Meetings

Todd Bird Club meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. the first Tuesday of the month, September through April, at Blue Spruce Lodge in Blue Spruce County Park, located just off Route 110 east of the town of Ernest. Arrive by 7:00 to socialize and snack. Refreshments are provided at each of our meetings.

In May we hold our banquet meeting which starts at 6:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, November 6** – Member Nancy Murphy will present “Birds, Butterflies, and Bugs of the Rio Grande Valley.” Nancy will take us from South Padre Island along the Mexican border to Falcon Dam State Park.

Nancy has been a photographer for more than 20 years, starting with 35 mm film. When Canon came out with a digital camera in 2000, she purchased it and says, “I’ve never looked back.” Her present camera is a Canon 7D with 100 to 400 Mark 11 lens.

Nancy’s son has come up with an excellent idea as a gift for every occasion. He gives her a birding trip to the destination of her choice. Even though he’s not a birder, he takes her and doesn’t complain. What a son! Don’t miss this excellent Texas program.

**Tuesday, December 4** – This is our annual cookie extravaganza. If possible, please bring two dozen cookies to share.

Kati Edmiston, Environmental Education Specialist from Jennings Environmental Education Center, will present a program entitled “Highlights of Jennings” at this meeting. Come learn about Jennings Environmental Education Center and what makes it unique among Pennsylvania’s state parks. Find out about birding at Jennings, some birds that call the park home, those that make an appearance throughout the year, and a few other exceptional species that have been noted nearby.

Kati started her career with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of State Parks in 2014 as an Environmental Interpretive Technician at Moraine and McConnells Mill State Parks before transferring to Jennings Environmental Education Center as an Environmental Education Specialist in February of 2018. Prior to joining the Bureau of State Parks, she worked for the Pennsylvania Game Commission, US Investigation Services, and Westminster College.

Let Kati take us to Butler Co. and another great state park, home to the endangered massasauga rattlesnake and the blazing star. Don’t miss this one!
Outings

Tuesday morning outings will continue till deer season. Most outings are at Yellow Creek. For all Yellow Creek outings, meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office, located on Route 259 just off Route 422 east of Indiana. Early comers are invited to meet at the pavilion on the north shore shortly after dawn. Everyone is welcome. If you have any questions, please contact Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667) or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

Saturday, November 10 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Sue Dickson (724-388-5000).

Saturday, November 17 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Gloria Lamer (724-349-1159).

Saturday, November 24 – Blue Spruce County Park outing, led by Ray Winstead (724-349-2506). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the first large parking lot just past the park office.

Saturday, November 30 – Monday, December 2 – The Niagara Frontier, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee. You must have a passport or a passport card to enter Canada and return to the US. We will bird mostly in Canada. This four-day trip will cover Dunkirk Harbor en route to the Peace Bridge, as well as areas along the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. We will meet Frank and Sandra Horvath in Grimsby and bird two days under their leadership.

We plan to stay at a motel near the falls on the Canadian side. You may take part in the entire trip or in only a day or two by meeting us there. If you are interested in going or have questions, please contact the Higbees (724-354-3493).

Wednesday, December 26 – Indiana Christmas Bird Count. The count is conducted in a 15-mile-diameter circle centered at the intersection of Second and Grandview in Indiana. If you live within 7.5 miles of this intersection, you are welcome to do a feeder or yard count. Otherwise, you may join one of the field parties or take responsibility for a section of the circle. Please contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493) if you plan to participate.

I love fall. The air seems crisper, more refreshing, and easier to breathe. The nights are great for sleeping, and the days beckon me to the woods and waterways. Whitetail fawns are starting to find their own way, and bucks are polishing their racks. The steelhead will soon be running upstream from the Great Lakes, and the fall migration of our feathered friends has begun, triggered by the rhythms of nature. It's a time of transition.

It's a time of transition for the Todd Bird Club as well. When I was asked (actually pleaded with) to be the club's president, I thought "You've got to be joking." I'm the most fledgling of birders, but I did eventually agree to be co-president with Linda Jones, not because of my standing with the group, rather that I'm willing to stand up before the group!

