

The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Todd Bird Club
www.toddbirdclub.org

April 2021

Spring Migration Count Scheduled

Our annual Todd Bird Club Spring Migration Count is scheduled for Saturday, May 8. Mark your calendars now. Social distancing will probably still be in place, so keep in mind any other state regulations at that time.

Field birders, as well as feeder/yard watchers are welcome to participate. This count is county-wide and not limited to a 15-mile diameter circle like the Christmas Bird Count. The procedure is the same, but the possibilities for a variety of species are much greater.

May is a great time to get outside to observe migrants. Many birds pass through our state on their northward journeys. It's exciting because we never know what to expect.

If you eBird your data, just let us know where you birded. If you plan to participate, please notify Roger or Margaret Higbee (bcoriol@windstream.net; call 724-354-3493 or text 412-309-3538).

The Inaugural Breeding Bird Blitz For Conservation Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology June 18-21, 2021

PSO is launching a new initiative in 2021, the Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation, which will turn the passion of Pennsylvanians for watching and counting birds into funding for bird conservation. Teams of birders across the state – following strict COVID protocols – will compete to identify as many species as possible on one day between June 18 and June 21, 2021. Teams will enlist their friends to support their efforts with a donation to support three critical bird conservation projects. Bird-lovers of all ages and skill levels are invited to visit www.breedingbirdblitz.org to form or join a team or to make a donation. Our hope is that PSO (and Todd Bird Club) members will take the lead in organizing teams in their areas to both collect valuable breeding season observations and raise funds for these worthy projects.

The Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation (or the B4C) will direct its efforts toward conserving two priority species whose populations are declining in Pennsylvania: Northern Harrier and Wood Thrush. Both species are listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan. The Northern Harrier is state-listed as “threatened” since its numbers are declining so rapidly. Funds raised for the Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation will be used to protect habitat that these species need: extensive grassy fields for the Northern Harrier and unfragmented forest for the Wood Thrush.

PSO will be partnering with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Manada Conservancy, and Western Pennsylvania

Conservancy. All three organizations protect natural habitats through land purchases, donations, and conservation easements and have identified projects that will utilize the donations from the B4C to protect bird habitat. Hawk Mountain will earmark the B4C funds for Northern Harrier habitat protection, while Manada Conservancy and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy will protect Wood Thrush habitat. Funds raised by the B4C will be split equally among the three organizations. Every penny of donations received will support these projects as PSO is covering all administrative costs associated with the program.

So how does the Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation work? Teams of two or more birders register through the website and decide whether they will cover a single county or a region of the state. While drawing up the plans for their “Big Day,” the team members will reach out to friends to tell them what they are doing and ask for their support with a donation. All donations are made through www.breedingbirdblitz.org, where a donor can select a team to support. After the event, teams will submit their results, primarily through the eBird website. The teams that raise the most funds and document the most species will receive special recognition.

A few tips for members looking to make the most impact with their teams:

1. Organize your team as soon as possible. Once you register your team at the website you can begin to solicit donations from friends.
2. Keep separate eBird checklists at each site you visit during your “Blitz Day.” Make sure to record all species observed and record your effort. These “complete checklists” are a great resource for all those studying Pennsylvania’s breeding birds.
3. Invite someone who is not a member to join your team. This is a great opportunity to introduce them to the organization and the great work that we do.
4. Use email and your social media accounts to let friends know about your effort and ask for their support with a donation toward these great conservation projects. Remember to tell your friends your team name; when they donate, they will select your team name from a drop-down list to “credit” your team with the funds raised.
5. Remember, birding is FUN! Don’t stress if that Blue-winged Warbler that was singing yesterday just won’t show when you want it to. If you can have fun, provide valuable citizen science data, and raise money for conservation in one day, that’s time well spent.

– Brian Byrnes, B4C Committee
brianjbyrnes79@gmail.com

Todd Bird Club’s Participation in the B4C

The Breeding Bird Blitz for Conservation explained above had been planned for 2020, but because of Covid, like everything else, all the plans were put on hold. The B4C is now scheduled for 2021. Last year at one of our pre-Covid meetings, we had formed a team, headed by Roger Higbee. Team members are Margaret Higbee, Carol Guba, and Gloria Lamer. We named ourselves The Todd Towhees. If you go on line to www.breedingbirdblitz.org, you will see our team, and

you will be able to donate toward bird conservation by supporting us.

We would also like to field other teams. Are you willing to head up the Todd Thrashers, the Todd Turkeys, or the Todd Turnstones? Or you can think up your own name, recruit one, two, or more other birders, and take part in this venture. If so, go to the website and register as soon as possible.

Outings and Meetings May Resume in September

We are hoping to resume our normally scheduled meetings and outings starting in September as long as the Covid pandemic subsides and most are vaccinated. When everything starts up again, we will abide by all the state and federal mandates concerning social distancing,

group meetings, and wearing masks. Details will be provided in the August issue of “The Todd Nuthatch.”

Meanwhile, go birding, walk a trail, keep a list, and submit your data.

My Favorite Bird

When I was at Maine Audubon Camp, ornithologist Sara Morris said that the Black Guillemot was her favorite bird. She loves their crisp black and white plumage and bright red feet. “Guillemot Day” was that coming Friday and Sara wore red socks to celebrate.

After all these years of birding, I should have a favorite bird. I think it’s the Arctic Warbler. Unassuming, almost non-descript, but on our recent trip to Alaska it was one of our targets. I had listened to its song and call, and we were birding early one morning on the Denali Highway in its habitat of willow thickets, when I thought I heard its all-on-one-pitch trill. After some searching, I found a small, light olive-colored bird with whitish underparts and a white supercilium, singing from the top of a small tree. I was pretty excited, but still not sure of myself about this potential life bird, when I noticed a few people with binoculars nearby; and one of them was a local guide. I was delighted when he verified my identification.

