some breeding bird work for various counts or Special Areas Projects, and now look forward to what the rest of the year will bring. Reading this summary is only a preface to what lies ahead in the next pages. Enjoy and report.
COUNTY REPORTS - January through March 1992


ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Ted Floyd

Abbreviations: Allegheny R. (AR), Beechwood Farms (BF), Forest Hills Park (FH), Harmar Twp (HA), Harrison Hills Park (HP), Homewood Cemetery (HO), Natrona Heights (NH), North Park (NP), Ohio R. (OR), Ohio Twp (OT), Penn Hills (PH), Plum Boro (PL), Sowickley (SE), Sharpsburg (SH), South Park (SP), Whitehall Boro (WB).

Grebes included Pied-billed at AR and OR 1/22-3/12 (PB) and Horned at NP 2/19 (JH). Best of Great Blue Heron reports was 5 at NH 2/21 (PH). Anatriidae were widely scattered in small numbers as follows: 2 Wood Duck at NP 1/12-2/15 (MF,TF,JH,EK) and 4 at NP 3/28 (MF); 43 Am. Black Duck at OR 1/6 (PB) and smaller numbers elsewhere (v.o.); 2 Am. Black Duck X Mallard hybrids at OR 2/12 (PB); 1 N. Pintail at NP 2/6-3/28 (MF, JH); 1 Gadwall at NP 1/12 (MF,TF,JH,EK); 2 Am. Wigeon at OR 3/3 and 2 at NP 3/28 (MF); 1 Canvasback at OR 1/27-2/3 (PB); 1 Redhead at NP 2/6-2/9 (MF,JH); 5 Ring-necked Duck at AR 12/31 (PB) and 14 at NP 3/28 (MF); 1 scaup sp. at OR 1/22-2/12 (PB); 20-23 C. Goldeneye at OR 12/27-2/3 (PB); 7-8 Bufflehead at OR 1/28-2/12 (PB); and 2 Hooded Merganser at NP 2/6-2/15 (MF,TF,JH).

First Turkey Vulture were not noticed until 3/28 at several locations (MF,PH,JH). Sharp-shinned Hawk were reported from just 2 locations (WH). Cooper’s Hawk was again reported at encouraging many locations (v.o.), in accordance with RG’s observation that this species is becoming more common here. A Red-shouldered Hawk was at NH 1/4-3/4 (PH). Red-tailed Hawk nesting activity was underway by 3/3 (PB). Single Ring-necked Pheasant were reported from 2 locations (WH), and 4 Wild Turkey were at NP 3/28 (MF).

1 Am. Coot was at OR 2/12 (PB). First Killdeer at SE 3/3 (PB). Hundreds of Ring-billed Gull were reported 2/21-2/28 (v.o.), and 5 Herring Gull at NH 2/23 (PH). Red-bellied Woodpecker were common and Hairy Woodpecker uncommon (v.o.). N. Flicker wintered at many locations (v.o.), but only Pileated Woodpecker was 1 at SP (WH).

First E. Phoebe was at HH 3/28 (PH). A leucistic Blue Jay was at OT during Jan. (PB). A Black-capped Chickadee remained s. of its usual range at WB all quarter (WH). A Golden-crowned Kinglet at WB 3/27 the only report (WH), and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet was at NP 1/12 (MF, JH,EK). An E. Bluebird was at PL 2/12 (PB), and Am. Robin wintered in good numbers (v.o.). N. Mockingbird was listed at 4 locations. Notable among many Australians were scattered reports of considerable consumption of freshly accumulated snow by a flock of 21 at OT 2/8 (PB).

A Rufous-sided Towhee at OT 2/15 (PB) and an Am. Tree Sparrow at PE 1/1 (MF,RP) were the only reports. Fox Sparrow reports included 1 at NH 3/19-3/31 (PH); 1 at HA 3/14-3/31; 1 at BF 3/15 (MF); and 1 at HC 3/15-3/28 (MF,JS). White-throated Sparrow numbers were very low (v.o.). The best find was a ♂ "Oregon" Junco at NH 2/24 (PH). First dates: Red-winged Blackbird at PL 2/25 (RG); C. Grackle at NH 2/23 (PH), and Brown-headed Cowbird at WB 3/10 (WH). An orangvariant House Finch was at FH 2/8 (MF).


ARMSTRONG COUNTY

Margaret and Roger Higbee

Abbreviations: Elders Ridge strips (ER), Elderton (ED), Ford City (FC), Manorville (MV), Rosston (RT), Tub Mill Run (TMR).

All reports by ES at RT unless otherwise indicated. C. Loom was found 3/19,27. A Pied-billed Grebe was noted 1/12 but not found again until 2/22; max. was 4 3/31. Three Horned Grebe at KR 3/15 (M&RH) was the lone report. A Tundra Swan was seen 3/14, Canada Goose peaked at 240 2/9. First flock of Wood Duck, 4, arrived 2/21; numbers peaked at 16 by 3/21. Green-winged Teal max. included 12 at RT 3/14 and 5 at MV 3/31. Top Am. Black Duck count was 22 at MV 2/15 (MH, RH). N. Pintail was noted 1/12; high count 7 2/25. A Blue-winged Teal was observed 3/15, the lone report. Am. Wigeon max. were 19 at RT 3/19 and 13 at TMR 3/21. Four Redhead were a nice find at MV 2/16-17; 1 at RT 2/25. Ring-necked Duck, present from 2/21-3/19, peaked at 34 3/14. KR, still partially unfrozen 1/11, yielded 2 Ring-necked Duck. 8 Gr. Scaup were seen 3/6; 6 L. Scaup 3/18. A Surf Scoter was a nice find at MV 2/6 (DL). C. Goldeneye reports included 1 2/20-22 and 2 3/27. Bufflehead were noted in small numbers after 1/28. Merganser max. included 15 Hooded 2/21, 13 Common 2/22, and 11 Red-breasted 3/31. Up to 77 Turkey Vulture were counted perched in trees and soaring overhead at Wattersonville 3/19 (TS,MJO). The 2 Bald Eagle reported wintering last quarter continued into this period with last report 3/6 at Templeton (SH). 2 N. Harrier were at ER 2/2 (M&RH). A flock of 15 Wild Turkey was seen nr Pyrra 3/25 (RH). 4 Am. Coot were observed at KR 1/11 (M&RH) and at RT 3/27. Best Ring-billed Gull tally was 140 at Tarrtown 2/21 (NK,GW). A Herring Gull was at MV 2/25 (M&RH).

An E. Screech-Owl was observed perched in a low shrub in an adjacent field that 3 Short-eared Owl were working 2/8 at ER (M&RH). An ad. Red-headed Woodpecker was hammering on a telephone pole nr ED 1/11 (M&RH). The lone Yellow-bellied Sapsucker report was 1 at KTN 1/16 (NK). 2 N. Flicker were at ER 2/21 (M&RH). 1-2 Red-breasted Nuthatch visited feeders nr FC (Jv) and KTN (NK). Small flocks of E. Bluebird, reported from scattered locations, included 6 in Burrell Twp 2/21 (Jv). Up to 30 Pine Siskin were regular at a KTN feeder through 3/31, the only report for the county.


BEDFORD COUNTY

Janet Shafer

Abbreviations: Bedford (BED), Bedford Valley (BV), Beldon (BL), Black Valley (BVK), Buffalo Mills (BM), County Home Rd (CHR), Shaver Rd (SP).

Only one report from SSP as Gordon Hassel who birded that area has moved. Therefore there were almost no reports of waterfowl, Great Blue Heron was found 2/24 BL (CMc) and 3/28 BM (DH). Tundra Swan migrating over BVK (MJ) 3/2 and 23
were seen 3/20 at SSP (CMc). On 3/7 there were 3 Wood Duck present at BL (CMc). A kettle of 46 Turkey Vultures was seen 3/4 BV (JES). Black Vulture (8) were feeding at a deer pit on Willis Mt. 3/7 (TF). Sharp-shinned Hawk present BM (DH) 2/7 and a 3/14 BML and banding 3/14 BV (JES). Cooper’s reported 1/17 BM (DH) and 1/29 BL (CMc). The leucistic Red-tailed Hawk caught the attention of a neighbor in BV (BC) 2/27. As many as 3 Golden Eagle and several C. Raven reported from 1/1 until at least as late as 3/16 on Wills Mt. (TF) and Bald Eagle sighted nr Hyndman 3/7, (TF). N. Harrier seen 1/19, 2/4 & 3/1 BM (DH). Ruffed Grouse 1/15 BM (DH). Kildeer were first seen 2/28 BV (JES). Snowstorms the first two weeks of March sent many Killdeer and robins out foraging along the highways where plows had cleared. Am. Woodcock heard “peenting” 3/4 BV (JES), also seen 3/9–20 BM, BL & BKV (DH,CMc,MJ).

E. Screech-Owl found d.o.r. 1/2 BED (JES); reports of live ones 1/31 BL (CMc) & 2/22 BM (DH). Great Horned Owl d.o.r. s. of Bedford 1/27 (JES). Barred Owl seen 1/29 nr Chaneysville (JES), 1 on power line s. of Centerville 2/1 and 1 reported 3/21 at BL (CMc). Unconfirmed report of N. Hawk Owl 1/26 CHR (LH). All expected 7 species of woodpeckers were found in various locations.

E. Phoebe 3/29 at BM (DH). White-breasted Nuthatch 3/31 BM (DH); Carolina Wren 1/23 BM (DH) and present on feeder all quarter CHR (LH). N. Mockingbird 1/20 BKV (MJ) & 2/2 BL (CMc). Large numbers of Am. Robin reported from all areas beginning 2/18 BV (JES). E. Bluebird reported 3/5 from BL (CMc) and BM (DH).

The snow storms and extreme weather fluctuations the first 2 weeks of March took quite a toll of these birds. In a 24-hour period 3/12–13 there were 18 dead counted along 30-mile stretch. Some were so exhausted they could barely fly out of the way of cars. Ten robins took shelter in a wood pile on the front porch at CHR (LH) during one of the storms.

E. Meadowlark seen 2/27 BV (JES) and Red-winged Blackbird reported 1/1 BL (CMc), 2/22 BV (JES), 3/11 BKV (MJ) and 3/20 BM (DH). Purple Finch was in BL 1/25 (CMc) and BKV 3/11 (MJ). A banded 3/5 House Finch visited 2/17,18 BM (DH). Pine Siskin appeared 1/31+ BV (JES); also reported 3/10 in BM (DH).


BERKSY COUNTY

Abbreviations: Blue Marsh L. (BML), Hawk Mt. Sanctuary (HMS), L. Ontelaune (LO).

Open lakes and plenty of pig farm garbage near Strausstown attracted 9 spp. of gulls in Jan. The front-page bird was the Pa. record Common Gull picked out of hundreds of closely packed Ring-bills at LO 1/2 by Jonathan Heller and carefully identified and described by David Rich of Wales, who knew the sp. well in Europe. It was later seen by m.obs. at BML 1/3,5,13, and was reported again at Strausstown 2/22,23 (PC). Best estimates of numbers and dates of the other sp. are: 1 Laughing 1/3; 1 Bonaparte’s 1/15; 10,000 Ring-billed 1/5; 2000 Herring 1/3+; up to 7 Iceland 1/1–3/1; up to 6 Lo. Black-backed 1/1–5/1; 4 Glauces 1/1–3/10; and B+ Grocers (RK, DK,EK,HJS,MS). Gull numbers plummeted after hard freezes in mid-Jan., but plenty were left to hone local birders’ identification skills.

Black-crowned Night-Heron returned to LO 3/30 (KC,BP). The usual small numbers of Tundra Swan were seen 2/20–3/30, with a high 13 at LO 2/24 (KC). A Mute Swan was at LO 3/2 (KC). “Over 800” Snow Goose, a record number, were at LO 1/13 only (JG,DK,ride BM). A “blue” at LO 2/24 (KC) and 3 “white” and a “blue” 3/12 (KC,MS) were more normal numbers. A “Hutchins’ Canada Goose was at Straussstown 3/1 (RK,HJS).

Some peak duck counts, from LO unless otherwise noted, were: 100 N. Pintail 3/15 (BOC); 3 Blue-winged Teal 3/30 (KC); 4 N. Shoveler 2/23,30 (KC); 100 Gadwall 2/3 (KC); 73 Am. Wigeon 2/23 (KC); 12 Canavasback Grace Mine 3/9 (MW); 56 Ring-necked Shartlesville 3/1 (RK,HJS); 8 S. Scapu 3/30 (MS); 5 C. Goldeneye 1/12 (KC); 5 Bufflehead Big Spring Farm 1/25 (RK,HJS); 15 Hooded 3/15 (BOC), 720 Com. 2/25 (DK), 24 Red-breasted mergansers 3/30 (MS,MS), and 2 Ruddy 2/22 (MS).

MS notes that high counts of Red-breasted Merganser have fallen on 3/30 before, with 51 at LO 3/30/75 (MS) and 120 there 3/30/39 (E.Poole). At LO 3/27, MS saw a “hooed” Merganser “obviously paired” with a P. C. Goldeneye swimming and later bringing together, and notes that a hybrid of these spp. is illustrated in the 1978 ed. of Frank C. Bellrose, The Ducks, Geese & Swans of North America.

An Osprey nr Kutztown 2/20 (CE) is the earliest on record. Single ad. Bald Eagle were at LO 1/7 (EK), Port Clinton 1/14 (fide CV), HMS 2/22 (fide CV), and LO 3/30 (EB). A leucistic Red-tailed Hawk was on territory nr Krumsville 2/25 (MS). Rough-legged Hawk was absent from many areas, and only 2 were in prime territory in Marion Twp 1/8 (RK, HJS). An ad. Golden Eagle was nr Steinsville 1/24 (fide CV).

The reintroduced semi-Wild Turkey, bolstered by a good mast crop and having learned to glean fields and visit feeders, is doing very well in Pike & District twps, where 100+ could easily be found this winter (RK). Am. Coot counts of 20–50 were made at LO. First Am. Woodcock was in Pike Twp 2/22, and 8 at BML 3/20 (RB,RM,PN,BP).

There were 3 Long-eared Owl 1/26 at the Penn Twp roost, an almost impenetrable abandoned orchard overtopped with multilora rose in which the birds roost close to the ground (HJS). Only non-birders saw the Snowy Owl on the roof of the Berkshire Mall 1/3 (fide PC) and the bird in Laurel Run Park, Muhlenberg Twp, in late Jan. (fide CCD), but the descriptions were convincing. Earliest arrival date for E. Phoebe was 3/6 at Red Bridge (BP).

The Great Crested Flycatcher found 1/1 (ESB) on the Bernville CBC was seen again 1/5/6 (HK,ES,HJS). [The documentation confirms this as the first winter (January - February) record in the Northeastern United States. Although Ash-throated Flycatcher may have been the more expected species for this time of year, the merits of documentation cannot be emphasized enough. –eds.]

The only Red-breasted Nuthatch report was at a Powllow feeder 3/18, and a Pine Warbler visited that same feeder 3/28 (KL). Up to 3 Lapland Longspur in breeding plumage were nr Lyons 3/15,22 (MS,MS), and the only Snow Bunting reported was at BML 1/18 (HJS). A grand total of 4 Purple Finch was reported, and Pine Siskin at only 2 feeders—up to 40 all winter at HMS (fide CV) and 18 all winter at Powllow (KL).


PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS 29 VOLUME 6 NO.1
BLAIRC COUNTY
Stan Kotala

Abbreviations: Brush Mt. (BM), Canoe Creek SP (CC), L. Altoona (LA), Mill Run Res. (MR), Special Areas Project (SAP).

The quarter was relatively unremarkable until Mar., when several snowstorms moved through. Waterbird reports from CC unless otherwise noted. 1 C. Loon rested 3/21 & 5 on LA 3/27 (BK). 2 Horned and 6 Pied-billed grebes 3/21 (BK,GK) and a Red-necked Grebe there 3/23. During the night of 3/25 SK was awakened several times as large flocks of Tundra Swan flew over his home in Elberta; 12 were found at CC 3/3 (ASK) and 127 noted at LA 3/8 (BK). 11 Am. Wigeon and 3 Gadwall rested at CC 3/8 (BK). A♂ Canvasback 3/1–22 (m.ob.) was joined by 15 others 3/22 (GK), but not seen subsequently. 1–4 N. Pintail found 3/1–8 (ASK,BK), 7–18 Ls. Scaup found 3/8–29 (BK,ASK,DK). 18 Ring-necked Duck 3/8 (ASK) rose to a high of 155 during the 1st PSO SAP census there 3/29 (DK). A C. Goldeneye was on LA 2/29 (BK) and 3 at CC 3/2 (BK). BK saw an Oldsquaw at CC 3/27. 14 Bufflehead joined large rafts of other diving ducks 3/21 (SK) along with 4 Ruddy Duck (BK). 2–20 Hooded Merganser found 3/5–23 (ASK,GK). High for Red-breasted Merganser was 104 at LA 3/8; 1 at CC 3/3 with 6 C. Merganser (ASK).

DK observed 2 sub-adult Bald Eagle in a thermal at CC 3/29. They engaged in mock combat, spiraled, and moved eastward and out of sight. On the same date, an imm. Golden Eagle circled overhead CC (DK). 2 Osprey (m.ob.), a ♀ Harrier, and a Red-shouldered Hawk were at CC 3/29 (MP). A Cooper’s Hawk landed on an old post in a grape tangle below MB’s house 1/15. This accipiter flew from post to post to fallen log, searching for small birds. It jumped to the ground and succeeded in flushing several juncos but did not attempt to catch any and eventually flew off empty-taled. Ruffed Grouse were drumming several times on BM 1/8 (MB). An imm. Virginia Rail was seen for several minutes among cattails and watercress during the SAP 1/19. 5 Am. Woodcock were at CC 3/29 (DK,SK) and 1 found on BM 3/31 (MB).

N. Flirker returned in force in late Feb. On 2/22 MB observed a ♀ Piedleated Woodpecker in her yard as it ate Staghorn Sumac berries. The ♀ called her from a distance several times, but the ♀ kept ducking her head and not answering, all the while continuing to eat as the shrub swayed from her weight. Finally, just as she took off she did answer. According to Terres, these berries are a favorite winter food for Piedleateds. First E. Phoebe was seen on Lower Trail(GK); MB noted 1 on BM 3/7, fully a week ahead of the earliest record there. Earliest Tree Swallow were at CC 3/29, when 7 were seen. E. Bluebird numbers at CC were in the 50s all quarter. A Hermit Thrush was at MR 1/4. Wetlands next to a small private pond nr CC harbored 4 Am. Pipit 3/21 (BK,GK). First Pine Warbler was at CC 3/29 (GK). Red-winged Blackbird returned to CC 2/23. A ♀ Rufous-sided Towhee was in ASK’s yard 1/11–13. Song Sparrow (m.ob.) and another (BM) were found at Chipping to CC 3/29. A Savannah Sparrow was in the fields at CC 3/10 (GK). Fox Sparrow were relatively common, a group staying on BM for 2+ weeks after a 3/11 snowstorm, and 3–4 at Tipton Wetlands 3/11–23 (GK). Pine Siskin were uncommon, but 3 were at MB’s yard 1/28.

OBSEVERS: Marcia Bonta, Melissa Focht, Bill King, Gary Koch, Alice & Stan Kotala, RD 3 Box 866, Altoona 16601 (814-946-8840), Dave Kyler, Dan Sinal, Terry Wentz.

BUCKS COUNTY
Ron French

Abbreviations: Dublin (DU), Falls Tsp landfill (FT), New Hope (NH), Nichamixon SP (NSP), Peace Valley Park (PVP), Revere (RV), Silver Lake Nature Ctr (SL), Tyler SP (TSP), Van Sciver L. (VL).

Only C. Loon was at NSP 3/21 (SF). High count of Pied-billed Grebe was 5 at NSP 3/13 (B&NM). A Horned Grebe was at PVP 2/22 and 1 leucistic bird (totally white head/neck) at NSP 3/31 (SF). 8 Great Cormorant at Salem Harbour 3/1 (SF,DF) and Double-crested common on the Delaware R. after then. Undoubtedly, the most exciting find was a Great Blue Heron nest (more next issue). 100+ Tundra Swan flew over in late Feb (APG). Best Snow Goose tally was 70+ over NSP 3/30 (SF). An ad. Gr. White-fronted Goose (Greenland race) was at PVP 2/10–13 (KC,SK,DF); another at VL 1/17 (CD). AM saw a Brant feeding with Canada Goose at PVP 1/25 and 2 at VL 1/26 (CD). First Wood Duck at NSP 2/14 (SF), with 18 at SL 3/26 (BoM). The 2 Eur. race Green-winged Teal continued at PVP all quarter (AM et al.). High count of N. Pintail at NSP was 14 3/13 (SF), First Blue-winged Teal at PVP 3/21 (AM). A. Shoveler at NSP 3/10 and 2 Gadwall at PVP 1/1 (SF). Am. Wigeon noted at 4 locations (v.o.). 1 Canvasback at PVP 2/24 (TE). Ring-necked Duck was widely reported, 81 the high count at L. Warren 3/6 (SF). 13 Ls. Scaup at PVP 3/10, 2 Oldsquaw at NSP 3/25, and 12 Black Scoter at PVP 3/26 (SP). High for C. Goldeneye was 45 on the river nr NH (BH). Bufflehead at NSP, NV, PVP (SF, BH,RF et al.). Pairs of Hooded Merganser were reported by many, and a flock of 75–80 at VL most of the period (CD). High for C. Merganser was 450 at VL (CD). 2–5 Red-breasted Merganser at NSP 3/14–26 (BNM,SP), 75 Ruddy Duck at FT 1/31 (CD).

Black Vulture were found after 2/3 at several locations. First Osprey was at NSP 3/24 (SF). An imm. Bald Eagle 1/1 (BNM) started their year off well. There were numerous records of both ad. and imm. all quarter, including 1 imm. at PVP with a trap caught on its leg seen 1/19 (RH) and 1/25 (AM). In all, at least 5 different birds were noted in the Co. N. Harrier was found at RV 1/5 (SF) and TSP in Mar. (JH). Cooper’s Hawk were frequently reported 1/18+ (v.o.). Red-shouldered Hawk were found at Quakertown 1/13 and PVP 2/29 & 3/8 (DF,SP,AD). The “shimmering” albino Red-tailed Hawk was in Upper Bucks all quarter and Rough-legged at NSP 1/23 (SF). The pair of Peregrine Falcon reported previously at the Pa. Tpk Bridge are still being seen there and a 3rd bird visits the FT landfill, apparently flying in from Trenton, N.J.

Ring-necked Pheasant continue only occasional. The Wild Turkey flock has increased from 19 to 36 indiv. (HH,JC). 12 Am. Coot were at NSP (SF). A Sandhill Crane first found at SL 2/1 (JH) was observed at various places in Lower Bucks (Penn Manor, Levittown L.) for 2–3 weeks (CD,BoM). SF found C. Snipe at NPS 3/30 and Am. Woodcock were plentiful by quarter’s end (RF et al.). An imm. C. Black-headed Gull was at VL 1/25 and an ad. there 2/15 (no details for either -eds.) (CD). Bonaparte’s Gull were in FT 1/4 (CD). 1000+ Ring-billed Gull at NSP 3/12. An Iceland and 10 Ls. Black-backed gulls at FT 3/25 (CD). High for Great Black-backed Gull was 30 at NSP 2/29 (AM). SF & DF found a Short-eared Owl at NPS 1/27 (SF) and another at PVP 3/18 (AV). A very cooperative N. Saw-whet Owl, seen and photographed by many, was first seen 1/22 (RF et al.) and remained through the end of Feb.

An ad. Red-headed Woodpecker was at Plumsteadville 2/29 (SF,RF et al.) and another (BM) was found on Lake Jackson. A pair of Piedleated Woodpecker was at RV 3/8 (SF). Earliest E. Phoebe was at NH 2/11 (BH). 30+ Horned Lark at DU 3/8 (SF). Earliest Tree Swallow was 3/11 when ±80 were at NH; 2 N. Rough-winged and a Barn swallow at NH 3/28 (BH). Fish Crow from 1/29+ (v.o.), 2 Brown Creeper at TSP 2/3 (JH) and a Winter Wren at RV 1/21 (SF). A Golden-crowned Kinglet at PVP 3/18 (JH) and a Ruby-crowned at PVP 3/18 (SF). A Hermit Thrush overwintered in Warwick Twp (SC) and other at PVP 1/25 (RF et al.). The mild winter produced many Am. Robin (m.ob.). Gray Catbird was at RV 1/1 (SF), at NH 1/12 (BH), at NSP 3/14 (BNM), & at least 2 at PVP all Feb. (RF). Am. Pipit at FT all Jan. (CD). A single bird at NSP 3/12 (SF).
A Rufous-sided Towhee at RV 1/20 (SF); another at TSP 2/11 (JH). 2 Savannah Sparrow at NH 1/18 (BH). 2 Fox Sparrow at NSP 1/1 (BNM) and 7 Snow Bunting (SF). 6 E. Meadowlark at DU 2/24 (SF) and 1 at E. Rockhill Twp 3/30 (HRCJ). Single Rusty Blackbird reported by several observers: at NH 3/7 (BH); at RV 3/19 (SF); at TSP 3/31 (JH). 7 Purple Finch at NSP 1/1 (BNM) and single birds at PVP 2/1,8 (AM).

EXOTIC. 7 Ruddy Shelduck on the Delaware R. at NH 2/9; 2 birds were still present 3/29 (BH).


BUTLER COUNTY
Paul Hess

Abbreviations: Glades SGL (GSG), L. Arthur (LA), Lancaster Twp (LT), Moraine SP (MSP), Slippery Rock Twp (SRT).

Snow was the season’s remarkable feature, with GW reporting 59” overall. March’s 27” may help explain some delayed arrivals—phoebe over a week late, only 1 towhee, and no Chipping Sparrow by 3/31. 4 at LA 3/21–22 (GW); just a few were seen elsewhere. A Fox Sparrow appeared 3/14 (GSB,RC) and 2 seen 3/22–29 (GW), all at SRT. White-throated Sparrow were scarce (v.o) and a White-headed Sparrow at NSP 3/15 (MG,BS,HB) was early. First Red-winged Blackbird wasn’t listed until 3/14 at SRT, but a Rusty Blackbird appeared there 2/27 (GSB,RC). First C. Grackle date was 3/14 at SRT, where a wintering Brown-headed Cowbird was first noted 1/25 (GW). 3 Purple Finch 3/26 (GSB,RC) were the only report, as were a Pine Siskin 1/21 (GW) and 2 on 3/15 (GSB,RC), all at SRT.


CARBON COUNTY
Bernie Morris

At least 1 Red-headed Woodpecker wintered near Linden Hall (RH), while another indiv. was nr CL 3/20 (KJJ). E. Phoebe apparently returned 3/8 with a report of 1 nr Fairbrook (JP). A Tree Swallow had returned to BESP 3/25 (MW). The single Fish Crow seen/heard 1/1 nr Spring Cr. was a rare winter record (RH). 6 Am. Pipits were at CL 3/21 (TF,MWi), and 1 at Toftrees 3/29 (TF). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was at the Ag Progress Days area at Rock Springs 3/20 (AF). A N. Shrike was in SB 1/21 (RH). Apparently the same bird was seen a mile away 1/22 (AF), while another indiv. was at CL 1/29 (BT). A small group of wintering Yellow-rumped Warbler was at Millbrook Swamp on various dates through the end of the quarter.

First spring reports of Rufous-sided Towhee included indivs. in SB 3/5 (TF,MWi) and 3/7 at Millbrook Swamp (TF,KS). Many Fox Sparrow appeared at feeders following the snow storm 3/11, with many remaining through Mar. A small flock of 5–10 Snow Bunting was along Nixon Rd. 1/13 (KJJ), 1/19 (HH,m.ob.), and 2/13 (GG). 3 E. Meadowlark were at the Univ. Park Airport 1/25 (JP). Red-winged Blackbird and C. Grackle began appearing in the State College area 2/19, about a week later than in 1991. Rusty Blackbird reports included 19 at Toftrees 3/11 (TF) and 1 at CL 3/21 (TF,MWi).

OBSERVERS: Dorothy & Blanche Bordner, Ted Floyd, Alice Fuller, Greg Grove, Randy Harrison, Harry Henderson, P. Hock, Jeff Hoover, Katherine & Jennings Jones, Tim Kimmel, Robert Merideth, Becky & John Pfeilninski, 761 Beaver Branch Rd, Pennsylvania Furnace 16865 (814-238-6541).

### CHESTER COUNTY

Jerry Pasquarella

**Abbreviations:** Honey Brook (HB), Kurtz’ Fish Farm (KFF), Marsh Creek SP (MC), Octorora Res. (OR), Struble L. (SL).

Only report of C. Loon was 2 at MC 3/26. Pied-billed Grebe were in good numbers at MC, with as many as 10 there 1/10. Single Horned Grebe at MC 1/15 and at SL 3/2. Great Blue Heron in good numbers due to the mild winter. On 1/7 as many as 160 Tundra Swan were at MC. On 3/30 at MC a flock of ±250 Snow Goose arrived. In the flock was a single Ross’ Goose (LL). For a few days before a similar flock of Snow Goose with a Ross’ Goose was at Muddy Run in Lancaster. They were last seen flying E so this was quite possibly the same bird. First Wood Duck observation was of 8 birds at KFF 2/3. On 3/30 there were 5 N. Shoveler at SL. A total of 49 Am. Wigeon were at the last two weeks of Mar. A 3 Eurasian Wigeon was at MC 2/21-22 (LL). 1 Canvasback was at MC from 3/7–2/10. The 4 Redhead remained at MC until 1/13 and were still present 2/1. Numbers of Ring-necked Duck continued to increase up until the end of the quarter with a flock of 234 at MC 3/30. At least 23 Gr. Scaup were there as well 3/19. A C. Goldeneye was at SL 1/10. Bufflehead were in good numbers at many locations. An “earlyish” group of 4 Red-breasted Merganser was at SL 2/22.