Decades ago I graduated from IUP with a degree in Natural Sciences, and I've long been in love with the outdoors. One of the presenting problems is it's a BIG outdoors, and there is so much that interests me that I find it hard to focus on any particular topic. I'd like to expand my limited knowledge of birding and need lots of help and coaching. I imagine there may be others like me who are a bit intimidated by the expertise held by many in our group. Let's learn together and invite other "newbies" to join and enjoy recognizing the birds just beyond their windows.

My wife Jan and I have been traveling quite a bit with recent trips to Ohio, Colorado, our cabin in the Finger Lakes, and the Delaware shore. Birds are everywhere and I'd like to identify more of them! We visited our daughter's family in New Zealand last fall and saw birds unique to that part of the world along with magnificent scenery. We shared some of that trip with you at our October meeting.

Hope to see you in November!

Jim Woodard, President
This year was our 50th wedding anniversary, so Ken and I decided that we wanted to celebrate with an adventure. We decided that Alaska was one of those places we wanted to visit while we could still get around, so late last year Ken started to look online for places to bird in Alaska. He found several, but the most interesting was St. Paul Island in the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea. The islands are part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. We also wanted to travel inland in Alaska so we could get to know the state up close. No Carnival Cruise for us!

Our first problem was how to get to St. Paul Island. We started with AAA only to find that they didn’t even know where the Pribilof Islands were and had no idea how to get there or what was on the island. Back to the internet. Fortunately, Ken found an Alaskan tour agency which offered a package tour to St. Paul Island. The agency works with the Aleut Indian Council which manages the commercial enterprises on St. Paul. The Council runs the tour while the agency makes our tour reservations with them and arranged round-trip airfare from Anchorage. The tour included the hotel and food, birding guides, and transport while on St. Paul. We chose a four-day tour in early June to try to spot both migrants and nesting species. About 25 species nest in the thousands on the cliffs and tundra on St. Paul. About 310 species of birds have been seen there, including rare species from Asia.

St. Paul is a 3½-hour flight from Anchorage. The flight goes once a day if the weather is good. If it isn’t good, the flight is late or doesn’t go until the next day...or whenever the weather allows. The island is volcanic with ancient peaks and a caldera. The ground is tundra over volcanic rock. No trees. Black sand. Grass and wildflowers in early June. Lapland Longspurs and Rock Sandpipers nest on the tundra; Rosy Finches, Snow Buntings, and Pacific Wrens, in the rocky outcrops. Seabirds and alcid birds nest in the niches in the cliffs overlooking the sea. Lots of gulls of many species. Lots of strays from Asia. We saw 51 species on St. Paul, 31 of which were lifers and 6 species I had seen only once or twice but never in breeding plumage. Think Red and Red-breasted Phalarope, for example. We didn’t just catch glimpses of the birds but had multiple long, good looks. We also got the bird of the trip there – an Oriental Cuckoo, only the fifth time it has been seen in North America.

Living conditions were spartan. The hotel was a wing of the air terminal with shared bathrooms at one end of the hall. Rooms were small but clean, and there was a laundry for residents’ use. The food, served at the Commissary of the island fish packing plant, included three hearty meals a day; and the food was fresh and tasty. Birding was available 13 hours a day or longer if anyone wanted to stay up into the evening. There are about 20 hours of sunlight in early June. The schedule was dinner at 6:00 p.m. with birding in between meals and after dinner. I admit that Ken and I skipped the after-dinner outing.

There were seven people in our tour group from all over the US and Scotland. As we arrived, a larger group was just leaving. Birders and wildlife photographers from all over the world make St. Paul one of their stops. The four guides, all top-notch birders, rotated shifts.

After four days we flew back to Anchorage and rented a car. We made a stop at Potter Marsh just outside of Anchorage. Then we went south to Seward and Homer on the Kenai Peninsula. The housing was much more upscale there.

We took a small boat day cruise from Seward. Thirty-four people were on the boat including about 15 birders and photographers from all over Europe and Asia who were on an escorted grand tour of Alaska. We saw more alcid species, four species of whales, one type of porpoise, sea otters, seals and sea lions, lots of gulls, a kettle of 23 Bald Eagles, and a really great view of a glacier.