The Arctic Warbler, unlike most of the warblers seen in Pennsylvania, is not in the Wood-Warbler family. It is an Old World warbler, a member of the Leaf Warbler family. It breeds across northern Eurasia and has become established in Alaska. The entire population winters in southeast Asia. For the winter, this tiny bird would migrate across the Bering Sea back to Asia, then south, having the longest migration route of any Old World insectivorous bird.

But what about this Wood-Warbler: Jim and I were birding in Madera Canyon in July, one of our few summer trips to southeast Arizona, when I spotted a tiny, colorful bird with a red face. I said, “It looks like a warbler with a red face.” On that trip we were just birding, no target list.

We knew some of Arizona’s winter species but didn’t know what to expect in summer. Was I surprised to get out my field guide and find that a “Red-faced Warbler” existed, and we had seen one!

But maybe my favorite bird is the Yellow-breasted Chat.



Flo McGuire photographed this Arctic Warbler on the trip she and Jim took to Alaska in 2018.

During the first Breeding Bird Atlas I had been playing tapes conscientiously during my long commutes, to try to learn warbler songs. Apparently I’m not one of those folks who learn sounds easily; I did not learn much from these tapes. It helps a lot when someone shows me the bird and I can hear its call in person. But one of these “warblers” (an old tape when this species was considered a warbler) made a lasting impression. I had gotten permission and was atlasing on abandoned farmland when I heard a series of raucous calls and whistles and thought, “That sounds like a Yellow-breasted Chat!” With its bright yellow breast and continuing calls it was not hard to find this joyful songster, which will always hold a special place in my heart. The Yellow-breasted Chat is the first, maybe only, lifer I identified myself by sound!



Flo poses with a Northern Saw-whet Owl at Scott Stoleson’s banding site in 2011.

But I love owls! I think my favorite bird is the Northern Saw-whet Owl. We went to Dauphin County twice in the early 2000s for Scott

Weidensaul’s Northern Saw-whet banding demo and were rewarded with up-close looks at these big-eyed feather-balls. In 2011, we had the opportunity to help Scott Stoleson banding on the Allegheny National Forest, and I was able to hold one. I think the photo says it all.

Oh no, scratch that. I think my favorite bird is the Wilson’s Warbler. In 1998, on our very first winter trip “out west,” at Oso Flaco Lake Trail near the California coast, we encountered a yellow warbler with a black cap

foraging in the vegetation on the dunes. Checking my field guide, I identified it as a Wilson's Warbler, a lifer! I love this warbler, not only because of its beauty, but you don't have to be an expert at wingbars or undertail coverts to know it. We had more notable experiences with this species. On the PA Migration Count in May 1999 on Tionesta Creek Road near Hazelton Run Road we were delighted to see another



Flo photographed this Wilson's Warbler, another favorite bird, in 2018 in Alaska.

Wilson's, foraging in the deciduous shrubs. It was probably the "best" bird we had on that PAMC. Then, on the Migration Count in May 2007 on Tionesta Creek Road near Hazelton Run Road, guess what was foraging in the shrubs? Another Wilson's! Maybe even the same one? In 21 years of doing the PAMC in Forest County, we saw exactly two Wilson's Warblers. Then in 2018 on their breeding grounds in Alaska we were fortunate to have several close-up looks at this lively warbler.

As you can see, it's hard for me to choose my favorite bird. I just thought of another candidate—what about the common, silky-gray Mourning Dove, its soft cooing a background music outside our windows, on hikes, and on camping trips all over the country. Although dressed in dove-gray, it has blue eye-rings and pink legs. If I choose the Mourning Dove, I could celebrate by wearing pink socks!

Trying to determine my favorite has been a fun process of sifting through birding memories. I love birding with other birders and have learned immensely from them, but the sightings that have a special place in my heart are the ones I found on my own.



What Is Your Favorite Bird?

We'd love to hear about *your* favorite bird (or birds!). The deadline for the August newsletter is July 20, so you'll have a while to think about this. Please send your favorite bird article to bcorirole@windstream.net. Thanks.

Dues Reminder

This newsletter is produced four times a year by the Todd Bird Club.		
Co-President - Jim Woodard	724-465-5886	creelcrazy@gmail.com
Co-President - Linda Jones	724-463-0651	joneslinda@hotmail.com
Secretary - Roger Higbee	724-354-3493	rvhigbee@windstream.net
Treasurer - Gloria Lamer	724-349-1159	michny9@gmail.com
Past President - Tom Glover		tomnglover@comcast.net
Facebook - Doug Wise		dmdoug66@gmail.com
Scrapbook - Donna Meyer	724-349-2787	donna.meyer36@gmail.com
Webmaster - Ed Donley		hedonley@iup.edu
Newsletter - Margaret Higbee	724-354-3493	bcorirole@windstream.net
Outings - Lee Carnahan	724-388-4667	

Todd Bird Club dues are due on January 1 each year. If you haven't already paid, please submit your \$15 family, \$10 individual, or \$5 student membership to:

Gloria Lamer, Treasurer
515 Laurel Run Road
Penn Run, PA 15765

And please indicate whether you prefer a hard copy or the electronic version. Thanks!

Did you know... that Red-breasted Nuthatches excavate their own nest cavities then apply resin from conifers to the entrance; sometimes they even use a piece of bark as a tool to apply the resin.

Birding Manasquan Inlet, Ocean County, New Jersey

By Tom Glover

During the week of January 17, 2021, my daughter Elyse and son-in-law Tom were checking eBird for target birds located at the Manasquan Inlet, Ocean County, New Jersey. The Inlet is located about 40 miles south of New York City along the Jersey shore where the Manasquan River flows into the Atlantic Ocean. On Saturday, the 23rd, they called and asked if I would be interested in a quick trip to the Inlet to check out a list of neat birds posted on eBird. They noted four species that had been posted consistently throughout the week – King Eider, Common Eider, Razorbill, and Dovekie. These four birds were not on my life list. Of

course, I agreed to the outing. They picked me up the next day, Sunday, the 24th. They talked Grandma into looking after granddaughter Phoebe while we chased birds. That meant Phoebe would be watching a lot of cartoons while snacking on Goldfish and Pirate's Booty.