A pair of Bald Eagle is nesting on the Lancaster side of the Octoraro, but seen in both counties. Other reports were of an imm. at MC 1/5 and an ad. over Downingtown 2/21. A Merlin was at OR 1/11. A light-phase Rough-legged Hawk was seen 3/20 nr Rt. 10 & 30. The 6 N. Bobwhite were still at MC 1/3. LL and GS went on a C. Snipe count in HB twp 3/23 and tallied a total of 54 birds with at least 20 present at the usual spot along “Snipe Creek.” At least 5 Am. Woodcock were displaying nr Romansville 3/9–14 and 2 displaying in E. Goshen twp. 3/9.

An ad. Ls. Black-backed Gull was at OR from 3/3–5. A real good find was 1 Glaucous Gull on the Chester side of OR 2/23 for one day only (LL). 2 N. Saw-whet Owl were at Hibernia Park in the same spot as years past during most of Feb. Another was in a yard nr Malvern in late Mar. At least 4 Long-eared and 8 Short-eared owls were seen until mid-Feb. in the evergreens near the parking lot at SL.

An imm. Red-headed Woodpecker has been seen sporadically nr the parking lot at SL and the pair are still along Pleasant View Rd nr HB. E. Phoebe was seen occasionally throughout the early part of the season, no doubt assisted by the relatively mild winter. Red-breasted Nuthatch was a tough find this winter, only 1 report of an indiv. which remained all quarter nr West Chester. Am. Robin wintered over in very large numbers and a few Gray Catbird were also at various locations. Am. Pipit were first reported nr HB 2/5 and 13 were at MC 3/18. Dickcissel was seen and photographed at a feeder in Kennett 2/16. An excellent bird was the Clay-colored Sparrow seen for only 3/21 at a feeder nr Devon (PS). Absolutely NO winter finches reported!

**OBSERVERS:** Barry Blust, Tony Fernandes, John Ginaven, Larry Lewis, Jerry Pasquarella, 2209 Cranberry Ln, Coatesville 19320, Phillips B. Street, Orier Saunders, Era VanDenburg.

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### CLARION COUNTY

Margaret Buckwalter

**Abbreviations:** Clarion area (CA), Curlsville (CV), Kahle L. (KL), Upper (UP), Shippenville (SV).

Horned Grebe found 3/15+ at KL and other large ponds in the area (WF). Up to 20 Tundra Swan were at KL 3/15, 19, 24 (WF, CR). First Wood Duck noted arrived at Beaver Cr. 3/29. KL was the magnet for various diving and puddle ducks as soon as the ice was partly off: 2 Am. Wigeon 3/15; 50+ Ring-necked Duck 3/18+; scaup, probably Lesser, 3/15+; 3 pairs Oldsquaw 3/30+; 8 Hooded Merganser 3/26+; and 30 Red-breasted Merganser 3/30+.

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**Sandhill Cranes, Limestone, 3/17/92. Photo by Margaret Buckwalter.**

A pair of Sandhill Crane grazing in snow-covered corn stubble startled Jack Williams 3/16 as he was riding between Frogtown and Limestone on Rt. 66. The cranes were subsequently seen and verified in the same locality 3/16, 17 by several birders, the compiler included. Some snow-drifted tracks led to the conclusion the birds had also been there 3/15. They weren’t seen there after 3/17, but on 3/19 WF saw a pair flying overhead at KL. On 3/20, the author found them grazing in another corn stubble field at KL. We have not been able to verify if this were a different pair or not. One of each pair observed was definitely smaller than the other and at KL the smaller crane was much lighter than the other, but the photographs (MB) were taken under such different lighting conditions that we still don’t know if 2 or 4 cranes visited us.

First Turkey Vulture noted 2/23. The fate of the Killdeer that came back during the warm spell in Feb/Mar is doubtful. 3 dead Killdeer in emaciated condition were turned into the bird
banders at Clarion Univ. of Pa. in Mar. A N. Goshawk was seen in Tylerseurs 1/23 (LC). A Red-tailed Hawk being chased by 2 Red-shouldered Hawk was seen 3/4 at LP (LC). A Rough-legged Hawk was observed 2/27 at LP (LC), and another at KL 3/15 (WF,CR). A lucky ornithology class of 17 students led by Professor Jack Williams found a Peregrine Falcon perched on a fence post in a field n. of KL 3/26. The falcon was verified the same day in a nearby tree by WF and CR.

1 C. Snipe showed up at KL 3/15 (WF,CR). 1 Herring Gull was at KL 3/30 (WF,CR). A couple of feeder watchers at SV were lucky enough to see a Great Horned Owl swoop in and catch a mouse (vole?) 1/12 (S&LV). Sightings of Short-eared Owl were sporadic: 2 at CV 2/6; 1 at the “Triangle” s. of Beaver Cr. (CR); and 2 at KL 3/19 (W&AF).

50–60 Horned Lark were prospecting in newly manured fields at KL 2/15 (WF,CR). A Gray Catbird was at a feeder all quarter in CA (EM). Fox Sparrow showed up in Mar.: 3/11 (EH), 3/12 (WF,CR), 3/20 (RK). Many E. Meadowlark that came during the warm spell before 3/15 may have met the same fate as the Killdeer because they were scarce later. 1 Rusty Blackbird was reported from Summerville 3/19 (J&FW). 5–50 Pine Siskin appeared at SV at my feeder 1/17+. The only Evening Grosbeak flock, ±12, stayed at a feeder nr LP all quarter (LC).

OBSERVERS: Margaret Buckwalter, RR 2 Box 26, Shippenville 16254 (614-782-3935), Lois Callahan, Walter & Annabelle Fye, Edith Hays, Reba Klingler, Eleanor Moore, Carl & Ruth Rowe, Sherry & Lorna Vowinckel, Jack & Fran Williams.

CLEARFIELD COUNTY

Jocelynn L. Smerek

Abbreviations: Brockway (BR), Dubois (DU), Troutville (TV).

Tundra Swan and Snow Geese were sighted at Sabula L. in mid-March. Other waterfowl seen in Mar. were Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Ls. Scapu at the Tannery Dam in DU and Mallards, Ring-necked Ducks, Bufflehead, and Hooded and Red-breasted mergansers at Kyle L.

A Sharp-shinned Hawk bit the dust as it slammed into Betty Cessna’s window in Camp Mt. Run while in pursuit of a Purple Finch in Jan. Betty, a local rehabilitator, was not able to save either of the birds! Cooper’s Hawk were seen frequently in DU and TV, as well as the Beechwoods area. Red-tailed Hawk were also common in the DU area, including the one which grabbed a chunk of suet from a feeder in Home Camp and flew away with it, net bag and all, in the latter part of Jan. A Red-shouldered was observed in DU and N. Harrier were seen on Boine Mt. and frequently nr TV. Am. Kestrel were not as prevalent a bird as usual for this time of year. A Ruffed Grouse and 2 Wild Turkeys came to feeders in JA in Chestnut Grove. A few Ring-necked Pheasants were observed to have survived the winter in this northern locale at least until the end of Feb. First Killdeer was noted in mid-Feb. Am. Woodcock were seen in early Mar. nr Sykesville and Ring-billed Gull were in DU in mid-Feb.

Barred Owl were observed nesting at Treasure L. in Feb. A N. Saw-whet Owl was seen in Chestnut Grove in Feb. Belted Kingfisher stayed all quarter on Sandy Lick Cr. in DU & 1 in Penfield 1/31 (Bk&PH, BS,RC). A few N. Flicker were observed in the area through the winter. Horned Lark in a flock of 150 were seen on a strip mine nr DU in Feb. Carolina Wren found in DU and BR on several occasions in Jan/Feb. Am. Robin and E. Bluebird were common. A flock of 150 robins was in Camp Mt. Run in Jan. Cedar Waxwing were in several locations including DU and BR in Jan/Feb.

Am. Tree Sparrow were common and a Chipping Sparrow was seen in late Feb. in Luthersburg. White-throated Sparrow were seen in Feb. and Fox Sparrow came to feeders in TV. Luthersburg & Beechwoods during the record-breaking snowfall in mid-March. At least 1 hardy Song Sparrow survived the entire winter here at a feeder in TV. First E. Meadowlark found 3/13 nr Sykesville. 50 Red-winged Blackbird noted in a flock near DU at the end of Feb. C. Grackle were seen in the latter part of Feb.

Evening Grosbeak were scarce. A few were seen in mid-Feb in DU and again in Brockport in Mar. Pine Siskin were also scarce, with sightings of a dozen in BR in Jan., a handful in DU in Feb. and 5 in TV in mid-Mar.


Jocelynn writes that classwork for her Ph.D. is finally over and she only has her dissertation to go. We can look forward to receiving more reports from Clearfield in the future. Congratulations, Jocelynn. –eds.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Douglas A. Gross

Abbreviations: Briar Creek L. (BCL), Rohrsburg (RB).

Due to mild weather, the waterfowl migration started early and got stalled during a mid-March freeze-up. Am. Black Duck seemed less common this quarter (DG). Am. Wigeon was common at BCL 3/4 1/14 and 50–315 (KH). A Canvasback was noted on a small lake nr Johnstown 3/23 (KH). 16 Ring-necked Duck were at BCL 3/3, 20 3/8, and 60 3/15 (KH). A Peregrine Falcon was seen flying in Briar Creek Twp 2/19 (DG), and in Briar Cr. Borough 3/28 (KH), perhaps the same bird.

Red-bellied Woodpecker was reported at BCL 2/22 (KH), and nr Johnstown 3/23 (SK). E. Phoebe was nr Mainville 3/12 (DG), and probably near the river earlier (see Montour, DG). Horned Lark was not reported as commonly as usual so 8 at BCL 2/22 was a good sighting (KH). Fish Crow arrived in Berwick 2/17 (ND). E. Bluebird and Am. Robin were common all winter with flocks of 50+ regularly seen nr Millville & RB in Jan and Feb. Robins staged a particularly large migration in late Feb. & early Mar., but got caught in killer snow, 3/19, when March turned into a lion. Carolina Wren continued successes in upland habitats (DG,RS). At least 2 Yellow-rumped Warbler stayed on DG’s property nr RB through winter. Many N. Cardinal stayed in w. Berwick with 12 regular at KH’s feeder. Rufous-sided Towhee returned by 3/21 at both Mainville (JF) and RB (DG). Am. Tree Sparrow was scarce. Fox Sparrow was especially common in n. Columbia in Mar. (DG,RS). E. Meadowlark was at BCL (4) as early as 2/22 (KH).

OBSERVERS: Nancy Dennis, Douglas A. Gross, Susquehanna SES Environmental Laboratory, RR 1, Berwick 18603, Karen & Steve Hiller, Scott Killam, Robert Sagar, North Branch Bird Club.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Ronald F. Leberman

Abbreviations: Conneaut L./Marsh (CM), Erie NWR (ENWR), Meadville (MV), Pymatuning Sp [including the Causeway, Fish Hatchery, Goose Management Area GMA], Spillway, Norristown, Saegertown, Tamarack L., Woodcock L. All observations by compiler unless otherwise noted.

A C. Loon at PSP 3/21. 1-2 Pied-billed Grebe at PSP most trips. High count of Horned Grebe was 9 at CM 3/29; 2 Eared Grebe in basic plumage at PS 3/14 were well studied at 500’ with a 30X scope. Several Horned Grebe were nearby and the bill difference was noted. Max. Tundra Swan count was 130 at WL 3/15. 1 Snow Goose at PSP 2/7 (TM) and 1 2/15 (RFL).

A pair of Wood Duck on a small farm pond e. of MV 2/23 and 28 at CM 3/21. 5 Canvasback at CM 3/21 and 26 at PS 3/28, with smaller groups noted thereafter. N. Pintail first noted at WL 2/23 with a total of 14; numbers built up to 90 in CM by 3/28. 2 Blue-winged Teal at CM 3/21 were the first noted. 2 N. Shovelers were nr CL at Smith’s Marsh 3/28 and 10 at CM 3/29. 1 Gadwall was at PS 2/17 and 6 at CL 3/28 was the high.
On 3/21 I had stopped to look at the CM Bald Eagle nest along Vernon Rd, by the old duck farm, and moved ahead to a brushy area with lots of grape tangle a short distance west. I stopped and began to push a small sparrow-like bird came close to the car and at the same time a Carolina Wren. After looking at the wren I put my binoculars on the sparrow, which to my amazement was extremely yellow on the head and chest area and had rufous wing patches. I also had it in my 30X scope before it took off and I could not get it to respond again. I had seen my first Dickcissel in Pa., a nice female. It was about the 3rd Co. record (the last 25 or 30 years). It would not respond to my calls the following week, so I had seen my first Dickcissel in Pa., a nice female. It was about the 3rd Co. record (the last 25 or 30 years).

On 3/15 I had a view of a Carolina Wren by the house and at 3/17 on the edge of the woods while birding. A Carolina Wren came close to the car and at the same time a Carolina Wren. After looking at the wren I put my binoculars on the sparrow, which to my amazement was extremely yellow on the head and chest area and had rufous wing patches. I also had it in my 30X scope before it took off and I could not get it to respond again. I had seen my first Dickcissel in Pa., a nice female. It was about the 3rd Co. record (the last 25 or 30 years).

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DELAWARE COUNTY

Al Guarente

Abbreviations: Crum Creek Res. (CCR), Springton Res. (SR), Tyler Arboretum (TA), John Heinz NWR at Tinicum (TN), Ridley Creek SP (RCSLP).

C. Loon were present all season at SR with as many as 5 seen one day. Pied-billed and Horned grebes (AG, NP) were also there on various days. Double-crested Cormorant (NP) returned to the area 3/28 when 28 birds were along Darby Cr. 6 Snow Geese (NP) were at SR 1/1. Wood Duck appeared to have overwintered since reports came in for all three months. An unusual find at TA were 10 N. Pintail (JG) 2/28. Ring-necked Duck (NP) grew in numbers from 4–100+ 1/1–3/8 (AG) at SR. Also at SR 1/1 were 2 Gr. Scaup, 2 C. Goldeneye, 5 Ruddy Duck and 50 C. Merganser. 5 Hooded Merganser (AG) were at CCR 3/8 and 14 there 3/31 (SC, HMC, TR). 2 Red-breasted Merganser (EK) were at SR 3/12. Along the Delaware R. 3/31 18 Red-breasted Mergansers (AG) appeared for two days.

Black Vulture (JG) were at TA 3/12. At TA 3/22 was a sub-ad. Bald Eagle (DM). A Cooper’s Hawk (FH) was at RCSP 2/15 and 1 also present the whole season at Crozer Hospital campus in Upland (NP). A N. Goshawk (EK) was reported from Boothwyn 2/27. A nice find 1/5 was a Golden Eagle (FH) found flying over RCSP. On 2/8 a Merlin (JCM) was found at TN. Apparently there is still hope in the Co. for the N. Bobwhite as 1 was calling in Boothwyn 2/23 (EK).

4 Gr. Yellowlegs (JCM) were at TN 3/28, 100+ C. Snipe (JCM) were along the Darby Cr. 3/27. This is a great area for finding large flocks of these birds; also 2 snipe at CCR 3/15 (JCM). Another good area for C. Merganser (AG) remained for the winter as 2 were at TA 3/28,30. M.ob. noted the following on 3/25 (LC). 2 tall Am. Holly tree in (LS) yard!

