

The

PSO Pileated



December 2018

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Volume 29, Number 4

From the President's Desk....

Evening Grosbeak Invasion?

It may shape up to be an exciting winter for northern finches this season. Recent reports have been posted to the Pennsylvania Birds listerv and eBird (and perhaps Facebook to which I'm not connected) of Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks and even a Common Redpoll. Birders are always hoping for an exciting winter of these northern finches.

With Christmas Bird Counts coming up in December, I took a look at Evening Grosbeak numbers for the Pittsburgh Christmas Count from 1959 to 2010 (data provided by former compiler Jim Valimont and retained in my personal records). Evening Grosbeaks were annual on the count from 1961 to 1986 with high counts of 178 in 1975 and 244 in 1985. Only one was tallied in 1986, none from 1987-89, two in 1990 and seven in 1993. From 1994 to present none were found during the count.

Evening Grosbeaks had a period of abundance in the 1970s and 80s then nearly disappeared as a winter visitor in Pennsylvania. Apparently this was a result of the decline of the spruce budworm population in eastern Canada.

Pine Siskins have been more consistent over the past decade with an extensive invasion in 2009. According to Ron Pittaway's Winter Finch Forecast for the winter of 2018-19 (<http://jeaniron.ca/2018/wff18.htm>), the Evening



This striking male Evening Grosbeak arrived just south of Everett on the lower slope of Tussey Mountain in Bedford County, where Laura Jackson photographed it on Nov. 17.



This male, accompanied by a female Evening Grosbeak, appeared at Nancy Murphy's feeder near Tunnelton, Indiana Co., Nov. 23, 2018, where she photographed them.

Grosbeak is expected to make a moderate move southward this winter. Some have appeared in mid-November but may be only transients; time will tell. Pine Siskins are predicted to move south, and the flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches (I know, they are not a finch) has been noted in Pennsylvania with widespread reports during the fall.

This issue features our annual list of all Christmas Bird Counts in the state with compiler contact information. We strive to be a one-stop shop for Christmas Bird Count information. Newsletter editor Margaret Higbee does an excellent job compiling the information each year.

Another unpredictable feature of any Christmas Count that affects human counters and birds is the weather. We've all birded in snowstorms, rain, fog, wind, mild temperatures, frigid temperatures, etc. Last December during the Pittsburgh CBC, it snowed the entire morning that I was in the field; several inches accumulated. One other count in which I have participated is the Buffalo Creek

Valley Count that covers southern Butler, parts of Armstrong, and northeastern Allegheny County. Last December, most participants in that count never made it into the field due to freezing rain that caused driving and

walking to be extremely hazardous. I'm sure we all have stories to tell about our Christmas Bird Count experiences, ranging from weather conditions to rarities.

It will be interesting to see what is reported during this CBC season and during the upcoming winter. Hopefully we will be treated to the sight of numerous Evening Grosbeaks.

Other upcoming events include the Winter Raptor Surveys coordinated by Greg Grove. The upcoming season will be the project's eighteenth. This project surveys the winter distribution of open country raptors in the state. If you are

interested in starting a new route, please contact Greg Grove. His email address is on the last page of this newsletter as well as in the journal *Pennsylvania Birds*.

Also coming up in February is the Audubon Society's Great Backyard Bird Count, so stay tuned for that. I hope you had a Happy Thanksgiving and have a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Mike Fialkovich, PSO President
Allegheny County
mpfial@verizon.net

2018-19 Birding Trips, Excursions, Surveys, and More

Special thanks to Chad Kauffman for organizing our trips and events. If you have any questions, please contact Chad at chadkauffman@earthlink.net. More trips may be added later or at the last minute. We continue to work with local groups and clubs to bird with them in their favorite spots by joining their existing field trips or creating new ones. Please contact any PSO board member for information. Details will follow in the March newsletter and on line.

December 14 - January 5 – Christmas Bird Counts.