We arrived at the south jetty along the Inlet at 9:26 a.m. While parking the car, we noticed a flock of Ring-billed Gulls camped out on a railing next to the jetty. Every now and then a few of the gulls would take flight. We noticed the gulls were kiting in the air, and after we exited the car, we discovered why: a strong steady wind coming off the land was blowing toward the ocean. We also noticed we were the only ones out in the cold wind, so it was good that we were wearing our heavy coats, and fortunately I had had the foresight to remember to wear my longjohns! We set up our scopes and started surveying the Inlet. In no time our list included Brant, American Black Duck, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, and Double-crested Cormorant. Tom found one of our target birds, a lone female King Eider, foraging in the inlet. It was a treat watching her technique as she would start into the inlet with the strong wind blowing her out of the inlet. She dived while moving into the inlet. When she was blown out of the inlet, she would fly back up the inlet, starting the process over. We got excited when she came up after a dive with a crab which she promptly devoured.



This female King Eider foraging in Manasquan Inlet was photographed by Tom Fuller.

Tom noticed a flock of Common Eiders near the end of the jetties. Our present position did not offer a good view of the birds because of a string of large boulders toward the end of the jetties. Tom scrambled up onto the boulders and Elyse followed. They promptly told me they had a better view from on top, so reluctantly I started up the boulders, and with some effort I reached the top. The view was improved, but I noticed a nice flat, concrete walkway that extended to the end of the jetty on the south side of the inlet. I also observed four or five birders with scopes at the end of the jetty. We decided that must be the location

from which to see the birds. Tom and Elyse bounced off the boulders while I scouted for the best way to climb down. Unfortunately, there was no best way. I ended up scooting down on the seat of my pants, reconfirming why 73-year-olds should not climb piles of boulders!

After making a wrong turn, we figured out how to get to the end of the jetty. We accessed the jetty by walking across a sandy beach. When we arrived at the end of the jetty, we noted that everyone present was observing the proper spacing per Covid protocol. We found an open area and set up our scopes. We confirmed the Common Eiders we saw from the distance, plus we added Long-tailed Ducks to our list. After a while, the birders on the outer edge of our group discovered the Razorbill diving in the open water. I managed to get a quick view of the bird through my scope. It did have an oddly shaped bill. Elyse and Tom were not quick enough to see the Razorbill. The other bird of note was a Black-headed Gull swimming off the beach; the gull took flight and flew over us, offering a good view of the bird. Tom asked if the gull was a lifer for me, but I thought I had recorded a Black-headed Gull at Yellow Creek sometime in my past.

On our drive home, we inventoried our target birds. We did not get the Dovekie, but I did get three life birds, King Eider, Common Eider, and Razorbill. I realized that the Black-headed Gull was also a lifer for me. After checking

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Searching for Gulls at Moraine

By Debbie Kalbfleisch

In the past few years, Moraine State Park in Butler County has turned into a rather good place to search for winter gulls in western Pennsylvania. Ring-billed Gulls are generally present year-round, and Bonaparte's start coming through in November and December. Herring Gulls can be counted on to put in an appearance throughout the winter, as long as there is some open water. For a while, a rather rare gull, an adult Black-headed, was a regular on the South Shore. Geoff Malosh makes an excellent case in *Pennsylvania Birds*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Dec 2019-Feb 2020), that the same bird had been showing up in that same spot, starting in December 1998, for more than 20 years!

A Eurasian species, the Black-headed Gull stands a bit taller than a Bonaparte's Gull, with a small black ear spot. Unlike the black bill of a Bonaparte's, the Black-headed has a short straight, reddish bill and bright red legs. The year 2017 may have been the last that this particular gull visited the Pleasant Valley Beach Area although an adult was briefly seen in December of 2019. A first-year Black-headed Gull was also seen once that month at the Waterfowl Observation Area.

In December of 2017, a few birders who went to see the Black-headed Gull on the South Shore also spotted a California Gull! Alas, it was a one-day wonder and was not seen again. An Iceland Gull, probably one of our prettiest gulls, had been found on the first of December and spotted again the next day from the North Shore. These two rarities were spotted chiefly because birders were on the lookout for the Black-headed Gull, so it pays to look carefully through flocks of gulls!

The Pleasant Valley Beach Area on the South Shore is probably the best place to start your search for gulls. The morning light is best for picking out detail, but gulls also show up in the afternoon after a day on the water. One can usually see hundreds of Ring-billed Gulls and pick out several Herring Gulls, but in late December of 2018 more than 600 Ring-billed Gulls and 75 Herring Gulls were swarming over Lake Arthur. With that many gulls, a few oddballs are bound to show up; and indeed, birders found

a couple of Great Black-backed Gulls and several Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Beginning birders especially appreciate the black-backed gulls as they are easy to pick out of a crowd. The hulking Great Black-backed Gull is our largest gull and towers over even the Glaucous Gull. Look for a deep black back and wings and an all-white head. If in doubt, check out the pink legs! The Lesser Black-backed Gull is slightly smaller than a Herring Gull and larger than a Ring-billed. You'll notice that the black on the back and wings is more of a slate color, and it has yellow legs. In a gang of gulls hanging out on the beach, the black-backed gull wearing a dirty disheveled hood is the Lesser.



The Moraine Iceland Gull in the center of the photo above was photographed January 16, 2021, by Roger Higbee at the state park.