Homer is the home of the visitor center of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. It’s a great visitor center where we met a former IUP student who works there. We bought our sons some high status T-shirts and saw one of our St. Paul guides on their video. We also visited a coastal park and got some neat birds.

I added another 10 lifers on the mainland part of the trip. Yes, any birder should go to Alaska at least once. The food is good, the air is clean, and the birding is fantastic. Please see the complete bird trip list on page 4 and the mammal list on page 5.
Beth & Ken Marshall’s Alaska Bird List – 2018

Species designated with an asterisk (*) were life birds. Species designated with a “B” were ones we saw in breeding plumage for the first time.

Saint Paul Island

*Aleutian Cackling Goose
*Harlequin Duck
Northern Pintail - B
Long-tailed Duck - B
*King Eider – Juvenile & Adult
Greater Scaup
Green-winged Teal
*Common Teal
*Eurasian Wigeon
American Wigeon
Tufted Duck
Tundra Swan
*Red-legged Kittiwake
*Glaucous-winged Gull
*Glaucous Gull
*Sabine’s Gull
*Black-headed Gull
*Slaty-backed Gull
*Black-legged Kittiwake
Short-eared Owl
Northern Fulmar - Lots
*Long-tailed Jaeger
Red Phalarope - B
Red-necked Phalarope - B
*Rock Sandpiper
*Wandering Tattler
*Common Greenshank
Whimbrel
*Siberian Whimbrel
*Bar-tailed Godwit
Ruddy Turnstone – B
*Terek Sandpiper
*Crested Auklet
Common Murre
*Thick-billed Murre
*Parakeet Auklet
*Least Auklet
*Horned Puffin
*Tufted Puffin
*Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (Pribilof subspecies)
Snow Bunting – B
*Brambling
Lapland Longspur – B
*Streaked Flycatcher – Ken only
Bank Swallow
*Oriental Cuckoo
*Pacific Wren (Alaskan Coastal Subspecies)
Pelagic Cormorant
*Red-faced Cormorant
Double-crested Cormorant

Total for St. Paul Island - 31 Lifers

Alaska Mainland

Canada Goose
Green-winged Teal
Greater Scaup
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Turkey Vulture
Herring Gull
Black-legged Kittiwake
*Black Oystercatcher
Double-crested Cormorant
Pelagic Cormorant
*Arctic Tern
Spotted Sandpiper
*Kittlitz’s Murrelet
*Ancient Murrelet
*Rhinoceros Auklet
Common Murre
Tufted Puffin
Horned Puffin
American Robin
Varied Thrush - Heard
*Pacific-slope Flycatcher
*Golden-crowned Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
*Costal Alaska N. Fox Sparrow – subspecies, gray with plain back
Tree Swallow
Violet-green Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Belted Kingfisher
Orange-crowned Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Snow Bunting
Rusty Blackbird – B
*Northwestern Crow
*Black-billed Magpie
Sandhill Crane – Pair with two young (Brown bodies from dusting themselves with brown earth)
Trumpeter Swan

10 Lifers on Mainland

(see page 6 for their Mammal Lists)
Conneaut Sandspit Outing Revisited

The outing to Conneaut, Ohio, was scheduled for Saturday, August 25. Roger and I left Indiana at 6:13 a.m., and arrived at the sandspit at 9:00 a.m. By the time we arrived, members Debbie Kalbfleisch and Richard Nugent were already there.

The day started off slowly with the usual Bonaparte’s, Ring-billed, and Herring Gulls, but scattered among them were 13 Common Terns and one Forster’s Tern. An Osprey flew overhead, and we counted 64 Double-crested Cormorants, three Great Blue Herons, and four Bald Eagles on the rock jetty. After a while a flock of 22 Sanderlings arrived followed soon after by a single Caspian Tern. Richard noticed a Semipalmated Plover by the ponded water, and it was soon joined by three Semipalmated Sandpipers. Three Wood Ducks were swimming in the vegetation while a Green Heron stalked prey at the edge of the marsh. Two Spotted Sandpipers appeared, and a Ruddy Turnstone was a nice surprise. Overhead two Chimney Swifts and two Cliff Swallows zipped by. A Belted Kingfisher rattled, making us aware of his presence. Debbie then noticed several photographers peering back into the vegetation, so the four of us ambled over toward them. They were photographing a Least Bittern. Other species seen here included Canada Geese, Mallards, Rock Pigeon, Turkey Vultures, Killdeer, Song Sparrow, and Northern Cardinal. By now it was 11:52, so hearing the growling of stomachs, we decided to head to Burger King for lunch.