January 1 – Start of the eBird 200 Challenge for Snyder County, one of our under-birded counties.

January 14 - February 8 – Winter Raptor Surveys. Contact Greg Grove (gwg2@psu.edu) for more information.

March 2 – Snyder County Waterfowl Tour. This field trip is weather dependent, so if it's questionable, please contact Chad Kauffman to ascertain whether it will be held. We will hit Faylor and Walker Lakes looking for waterfowl as well as exploring various other areas for winter birding.

March 9 – **Snyder County Waterfowl Tour** – We'll do a rerun of the previous week, or this will serve as a backup date.

February 15-18 – Great Backyard Bird Count. Our state's birders have been actively participating in this count. It's a good time to encourage others to start birding and using eBird.

May 3-4 – Shaver's Creek Birding Cup. This annual fundraiser for Shaver's Creek Environmental Center is an attempt to find as many species as possible in a 24-hour period. There are various categories. For more information see their website (www.shaverscreek.org).

May 11 – PA Migration Count (PAMC). The second Saturday in May is a great time to get out to count birds. For more information, go to <https://pabirds.org/index.php/projects/pa-annual-migration-count>

June 14 - 17 – Breeding Bird Blitz. This will be the fourth year of this organized count, with the goal of getting reports of breeding birds entered on eBird. Do the Blitz! Check <https://pabirds.org/index.php/projects/breeding-bird-blitz> for more information.

September 13-15 – PSO Annual Meeting in Lycoming County. A great variety of field trips are in the planning stages and details will be included in the March issue of *The PSO Pileated*.

October 12-13 – The Big Sit, sponsored by *Bird Watcher's Digest*. You may join or create your own circle and count what you see in a 24-hour time frame. Go to <https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit.php> for more information.

November 2-3 – Hawk Mt. for the peak of the Golden Eagle migration and possibly Northern Goshawks.

The Raven Reporter

Tales of Discovery about Pennsylvania Birds



Evening Grosbeak: Boreal Finch of Change

A mild but welcome irruption of Evening Grosbeaks (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*) is occurring in Pennsylvania and other eastern states. Birders are ecstatic. Newer or younger birders are looking for their first Evening Grosbeak and hoping for Pine Grosbeaks, too. The veteran birders remember previous irruptions when the hungry yellow horde covered their backyard bird feeders gobbling up every last sunflower seed. We gladly ran to the store, bought another 50-pound bag of sunflower seed, and kept feeding the horde that was bankrupting all of us backyard bird feeders. They are loud, bright, obnoxiously voracious. If you are a bander, you know that Evening Grosbeaks have a vice-like bite that is sort of like when a body builder grabs the tenderest part of your hand – say the flesh between your fingers – with a pair of needle-nose pliers, twists, and does not let go until your skin is black and blue and bleeding. What’s not to like?

Many of us remember when Evening Grosbeaks were much more regular winter visitors. I remember our family’s backyard feeder covered with them on some snowy days in the early 1960s. I can remember not only the sight of the birds but also the persistent loud “cleer!” call note that Peterson so well described as sounding like a glorified House Sparrow. The call is certainly robust and distinctive, loud enough to keep flocks in touch while they fly over the landscape. I have found this species many times based on its voice overhead. Very distinctive.

The 2018-2019 Evening Grosbeak irruption has been described as “a moderate flight south” by the Ronald Pittaway Winter Finch Forecast. The folks at Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (CLO) are “all over” this invasion as an opportunity to document the winter finch flight in eBird. Indeed this is a great way for eBird to provide an easy way to document the numbers and distribution of these charismatic winter finches. The Lab also has posted information about “call types” of Evening Grosbeaks, perhaps a situation similar to the Red Crossbill “call types.” I will not go into detail about the call type theories, but it is apparent that recordings of Evening Grosbeaks are helpful to identify the call types, contribute to the research about these types, and document the birds