This past January an adult Iceland Gull appeared at the South Shore. It is a petite-looking white-winged gull, smaller than a Herring Gull and a bit larger than a Ring-billed. It is overall pale and the tips of the wings are gray, not black. One can never be sure how long a particular gull will stay, so a few friends and I immediately made plans to do a serious search for it. When we arrived at the Pleasant Valley Beach that morning, we were glad to have multiple pairs of eyes as hundreds of gulls were swirling

around the lake! It took several hours and the help of another two birders, but we were eventually victorious with very good looks through the scope at this handsome bird with bright pink legs!

After checking out Pleasant Valley Beach, you'll want to keep moving up the road to the Point to scan the skies and water. After sorting through hundreds of gray gulls that all look the same, you'll also find it a relief to carefully check out the somewhat more colorful ducks and other waterbirds. Remember that cold weather brings in loons and scoters! As you leave the South Shore area, you might want to stop at the Bear Run Boat Ramp. Gulls flying in the distance near the Route 528 Bridge can be a clue that you should head there next.

The Route 528 Boat Launch offers a wide vista for gulls, but a better spot is probably the Waterfowl Observation Area on Park Road. This past winter while both Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were initially seen at the Pleasant

Valley Beach, they moved on after a day or two and were seen from the Park Road area. I missed the Glaucous Gull when it was on the South Shore, but when I heard it was at the end of Park Road, I headed there. A scan with the binoculars revealed an extremely large, white gull hanging out on a not-too-distant sand bar, so I set up my scope. Bingo! The bird was a first year Glaucous, and the bright pink bill with a black tip really stood out as did the pink legs. All gulls should be this cooperative!

While rarities are not seen as often on the North Shore, it doesn't hurt to check out Barber's Point, Watts Bay, and Nealeys Point, as well. Bonaparte's are regularly seen from those vantage points as well as from McDanel's Boat Launch, and an Iceland Gull was spotted from Nealeys Point a few years ago. As I write this in March, Bonaparte's Gulls are once again on the move, so be sure you're on the lookout for that one oddball in the flock!

Great Backyard Bird Count Participants

Seventeen Todd Bird Club members participated in the GBBC February 12-15. Listed below are 61 who submitted lists to the count. Twelve of the 35 who birded in *Indiana* are Todd members; six of the 19 who participated in *Armstrong* are members; one of the eight counters in *Cambria* belongs to Todd.

Indiana County

Marcia Alexander
 Debbie Beisel
 Sara Busch
 Rich Carlson
 Laurel Chiappetta
 Matthew Cmar
 *Marcy Cunkelman
 Edward Davis
 Lionel Deimel
 *Sue Dickson
 John Dudash
 Ann Forsha
 Kevin Freeberg
 Susanne Haney
 Jenny Henry
 *Margaret Higbee
 *Roger Higbee
 Carol Hoover
 *Marilyn Moore
 *Nancy Murphy
 Oscar Nigam
 *James Pumford
 *Joseph Pumford

George Rittenberger
 Cindy Rogers
 Henry Rummel
 Sherry Shank
 *Nancy Smeltzer
 Ashley Smith
 Nancy Smith
 *Vicki Stelma
 *John Taylor
 Josie Usko
 Ann Williams
 *Ray Winstead

Cambria County

*Tina Alianiello
 Michael David
 Winnie Illig
 Matt Kline
 Kathy Lubert
 Oscar Nigam
 Cathy Selby
 Cari Thompson

Armstrong County

Tammy Arnold
 *Dave Brooke
 *Alan Buriak
 Rachel Cellier
 Sarah Dunmire
 *Patience Fisher
 Gayla Ford
 Sam Guthrie
 Karlee Holmes
 Christine Hunter
 Donna Klaput
 *Theo Rickert
 Robert Schall
 Betsy Simms
 Regina Stevenson
 Alice Stitt
 Lawrence Valasek
 *Marge Van Tassel
 Misti West

Note: Oscar Nigam birded in both Indiana and Cambria.

Birding Manasquan Inlet

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my memory, I realized that I had confused the Black-headed Gull with the Black Terns from Yellow Creek. So, it turned out that I did score four lifers on that outing – not bad for a half day's effort. And Grandma did survive the morning with Phoebe.

Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria County Winter 2020-2021

Abbreviations: Allegheny River (AR), Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Crooked Creek (CC), Indiana (IN), Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), Keystone Reservoir (KR), Kittanning (KT), Lewisville (LV), Lock and Dam (L&D), Manorville (MV), Prince Gallitzin S.P. (PG), Rosston (RT), Shelocta (SH), White's Woods (WW), Winter Raptor Survey (WRS), Worthington (WT), Yellow Creek S.P. (YC).

Glendale Lake at PG froze up in mid-January and remained frozen till mid to late February. Nine **Snow Geese** visited PG 12/18 (TD) while 2 white morphs stopped by 1/11 (TD); a white morph Snow was found on the AR at KT 2/3 (TR) and continued through 2/19 (SG); a blue morph at L&D 5 (Schenley) was photographed 2/21 (MH, RH). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** found at KT 2/13 (ABu, SG) remained though 2/15 (ABu); another showed up at KR 2/28 (MH, RH). YC hosted 3 **Cackling Geese** on 1/2 (MH, RH) of which 2 were still present 1/5 (MH, RH); at least 4 were counted 1/14 (TR), but that observer noted that as many as 6 may have been present. These are the first Jan. sightings on record with all previous reports in either Nov. or March. Two **Trumpeter Swans** that appeared on the AR between RT and MV between 1/28 (ABu) and 2/27 (TR), were observed by many birders. **Tundra Swan** high tallies included 180 at Schenley 2/26 (TR), 157 at YC 12/26 (RC), and 48 at PG 12/27 (TA); the 157 at YC is the second highest Dec. eBird record for *Indiana*.