3/29 at the public docks at the foot of State St. in Erie. A flock of 100+ Ring-billed Gull (AG, NP) were in RW late Feb., while other flocks were in other RW areas until 3/8 (DW). C. Raven seen: 1/10 SGL 25; 12/28 Haney Hill; 1/27 Taft Rd near carrion; 3/19 BT (LC); 3/8 SGL 25, a pair nesting on cliff (PD); and a pair at ON 3/29 (DW). 4 Tufted Titmouse continued at a feeder (DS) all quarter, while 1 was at Taft Rd 1/3 and 2 at Johnstown 1/30 (LC). 1 Red-breasted Nuthatch in BT 3/6 (LC). Only 2 Carolina Wren: 1/1 AND 3/4 in RW (DW). E. Bluebird back 3/3 (DS). 1 N. Mockingbird at a farm in Johnstown (LC). At the end of Feb. a flock of Cedar Waxwing cleaned up all the berries on the 12’ tall Am. Holly tree in (LS) yard!


On 12 March 1992 John Ginaven observed 3 indv. Pine Warbler (2 v, 1 t) at the Tyler Arboretum. ‘Each Pine Warbler was associating separately with its own pair of E. Bluebirds. When the bluebirds flew to a different tree, ‘their’ Pine Warbler followed them, fed on the ground under the tree, and followed them to the next tree. I observed this behavior for at least fifteen minutes with each warbler on three separate locations. During the last five years I have found at least one Pine Warbler wintering at the arboretum. Invariably, I found it associating with a flock of bluebirds. In The Birder’s Handbook, Ehrlich et al. mention that Pine Warblers associate with bluebirds. Has anyone else observed this one warbler per pair of bluebirds behavior?’

Chipping Sparrow (JG) arrived on schedule at TA 3/24, but apparently some Chippers (AG) remained for the winter as 2 were at TA 1/2 and 6 there 1/25. An excellent sighting was of a Lincoln’s Sparrow (JF) at RCSP 3/15. Always a delight to see 100+ Snow Bunting (JCM) at the Philadelphia Airport 1/15.

ERIE COUNTY

Linda Christenson

Abbreviations: Benzingier Twp (BT), Owl’s Nest (ON), Ridgway (RW).

After a mild winter, we had a heavy 17” snowfall 3/11, and other snowstorms in the following weeks. We worked to keep our feeders open and snow-free. Reports were received of dead robins. One hung around a BT feeder and drank water many times a day. The orange halves that were put out were gobbled up by starlings. DW noted very aggressive behavior by the robins as they would find an open patch in the snow and drive off any other bird that would try to use it. He heard reports of Killdeer getting hit by cars on the roads because of not having open areas in which to feed. DS mentioned the birds were just starting to come back before the heavy snow and he also saw 1 E. Bluebird since 3/11 and no Am. Woodcock since then. A grove of sumac by DS’s office was hard hit by robins during the snows. He mentions that “Sumac must be important as an early spring food for robins and bluebirds.”


Am. Woodcock returned 3/9 (DS). A flock of 100+ Ring-billed Gull (AG, NP) were in RW late Feb., while other flocks were in other RW areas until 3/8 (DW). C. Raven seen: 1/10 SGL 25; 12/28 Haney Hill; 1/27 Taft Rd near carrion; 3/19 BT (LC); 3/8 SGL 25, a pair nesting on cliff (PD); and a pair at ON 3/29 (DW).

4 Tufted Titmouse continued at a feeder (DS) all quarter, while 1 was at Taft Rd 1/3 and 2 at Johnsonburg 1/30 (LC). 1 Red-breasted Nuthatch in BT 3/6 (LC). Only 2 Carolina Wren: 1/1 AND 3/4 in RW (DW). E. Bluebird back 3/3 (DS). 1 N. Mockingbird at a farm in Johnstown (LC). At the end of Feb. a flock of Cedar Waxwing cleaned up all the berries on the 12’ tall Am. Holly tree in (LS) yard!


OBERVERS: Linda Christenson, 602 Sunset Rd, St. Marys 15857 (814-781-3156), Paul Dornisch, Randy Flament, Dave Sorg, Len Sorg, Dave Wolfe.
several species of diving ducks including scoters were also eating them.

A few C. Redpoll appeared this winter and some Pine Siskin made a showing, but where were the Evening Grosbeak?

It has been several years since this species has staged an invasion in NW Pa. All sightings from PI unless otherwise noted.

A] 1/22 (JHS,JGS). An Eared Grebe 1/1 (same bird from 12/91; JM). Up to 5 Double-crested Cormorant 1/20 (EK,JM). 1 Snow blue Goose 2/29, 3/1 (BSc,JM), 2 Wood Duck 2/19 (DS); 1–2 Green-winged Teal 1/7-15 (JHS). A × Eur. Wigeon 3/29+ (†,ph JM,JM) was the 12th Co. record. Quite bizarre and certainly unprecedented for late winter in Erie was the flock of 40 Black Scoter flying past Gull Pt. 2/17 (TF). Up to 7 White-winged Scoter were present all quarter (JM). Less bizarre was the flock of 23 accompanying the 40 Black Scoter 2/17 (TF). These two flocks of scoter may have been wintering N of here and were forced S by ice, since this date is far too early to expect northerly migrants.

A pair of Barrow’s Goldeneye noted 2/20–3/17 (f,ph JM, et al.). Another × seen with the pair 2/26 (JM). This represents about the 8th Co. and about the 15th state sight records, but the 1st state record documented by photographs.

A Turkey Vulture was at FV 2/28. The Osprey at RWR 2/9 was the earliest spring record by 12 days (JHS,JGS). Bald Eagle were seen in Feb. and Mar. at PI, FV, West L., and Northeast (m.ob.). Up to 2 N. Goshawk were in Summit Twp 1/–9 (JHS). A leucistic Red-tailed Hawk was seen in Jan. in Summit Twp (REG,JHS). Several reports of Rough-legged Hawk throughout the Co., with largest concentrations [16 on 2/22 (EK) & 17 on 3/18 (DS)] in Franklin Twp. These numbers are unprecedented for the Co. Merlin reports include 1 1/10 & 2/17; 2 at RWR 3/9; & 1 at RWR 3/25 (all JHS,JGS). Quite unusual was the discovery of the fresh remains of an Evening Grosbeak, but where were the

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When we were out getting our Wood Duck boxes ready for the spring nesting, we got a surprise in one of them. A N. Saw-whet Owl flew out of the box and inside were 4 eggs and 5 dead mice. As usual, we did not have the camera (RAW,ADW).

Two Red-bellied Woodpecker were at Tionesta 1/11 (DW,DD). OBSERVERS: Don Watts, Dan Doherty, Keith Confer, C.R. Mann, Randy DeMarco, Richard & April D. Walters, Box 127, Endeavor 16322 (814-463-9306).

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Don Henise

Abbreviations: Timmons Mt. (TM), Thornwood Rd, Shippensburg (TH)

A N. Goshawk and a Red-shouldered Hawk were seen on TM 3/29 (DRH,DHo). Several Rough-legged Hawk spent the winter in the TH area with 1 dark morph and 3 light morphs seen 1/8 (DH). Last record was 1 dark and 2 light morphs perched in the same tree 1/27 (DH). One C. Raven was seen at TM 3/29 (DRH,DHo).

OBSERVERS: Don & Robyn Henise, 763 Greenspring Rd, Newville 17241-9694 (717-776-6550), Deuane Hoffman (DHo).

GREENE COUNTY

Ralph Bell

Not much snow and generally mild during the quarter. There were no below zero temperatures. Because of the recent run of mild winters, the Carolina Wren should be in very high numbers this coming summer.

First Great Blue Heron noted flying over 3/8. This species is now nesting in numbers in the Co. and additional comments on their nesting will be made in the next issue. 80+ Canada Goose flying over our farm 1/19 and probably the same flock was seen eating grass on a dairy farm nr Carmichaels 1/31. Detailed records have been kept for 40 years and this is the largest number of Canadas ever seen here in Jan.

A Cooper’s Hawk was often noted here in the area. First Killdeer (4) were reported 2/22 (KB), and 93 Ring-billed Gull counted on a farm nr Dry Tavern 2/24 (JW).

E. Phoebe arrived here a bit earlier than usual, as 3 were singing near here 3/9. Not many Cedar Waxwing wintered but 20 were observed eating Am. Holly berries in the yard 1/29. First Chipping Sparrow noted 3/25—the earliest since 1978 when 1 was noted 3/21. No Evening Grosbeak reported, but a single Pine Siskin in the yard 3/7.

OBSERVERS: Kim Barbetta, Ralph Bell, RR 1 Box 229, Clarksville 15322 (412-883-4505), Jim Willis.
HUNTINGDON COUNTY

Greg Grove

abbreviations: Atch Age (AA), Huntingdon (HU), McCauley's Ft. (MF), Stone Valley Rec. Area (SvL). observations by compiler unless otherwise noted.

Two Co. records, Sandhill Crane and Great Black-backed Gull, were the highlights. Also noteworthy were the Ovenbird which wintered at a feeder and a possible hummingbird checking on a feeder location of last summer. The combination of a partially drawn-down SvL and 3 Mar. snowstorms resulted in a good variety of waterfowl sightings.

Red-necked Grebe was found at SvL during heavy snow 3/22 (Gy). Some Great Blue Heron wintered; first migrants at SvL were 3/21. Drawn-down several feet, SvL provided bottom feeding for up to 270 Tundra Swan which sat out a cold, snowy 2 weeks of mid-Mar. 1 Snake Goose, unusual for SvL, joined the swans 3/11–16. First dates for ducks at SvL: 2 weeks of mid-Mar. 1 to believe, but seen twice, what could have been mistaken for such SvL 3/8–10 but were not seen after the first snowstorm 3/11. 8 SvL were 3/21. Drawn-down several feet, SvL provided bottom 3/22 (Gy). Some

unless

Observations by compiler (MF), Stone Valley Rec. Area (SVL).

White-throated Sparrow

Abbreviations: Brush Valley (BV), Clarkesburg (CB), Creekside (CS), Indiana (IND), Margus L. (ML), Robinson (RBS), Sheolota (SHL), Strongstown (ST), Tuolick Reservoir (TR), Yellow Creek SP (YC).

Highlight of the season was a Eur. Wigeon at YC. Of interest, too, was an extremely early Barn Swallow 2/24. All reports are from YC unless otherwise noted.


An imm. Bald Eagle 3/31 (MH, GL et al.) soared high over the lake heading toward Chestnut Ridge. N. Harrier was regular at YC 1/21+; another found nr CS 3/28 (M&R). Sharp-shinned Hawk was found at 6 locations and Cooper's at 4. A Red-shouldered Hawk was well observed at YC 1/29 (MH, GL, and seen periodically through 3/25 (MH, GL, BM). Rough-legged Hawk was found nr YC 1/21 (MH, GL, MJS) and 2/4 (MH, GL, MJS); another sighted nr IND 2/7 (AB, DB). Two Am. Coot, lingering in a small open area of water, were last reported 1/15 (AB, DB, GL); by 3/31, up to 45 had returned (MH, GL, et al.). C. Snipe did not return until 3/14 (TBC) when 5 were a nice count nr YC. Am. Woodcock, also late in arriving, appeared first at RBS (GC) and at YC (TF) 3/23. First Bonaparte's Gull arrived 3/31 (BB, MH, GL, NK, MJS, GS). Top Ring-billed Gull count was 96 3/1 (GL, GL). 1–2 Herring Gull were noted 3/3 and 3/24, 25 (MH, GL et al.).

Two Short-eared Owl nr BV 2/5 (PA) were at a new location; these birds were subsequently seen 2/7 (AB, GB, GC, GL, GS). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reports include 1 at YC (GL) and 1 at Nolo (GS) 3/25. E. Phoebe first reported 3/13 (GC). Horned Lark, in very low numbers for the past few years, included 1 at ML 3/20 (GL) and 28 nr BV 3/26 (GC, GL, GS), our only reports. Tree Swallow found 3/30 (GL) was late.

Barn Swallow, observed at YC 2/24 (GL) was seen again 2/25 (MH, GL, GS) picking black insects from the ice; undoubtedly, this indiv. did not survive.

A Hermit Thrush reports include 1 nr CS 1/20 (SC, MH) and 1 at YC 1/21 (MH, GL, MJS). Top Am. Robin count was 222 on 3/10 at ML (MH, GL, RS). The 3/31 34 at Strongstown, a separate IND locations 1/11 (M&R), 2/12 (GL), and 3/4 (MH). Am. Pipit, present 3/14–21, appeared in only numbers of 2–8 (v.o.). A Cedar Waxwing 1/7 (AB, MH, GL) was YC's lone report; waxwing also at Blairsville 3/3 (Ab). Two Yellow-rumped Warbler, subsisting largely on poison ivy berries, continued nr SHL all quarter (M&R). The major invasion of Fox Sparrow occurred 3/11 with reports that day of 2 nr CS (SC), 3 nr SHL (PF), 4 at another SHL feeder (MH), 1 nr IND (BM), and 1 at Nolo (AB). Pine Siskin reports included 1-2 at CB 1/15, 2/12 (MC), 1 at SHL 3/2 (MH), 1 at Nolo 3/12–13 (GL), and 20+ at BV 3/17 (MH, NK). Up to 14 Evening Grosbeak were noted at ST until 3/10 (JM).


Indiana County

Margaret and Roger Higbee

abbreviations: Brush Valley (BV), Clarkesburg (CB), Creekside (CS), Indiana (IND), Margus L. (ML), Robinson (RBS), Sheolota (SHL), Strongstown (ST), Tuolick Reservoir (TR), Yellow Creek SP (YC).
**JUNIATA COUNTY**

Linda Whitesell

Abbreviations: Cedar Spring Rd (CS), Juniata R. (JR), Mifflintown Access (MA), Muskret Springs Access (MS), JR at Van Dyke (VD).

Migration, which seemed to be in full swing with flocks of Tundra Swan, Canada Goose, and Ring-billed Gull nr Thompsonstown reported 2/22–23 (DW), was slowed by cold weather until mid-Mar. on. 14 Ring-necked Duck on JR at VD were 2–3 weeks later than previous years' records. 35 C. Goldeneye were last seen at that location 3/15. All mergansers were in good supply: 8 Hooded at MA 3/15 and 1 ther 3/23; high count of 282 Common at VD 2/28; high count of 12 Red-breasted at VD 3/9 and 1 at Thompsonstown 3/21.

Black Vulture only reported at Thompsonstown 1/27 (DW). A N. Harrier was nr Richfield 3/14 (DW). Killdeer arrived 3/8 and along with Am. Robin had trouble finding food due to late snows and frozen ground starting 3/13; for a while they were very visible along roads and in yards. 12–15 C. Snipe were nr the CSR ±3 mi from Mifflintown 3/21–23.

At MA 3/23 a Great Black-backed Gull was harassing a C. Merganser, which would dive to escape it. The gull would then set down on the spot where the merganser dove or circle and dive-bomb it again when it came up.