in eBird or any other report. The call type found most often in the East is Call Type 3 (as in the Birds of North America account by Gillihan and Byers), but call type designations should be made with care without assuming identification by geography as reported in the literature. Much is not known about Evening Grosbeak call types, populations, and subspecies. There has been no publication in a peer-reviewed journal about these call types, and the explanation in the BNA account is given as a theory to stimulate more study. Since this species often visits backyards, it should be fairly easy to get sound recordings with smart phones, digital cameras, or other means. As CLO states: “However, as with Red Crossbill, please be conservative, especially with observations that are not supported by a recording. Please do not assume call types based on range.”

Evening Grosbeaks are fairly easy birds to study in migration since they so readily visit artificial feeding stations, especially those providing sunflower seeds. And the Christmas Counts place a lot of birders in the field just when these boreal birds could be found, especially at feeders. But the yellow monsters also eat a lot of natural foods. The expansion of Evening Grosbeak from the West into the East has been explained in the past as a response to the planting of ornamental box elders (*Acer negundo*), a kind of a maple with seeds called keys that remain in winter.

This is an interesting explanation especially in the Midwest, but Nick Bolgiano provided credible evidence for another theory that spruce budworm outbreaks contributed to this expansion, fueling a population expansion and increase in the boreal forest which manifested in irruptions south in some years. Timbering practices and widespread fires also provided an environment for the spread and increase of pin cherry (*Prunus pennsylvanica*), the seeds of which are a popular food for grosbeaks. I would add that the land clearing that took place in the 19th and early 20th century also provided a lot of growth of fruiting plants of young forests and edge habitat where Evening Grosbeaks eagerly forage. With modern emphasis on artificial feeder observations, it is easily forgotten or ignored that Evening Grosbeaks eat a wide variety of fruits, seeds, and, in summer, caterpillars. I absolutely agree with Nick Bolgiano that the increase of pin cherry is not the only best explanation for Evening Grosbeak expansion into the East. Not only has fire cherry increased, but so have many other small trees and shrubs associated with young forests and regenerating edge habitats that produce seeds attractive to this northern finch. Even young maple trees produce bountiful seeds for the picking. The formidable bills of Evening Grosbeaks are quite capable of great force – like living pliers or nutcrackers. The closely related Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) of



Laura Jackson photographed this Evening Grosbeak south of Everett in Bedford County on Nov. 17.

Eurasia and Africa has the capacity to crack seeds needing 27 – 57 kg. of pressure. Its American cousin probably has similar capacity. Evening Grosbeaks are capable of cracking very hard seed kernels with great force as many banders can attest. So, they can handle cherry pits but also the seeds of hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*). They do this with resounding loud crackling noises, a good way to find foraging grosbeaks in the woods. The hulls of nuts and fruits can be found on the snowy forest floor under foraging grosbeaks and other finches. I have seen them consume the seeds of staghorn sumac, wild grapes, and hackberries, shredding the pulp and crunching up the hard seeds inside. And, after discussing the various wild foods of this species, I would emphasize that the spread of artificial bird feeding may also be a factor in the expansion of the Evening Grosbeak wintering range but may not have been sufficient to support the breeding population expansion.

There is a history of Evening Grosbeaks occasionally nesting in the state. I was witness to one of these incidents when flocks of Evening Grosbeak descended upon Dutch Mountain, an area straddling the Wyoming/Sullivan county line around Schmitthenner Lake, east of Lopez and south of Dushore. Skip Conant colorfully wrote about this incident in the Volume 3, Number 3 edition of *Pennsylvania Birds*, Summer 1994. The grosbeaks were reacting to a massive outbreak of elm spanworms (*Ennomos subsignaria*). They also were visiting bird feeders with the locally breeding Purple Finches and Black-capped Chickadees. Not only were the Evening Grosbeaks nesting by Skip’s cabin but other pairs were found by Nick Kerlin near Ricketts Glen State Park and by me along the Windy Valley Road and in Coalbed Swamp that July. Several

pairs of grosbeaks were involved in this invasion. This is the same summer that nesting Blackpoll Warblers were discovered in Coalbed Swamp where elm spanworms also were abundant and were defoliating the forest. Interestingly, most of these observations were made in July.