Winter **Wood Ducks** noted included one in IN 12/16 (JP), 1-2 at PG between 12/18 - 12/30 (TD), and one south of Strongstown 12/30 (MH, RH). Some water remained open at Yellow Creek through Dec. and into early Jan. Nine **Gadwalls** lingered at YC 12/2 (MH, RH), the first Dec. record since 2017, while 4 remained 12/2 (LG) at PG where one appeared again 12/19 (TA), and 1-2 were found through 1/24 (TA). KR harbored 20 on 12/3 (MH, RH), 12 on 12/27 (ABu, SG), and last 3 on 1/2 (ABu); along the AR 6 were noted at RT 12/2 (TR), 2 were at MV 1/25 (SG), and 3 reappeared at RT 2/27 (TR). Three **American Wigeons** were sighted at YC 12/27 (MH, RH), the latest record since



Theo Rickert photographed this Snow Goose at Kittanning 2/3.



This blue morph Snow Goose was photographed at Schenley 2/21 by Roger Higbee.



Alan Buriak got his nice profile shot of one of the two Trumpeter Swans on the Allegheny.



Joseph Pumford got this Wood Duck photo in Indiana, right in his yard 12/16/20.

2012 when 2 remained till 1/6 (TS); 12/27 (MD) also yielded 2 along the Butler-Freeport Trail; farther north along the AR a hen wigeon was photographed at RT 1/24 (TR) with the next sighting of 10 at Templeton 2/26 (PW) and 3 the following day at RT (MD, TR). Single **Northern Pintails** lingered till 12/15 at YC (MH, RH), at PG (MD), and at RT (TR); first Jan. sightings involved 4 at PG 1/4 (MH, RH), 2 at YC 1/13 (SD), and 2 at RT 1/23 (TR); 8 at KT 2/24 (TR) was the lone Feb. report in the region. Four **Green-winged Teal** remained at YC through 12/2 (MH, RH); Jan. reports included one at Mahoning Creek 1/1 (AD), 2 at PG 1/4 (MH, RH), the first at YC 1/6 (ON), and one at KT 1/25 (ABu).

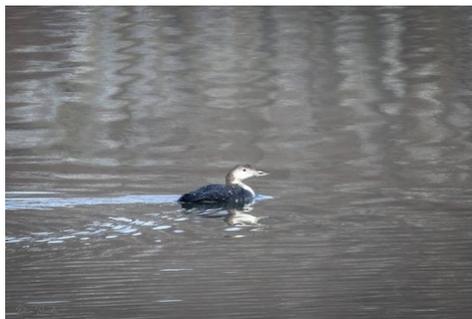
At PG one to 2 **Canvasbacks** were consistently present after 12/18 (TD) with highs of 5-8 between 1/21 (MD) and 1/27 (TD). Dec. 2 was the last date for Canvasback at RT (TR) and at IUP (JT) while 3 at YC were the only ones reported 12/8 (LC, PF, MH, RH). Along the AR one photographed on the 22nd (SG) at KT was the lone Jan. report; that same location yielded the first Feb. sighting on th 13th (TR) when the high of 7 was listed. After 2/14 (v.o.) Canvasbacks were well reported on the AR from Schenley to KT since area lakes and ponds were mostly frozen. Three **Redheads** were last seen in *Indiana* 12/2 at both YC (MH, RH) and at IUP (JT) and did not appear again in the county this winter; the only major time gaps at PG when Redheads went unreported were between 12/3-17 and 1/11-23 and after 2/8 when the lake was completely frozen. On the AR, 4 stopped at RT 12/2 (TR) then were unreported until 2/12 when 3 were at KT (SG, TR) and up to 6 visited RT (TR). **Ring-necked Ducks** lingered at YC through 12/28 (MH, RH) with best tally of 6 on 12/8

(LC, PF, MH, RH); along the AR at RT a singleton remained through 12/22 (TR) with next sightings beginning 2/4 (ABu, TR), when one was noted at KT, and 2/14 (KH), when 15 were listed at RT, where the species' total reached 130 when an exact count was attempted on 2/27 (MD). At PG Ring-necks were present mostly throughout the winter until 2/7 (JC) when the last one was recorded. One to 7 **Greater Scaup** were found at PG between 12/18 (TD) and 2/6 (TA) with 7 counted on 1/4 (MH, RH); Greater Scaup were found on the AR between 2/19 (ABu, SG) and the end of the period (ABu) when 5 were seen at RT. **Lesser Scaup** were last found 12/2 at IUP (JT) where at least 75 were present; this is a high winter count for Lesser Scaup in *Indiana*; at PG high counts included 24 on 12/2 (LG) and 38 on 1/27 (TD). In *Armstrong* along the AR, 100 was the best "rough count" at RT 12/2 (TR); last seen was one on 12/15 (TR) also at RT. Next sightings began 1/25 (ABu) at MV and continued through the end of the period all along the AR. A **White-winged Scoter** was reported near Brady's Bend 2/14 (TAr). A hen **Black Scoter** was a nice find at PG 12/15 (MD). **Long-tailed Duck** sightings, mentioned on eight dates at PG, included 6 on 12/2 (LG) through 1/9 (TA) when 2 were still listed. One Long-tail was found at RT 12/19 (TR) and again 1/11 (TR); 2 were n. of L&D 8 on 1/8 (TR); top tally was 10 on 2/15 (ABu) at KT; two of the latter birds were still present 2/19 (SG). An all-time high winter count of 116 **Buffleheads** at YC (MH, RH) 12/2 occurred the same day 15 were also noted at IUP (JT). Dec. 2 (LG) also yielded PG's top tally of 60 and RT's maximum of 80 (TR). First 2 **Common Goldeneyes** arrived 12/27 (TA) at PG, where numbers peaked at 25 on 1/8 (GK, MK), and the season's last 5 were noted 2/7 (JC). One was found at YC 1/3 (RH, SM), the lone report, while the AR yielded the first goldeneyes 1/24 (TR), both at KT where 2 were present and at RT which harbored one.