After lunch we headed south on Rt. 7 toward the Pymatuning Causeway where the only new species was a flock of 10 Tree Swallows, but 10 Caspian Terns were also here. The spillway yielded our first Great Egret, and Roger spotted one American Black Duck amid all the Mallards. At the fish hatchery we added five Wood Ducks, Lesser Yellowlegs, three Bank Swallows, a Cedar Waxwing, and at least six Red-winged Blackbirds; but the highlights here were the six Great Egrets and another Osprey. En route to the Miller Ponds we continued along Teakettle Road where we picked up a few more species – Mourning Dove, Red-tailed Hawk, Eastern Wood-Pewees, Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, and a flock of European Starlings. The Miller Ponds produced three Greater Yellowlegs and swallows – Purple Martins and Bank and Barn Swallows. Here, too, was the day’s first Eastern Kingbird. Our next destination was Wilson Road where the new species included 14 Sandhill Cranes, American Kestrels, American Goldfinch, and Eastern Meadowlarks. A brief stop at the Hartstown Project yielded Tree Swallows and a Green Heron. We decided to stop at McMichael Road on the way home. The highlights here included Common Gallinule, Red-headed Woodpecker, Marsh Wrens, and Brown Creeper.

Since it was almost 5:00 p.m., Richard decided he should head home; but Debbie was intent on continuing to bird. We agreed to stop at Shenango Reservoir’s West Lake Propagation Area. We saw a few “new” species – Least Sandpipers, Eastern Phoebes, Red-eyed Vireo, Baltimore Oriole, and Scarlet Tanager – and we enjoyed the beautiful evening. We ended the trip with a total of 73 species.

– Margaret Higbee

Our Summer Vacation (continued from page 5)

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Kenai Peninsula Mammal List

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Sea Otter

-5-
Trumpeter Swans – Z603 and Z675 – The Continuing Saga

By Tom Glover

When Z603 and Z675 were last noted in the August 2018 issue of *The Todd Nuthatch*, they were found nesting on a beaver pond near Richardsville, PA, in Jefferson County by Lisa Catarouche and family. Since that last report Z603 and Z675 have added new chapters to their saga.

Early on it was feared that the swans’ nesting effort had failed. There was evidence that the eggs did not hatch, but a fuzzy photo taken by Lisa supplied a surprise. Lisa took the photo to highlight the two adult swans with a deer in the background. But on closer examination the photo revealed an image of a little cygnet between the two adults. Yes, Z603 and Z675 did hatch one egg. During the summer Lisa and her family checked on the swan family, and she supplied photos documenting the growth of the cygnet over the summer. The latest photos of the family of swans were taken in early September 2018.

Their story has been interesting, and it continues. Even though I’ve searched eBird reports of Trumpeter Swan sightings in Pennsylvania and states to the south, I have yet to turn up Z603 and Z675. It will be interesting when they are reported to note whether a young swan is associated with the pair.

Following the saga of Z603 and Z675 over the past year has developed into a “Trumpeter Swan Reality Story.” It is rare to get the opportunity to follow individual birds over a long period of time. We will have to wait to see what chapters this family adds to their story.

Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria County – Summer 2018

If you notice that the species in the following report are in a different order yet again, check out the new American Birding Association’s checklist at [http://listing.abird.org/checklist/abachecklist_v7.9.0.pdf](http://listing.abird.org/checklist/abachecklist_v7.9.0.pdf). There was another reshuffling of species in August and more changes will be coming in the near future.

Please send your bird reports at the end of each month to Margaret Higbee at bcoriole@windstream.net or mail to 3119 Creekside Road, Indiana, PA 15701.