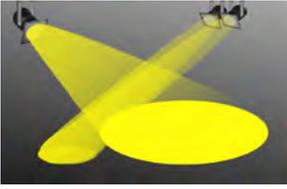
Rangewide, Evening Grosbeaks nest in various kinds of coniferous and mixed-coniferous forests. Evening Grosbeaks do not need deep forest for breeding. They have nested right in backyards next to wooded areas where caterpillar outbreaks were occurring and other locally abundant foods were available. They often nest in parks, villages, or other settlements within forests. The 1994 Dutch Mountain nesting incursion sounds a lot like what has been occurring in New York. There Evening Grosbeaks have nested pretty regularly in the Adirondack Mountains, but also at a variety of other locations such as the Catskill Peaks, along the St. Lawrence, Tug Hill, the Black River Valley, Rensselaer Hills, and the Champlain Valley. Defying the general pattern of higher elevation forested areas, the Champlain Valley records are only around 500 feet ASL. These patterns suggest that Pennsylvanians should keep their minds open about the possibilities of Evening Grosbeaks nesting in the state. I have heard that there have been some summer reports of Evening Grosbeaks in the northwestern counties where there is a lot of potential for boreal finches both in winter and the breeding season. It is also gratifying to see that Evening Grosbeaks are wandering far south in our state and other states along the eastern seaboard.

Come spring, birders should probably study the song of the Evening Grosbeak so they can recognize any courtship singing if it does occur. Examples are found on the internet as well as commercial products. It has been described as a “short, uneven warble” by R. T. Peterson. Searches should continue in the summer at higher elevations where there are hamlets and settlements in forested areas. Many of these areas deserve more exploration by birders anyway. People who are not in the birding report circles may be the ones who are feeding grosbeaks in remote areas. So, it is good to spread the information net wide in any searches for them. Not only can we enjoy a winter wave of big yellow finches but also possibly a rare nesting event.

Good birding!

Doug Gross
Dagross144@verizon.net





Young PA Birder Spotlight

Opportunities for Young Pennsylvania Birders

Younger birders, specifically those under 18, are fortunate to have incredible opportunities to learn and connect with people their own age in this digital era.

Tools like eBird, Facebook groups, multiple online articles, and websites provide incredible learning opportunities for people of all ages who are expanding their knowledge on all things avian.

A sense of community, particularly among younger birders who join and participate in text “chat” groups via What’sApp, Discord, GroupMe, and Reddit, allow for them to find a place to connect, learn, and mentor each other no matter how many miles are between them.

But connecting in person and sharing experiences in the field, looking at birds, and learning about them can be life changing for younger birders. And now there are many opportunities for this to happen, especially through the many young birder camps around the country.

Young birders here in Pennsylvania have had opportunities to attend young birder camps somewhere in the US. These experiences can change the life of a young birder.

I asked two young birders to share a comment about what attending a young birder camp meant to them, and here are some great quotes:

“The birds and destinations are fantastic, but the chance to make long-lasting connections with people who share your interests is perhaps the best part.”

~ Madelyne Ray of Montgomery County, PA

(Madelyne has attended multiple young birder camps across the US!)

and from Brendyn Baptiste, of Butler County, PA:

“My experiences at Hog Island and coastal Maine had such an impact on me that it was a deciding factor in choosing to begin my next chapter in life by attending Unity College in Maine to further my studies in wildlife.”

These opportunities for young birders are priceless as you

can see. The level of impact these week-long experiences provide surely will last a lifetime and can shape the direction in which a young person might go forward.