Hooded Mergansers showed a steady presence at YC through 1/14 (TR) when 12 were last listed; 12/27 (MH, RH) yielded the second highest winter count of 37 while the top YC count of 38 had occurred on 12/1/2010 (JuB). PG, too, harbored Hooded Mergansers pretty regularly through 1/25 (AM); high tallies were 46 on 12/18 (TD) and again 1/4 (MH, RH). The high of 11 along the AR occurred 2/27 (JB, TR) at RT. YC hosted as many as 55 **Common**



These two Greater Scaup at Schenley 2/23 were photographed by Roger Higbee. The drake is above; the hen, in the photo below.



Dave Brooke photographed this Common Loon at Rosston 12/23/20.

Mergansers 1/3 (RH, SM), the highest winter tally on record, with the last 2 noted 1/19 (SD); Two Lick Reservoir's high was 32 on 1/17 (MH, RH); this was Two Lick's highest Jan. count. Common Mergansers at PG first appeared 12/27 (TA) and were last listed 2/7 (JC); top count was 45 on 1/6 (ON). CC, however, harbored the largest flock of 341 on 1/8 (JB) while the best tally along the AR at KT included 41 individuals on 1/25 (ABu). A single **Red-breasted Merganser** at Wilmore Dam 12/2 (TA) was the first Dec. report. After a Nov. presence at PG, the first and only 3 Red-breasted Mergs arrived 12/19 (TD). In *Armstrong* RT yielded 4 on 12/2 (TR); 2/15 produced 2 along the Kiskiminetas near Leechburg (MVT) and one along the AR at KT (ABu) where the singleton continued through 2/20 (CB); two days later (MVT), 4 were present at KT. A singleton at YC 12/20 (MD) comprised the entire *Indiana* report for this species.

After a good **Ruddy Duck** presence at PG and YC in Nov., 110 remained on Glendale Lake 12/2 (LG) and Ruddies were reported pretty consistently through 2/14 (TA) when the last 2 were sighted at PG. YC's high of 23 occurred 12/2 (MH, RH) while last seen at YC were 5 on 1/3 (RH, SM). High *Armstrong* tally was 7 at RT 12/18 (TR).

Only 2 **Ruffed Grouse** were reported: one near Pineton 1/14 (*vide* GL) and one at Nolo 2/6 (DB).

Two **Pied-billed Grebes** were reported at PG 12/3 (TA); YC sightings included only 3 on 12/2 (MH, RH) and 5 on 12/8 (LC, PF, MH, RH). One was observed along the *Indiana* section of the West Penn Trail 12/13 (RC, LCh). KR hosted 2 on 12/3 (MH, RH) and 3 on 12/27 (ABu, SG). Two were at CC 12/4 (ON) while 1-3 were on the AR between 12/8 (TR) and 12/23 (SG). **Horned Grebes** included 2 at PG 12/3 (TA) and one 12/5 (TD), the only *Cambria* reports. In *Armstrong* one at RT 12/8 (TR) was the lone Dec. report. The AR hosted 1-3 at KT between 2/12 (SG, TR) and 2/14 (TR) as well as 3 at RT 2/27 (MD, TR).

American Coot maxima included 44 at PG 12/18 (TD) and amazingly none in either *Indiana* or *Armstrong* even though *Cambria* had 25 coot reports! First **Killdeer** returned 2/24 (ABu) near WT and 2/25 (SB) at South Fork.

Single **Bonaparte's Gulls** were noted at PG 12/30 (TD) and 1/8 (MK, GK) and at CC 1/10 (SG). Dec. 2 yielded **Ring-billed Gull** maxima of 279 at PG (LG) and 53 at YC (MH, RH); RT's top count was 200 on 2/25 (CR). One to 3 **Herring Gulls** were listed at KT 12/30 (ME, LS) into the next period.

Five **Common Loons** appeared at YC 12/2 (MH, RH) and one remained through 12/8 (LC, PF, MH, RH); one was noted at KR 12/3 (MH, RH); RT yielded 2 on 12/14 (TR) while one lingered through 12/23 (DBr); one popped up at PG 12/19 (TD) and continued through 1/24 (TA). Single **Double-crested Cormorants** were listed 12/5 (TD) at PG and 12/23 (DBr) through 1/6 (MH, RH, TR) at RT.

Only one **Turkey Vulture** was noted this winter – one at PG 1/6 (TA). A **Golden Eagle** photographed 1/20 (TB) at South Bend was an amazing find. A single **Northern Harrier** was reported this season at YC 12/23 (MK, GK); 2 were noted at PG 1/6 (ON) while the area near WT produced singletons on six dates (v.o.). The mostly white **Red-tailed Hawk** that has been present for years near Cresson was observed 1/8 (AB, DB). A dark morph **Rough-legged Hawk** flew over a field adjacent to the Ghost Town Trail near Dilltown 12/30 (MH, RH); *Cambria* took the prize for Rough-legged Hawk reports as another dark morph was observed 1/27 (TD) at PG, where a light morph was found being mobbed by crows 2/7 (JC); SGL 108 in Dean Twp. yielded one on 1/10 (TD), and just west of the former sighting one was observed 2/14 (TA).

Eastern Screech-Owls were well reported. One was at IUP 12/2 (JT). A gray morph appeared in one of the four available boxes near SH 12/26 (MH, RH), the evening of the IN CBC, and remained till 2/21 (MH, RH), the evening it was last observed. Last year when five boxes were available, the owl moved around, spending at least several nights in each box; this year he stuck to the box in the garden. Strangely enough, a mile up the road from the previous location, the observer, who had previously had one owl, on 2/26 (ED) had two. One was "trilling for at least 15 minutes" near LV 2/27 (MC). Only one screech was noted in *Cambria* – one at Elmora 2/13 (CS). In *Armstrong*, 2 were noted at both Apollo 12/1,7 (SDu) and



Tony Bruno found this striking Golden Eagle near South Bend 1/20.