Ned Foglema reported a Barn Owl on his farm 2/5. The Long-eared Owl first heard in late Dec. 1991 (DW) on the ridge at Kellerville was first seen 1/2, then again 2/10,22,26 (DW,LW). Two were seen 3/5 and 1 was watched 3/30. A Red-headed Woodpecker just n. of Oakland Mills was a welcome report 2/8 (MK). An E. Phoebe was at Hammer Hollow 2/23 during the week of the waterfowl migration; the next report was at VD 3/16. A Purple Martin made it back before the snowstorm of 3/16 at MS (MR). C. Raven were nr Van Wert the week of 2/2–8 (MR) and 2 on Shade Mt 2/9. Am. Pipit were nr Van Wert that same week (MR). White-crowned Sparrow reported consistently all quarter from a field nr CSR were 14 in number 2/8. A Red-winged Blackbird nr Oakland Mills 2/1 was early.

OBSERVERS: Rosann Bongey, Nancy & Derry Bird, Gerald Klebauskas, RR 2 Box 2821, Factoryville 18419 (717-945-3949), Tinka Zenke.

**LACKAWANNA COUNTY**

Gerald Klebauskas

Abbreviations: Dalton area (DA), Factoryville area (FA), Glenburn (GL), L. Scranton (LS).

Great Blue Heron were in FA 3/1 and DA 3/6. At FA, 2 Wood Duck 3/10; 8 N. Pintail 3/1; 1 Am. Wigeon and 1 C. Goldeneye 3/29; Hooded Merganser 3/7. 8 C. Merganser at LS through Feb.


OBSERVERS: Rosann Bongey, Nancy & Derry Bird, Gerald Klebauskas, RR 2 Box 2821, Factoryville 18419 (717-945-3949), Tinka Zenke.

**LANCASTER COUNTY**

Eric Witmer

Abbreviations: Conowingo Pond (CP), Middle Creek WMA (MC), Muddy Run Pump Storage area (MR), New Holland (NH), Speedwell Forge L. (SP), Susquehanna R./Conojehola Flats (SRC).

Highlights of the period include the 1st Co. record of C. Black-headed Gull (ph.EW), the recurrence of Ross' Goose among large flocks of Snow Geese, four Bald Eagle nests within the Co. and Yellow-headed and Brewer's blackbirds.

11 Horned Grebe were found during a rainstorm at SRC 3/19 (JH). Red-necked Grebe sightings on CP include 2 3/20 and 5 3/26 (RMS,LL et al.). An ad. Black-crowned Night-Heron was at the Lititz Run (Manheim Twp) rookery 1/1 (EW) and 4 present 3/28 (JW,EW) presumably the start of another breeding season. Tundra Swan continue to winter in the Co. in large numbers with 750+ at MC 1/10 (JW,EW) and 3000+ at SRC 1/23 (JH). The swan migration was as usual with 5000+ at MC (mid-late Feb). Interesting was 500+ Tundra Swan at SFL 2/22 (BC). Waterfowl numbers have been low for many years in spring at SFL, however the complete drawdown of the lake last year and increased coverage by BC yielded some noteworthy numbers including 60 N. Pintail 3/21, 85 Ring-necked Duck 3/31, 1 C. Goldeneye 3/14, 12 Hooded Merganser 3/29, and Red-breasted Merganser 3/26.

A Gr. White-fronted Goose was at MC 3/8 (RM, JW). Snow Goose made an impressive showing for the 2nd consecutive spring, with the initial flock of 200 at MR 2/23 (JH). 2000+ Snow Goose "staged" at MR and at MC and SRC seemed to hold the most birds with a high count of 10,000 on 3/8 (JW). Also for the 2nd consecutive year single Ross' Goose were found with Snow Geese at MC 3/8–21 (RM,JH,TG), at MR 3/20–30 (RMS,LL) and nr Willow Street 3/31 (RMS). A Wood Duck was at MC 2/2 (JH). The p' Eurasian Wigeon at a Chestnut Level farm pond remained until late-Feb with up to 80 Am. Wigeon (RMS et al.). A high count of 125 Am. Wigeon was made on the Chickies Cr. nr Mt. Joy 3/31 (JH). A Canvasback and a Gr. Scaup were at MR 1/26–2/8 (JH et al.). A flock of 25 Gr. Scaup was also present at MR 3/31 (RMS). Numerous reports of Red-breasted Merganser were made from MC and along the SR 3/20–28 (m.ob.).

OBSERVERS: Rosann Bongey, Nancy & Derry Bird, Gerald Klebauskas, RR 2 Box 2821, Factoryville 18419 (717-945-3949), Tinka Zenke.

Common Black-headed Gull (with Ring-billed Gull), Susquehanna River, 2/23/92. Photo by Eric Witmer.

The most unusual sighting of the period (many more sightings in Apr.) was a basic 1 C. Black-headed Gull on CP nr the Maryland border 3/22–23 (JW,EW,LS et al.). "Captain Bob" and his chumming crew obtained many photographs and determined that this gull preferred buttered popcorn over bread and day-old pastry!

Ospree were reported from the Holtwood area 3/8 (RMS). At least 4 active Bald Eagle nests found. Locations include Octoraro...
Milton Grove was present 1/1 (EW) and was most likely there near Rowenna 3/20 (LC). The previously reported Mallard on 1/26 5 (NR) and in BA some courtship was observed 3/2 (BD,GW). A 3/29 (EW). Very few Gray Catbird was in the NH area until 1/19 (DoH). 14 Rd (Clay Twp) 1/26 (TK,NC) and another at MC 3/7 (SS). 31 (BW,BD) plus 1 Mar. 200+ were reported from various feeders. 14 indiv. were at VA, VS, NC, & PG (v.o.). Accipiters are a pond where they usually breed near Quarryville 3/10 (RMS,LL), and up to 5 in Drumore Twp 3/17 (NR). A Peregrine was near Rheems 3/23 (LC). Rock Rd 1/21 (FH). Another peregrine was nr Rheems 3/23 (LC). An imm. Golden Eagle was in alternate definitive plumage was on CP PA 3/8 (RMS et al.), an early spring Co. record. An Iceland Gull was in the Holtwood Dam area 2/4–8 (CH,RMS, JH, HM). Multiple sightings of Black-billed Gull included 2 ad. in a field nr Rheems (away from the SR) 3/4 (JH) and 3 different aged birds at Safe Harbor Dam 1/26 (EW,JW). Unusual was an imm. Great Black-backed Gull in NH 1/12 (JH, HM).

The previously reported Snowy Owl was irregularly seen in the NH area until 1/19 (DoH). 14 E. Phoebe were in the SPL area 3/29 (BC). First reported Tree Swallow at MC was 3/7 (JW). A Gray Catbird was in Warwick Twp 1/5 (RM). 300 Am. Pipit were nr Rowenna 3/20 (LC). The previously reported N. Shrike at Milton Grove was present 1/1 (EW) and was most likely there a while longer. Several Lapland Longspur were noted in Clay Twp 3/29 (EW). Very few Snow Bunting were reported with the high count 25 nr NH 2/14 (JH, BC, HM). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen 3/18 nr the Buck (RMS). Brewer’s Blackbird were found in several areas of the Co. Oxon was patient enough to scrutinize the blackbird flocks: 3 in Caernarvon Twp 1/27 (BH), 1 nr Quarryville 3/10 (RMS, LL), and up to 5 in Drumore Twp 3/17 (RMS, LL). A N. Oriole visited a feeder in NH 3/19+ (CS).


**LAWRENCE COUNTY**

Barb Dean

Locations: Bessemer area (BA), New Castle area (NC), Plain Grove area (PG), Shenango R. (SR), Volant area (VA), Volant strip mines (VS), Vosler Rd (VR).

Pied-billed Grebe reports were 2 found in NC 3/28 and 2 on a pond where they usually breed nr Beaver. The Great Blue Heron heronry nr Beaver was active with 37+ nests the end of Mar. 2004. A Tundra Swan flew over NC 3/15 (RB). Only 1 Wood Duck were at the Rt. 18 marsh compared to the 20+ in past years. On 1/26 5 Am. Black Duck were on Shenango R. (BW), 3 on Mahoning R. (BD), & 4 at VA (SM). Mallard numbers seem to be in decline. C. Goldeneve were found in various locations 1/26 (BW,BD) to 3/5 (BD).

Our N. Harrier sightings remain up, a trend that started 2 years ago. 14 indiv. were at VA, VS, NC, & PG (v.o.). Accipiters were reported from various feeders. Red-shouldered Hawk was a rare find here, and no reports this quarter. Only 1 Rough-legged Hawk was found, in NC 1/26 (BW,BD). Two Merlin include 1 on E. River Rd. 1/25 and 1 at PG 3/28 (BD). For the 1st time in 9 years, no report of Ring-necked Pheasant, but hunters report Ruffed Grouse doing well in Harlonsburg. Wild Turkey were found in Nesheannock woods, McConnell’s Mills, and now even in the BA. Am. Woodcock reports were way up, and a drive at dusk in BA revealed at least 7 pairs in a 2-mi area doing courtship flight.

The mild winter provided good numbers of Belted Kingfisher. Several Red-headed Woodpecker over-wintered in BA and PG (GW,BD). Unusual was the lack of N. Flicker reports in Mar. Pileated Woodpecker continue to do well. Our 1st E. Phoebe was here 2/15, over a week earlier than noted the past 9 years (DO). Horned Lark can usually be found here in excellent numbers: 700 in BA 1/25; 50 on VR 1/26; 20+ in PG, a few at VS (NR) and in BA some courtship was observed 3/2 (BD,GW). A Blue Jay fledging was found dead the first week of Apr.

The big story is that Short-eared Owl continue to build in numbers at VS nr Penzey, which borders Mercer. In 1990 only 1 was seen for 1 day only. This year we have seen at least 10 at a time and 5 or 6 remained to end of the quarter. I have searched the BA for many years and finally enlisted the help of several farmers. It paid off! I got a call from Bob Trotter who reported 3 owls at dusk from 2/12–15. On 2/17 I confirmed 3 Short-eared Owl there and they remained to 3/31. The owls at both locations barked “played” with each other and the N. Harriers, but no courtship behavior such as clapping was observed (BD,BW,SM, NR).

Feb. is the only month we have not recorded Gray Catbird, especially the last few years. 1 was on VR until 1/26 (BD,BW) and fed in a weedy, brushy area on dark berries and old apple trees. A Louisiana Waterthrush was in NC 2/28 nr Covered Bridge and a Rufous-sided Towhee on E. River Rd. 3/2 (GW,BD). We did not receive the heavy snowfall that surrounding cos. did. Our largest flocks of Am. Tree Sparrow were 30 in PG and NC. First Savannah Sparrow were in BA 3/2 (GW,BD). Very few White-throated Sparrow were seen all period. 25 Snow Bunting were at BA 1/26 (BW,BD) and 12 at VS 3/2 (BD,GW). NR reports 200 Red-winged Blackbird in PG 2/9 and hundred of mixed blackbirds flew over BA 3/2. SM reported 3 Purple Finch along Pennsy Rd. 2/16. The Rodgers’ feeder usually accommodates 30 by the end of Mar., but 200 House Finch may have discouraged Purple Finch there, and it was very unusual to have none here in NC. 3–7 Pine Siskin were at a NC feeder 2/13+. Open water in the bird bath and catskins on the birch trees were the major attractions. Am. Goldfinch numbers seemed down in PG (NR), but average in NC and Amish areas.

NR reports, “One thing that I feel certain has affected birds and other wildlife in our area is the huge amount of trees which have been timbered and all the fence rows cleared because of the strip mining in PG. I have no idea how many acres of land have been taken by the strip mining, which, of course destroys everything in its path.”

OBSEVERS: Ray Bales, Barb Dean, 321 E. Meyer Ave, New Castle 16105 (412-658-3393), Shirley McCarl, Nancy Rodgers, Bob Trotter, Bob Walczak, Gene Wilhelm.

**LEBANON COUNTY**

Steve Santner

Abbreviations: Memorial L. (ML), Middle Creek WMA (MC).

It was a quiet quarter. The temperatures on average were about normal, but there were no cold snaps or warm spells and there was very little snowfall (only about 12” for the season at Harrisburg). ML was frozen completely only for about a week or so in early Feb. Overall it was probably a good season for the birds. Winter finches were nonexistent. The bird of the season was the N. Shrike.

12 Pied-billed Grebe at ML 3/28 (MC), a relatively high number. A Tundra Swan was there 2/18 (MC) and several appeared after that through end of quarter, an insignificant number compared to the thousands at nearby MC. 4 Redhead at ML 2/18 (MC) and 6 there 2/22 (SR). A Canvassback was there virtually all winter and 4 there 3/1 (MC, JKL, SS).

Red-shouldered Hawk returned to nest in the Lebanon section of MC for the 10th year in a row (m,ob). An Am. Coot successfully wintered at ML (m,ob.). Both kinglets were at Swatara Gap SP 1/25 (EC, OR). Usually few Ruby-crownedf are found in mid-winter but apparently the lack of bad weather allowed a few to survive. A N. Shrike was found n. of Palmrya 1/11 (SR) and seen again 1/13 (DW). It was seen by a few others into early Feb.

LEHIGH COUNTY

Bernie Morris

Abbreviations: Fogelville Quarry (FQ), L. Muhlenberg (LM).

Birding this season was well above average. Despite yet another year with hardly any winter finches, the gulls and owls more than made up for it.

7 Tundra Swan were at FQ 3/8 (PE, BLM), 2 Mute Swan were at the Lehigh Valley Corp. Center 2/25 (DG, JG), 7 Snow Goose were at LM 2/29 (PE), 25 Ring-necked Duck at Leaser L. 3/7 (PE, BLM) and 1 C. Goldeneye at FQ 2/29 (PE). A Red-shouldered Hawk spent the winter at Applewood (PE). An early Am. Woodcock was found nr Applewood 2/27 (PE), and several were flushed in mid-day at Jordan Park 2/29 (PE, BLM). As many as 200 Ring-billed Gull were at LM 12/27 (BLM). Great Black-backed Gull were in Allentown along the Lehigh R. 2/5 (FBa), at Walnutport 2/6 (DG, JG).

The Snowy Owl which appeared to a lucky few last Nov. finally settled down next to the Strohs brewery at Fogelville from mid-Jan. through the end of quarter (m.ob.), a record late date (actually to at least 4/4). It could usually be found and approached mid-Jan through the end of quarter (m.ob.), a record late date finally settled down next to the Strohs brewery at Fogelville from mid-Jan through the end of quarter (m.ob.), a record late date.

Numerous flocks were flushed in mid-day at Jordan Park 2/29 (PE, BLM). As many as 200 Ring-billed Gull were at LM 12/27 (BLM). Great Black-backed Gull were in Allentown along the Lehigh R. 2/5 (FBa), at Walnutport 2/6 (DG, JG).

Snowy Owl, Fogelville, 2/20/92. Photo by Rick Wiltraut.

LYCOMING COUNTY

Wesley Egli

Abbreviations: Montoursville (MV), Muncy Creek Twp (MCT), Muncy Twp (MT), Picture Rocks (PR), Rosedale Valley L. (RVL), SGL 252 (SGL), Susquehanna R. (SR), Upper Fairfield Twp (UFT), Wolf Twp (WT).

On 2/26 the following species were observed at RVL by SS: Horned Grebe, Tundra Swan, Am. Black Duck, Am. Wigeon, Canvasback (a species rarely seen here), Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded, Common, and Red-headed mergansers, Merlin. Tundra Swan were also on the SR at Muncy 3/3 (WE). On 2/7 a Barrow’s Goldeneye was on the SR near Applewood (PE). A Barrow’s Goldeneye was in the early PM n. of RVL (SS).