If you are a young birder or you know someone who is, please share this list of available opportunities.

Let’s start with opportunities here in Pennsylvania:

Northampton County Junior Conservation School:
<https://ncjcs.org/>

Upper Mainline YMCA in Berwyn, PA:
<http://yesc30.wixsite.com/school-of-birding/teen-birding>

Wildlife Leadership Academy in Lewisburg, PA:
<http://wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/>

And now around the country and beyond:

[Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Young Birders Event:](https://ebird.org/news/the-2017-cornell-lab-young-birders-event/)
<https://ebird.org/news/the-2017-cornell-lab-young-birders-event/>

[Camp TALON:](https://www.atlantaudubon.org/camp-talon.html) St. Simons Island, Georgia.
<https://www.atlantaudubon.org/camp-talon.html>

[Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens:](http://hogisland.audubon.org/bird-studies-teens)
<http://hogisland.audubon.org/bird-studies-teens>

Hog Island’s Mountains to Sea Birding for Teens:
<http://hogisland.audubon.org/programs/mountains-sea-birding-teens>

VENT’s Camp Chiricahua: Arizona

[ABA’s Camp Colorado:](#) in Estes Park, Colorado.

VENT’s Camp Cascades: in coastal Washington.

ABA’s Camp Avocet: in Lewes, Delaware.
<http://www.aba.org/camp-avocet/>

[Teen Week in Costa Rica:](#) July 2019

Here’s to many more life-changing experiences for young PA birders in 2019!

If you have something of interest to share for young birders or if you know a young birder you would like to nominate for the PSO Pileated’s Young Birder Spotlight feature, please contact Holly Merker at HCybelles@gmail.com.

Good birding to all, young and young-at-heart!

– Holly Merker
PSO Education Committee Chair
HCybelles@gmail.com

2019 Snyder County eBird 200 Challenge

by Chad Kauffman

This is the fourth challenge for a central PA county to try to get over 200 species in one year for the first time. We have succeeded reaching 200 in Perry, Mifflin, and Juniata. Snyder will be the last of the challenges that my group and I will lead.

We think Snyder will be the most challenging as it is very underbirded, and most of the helpers we have lined up don't live or bird there often. We hope that some of the locals will join in with the few who do eBird their sightings.

We have created a website on Facebook for updates and to promote the challenge. Jason Weller is manning that front and that website is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/snydercountybirding/>.

The county compiler is now Joe Gyekis who is eager to get more involved in the county.

Several of us who run Winter Raptor Surveys will help the list.

Aden Troyer and I, as well as others, are doing our New Year's Day birding in Snyder to really get the year kick-started. In mid-January, Aden and I will be leading a field trip with Appalachian Audubon for a tour of Snyder County.

We usually take them around Juniata County to help them break the cabin fever, but a spur to Snyder will be fun for all.

In March we have scheduled two PSO field trips to Snyder County with the hope of finding waterfowl and gulls if there is any open water. These are now "penciled in" for the first two Saturdays in March, the 2nd and the 9th. More details will follow.

I will also be stealing my Juniata County crew for the PAMC, the Pennsylvania migration count, and trekking over the mountain to give extra eyes and hours during the peak migration times.

If you haven't birded Snyder County, try to make an effort to bird there in 2019. If you think you can join some of us, just reach out. The county features beautiful old growth forests at Snyder Middleswarth in the west, Susquehanna River front in the east, excellent birding lakes in Faylor and Walker, many State Game Lands, and farm areas. If there were more birders, there would certainly be more rarities and favorites found.

If you think you would like to create a challenge for your county and need some help, let me know. I will certainly help you promote it on social media.

Certificates of Appreciation Awarded

Since the March 2018 newsletter, two Certificates of Appreciation were issued to the following individuals who allowed access to their property to view a rare bird. The full list can be found on the PSO's website.

Varied Bunting, John and Elizabeth Cain, Allegheny Co.