**Abbreviations:** Cowansville (CV), Crooked Creek (CC), Prince Gallitzin State Park (PG), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

The Redbank Creek Mute Swans raised three young, and the family group was seen on the Armstrong side of the creek 6/23 (ABu). An American Black Duck at Hemlock Lake 7/5 (EF, TG) was unusual. Common Mergansers were found only in Armstrong this summer with counts of one at CC 6/6 (JB), 2 at Cochran's Mill 6/8 (MVT), and 3 at Mahoning Creek Lake 7/3 (SGu).

An Armstrong sighting of a female Ruffed Grouse with at least 4 young on 6/15 (TR) was the lone confirmed report for the tri-county area; a single grouse spotted at Nolo 6/12 (AB, DB) was the only other one reported.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo reports outnumbered those of the Black-billed this season (v.o.).

A single Common Nighthawk at Ford City 6/15, 29 (ABu) was the only one noted.

A Sora was heard calling at PG 6/30 (MSm).

An American Avocet visited CC 7/16 (MVT, ABu, SGu). Little Yellow Cove at YC provided mud intermittently for a few southward-bound migrant shorebirds. First Semipalmated Plover arrived at YC 7/24 (LC, MH, RH, DK). July 10 marked the arrival of 2 Least Sandpipers,
also at YC, where the high count was 11 on 7/17 (MH, RH, DK). High tallies of Spotted Sandpipers were 5 on 7/27 (AK, JK) at Hemlock Lake and 3 on 7/1 (RL) at PG. First Solitary Sandpiper and the season’s lone Lesser Yellowlegs were noted at YC 7/10 (LC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DK); single Solitaries also were found near WT 7/22 (ABu) and 7/30 (ABu).

A Pomarine Jaeger was photographed at PG 6/24 (RL). The Herring Gull pair nested again at KT, and 2 nestlings were seen in the nest 6/10 (MVT) and 6/21 (SGu).

PG hosted a single Common Loon 6/21 (DS, JSt) and 2 on 7/25 (SVH). High Double-crested Cormorant count was 6 at CC 6/1 (TR); one to 2 were found periodically at various areas across our region during the summer.

A single Osprey noted at YC on four dates bracketed by 6/5 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK) and 7/24 (LC, MH, RH, DK) suggested nearby nesting which has not been confirmed in Indiana. A Northern Harrier at SGL 108 - Bellwood on 7/1 (TA) was the lone report.

At least 3 Barred Owls were present at Nolo 6/3 (AB, DB); singletons were listed at Nolo 6/13; 7/2, 10 (AB, DB) and 7/19, 26 (DB). Two fledged Barred Owlets were seen near Polka Hollow 6/13 (MVT).

Amazing was the discovery of three Merlins – two adults and a fledgling – at IUP on 7/22 (JT). Three Peregrine Falcons – one adult and 2 juveniles – were observed at Manoville 6/7 (KSJ) and 6/8 (SGu, MVT).

Single Alder Flycatchers were listed at PG 6/17 (RL) and at YC 6/24 (SR).

Two Fish Crows were at IUP 6/5, 8, 22, 26; 7/24 (JT); in Cambria 2 were photographed at PG 7/1 (RL). At Loretto 2 were found 6/12 (SVH) and one, 6/24 (SVH).

Fourteen was the Purple Martin count both s.w. of Smicksburg 6/2 (MH, RH) and near Penn Run 6/5 (JA, RA, LC, TG, MH, RH, DK). The CC colony contained 5 individuals 6/10 (MVT). On 7/8 (RL) 27 were noted at the PG martin housing. Near Robbs Fording on 7/30 (MVT) at least 36 were present near two martin houses. The young Purple Martins that attempted an unsuccessful nesting at YC last year did not return; however, 8 young birds were counted at YC 7/24 (LC, MH, RH, DK) and 3 on 7/31 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, GL). The Wood’s Pond colony contained at least 16 birds on 7/28 (MH, RH). Bank Swallows were noted only at PG with tallies of 5 on 6/3 (RL) and 8 on 7/22 (RL). Rare as breeders in our county, 3 Cliff Swallows appeared at PG 6/5 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK); 2 were seen again after a downpour at YC 7/17 (MH, RH, DK) then 3 were found a week later (LC, MH, RH, DK). At PG where a large colony had existed in the 90s, 7/14 (JT). Single Pine Siskins showed up near Lewisville 6/15, 24 (MC) and near Shelocta 7/8, 9 (MH, RH).