A Turkey Vulture was in MT 3/12 (WE). An ad. Bald Eagle was on the SR at Williamsport 2/6 (DB). N. Harrier was quite common all quarter in UFT, MT, WT (ER, SS, WE). Sharp-shinned and Cooper’s hawks were in MV (SS). Red-tailed and Rough-legged hawks were frequently seen in appropriate habitat (DB, WE, ER, SS). Another Merlin in MV (possibly the same 1 from last quarter) 1/3 (SS). An imm. Peregrine Falcon was in UFT 1/18 nr the home of ER. Ruffed Grouse were nr PR 3/1 (WE). 15+ Wild Turkey were flushed nr PR 1/5 (WE).

Killdeer were first noted in MCT 2/19 (WE). On 3/19 17 C. Snipe were found in a field (SS). Am. Woodcock were at LT 2/26 (DB). Ring-billed Gull were first seen in MCT 3/5 (WE). A Barred Owl was seen in the early PM n. of RVL (SS). Short-eared Owl seen in MT 1/26 (WE) & 3/19 (SS).

A Red-bellied Woodpecker frequented suet at UFT (ER). Tree Swallow returned to UFT 3/31 (ER), 6 Blue Jay came to my PR feeder 2/16, the most I’ve ever recorded (WE). Fish Crow in Elimsport 1/12 (DB) then in good numbers 3/5+. C. Raven nr PR 3/1,14 (WE). 2 Am. Pipit in MV 3/19, the first SS has ever seen this species in a town. 17 Am. Tree Sparrow appeared at ER’s feeder 1/20; also in PR 1/26 (WE); and 2/17 at SGL (DB). Fox Sparrow noted at feeders in PR 3/21+ (WE) and UFT (ER). White-throated Sparrow were at SGL 2/17 (DB). Also noted at ER’s feeders were: Red-winged Blackbird 3/19+; C. Grackle 2/22+; and Purple Finch 2/22+. Pine Siskin 1/1+ in PR (WE) and 1/18+ in UFT (ER) were the only reports of winter finches.

OBSEVERS: Dan Brauning, Wesley Egli, PO Box 381, Picture Rocks 17762 (717-584-2222), Ed Reish, Stanley Stahl.

MERCER COUNTY

Marty McKay

Locations: Grove City area (GC), Hermitage area (HA), L. Latoonska (LL), Limber Rd. (LR), Sagualas Pond (SP), Shenango R. Res. (SR), L. Wilhelm (LW), Willow Pond (WP). Waterfowl reports without location noted are from SR by compiler.


LUZERNE COUNTY

Bill Reid

Abbreviations: Council Cup (CC), Susquehanna Riverlands (SR), SR Wetlands Nature Area (SW).

A Canvasback was at SR 2/25 and 3/1 (JF). Ring-billed Gull was particularly common in Mar. with 50+ at SR almost daily, sometimes reaching 80 birds (JF, DG). 3 early Wood Duck were at SR (JF, DG). A Red-shouldered Hawk was at SR 3/23 (JF). An usual winter E. Phoebe was at SW 1/11 (A&MG), but not seen again. An E. Phoebe arrived at an early extra 3/3 at SR, feeding on stoneflies over the river, and apparently survived the month (DG). 2 Tree Swallow arrived at SR 3/2 (JF, DG). Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and White-breasted Nuthatch numbers were low at CC, SW, and other woods nr SR (DG). A Winter Wren overwintered in SW (DG). 2 Am. Pipit were at SR 3/12 (JF) for a rare visit. Several Am. Robins survived the winter in SR (JF, DG). There were at least 2 Yellow-rumped Warbler in SW/SR through winter (A&MG, DG). At least 5 Swamp Sparrow stayed winter in SW (DG) and 5 Field Sparrow were found there 1/15.

OBSEVERS: John Froidman, Allen & Monica Gregory, Doug Gross, William Reid, 73 W Ross St, Wilkes-Barre 18702 (717-856-2525).

The PGC reported a Bald Eagle at SR in Jan. and another at LW in early Mar. A Cooper’s Hawk was at SP 3/21 (HBLW) and 1 at HA 1/12. A pair of Red-shouldered Hawk were displaying 3/9.

Wild Turkey numbers are increasing. A flock of 14 at HA 3/12 failed at their clumsy, comical attempt to cross a frozen pond by “ice skating,” and retreated to the edge to walk around instead. This flock remained in the area until 3/15 before dispersing. 21 Am. Coot were at SR 3/20, where only 1 was seen last year. First Killdeer arrived at HA 2/27. Am. Woodcock was heard 3/1 at Christy Rd. 7 Short-eared Owl were found at LR 2/9 (BD), and 3 were at a new location: the overgrown old Chadderton airport 2/23, 3/1.

The unusual warm early Mar. brought E. Phoebe to HA 3/12, 6 days early by my records. 1 Brown Creeper at GC 1/17 (HB). The Carolina Wren population is exploding at HA. One smart wren learned to gain access to a heated workshop through a series of cracks and roosted inside all winter, making it impossible for the sympathetic workman to use this outbuilding evenings, lest he disturb it.

Finally, the long expected N. Mockingbird was reported from HA: 1 on 3/20, and surely the same bird again 3/29 in the same bush. 12 Am. Tree Sparrow at SR 3/20. 35 Dark-eyed Junco at HA 2/22 and 1–2 “Oregon” at a GC feeder 1/16–3/22 (HB).


OBSERVERS: Harriet Bauer, Barb Dean, Shirley McCarl, Marty McKay, 2320 Valley View Rd, Sharpsville 16150 (412-962-7476), Loraine Weiland.

MIFFLIN COUNTY

Margaret Kenneff

Abbreviations: Belleville (BV). All observations by compiler unless otherwise noted.

We had a great quarter of watching the feeders and backyard areas. I had some old lard given to me and mixed it with peanut butter and some small seeds. The birds loved it. Carolina Wrens and chickadees were pushed aside by the woodpeckers and even the Red-bellied and N. Flickers came in to the porch for the new menu.

Great Blue Heron became regular since mid-Mar., in company of a Green-backed Heron and a Spotted Sandpiper. Am. Redck Duck, C. Merganser, and Lerring Gull were in great numbers on the Juniata R. s. of Lewistown 2/24. Large flocks of Canada Goose and Tundra Swan were flying N, and night, 3/12–14. A Ring-necked Duck was on Dunnires Pond 3/8 (RD). A Rough-legged Hawk was over BV 1/19 and 1 nr Strodes Mills 3/20 (GB). Am. Woodcock were present 3/10+. E. Phoebe arrived 3/5. A flock of 18 Hooded Lark nr BV 1/19.

Carolina Wren flew over LK’s yard at dusk; it was getting very cold and they flew in a direct line towards the nearby ridge. A flock of 16–18 of N. Cardinal 1/22 suggested just arrived from the south or ready to head north? All during Feb/Mar were White-crowned and White-throated sparrows feeding under the picnic table in the company of Dark-eyed Junco and Mourning Dove. At times were 9 White-crowned, 7 White-throated, and 7 Fox sparrows. Am. Goldfinch were in excellent numbers in Mar: 12 in McVetown, 32 at BKMfs feeders, and 42 at ours. ±10 Pine Siskin visited for perhaps two weeks in mid-Mar.

OBSERVERS: Gloria Bickel, Rhonda Dunmire, Bill & Mary Kauffman, Margaret Kenepp, RR 2 Box 343, McVetown 17051 (717-899-6252), Lorna Kritser, Don Miller, Grace Miller, J. & A. Morgan, Catherine Snyder, Merrill Wyat.

3/10 was a warm, spring-like day. The woodcock were heard over the fields. After a warm rain in late evening the temperature dropped rapidly to below freezing. At 6 the next morning a snow squall began, with a mixture of snow, sleet and freezing cold winds. Returning from an early trip to town, my husband related that he had seen 200 and maybe 300+ robins in the fields along the way. It didn’t register with me as I started to prepare lunch, until a neighbor called and excitedly said he had circled around twice and was about to go again to see the unbelievable sight of so many birds. We cancelled lunch, needed to say, but ended up with a thorded field guides, binoculars, a scope and started out in the harsh weather with @Eliane, Rebecca and I becoming very excited by the end of our driveway.

Dozens of robins and all birds were everywhere on the road and they were not at all concerned of our presence. As we journeyed toward Mattawana we saw 17 Killdeer on Yoder’s Bus driveaway. Other birds were scurrying about. On the River Rd. e. of Mattawana, along the Juniata R., we were able to view the birds on the highway, perhaps from 5–6 through the open jeep windows. They were eating the frozen earthworms which had come out onto the macadam the day before and had frozen on the road.

We realized that many species were involved in this fallout: Sparrows included Chipping, Song, House, and Fox; finches; bluebirds; several shorebirds; and then an unusual gull revealed (confirmed in Peterson’s guide, Am. Prits (we saw 20+ from there to Newton Hamilton). They were mostly running along the edge of the frozen slush on the road. They were not bothered by us in the blustery squalls and as we watched I noted another unusual species and immediately knew it looked like a Lapland Longspur. The facial markings were very distinct. The field guides confirmed our identification as Laplands. We had 5 in view for perhaps 10 minutes, just out of the open windows. We had birds in our faces, but that didn’t bother us at all. A life bird is worth it! Some of the birds actually lay on their sides in the slushy road and they seemed so slow and half frozen. I am sure they didn’t all survive. I have had some interesting finds, but this was one of the most exciting snowy excursions ever. Four-year old Rebecca thought it was great as she crunched her apple in the car seat.

MONROE COUNTY

Rick Wiltraut

2 Rusty Blackbird were at Brodheadsville 3/1 (RZ).

OBSERVERS: Rick Wiltraut, 205 Washington St, Nazareth 18064 (215-759-5184), Richard ZainEldeen.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Gary Freed

Abbreviations: Pt. Washington SP (PW), Green Lane Res. (GLR), Mont Clare Canal (MC), Unami Creek Valley (UCV), UPPER Perkiomen Valley Park (UPVP), Valley Forge National Historical Park (VF).

Grebe max. at GLR were 5 Pied-billed 3/31 and 2 Horned 3/18 (GAF,GLF,KC). Tundra Swan seen periodically at GLR in Mar. with a max. of 36 3/22 (GLF,LR). Snow Goose was present at GLR from mid-Mar. with max. of 8 3/31 (GAF); 1 blue morph there 2/18 (RC). MC hosted 40 Wood Duck 3/31 (NT). Green-winged Teal, 50+ mid-Mar., and N. Pintail, 140–3/25, were both above average at GLR. Only 1 Blue-winged Teal 3/22 was there (GLF,LR). Diving ducks continue to be scarce. 4 Canvasback at GLR 2/29 (GLF,LR), 50 Ring-necked at a pond nr UPVP 3/12 (RG), 2 Oldsquaw at GLR 3/13 (NT), 6 C. Goldeneye and 20 Bufflehead at VF 1/9 (NT), a pair of Hooded Merganser in
Wynnewood 2/25 (WMc). C. Merganser present all quarter at GLR where there was open water with a high count of 220+ 2/22 (GLF, LR).

An ad. Bald Eagle was over Oaks 2/29 (BF) and an imm. at GLR 3/6 (KC). N. Harrier present at several locations in small numbers. 2–3 Sharp-shinned Hawk wintered at Evansburg SP (FH). Cooper’s present at FW & GLR (B&NM,GAF,GLF). An imm. N. Goshawk seen occasionally at GLR (GAF,GLF,LR). Red-shouldered also at these same locations (RG,B&NM,GAF). There were 2 Merlin sightings: nr Zieglerssville 2/23 (RG) & at GLR 3/6 (KC). Wild Turkey is now common at GLR with 48 at GLR’s GLR feeder 1/25. 2 Am. Coot at GLR 1/25.

An early Am. Woodcock display flight was observed at GLR’s nr GLR 2/19 and were regular for the subsequent 6 weeks. BP reported 1 at Mont Clare 3/23/24. A 1st-winter Ls. Black-backed Gull was at WT 1/15 and it stayed a few weeks more (GLF,LR). Great Black-backed Gull was fairly regular in small numbers at GLR. Great Horned Owl was in a Mont Clare yard 1/4 (NT) and there were 2 active obvious nests at GLR to the delight of many. Barred Owl called fairly regularly at GLR’s from mid-Feb+ and Long-eared 3/16–29 and N. Saw-whet owls 3/24 were heard at the same location (a benefit of walking a dog at night). KC reported a d.o.r. Long-eared Owl at GLR in Feb.

An imm. Red-headed Woodpecker spent the quarter at GLR (KC).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reported as regular at several locations. Fish Crow regular nr UPV all quarter in small numbers (RG). Brown Creeper was as easy to find as in previous years. 200+ on 1/25 (FH). Winter Wren at UCV 3/23 (GLF,LR). Hermit Thrush at GLR in Jan. and nr UPV in Feb. (GLF, RG). Yellow-rumped Warbler was easy to find at several locations with 100+ at MC 3/3 (NT).

Rufous-sided Towhee was at RG’s near UPV 2/8. RG also had 3 Fox Sparrow 3/19,29 GLR and GLR had 1 most of Feb. at its feeder (KC). GLR had 24 wintering E. Meadowlark (KC, GLF, LR). MC hosted 3 Rusty Blackbird 3/31 (NT) and GLR had 1 3/28. A N. Oriole fed on suet nr GLR all quarter (KC jfide Jane West). While Purple Finch was scarce most places, RG had 10–20 all quarter with 50 3/19.

OBSERVERS: Kevin Crilley, Bob Fetterman, George A. Franchois, Gary L. Freed, 1132 Walters Rd (please note change in address - I did not move), Pennsburg 18073 (215-679-8536), Ron Grubb, Frank Hohenleitner, Jason Horn, William McLean, Bill & Naomi Murphy, Larry Rhoads, Neal Thorpe.

MONTOUR COUNTY

About 30 Am. Black Duck were counted on windswept L. Chillis-quaque at Montour Preserve (MP) 1/15 (AG). In a nearby field on that date, CS saw 10 Wild Turkey. As many as 30 C. Snipe were present nr Washingtonville between 3/17–26 (CS). She also found an ad. Ls. Black-backed Sapsucker in Cooper Twp 1/19. A very early E. Phoebe at Danville was seen 3/2 (DG), and a lone Tree Swallow put in an early appearance at MP 3/25 (CS). After a late winter snowstorm 3/12, 3 Am. Pipit were along the roadside nr the PP&L flyash basin (CS).


NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

Rick Wiltraut

Abbreviations: Mount Bethel (MB), Martins Creek Quarries (MCQ), North Catasaqua (NC).

23 Wild Turkey were at MB this quarter (BT). On 1/12, Brock and Koch saw an Ice land, a Ls. Black-backed, and 3–4 Great Black-backed gulls at MCQ. The Ice land was a 1st Co. record and the Ls. Black-backed a 3rd Co. record.

There was an “invasion” of Barred Owl. One was seen several times in Jan. in a backyard in NC (GJ et al.) and 1 d.o.r. along Rt. 22 in Bethlehem 1/12 (RW). A N. Saw-whet Owl was seen sitting on the ground at MB 2/26 (BT). On a warm 2/23 (65°F), Boyle heard a Winter Wren burst into song at Martins Creek. A Gray Catbird was at MB 2/28 (BT), a sp. rarely reported after the CBCs and before the last week in Apr. A Chipping Sparrow was nr Edelmans 2/26 (RS) and an Evening Grosbeak was at MB 2/10 (BT), the only report in the Lehigh Valley area all season (BLM).


NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

Dave Unger

Abbreviations: Delaware Twp (DT), Irish Valley (IV), Ralpho Twp (RaT), Riverside (RS), Roaring Creek Water Co. (RCWC), Rush Twp (RT), N. Branch Susquehanna R. at Riverside (SR).

The complier thanks Ms. Dorothy Faust for her observations from Irish Valley and all the other persons who reported sightings. Any sightings from Northumberland can be deeply appreciated, especially the N or S end. If you watch birds and either live here or know someone who does, please call or send data to the complier.

Great Blue Heron were common along the SR all quarter due to the relatively mild winter. I was also seen along a small farm pond in RT during a snowstorm. Canada Goose, Am. Black Duck, Mallard, and C. Merganser (high 25+ on 2/24) were all common on the SR (CS, DU). Bufflehead were seen there occasionally.

An ad. Bald Eagle was observed at RCWC the beginning of Jan. (BK) and several imm. were present during the later part of Mar. (BK,DU). N. Harrier were uncommon in both IV (DF) & RT during the first part of the quarter. Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper’s hawks were reported preying on feeders in IV (DF), RS & RT. Am. Goldfinch and Dark-eyed Junco were reported to be the most common prey (DF,DU). Red-tailed Hawk were successfully preying on Rock Dove in IV (DF). Rough-legged Hawk were reported from DT (RF). Ring-necked Pheasant were uncommon in RaT & RT, but several survived the winter. Ruffed Grouse numbers declined in RT but Wild Turkey were reported in increasing numbers from all wooded areas (m.o.b.). First Kildeer were observed in RS & RT 3/4. Both Ring-billed and Herring gulls were common, with >100 seen several times. A ad. Great Black-backed Gull was on the SR 1/27, 2 ad. 2/12, and 5 (2 ad. and 3 imm.) were seen 2/17.

Horned Lark were seen occasionally in RaT and RT especially during the frequent snow storms, >100 were seen in RT 2/25. Blue Jay were reported as numerous in IV (DF) but were scarce in RT. Blue Jays have been few or nonexistent for the past several quarters in RT. Carolina Wren continue their comeback due to another mild winter. E. Bluebird also reported as common in many areas. On 1/22 a flock of >60 Cedar Waxwing was seen in RT (RS), otherwise they were rare.

Am. Tree and White-throated sparrows were numerous in RaT & IV (DF) but uncommon in RT. A Fox Sparrow spent the winter at a feeder in IV (DF) and several were in RS 3/11. Dark-eyed Junco and Am. Goldfinch were reported as numerous in all areas. Red-winged Blackbird and C. Grackle returned 3/11. House Finch numbers have been on the decline in RT but were numerous in IV, RaT & RS. For another year, no northern finches were reported with the exception of Pine Siskin in RT. 2 were seen 2/2 and 4 on 2/28.

OBSERVERS: Dorothy Faust, Roy Fontaine, Bill Krieger, Chris Smith, Linda & Dave Unger, RD6 Box 246, Danville 17821 (717-672-3254).

PERRY COUNTY

Deuane Hoffman

Abbreviations: Board Run Rd (BR), Little Buffalo SP (LB).

A nice mixture of waterfowl was at LB 3/25: 2 Red-throated Loon, 4 C. Loon, 20 Am. Wigeon, 25 Ring-necked Duck, 10 Ls. Scaup, and 2 Gr. Scaup (DC). 1 Redhead was on the Juniata R.
Ad. Bald Eagle sightings are becoming commonplace along the river nr Duncannon. Many sightings were submitted as the pair that nests on Haldeman L. got prepared for their hatchlings. Thank you PGC for the hacking program. Let us hope more of their released birds call the Susquehanna R. valley home.

A large flock of 29 Wild Turkey was nr Shermans Dale 1/30 (DH). A wintering E. Phoebe was found nr Liverpool 1/18 (DD), most unusual for here. Yellow-rumped Warbler took to the Warm Springs Lodge area with 12 seen 1/30 (DH).

A Fox Sparrow was at BR 3/20 (DD). A most difficult bird to find was Pine Siskin, but 3 were tallied at BR 2/29 during Project FeederWatch (DD). 3 Evening Grosbeak were nr Warm Springs 1/30 (DH).

OBSERVERS: Dick Colyer, Dallas Dowhower, Deuane Hoffman, 3406 Montour St, Harrisburg 17111 (717-564-7475).

**PHILADELPHIA COUNTY**

Ed Fingerhood

**Abbreviations:** Bartram Ave, pond (BA), Carpenters Woods (CW), Delaware R. (DR), Franklin Sq. (FS), Lewis Ave. pond (LA), Lively Ln (LL), Pennypack Ave. Res. (PR), Roxborough (RX), Schuykill R. (SR).

Note: On 11/13/91 the Tinicum Nat’l Environ. Center changed its name officially to the John Heinz NWR at Tinicum.

The WBC missed the peculiar 5 Hooded Merganser found by Freda Rappaport on the WC 1/1–2/18 at Valley Green. It “panhandled” with Mallards for bread crumbs. The Mallards often behaved aggressively toward her, she dove when they snapped at her. She ate bread, popcorn, Ritz crackers, and pretzels offered by visitors.

8 species of raptor were found on the WBC including 12 Turkey Vulture and 1 Red-shouldered Hawk. Also noteworthy were a N. Harrier at LA 3/14 (CL), a N. Goshawk at LL 1/17 (SL), and a Merlin in TN 1/17 (JCM); a Merlin perched in an Olney yard 2/24 (KS). Encouraging is that pairs of Peregrine Falcon have nested on 4 of the 5 major bridges, plus suspected nesting on center city buildings. Details will be published in the next issue of Pa. Birds. The introduced Wild Turkey in Pennypack Park was found for the WBC (not counted, as needs to be self-sustaining for 10 yrs under ABA rules and only at 5 yr). The 2 C. Moorhen were new to the count.

Best C. Snipe count was 55 at TN 3/21 (JCM), and although reported in Feb., Am. Woodcock were noted as many in RX 3/20 (CM). Owl reports include the return of E. Screech-Owl to CW; 22 Great Horned on WBC; Long-eared at TN 3/20 (JCM); Short-eared in RX 3/30+ (CM); and N. Saw-whet at TN 1/23 & 3/10 (JCM). 2 E. Phoebe found on WBC. A flock of 24 Horned Lark noted in n.e. PHL on the WBC. Tree Swallow arrived remarkably early with 4 at TN 2/23 (SS,FW,KS) & 10 2/25 (TR).

A high count of 160 Carolina Wren on the WBC was influenced by continuing mild winters, and 10 Winter Wren (becoming more regular). Only 1 Golden-crowned Kinglet found on WBC (FU) while MD found 4–6 at LL 3/17; lone Ruby-crowned report was 1 at TN 2/23 (KS). E. Bluebird were obvious in RX 2/23 (CM). The Am. Robin was unusually abundant; WBC had a record 1036. A few comments: “more than anytime in recent years in the area throughout the entire season (SL)” “every flat, grassy area covered with them (EF)” “commonplace (FU)” 20 Cedar Waxwing in RX 2/23 (CM).

Two, new-for-the-count warblers, Orange-crowned and a C. Yellowthroat, were found for the WBC in Roosevelt Park. 17 Yellow-rumped Warbler were found in n.e. PHL. An early Pine Warbler, scarce in PHL, was at TN 3/9 (NP), and a startlingly early Black-and-white was along the WC 3/29 (FU).

Although SL considered White-throated Sparrow “lower than used to be the norm” in Mt. Airy, the WBC came up with an average 1365. A flock of 100+ Snow Bunting at the PHL airport was a welcome return of decent numbers for JCM. Red-winged Blackbird never really left the area. Rusty Blackbird counts in TN included 2 early in TN 3/23 (KS), 50+ 3/6 (JCM). C. Grackle and Brown-headed Cowbird had arrived on RX by 3/8 (FU). 2 Purple Finch visited RX feeders 2/10 and 11 3/9 (CM) to round out, with a surprise, a very mild winter, with some very early arrivals.

OBSERVERS: Erica Brendel, Michael Drake, Edward Fingerhood, 541 W Sedgwick St, Philadelphia 19119 (215-843-5818), Stephen Lawrence, Chuck Lyman, Chris McCabe, John C. Miller, Nick Pulcinella, Tom Reeves, Jack Siler, Kate Somerville, Fred Ulmer.

**SCHUYLKILL COUNTY**

Dan Knarr

All reports by compiler in the New Ringgold area unless otherwise noted. A Black Vulture was at Port Clinton 3/30, 70 Wild Turkey were found in one flock 1/13, with smaller flocks noted on several other occasions. 3 Am. Woodcock noted 3/8, 2 Pileated Woodpecker 3/7. A Hermit Thrush 2/15. A flock of 75 Am. Pipit found 3/13. 2 Swamp and 1 Fox sparrow found 3/14. OBSERVER: Dan Knarr, RR 1 Box 25D, New Ringgold 17960 (717-386-4780).

**SOMERSET COUNTY**

Allen Schweinsberg

No report this quarter.


**SOMERSET COUNTY**

**Abbreviations:** High Point L. (HPL), L. Somerset (LS), Markleton (MK), Meyersdale Sewage Lagoons (MSL), Quemahoning Dam (QD), Samiti’s Pond (SP).

Tony Marich sent us his sightings as follows. As usual, waterfowl was generous. At LS were 1 Pied-billed 3/22 and 1–11 Horned 3/14,22. 4 Tundra Swans at Jerome Landing 2/28; 15 at MSL 3/23 (1 had a...
black neck collar #Y988), and 2 at LS 3/27. A white Snow Goose was with Canada Geese at MSL 2/1. High count of Canada Goose was 428 at MSL 2/1. A migrating flock of 215 were at SP 2/29. There were 7 neck-collared birds and the 4 different type collars indicate birds from 4 separate studies.

3 Shoddy pond where present last winter. I was in Black Twp in a spring Coot mine eating a robin. I continued. It to a tree to dine. Weakened birds were taken by predators. See was seen eating a robin 3/25. It picked up the road kill and carried being revived at an automotive service center was received. A crow caused mortality along highways. One report of an ice-covered bird during an unseasonable warm spell. The return of cold weather was seen eating pigeons. 4 at LS 3/22. 8 at HPL and 3 at LS 3/21. 159 at LS 3/22.

3/27 A

A pair of C. Raven built a nest (found 2/11) on a structural steel beam on the outside of an unused coal processing building at Rockwood. The nest was beneath a structural steel beam on the outside of an unused coal (WESP (MN). Raven was again noticeably more common in e. part of county in WSF and WESP (MG). Although nearly absent elsewhere, Evening Grosbeak were seen regularly in Eagles Mere this winter (FC).

Large numbers of Am. Robin arrived the first week of Mar. during an unseasonable warm spell. The return of cold weather caused mortality along highways. One report of an ice-covered bird being revived at an automotive service center was received. A crow was seen eating a robin 3/25. It picked up the road kill and carried it to a tree to dine. Weakened birds were taken by predators. A Short-eared Owl above. Robin numbers decreased through the end of Mar. as sub-freezing nighttime temperatures and snow cover continued.

3 Am. Pipit were at Confluence 3/14 and 2 at LS 3/22. 2 Fox Sparrow at MK 3/11. One had a leg missing. 1 Snow Bunting on a reclaimed strip mine 1/10. 7 Meadowlark nr Rockwood 1/29 and present at various locations afterward. 2–3 Pine Siskin at MK all quarter.

SULLIVAN COUNTY

Douglas A. Gross

Abbreviations: World’s End SP (WESP), Wyoming SF (WSF).

Populations of even common birds were low all quarter. Two C. Raven were carrying nesting materials as early as 2/5 in WESP (MN). Raven was again noticeably more common in e. part of county than most past winters (TJ,TS). Tufted Titmouse was hard to find in many of its summer haunts, but quite common in Eagles Mere where there were feeders (DG,FC). Red-breasted Nuthatch was notably absent from its usual places in WSF. even White-breasted Nuthatch was hard to find in WSF and WESP (DG). Although nearly absent elsewhere, Evening Grosbeak was seen regularly in Eagles Mere this winter (FC).

OBSERVERS: Fred Crafts, Doug Gross, RR 1 Box 147, Orangeville 17858, Ted Jacobsen, Mike Norris, Terry Soya.

TIOGA COUNTY

Bob Ross

Abbreviations: Crooked Cr. (CC), Grand Canyon (GC), Hills Cr. L. (HCL), Hamilton L. (HLL), Hammond L. (HDL), Jobs Corners (JC), Mansfield (MF), Millerton area (MA), Marsh Cr. (MC), National Fishery Laboratory (NFL), Nessmuk L. (NL), Pine Cr. (PC), Sabineville area (SA), The Muck (TM), Wellboro area (WA).

Many of the larger migratory waterbirds arrived earlier than last year only to find a late winter with refrozen lakes and cold weather to follow. One to three C. Loon were found on HCL & HDL 3/14 (AA&LB), at least 4 weeks ahead of last year. Pied-billed and Horned grebes, however, were observed HCL & NL 3/31,30 (CN), almost a week later than last year. Single over-wintering Great Blue Heron (MR,HR,MC). <20 Tundra Swan per observation were seen 2/22–3/29 (v.o.). 5 Mute Swan, perhaps a 1st (though unwanted!) Co. record, were at CC 3/29 (RMR,BR). 2 Gr. White-fronted Goose, the 2nd record in a year, reported at CC 3/21 (AA&LB). 8 Snow Goose were at MA 3/8 (AA&LB), but spectacular flights of Canada Goose began 2/22,23; On 3/2 >9,000 Canadas were counted in flight over JC (AA&LB).

As the following table shows, ducks were well represented in terms of both spp. and numbers this spring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Observers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wood Duck</td>
<td>3/5-21</td>
<td>PC,TM,HCL</td>
<td>CD,RMR,AA&amp;LB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gr-wing Teal</td>
<td>3/26-29</td>
<td>TM,HDL</td>
<td>RMR,AA&amp;LB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Am. Black Duck</td>
<td>3/14,21</td>
<td>NL,LC</td>
<td>BR,RMR,AA&amp;LB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mallard</td>
<td>3/22-23</td>
<td>TM,MLH,LCC,C</td>
<td>RMR,BR,AA&amp;LB</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. Pintail</td>
<td>3/14-31</td>
<td>NL,LC,HCL</td>
<td>BR,RMR,AA&amp;LB,CW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bl-wing Teal</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>AA&amp;LB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Am. Wigeone</td>
<td>3/6-31</td>
<td>NL,HCL,HML,C</td>
<td>BR,RMR,AA&amp;LB,CW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canvasback</td>
<td>3/21</td>
<td>CC</td>
<td>AA&amp;LB</td>
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<td>Redhead</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>HCL</td>
<td>AA&amp;LB</td>
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<td>3/28</td>
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<td>BR,RMR,AA&amp;LB,CW</td>
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<td>Gr. Scaup</td>
<td>3/21-29</td>
<td>NL,LC,HCL</td>
<td>BR,RMR,AA&amp;LB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ls. Scaup</td>
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<td>3/14,29</td>
<td>HCL,LC</td>
<td>AA&amp;LB,BR,RMR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bufflehead</td>
<td>3/21-21</td>
<td>HCL,LC</td>
<td>AA&amp;LB,BR,RMR,CW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hooded Merg.</td>
<td>3/31-31</td>
<td>MLNL,HCL,C,CC</td>
<td>RMR,BR,CA,AA&amp;LB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Merganser</td>
<td>3/31-31</td>
<td>PC,NL,HCL,HCL</td>
<td>CD,RMR,CWA,AA&amp;LB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red-brst Merg.</td>
<td>3/7-14</td>
<td>HCL</td>
<td>AA&amp;LB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data represent approximate increases of 40% in total spp. and 90% in total numbers over last year, partly due to additional observers. Most notably, Wood Duck were down, Black Duck and Pintail were present (up). L. Scaup were down, and all 3 spp. of Merganser were up.

