

# The Pennsylvania Migration Count (PAMC)

**Saturday 14 May, 2011**

**What is the Pennsylvania Migration Count?** The Pennsylvania Migration Count (PAMC) was established to gather annual data on migratory bird populations, and to help answer some fundamental questions regarding their distribution throughout Pennsylvania. PAMC is an annual one-day snapshot of bird populations within our state. Which species are present, and where are they? How many are there? Do migratory patterns change from year to year? Do populations of specific species change from year to year? Which birds are thriving, and more importantly, which are struggling? By identifying declining or otherwise at-risk species, it is hoped that steps can be taken toward assisting their future survival.

**How does it work?** The Pennsylvania Migration Count takes place each spring on the second Saturday in May, in conjunction with International Migratory Bird Day. PAMC is similar to the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The difference is that PAMC takes place on a countywide basis, rather than within the confines of a CBC circle. The rules are simple: spend some time in the field counting all birds encountered in a specified area, and keep track of miles traveled and time spent counting. Participants are free to roam their favorite county birding locales at any time during the 24 hour period, starting at 12:01am, counting every bird that they find. Totals are passed along to county compilers, who, in turn, report to the state compiler. The state compiler maintains the PAMC data, and an annual report is published in *Pennsylvania Birds*, the journal of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology (PSO).

**When did it start?** The Pennsylvania Migration Count originated as part of the continent-wide North American Migration Count (NAMC) in 1992, when there were 141 observers in 10 Pennsylvania counties. The count grew steadily in popularity in PA over the years, and was renamed PAMC in 2003, reflective of the fact that the national count was struggling everywhere but in Pennsylvania. Last year 704 observers from 40 counties participated in the PAMC. They counted 153,429 birds of 219 different species in over 2248 field hours. This year there are already more counties committed while we are always looking for more people to help.

**How can you help?** Birders of all skill levels can help out with the count. Beginning at midnight with the songs of the Whip-poor-wills and the hooting of the Great Horned Owls, the PAMC is a great way to spend time outside. Whether you tally birds in your backyard, at your feeders, the local little league ballfield, along the river, on a lake, at your camp or spend time hiking through a state park, your observations count. Forms and information for PAMC participation are available from your county compiler, or go online at [www.pabirds.org/PAMC](http://www.pabirds.org/PAMC). Data can be submitted via e-mail or post. If participating or for more information, please contact the county compiler first, to avoid duplicate submissions from the same area. If no compiler, contact [PSO@PABIRDS.ORG](mailto:PSO@PABIRDS.ORG)