Pam Illig photographed this very blonde Barred Owl near Eensburg on 1/30.



The ears are actually visible on this Short-eared Owl photographed by Dave Brooke on 1/10 near Worthington.

at Murphy's Bottom 12/19 (BP); a red morph was found near WT 12/4 (MH, RH); the *Armstrong* WRS yielded a gray morph peering from a cavity near Rural Valley 2/4 (MH, RH, GL, LW).

Two **Great Horned Owls** were hooting near SH 12/22 & 2/18 (MH, RH); one was found at YC 1/2 (DWa); others were hooting at Nolo 1/4, 2/1 (DB) and near Marion Center 2/13 (SS). In *Armstrong* single birds were heard 12/7 (TR) west of SGL 247 and 12/19 (BP) at Murphy's Bottom; 2 were noted near WT 1/17 (CM).

A **Barred Owl** observed at Nolo 12/26 (AB, DB, GL) was unfortunately outside the IN CBC circle; one of the Nolo owls was heard 1/10, 19; 2/20 (DB) while 2 were hooting 1/16 (DB); single Barred Owls were spotted perched near Strongstown 12/30 (MH, RH) and n. of Eensburg along Rt. 219 on 1/30 (PI); the latter bird was abnormally plumaged and very blonde; single birds were heard at YC 1/2 (MH, RH) and 2/6 (JC). In *Armstrong*, one was listed 2/6 (CM) s.w. of Adrian and another was hooting at KR 2/28 (MH, RH). At Loretto one was heard 2/17 (SVH) then again 2/24 (SVH) from another location about 1.4 miles distant. Another was heard at South Fork 2/25 (SB) then 2 the next day (SB) s.w. of the first location.

Short-eared Owls were found 12/18 (DBr) near WT where they continued through at least 2/14 (DBr); 2 were also reported near Pine Furnace 2/14 (MW).

Seven **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were reported including three in *Indiana* – one near SH 12/10 (MH, RH), one at YC 1/2 (DWa), and one at Smicksburg 2/14-15 (NS). One near Carrolltown was sighted 2/13 (MKI), the lone *Cambria* report. Singletons were found 1/7 (MVT) and 1/10 (SG) at CC, 1/24 (TR) at SGL 247, and 2/4 (TR) along the AT north of L&D 8. A **Red-headed Woodpecker** caused a lot of excitement in the household when it landed on a suet cake at South Fork 12/9 (SB); this was the only one reported in the region.

Single **Merlins** were noted near Saltsburg 12/6, 1/3 (KB), along the West Penn Trail 12/11, 30 (PF), over IN 12/15 (JP), and on a *Cambria* WRS 1/21 (MH, RH, GL, LW). One of the Graff Bridge **Peregrines** was first noted 1/6

(MH, RH) on the electrical structure near the bridge and was seen by many through the end of the period.

A very late **Eastern Phoebe** was sighted at KR 12/27 (ABu, SG); as the observers were conducting an *Armstrong* WRS near Elderton, a phoebe flew from a barn and landed on a wire where it perched wagging its tail 2/4 (MH, RH, GL, LW).

Three **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were reported – one in each county – single birds 12/28 (JP) at PG, 1/19 (SD) at YC, and one along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 2/4, 24 (TR).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were more plentiful than during the past few winters, but most reports mentioned one to 2 individuals; best count was 6 at CC 12/4 (ON).

Sightings of **Winter Wren** included individuals along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 12/10, 30; 1/18 (TR), at SGL 279 on 1/3 (TA), and at YC 2/6 (JC).

A wintering **Gray Catbird** was well seen 2/21 (TD) at SGL 108 - Dugan's Marsh. Single **Hermit Thrushes** were listed at YC 12/2 (MH, RH), 1/5 (LC, MH, RH, GL), 1/19 (SD), and 2/6 (JC); the IN CBC yielded one at Dark Hollow 12/26 (MH, RH). Nicholson Run 12/19 (TR), SGL 247 on 1/10 (TR), the AR n. of L & D 8 on 1/18 (TR), and Rolling Hills on 2/10 (TR) all produced one Hermit Thrush. Six **American Pipits** at PG 12/21 (TA) were the only ones noted.

Ten **Evening Grosbeaks** appeared at a feeder n. of Ebensburg 1/3 (RB); 26 were at Lilly 2/13 (MD), and 10 stopped at Patton 2/21 (RL). YC was the hotspot for grosbeaks in *Indiana* with maxima of 34 on 12/23 (TA) and 38 on 1/5 (LC, GL); last reported were 3 on 1/21 (MH, RH, LW). Nolo hosted 12 on 1/20 (CL, GL); some contemplated whether these were the YC birds moving around. Near Strongstown 8 Evening Grosbeaks first appeared at a feeder 1/28 (JM) where the count peaked at 20 on 1/28 (JM). Last report in the county (till March) mentioned 2 at Nolo 1/30 (GL). A flock of 25 **Common Redpolls** was found near Brush Valley on the IN CBC 12/26 (GL); 18 were still present the following day (CL, GL); singletons were listed 1/3 (MH, RH) near SH and



This was just one of the Yellow Creek Evening Grosbeaks photographed 12/23 by Roger Higbee.



This was just one member of the flock found by Gloria Lamer on the Indiana CBC 12/26. Photo by Roger Higbee



This Clay-colored Sparrow near SH, photographed by Roger Higbee, was seen by many birders, including one from as far away as Philadelphia.