Hudsonian Godwit and other bird species, R. & B. Kreider, Lebanon Co.

Congratulations to PSO Member Jessica Botzan!

The National Aviary in Pittsburgh elected Jessica Botzan as October's Maker of the Month! She created needle felt owls, dryer balls, keychains, and more inspired by the aviary's Snowy Owls. You can pick up these fun and fuzzy pieces on your next visit to the National Aviary. Jessica was one of our vendors at our September meeting in Meadville.

Congratulations, Jessica!!!

Bird List Volunteer Needed

Peter Robinson has been compiling the Pennsylvania Bird List Report Forms (see page 15) for the past 20 years. He would like to find someone to take over this job. If you are interested, please contact Peter at pabirder@hotmail.com and include your phone number so you can discuss the job. Sincere thanks to Peter for his dedication to this task for PSO!

Members Omitted from October's *Pileated*

The following members were inadvertently omitted from our membership list in the October newsletter because of a computer glitch. Our apologies!

Leigh Altadonna, Montgomery County, PA
David Brinker, MD
Peter Dalby, Clarion County, PA
Donald Davis, NY
Kenneth H. Dubke, TN
Jon L Dunn, CA
James Jackson, York County, PA
Joshua Jones, MD
Allan R. Keith, MA
Sandra Keller, NJ
Justin Mann, NY
Paul Mauss, DE
Bradford Merritt, NJ
Mark Moore, Clarion County, PA
John Oshlick, CT
Joan Renninger, Dauphin County, PA
Frank Rohrbacher, DE
David Saylor, DC
Terence Lee Schiefer, MS
Kurt Schwarz, MD
John Snarey, GA
Neil Troyer, KY
Betty Vermeire, TX
Andrew Wilson, MD
Dr. David Zegers, Lancaster County, PA

How Well Do You Know Your Pennsylvania Birds?

1. What is the last species at the end of our official state list (main, not provisional)?
2. Seven hummingbird species are on the state list. Can you name all of them?
3. How are Blue Jays related to crows?
4. McWilliams and Brauning say in *The Birds of Pennsylvania*, "Except at the Lake Erie Shore, nearly all sightings are of one- or two-year-old birds." What species?
5. We await Neotropic Cormorant for our state list. Apart from smaller size, what prominent feature of jizz might quickly suggest that it's not a Double-crested Cormorant?

(Answers on page 20)



Do you need a present for a birder?

Check the PSO website. We sell T-shirts, both short- and long-sleeved; hats; checklists and binders for those checklists; *The Annotated List of the Birds of Pennsylvania*; as well as patches, decals, and Zippo lighters.



Ornithological Literature Notes

As if we didn't have enough to worry about, the emerald ash borer and the hemlock woolly adelgid, another exotic import is seriously damaging plant life in parts of Pennsylvania.

It is the spotted lanternfly, whose adult might be mistaken for a pretty moth or butterfly. But don't be entranced. It is a planthopper from Asia in the family Fulgoridae, and like many pests imported from abroad, it is a serious threat to our environment.

Pennsylvania has an unwanted distinction. The lanternfly was identified in the U.S. for the first time in Berks County in 2014 and has since spread throughout south-eastern Pennsylvania into Bucks, Carbon, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, and Schuylkill counties.

Beyond this "core infestation area," it has been found in several counties elsewhere in Pennsylvania. So keep an eye out for them! Some have also been seen recently in neighboring New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and New York. This suggests that an unfortunate spread might be in store.

The lanternfly's depredations are extensive. Potentially at stake are not only Pennsylvania's grape, tree-fruit, hardwood, nursery, and landscape economies but also ornamental plants in our yards.

An excellent guide to the species' biology, environmental impacts, and methods of control is available at the Penn State Extension website, extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly. For example, females prefer to lay their eggs on the *Ailanthus* "tree-of-heaven," and property owners can help the spread by removing them or treating them with safe pesticides.