It was good to see reports of Vesper Sparrow south of CV 6/3 (ABu, SGu) and near Mayport 6/25 (BR) as this species has become very difficult to find in our region in recent years. The only Savannah Sparrow noted in Indiana was found near Dayton 6/2 (MH, RH); Cambria’s lone report mentioned 2 at SGL 108 - Bellwood on 7/14 (JC, LiC, MN) while Armstrong boasted three locations (v.o.) for Savannahs.

Best Grasshopper Sparrow count was 6 at SGL 108 - Bellwood on 7/1 (TA); none were found in Indiana, but they were noted at 5 Armstrong locations (v.o.). Henslow’s Sparrows were listed 6/3 (ABu, SGu) near CV, 6/15 (TR) north of West Monterey, and 7/30 (JSk) south of Cosmus, all in Armstrong.

Single Yellow-breasted Chats were spotted at the old Elders Ridge strips 6/2 (ABu, SGu) and east- southeast of Adrian 6/2, 24 (TR), and at SGL 247 on 6/21 (TR). Two were noted west of Adrian 6/3 (ABu, SGu). The Clarksburg area was the Indiana hotspot for chats with reports of 2 on 6/7 (MH, RH) and 6/20 (MH, RH, JT).

Two Bobolinks near Dayton 6/2 (MH, RH), 8 near Robbs Fording 6/3 (MH, RH), and 4 near CV 7/4 (TR) were a few of the reports.

Worm-eating Warblers were listed only west of CC 6/13 (JB) and along the Armstrong Trail north of L&D 8 on 6/29 (TR). Louisiana Waterthrushes were reported at Wilmore Dam 6/9 (TA), at C. F. Lewis N. A. 6/20 (MH, RH, JT), near Lewisville 6/21-22 (MC), at YC 6/30 (SR) and 7/21 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, GL), and at Pine Ridge Co. Park through 7/24 (DL); in the CC valley area Louisianas were listed at five locations between 6/3 (MH, RH) and 7/25 (JB). Now scarce in our region, Kentucky Warblers were found only at Conemaugh Dam 6/7 (MH, RH) and 6/18 (MH, RH, JT), at Murphy’s Bottom 6/8 (TR) and at SGL 247 on 6/21 (TR). The only Cerulean Warblers noted in Indiana were 3 at Conemaugh Dam 6/7 (MH, RH) and one there 6/18 (MH, RH, JT); Armstrong, however, yielded ceruleans at six CC valley locations between 6/2 (MD) and 6/17 (JB) as well as reports at four other areas. Northern...
Parulas were found at YC between 6/5 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK) and 7/3 (LC, MH, RH, DK, DM), at Murphy’s Bottom 6/8 (TR) and 6/24 (ABu, SGu), at CC 6/13 (JB), at PG 6/17 (RL) and 6/30 (JV), and at C. F. Lewis NA 6/20 (MH, RH, JT). All Black-throated Blue Warbler reports came from Cambria – one 6/9 (TA) at the Allegheny Portage Railroad N.H.S., one on 7/1 (TA) at SGL 108 - Bellwood, one 7/7 (TA) at Wilmore Dam, and 3 on 7/9 (MH, RH) along the Ghost Town Trail near Red Mill. Single Pine Warblers were noted at CC 6/3 (MH, RH) and south of CV 6/15 (SGu); at least one remained at YC through 7/31 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, GL). A Yellow-throated Warbler was heard singing near CC 6/6 (MH, RH); another was at CC 6/16 (JB) while Cochran’s Mill harbored still another 6/26 (MVT); CD still hosted a Yellow-throated Warbler 6/18 (MH, RH, JT).

This newsletter is produced four times a year by the Todd Bird Club.

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