1/27 (MC) near LV; 2 stopped at Graceton 2/15 (JU). Armstrong yielded only one report – a singleton e.ne. of KT 12/12 (ABu). One appeared at PG 12/20 (TA, TD); on 1/19 (TD) a different redpoll arrived at the park feeders and continued through 1/24 (JP). **Pine Siskins** continued at four *Indiana* locations with top counts of 27 near SH 12/5 (MH, RH) and 5 n.e. of IN 12/26 (DW); Armstrong yielded only one report of 4 at CC 12/17 (ABu) while *Cambria* hosted one to 3 siskins at four feeders between 12/1 (SB) and 2/25 (SB).

In the Patton area single **Lapland Longspurs** were noted at three locations: near St. Augustine 2/6 (TA) accompanied by a **Snow Bunting**, near Chest Springs also on 2/6 (PI), and midway between Patton and Carrolltown the following day (JaP, JP).

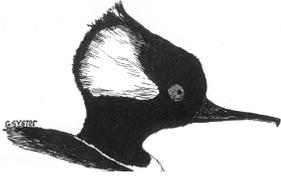
Unusual were multiple wintering **Chipping Sparrows**, the first of which appeared 12/25 (MH, RH) in a yard near SH, 1/21 (HR) near WW, 2/6 (SVH near Loretto, and 2/9 (MC) near LV; high counts were 3 near WW 1/24 (HR) and 5 near SH on 2/10 (MH, RH). The **Clay-colored Sparrow**, which was first observed 11/30 (MH, RH), continued through the end of the period (MH, RH) near SH; another Clay-colored Sparrow was reported near WW 2/8 (HR). Unusual were the number of **Field Sparrows**, including 2 at CC 12/2 (MVT), one near YC 12/15 (MH, RH), one at two Chambersville locations 12/26 (FMc, JMc) 3 on 12/10 (TR) on the AT n. of L&D 8, one 12/25 - 2/19 (MH, RH) wintering near SH, and one near WW 1/4,7 (HR). A wintering **Fox Sparrow** continued near SH and was last observed 2/20 (MH, RH). PG boasted the most **White-crowned Sparrows** in the region with as many as 7 on 1/24 (TA) with reports ranging between 12/18 (TD) and 2/22 (TD). In *Indiana* one was found near Chambersville 2/26 (FMc, JMc) while another frequented a feeder near SH between 12/31 - 1/3 (MH, RH). Two mentions of singletons at separate locations near WT 12/19 (CB, LCr), one at a Slate Lick feeder 1/1 (GM), and 2 near Leechburg 2/16 (MVT) were all the *Armstrong* reports. An **Eastern Towhee** was found at YC between 12/21 (PT) and 12/24 (RH, SM); one was at IN 2/27 (VS). More confusing were reports near SH of a towhee 12/25 - 2/24

(MH, RH); a male towhee was present 12/25 (MH, RH) through 1/13 (MH, RH); a female was listed 1/26-31(MH, RH) at the same location. Finally on 2/18 (DL) both the male and the female were sighted at the same time.

The WT area yielded single **Eastern Meadowlarks** 12/1 (DBr) and 2/24 (ABu), the only reports in the region. Last **Red-winged Blackbirds** were listed 12/18 (TD) at PG, 12/23 (MH, RH, GK, MK) at YC, and 1/12 (MH, RH, GL) on WRS #1 near Marion Center. First 2 returnees appeared 2/22 (TD) at PG, 2/25 (MH, RH) near SH, and 2/27 (SG) near KT; by 2/28 (MD) the count was 75 at KR. Lingered **Brown-headed Cowbirds** included one near WT 12/12 (TR) and one near LV 12/17 (MC). Two **Common Grackles** had returned to South Fork by 2/26 (SB) and to MV by 2/27 (TR).

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** at YC 12/29 (MH, RH) was a nice addition to the IN CBC count-week list. Although there are numerous fall and several spring records, this is the first winter report for this species. A late **Cape May Warbler**, an amazing find 12/3 (TA) at PG, was photographed. **Yellow-rumped Warbler** reports included one in *Cambria* at PG 12/3 (TA), one in *Indiana* along the West Penn Trail 1/21 (HH), and three in *Armstrong* which included one at CC 1/8 (MH, RH), one at RT 1/30 (TR), and 2 along Creek Road 2/24 (MVT).

Observers: Tina Alianiello, Tammy Arnold (TAr), Alice Beatty, Dave Beatty, Corey Bellis, Richard Bloom, John Boback, Justin Bosler (JuB), Dave Brooke (DBr), Tony Bruno, Alan Buriak (ABu), Seth Burnosky, Ken Byerly, Rich Carlson, Lee Carnahan, John Carter, Laurel Chiappetta (LCh), Linda Croskey (LCr), Marcy Cunkelman, Michael David, Tony DeSantis, Sue Dickson, Anna Donato, Ed Donley, Sarah Dunmire (SDu), Mary Eyman, Patience Fisher, Linda Greble, Sam Guthrie, Rebecca Hart (RH), Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Karlee Holmes, Hope Huntington, Pam Illig, Mike Kline (MKI), Mary Alice Koeneke, Glenn Koppel, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Dennis Lauffer, Renee Lubert, Alan MacEachren, Steve Manns, Chase McClister, Gregory McDermott, Flo McGuire (FMc), Jim McGuire (JMc), Jim Michny, Oscar Nigam, Julia Plummer, Brady Porter, James Pumford, Joseph Pumford, Craig Remaley, Theo Rickert, Henry Rummel, Tim Schreckengost, Cathy Selby, Sherry Shank, Nancy Smeltzer, Liz Spence, Vicki Stelma, John Taylor, Phyllis Terchanik, Josie Usko, Marge Van Tassel (MVT), Linda Wagner, Pam Walski, Ding Wang (DWa), Misti West, Dawn Winstead.



Todd Bird Club
c/o Roger V. Higbee
3119 Creekside Road
Indiana, PA 15701-7934