A flock of up to 25 Turkey Vulture were first sighted at GC & PC 3/10 (BR,RC), a week ahead of last year. An Osprey was at NFL 3/4 (RMR), some 3 weeks ahead of last year. Our resident pair of Bald Eagle constructed a new nest near last year’s fallen nest and mated before the end of the quarter (CD). A N. Harrier frequented TM this quarter and another was seen at CC 3/28 (RMR,AA&LB). A single Sharp-shinned Hawk was reported from WA 1/18 (MC), while Cooper’s were seen at MA and JC 3/15,31 (JS,AA&LB). A Broad-winged Hawk returned to the Co. an early 3/21 (at CC,AA&LB), while Rough-legged Hawk were last reported from SA 3/1 (HR). Independent sightings of single Golden Eagle were made at CC & TC 2/27 & 2/14 (HR,AA&LB), Single Merlin at JC and HCL 3/13,14 (AA&LB).

Winter sightings of wildfowl include only a single Ring-necked Pheasant at MA 1/6 and 5 Ruffed Grouse at GC 2/18 (AA&LB,BR). Killdeer returned to JC and NFL 3/23 (AA&LB,GP), only 2 days later than last year. 7 C. Snipecoastal roads over snow-covered fields at NFL 3/19 (GP, RMR). Am. Woodcock were first seen/heard at JC and GC 3/9-12 (AA&LB,BR,RMR), same dates as last year. Each migratory season for the past 3 years Ring-billed Gull have been found more often and in larger flocks,

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usually in farm fields. Up to 50 “seagulls” were counted at WA, JC & HCL 2/23–3/8 (CW,MC,AA&LB) with a high of 350 birds seen at WA 3/30 (RMR). Four spp. of owl were recorded including an E. Screech at SA 2/2 (HR), Great-horned at WA and SA 1/9 and 2/2 (MC,HR), Barred at GC and MA 2/8 and 3/15 (BR,RMR,AA&LB), and a pair of Short-eared at MA 3/26 (AA&LB). The only Belted Kingfisher fished at TM 2/23 (RMR). A few N. Flicker overwintered at TM and MF 1/20 and 2/11 (RMR,EE).

An E. Phoebe returned to TM 3/21 (within a week of the two previous years) only to experience a frigid 10°F by the following morning and 6 in. of snow later. It was observed catching aquatic insects in an open area of a stream pool. Tree Swallow returned to HDL 3/28 (AA&LB), a day ahead of last year. E. Bluebird were not reported until 3/7, 19 at Tioga and TM (MC,RMR). Only one winter resident was again reported from JC 1/10 (A&LB).

Chipping Sparrow returned to WA 3/22 (MC), 2 weeks ahead of last year’s first report. Fox Sparrow arrived 3/6 (same date as last year) but stayed much longer and in greater numbers (probably due to several waves of migrants), well into the 2nd quarter. Reports came from MA, MF,JC,TM,PC, and WA (JS,EE,AA&LB,MRM,BR,RC). Four Swamp Sparrow were found at CC 2/25 (winter resident?; RMR,BR). Only one winter resident was sighted at JC 1/2 (A&LB). Water Pipit interrupted their migration to feed along roadsides at NFL and WA 3/12,14 (RMR,BR). Large flocks of Cedar Waxwing were seen at GC (93) and MF (>60) 1/1 and 3/28 (BR,RMR,AA&LB). An adult Loggerhead Shrike was found at SA 1/26 (HR, previous experience with this sp.).

Red-winged Blackbird were seen at WA 1/17 (MC,CW), but the first waves of migrants did not arrive until 2/25-29 at WA, TM, and PC (MC,RMR,CD), only 2-3 days later than last year. E. Meadowlark were not sighted until 3/12,14 at WA, SA, and NL (MC,HR,BR,RMR), a week later than last year. Small flocks of Rusty Blackbird were first heard and seen 3/23 (RMR), a month later than last year. Com. Grackle arrived at WA, MC, and SA in small numbers 2/29+ (CW,MRM,BR), 3-4 days later than last year. Brown-headed Cowbird were not reported until 3/7-29 at WA and JC (CW,AA&LB,MC), some 2 weeks later than a year ago. The only report of Purple finch (1) came from JC 3/2 (AA&LB). Pine Siskin overwintered in moderate numbers at WA, JC, and GC (CW,AA&LB,BR). Evening Grosbeak visited feeders regularly in high numbers (75) at GC all quarter (BR), but only a dozen were reported at WA 3/30 (MC).


UNION COUNTY
Allen Schweinsberg
No report this quarter.


VENANGO COUNTY
Gary Edwards and Russ States

Abbreviations: Allegheny R. (AR), Hovis Pond (HP), Kahle L (KL), Oil Creek SP (OC), Two Mile Run Park (TMR).

Work schedules kept the number of hours in the field low. Nevertheless, 48 spp. were recorded in Jan., 43 in Feb., and 60 in Mar. The first C. Loon was at KL 3/29. A Snow Goose was among 20 Canada Goose at HP 2/2. Our 1st Co. record Sandhill Crane occurred 3/22 in the KL region by Walt Fye et al. The AR produced several duck spp. including a Wood Duck 2/2, an early Green-winged Teal 1/31, an early Ring-necked Duck 1/12, the first Hooded Merganser 2/2 and first N. Pintail 3/15.

First Turkey Vulture was seen 2/23. The Co’s 1st recent Peregrine Falcon record was 3/27 when Walt Fye et al. observed the bird in the KL region. Several E. Screech-Owl were at TMR and Short-eared Owl were on their usual winter strip mine on several occasions. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at TMR 1/25 and at OC 2/8 (NK). Carolina Wren was seen 1/5. First C. Grackle was 2/28. AM observed an early Fox Sparrow 3/12. There were no other unusual or extremely early sightings.


WARREN COUNTY
Ted Grizez

Abbreviations: Akeley (AK), Irvine (IR), Kinzua Dam (KD), Lander (LA), Saybrook (SA), Starbrick (ST), State Line Rd (SLR), Warren (WA).

There were 2 C. Loon and 2 Horned Grebe on the river at ST 3/30 (JS), and 7 Horned Grebe stopped at Neels’ pond nr SA the same day (CMN). Single Great Blue Heron were along the Allegheny R. in Jan. The first migrating flock of Tundra Swan was seen over SA 2/22 (CN). The next 8 days were napping on the river at ST and 60–70 flew over IR (TG). 44 were on the river at ST 3/30 (JS). The 4 Mute Swan at ST seemed to be paired off (TG).

A fine blue Snow Goose was at Dunn’s Eddy downriver from IR with 47 Canada 3/2 (TG). A Wood Duck and a Green-winged Teal spent much of the winter again with 270 Mallard on the river at Warren Gen. Hosp. where people feed them. 13 Am. Black Duck were nr IR 2/16 (BHL). 7 Oldsquaw were at ST 3/31 (TG), and 3 Red-breasted Merganser 3/30 (JS). 41 Hooded Merganser were counted in one flock in WA 1/1 (BHL).

3 ad. Bald Eagle were in WA 1/1 (BHL,CP), and 2 were often seen at KD in Jan. An imm. was nr Tidioute 1/10 (BHL,AG). A N. Harrier was nr LA 2/3 (DW). At least 8 Cooper’s Hawk were reported through the quarter; 1 caught a robin. An ad. f Am. Kestrel banded nr LA by DW 6/15/91 was found dead at Monticello, Flr (nr Tallahassee) 10/27/91.

First Am. Woodcock report was of 1 calling at WA 3/4 (DW). Ring-billed Gull, so abundant in early winter, were practically absent in Feb. & Mar. 40+ Mourning Dove were at JP’s home nr N. Warren 1/3. Please see the separate account of the Great Gray Owl.

A N. Flicker was in WA 2/14 and 2 on SLR 2/28 (TG). 30 Horned Lark were at AK 2/8 (BHL,DD). 2 C. Raven were seen out of usual habitat just w. of AK 1/28 (BHL,DD). 4 Ruby-crowned Kinglet were at KD 2/22 (CP), 2–6 E. Bluebird were seen 2/8–23 at four locations. Several flocks of 7–200 Am. Robin were noted through Jan. & Feb. A N. Mockingbird was nr LA 1/19 (DW), and 1 in WA 3/23 (BHL). ±200 Cedar Waxwing were estimated at SLR 2/13 (TG). A N. Shrike was at the same location on SLR for the 3rd straight winter 1/21 (DW) & 2/26 (TG). Others were seen at SLR 1/28 (DD,BHL), Columbus 3/11 (DD), AK 2/8 (BHL,CP), and w. of WA 2/23 (DW).

A flock of 15 Snow Bunting was nr LA 1/22 (DW). First Rusty Blackbird was 1 at Neels’ feeder at SA 3/3. A Purple Finch appeared at Barnes 1/16 (BBL). Neels’ feeder at SA hosted 1 or 2 C. Redpoll in late Feb., up to 50 Pine Siskin regularly through Jan., with lesser numbers in Feb. & Mar., and 8–10 Evening Grosbeak daily in Jan. (CMN).

OBSERVERS: Merle Caldwell, Keith Confer, Dan Doherty, Don & Brita Dorn, Ted Grizez, 10 Belmont Dr, Warren 16365 (814-723-9464), Bill Highhouse (BHL), Bill Hill (BHL), Chuck & Marjorie Neel, Jan Palmer, Chase Putnam, John Schultz, Don Watts.

PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS

VOLUME 6 NO.1
WAYNE COUNTY

Pat Walters

Abbreviations: Houda (LA), L. Ariel (LA), L. Holisterville (LA). Observations by compiler at LA unless otherwise noted. 3 Canada Goose 2/27. A flock of 16 Wild Turkey was seen 3/6 (EC). Killdeer returned 3/5 and there were 15 along Rt. 690 nr Holisterville 3/13 which were doing their “broken wing” act. The late snowice storm 3/15 may have been devastating to them as they were silent afterwards. (A positive note, 2 in Apr. apparently nesting.) Am. Woodcock were noted 3/24.

Mourning Dove were cooing by 2/7. 2 Pileated Woodpecker in Honesdale 2/2 delighted m.ob. (L). 2 Am. Robin in Hamlin apparently over-wintered feeding on the numerous berries available (GG). 12–15 Cedar Waxwing were attracted to a suet feeder at LA. For the 1st time in 5 years I had Scaup (LB), RCL, MEW). First 2 count of Horned Grebe 3/15 at LA 3/13. A Red-winged Blackbird visited our feeders 1/27, earliest ever noted here. Also interesting was the fact that we had 200+ Am. Goldfinch at one time at our feeders and m.ob. reported the same!

OBSERVERS: Joe Casalone, Gary Gogohan, Alex Lilje, Pat Walters, PO Box 190, Moscow 18444 (717-542-0730).

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

Robert C. Leberman & Robert S. Mulivihill

Abbreviations: Donegal L (DL), Powderrmill Nature Reserve (PNR), Trout Run Rd (TRR), also known as Latrobe Res.; Ligonier Valley (LV), Linn Run Sp (LR), Loyalhanna Water Gap (LWG), Mammoth Park (MP).

This quarter was relatively uneventful, with few northern finches invading the area. And, in spite of the mild weather during most of the period, few semi-hardy birds remained to winter. The severest weather occurred during the last 2 weeks of Mar, when snow accumulated up to 1’ or more; temperatures fell to below zero at PNR 3/15 (RCL,RSM), and subsequently at Ligonier 3/20 (WR). At least 2 Red-breasted Merganser was on TRR 3/3 (BR,TR). A count of 15 Horned Grebe was made at DL 3/23,24 (RCL,LB). A white morph Snow Goose was seen with Canadas at DL 3/24 (LB,RCL,MEW). First 2 Wood Duck were at PNR 2/5 (RCL); 4 at DL 3/20 (MEW). A good count of 17 Redhead was at DL 3/20 (MEW). A flock of 32 Ring-necked Duck was on DL 3/15 (MEW). 15 Lo. Scaup were taken 2/13; 92 and 40 were there 2/25 (RCL). Best count of Oldsquaq was 4 at DL 3/26 (MEW). TR & BR found the first 2 Hooded Merganser at DL 3/1, and the species apparently peaked there at 40 3/23 (RCL). Only report of C. Merganser (unnatural here in spring) was of 3 at DL 3/20 (MEW). A flock of 24 Red-breasted Nuthatch were at TRR 2/15; 34 at 3/1 (RCL). First Turkey Vulture was seen nr LR 3/1 (CN); a flock of 7 was nr their traditional nesting area along LWG w. of Ligonier 3/28 (DB). Only N. Harrier reported was nr Pleasant Grove s. of Ligonier 11/17 (RCL). The season’s only Rough-legged Hawk was found 3 mi. s. of Ligonier 1/17 (HMS). No Killdeer were known to winter in LWG, where the first 2 migrants were not found until 2/25 at TRR (RCL). Earliest record for C. Snipe was from PNR 3/11 (RCL). First Ring-billed Gull were 2 at DL 2/18 (RCL).

Horned Grebe was seen at our feeders 1/27–3/5. 3 Red-winged Blackbird were doing their “broken wing” act. The weather returned; at PNR 3 were found dead on or nr. nests where Chipping Sparrow and towhee, which normally return to this area; at 5 locations a total of 280 Ring-necked Duck was seen 3/4–24. A white-winged Scoter was at Sheppard Myers Dam 3/22 (RR). 6–80 Ruddy Duck were at CSP until 3/23 (AS).

First (early!) E. Phoebe was on DL 3/1, and the species apparently peaked there at 40 3/23 (RCL). Only report of Rusty Blackbird was 13 nr DL 3/7 (MEW). At Turkey Hill 3/14 (AS), 5 E. Meadowlark were at Acme Dam 3/16 (MEW). The House Finch dominated most feeding stations, and at PNR a total of 326 was banded this quarter. Pine Siskin were scattered about the LV in small numbers, with no feeding station reporting very large numbers. Three Evening Grosbeak at a feeder nr Stahtstown 3/14 (BR) were the only such report.


YORK COUNTY

Al Spiese

Abbreviations: Codorus Sp (CSP), Collinsville (CV), E. Berlin Rd (EB), Gifford Pinchot Sp (GP), Gut Rd (GR), Long Arm Dam (LAD), Marietta Watershed (MW), Spring Grove (SG), Wrightsville (WR).