What has this to do with birds? Margaret Brittingham, Professor of Wildlife Resources would like to find out. If you don't regularly read the PaBirds listserv, you may have missed her request to birders on October 30.

Dr. Brittingham seeks information on how birds are reacting to the lanternfly infestations. She is particularly interested in two kinds of observations: First, have you seen any birds feeding on lanternflies either dead or alive,

or do the birds avoid them? Second, have you seen birds feeding on the white lanternfly egg masses? All of these live stages, from egg masses to adults, are illustrated in color on the Penn State Extension website.

She is also interested in observations of birds related to pest control measures such as possible negative effects of insecticides and of "sticky bands" (flypaper-like bands on trees that capture lanternfly nymphs in the spring). The information will be used as a starting point for a pilot study of lanternfly and bird interactions. Her request is: "If you have observations to share, please email me directly at mx21@psu.edu."



The adult spotted lanternfly could easily be mistaken for a pretty moth or butterfly.

Photo courtesy of Lawrence Barringer, PA Dept. of Agriculture

So far she has learned that for the most part, birds are not feeding on lanternflies, although there are observations of cardinals, Olive-sided Flycatchers, and Red-headed Woodpeckers feeding on them. This diverse array of birds suggests that many other species might include the insects in their diet.

Some research suggests that lanternflies have chemical defenses making them unpalatable to birds, and that birds avoid eating them. Dr. Brittingham says that no birds have been seen eating dead lanternflies or their egg masses.

From an ecological viewpoint, birders' information can assist in developing effective controls. Dr. Brittingham explains how: "We want to make sure that control measures are not having unintended consequences on birds, and if they are, we need to know so that we can modify the control measures. For example, are birds getting caught on the "sticky bands"? If so, we need to modify these to reduce this hazard. Are birds eating lanternflies killed by insecticides? This does not appear to be happening, but if it is, we need to know in order to reduce hazards."

The Penn State Extension website noted above illustrates every life stage of the lanternfly, from its white egg masses, through the instar stages, to the egg-laying adults. Another important site, extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly-management-for-homeowners, offers many tips on how to control the pest.

Paul Hess
Natrona Heights, PA
phess@salsgiver.com

Conservation Chat Room

Please Ask your Federal Legislator to Support: The Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Farm Bill



The saying goes, “If it acts like a duck and quacks like a duck, it must be a duck.” But what is a lame duck? Internet sources explain that the “lame duck” phrase was used in the mid-1700s in reference to London stockbrokers who defaulted on their debts. It took a hundred years before the phrase

surfaced in the U.S., where it was used for “broken down politicians.” Today, “lame duck” refers to politicians who weren’t re-elected, as well as the period of time between the election in November and when politicians take office in January of the following year.

During this lame duck session, Congress should act on two key bills that include critical funding for conservation: the Farm Bill and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The House is scheduled to migrate out of DC on Dec. 13, and the Senate will follow their tailwind on Dec. 14; so we need to contact Congressional members as soon as possible. Both of these bills need to be authorized before Congress flies home.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund

Funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) helps to protect wildlife (bird) habitat, improve water quality (for birds, too), and preserve open space (for birds and people) in Pennsylvania. To see the impact in your county, click on the map that the Pennsylvania Environmental Council created. According to PEC, Pennsylvania has benefited from more than \$309 million in funding, from famous places like the Flight 93 National Memorial and the Appalachian Trail, to local projects and county improvements to safeguard natural areas, water resources, and our cultural heritage. Here is the link: www.pecpa.org/lwcf.

If you want to see details on the impressive list of projects funded by the LWCF in Pennsylvania, go to: <http://projects.invw.org/data/lwcf/grants-pa.html>. In my home county of Bedford, three community parks and two

state parks, plus three different state game lands have received money from the LWCF.

The money from the LWCF is not taxpayer dollars; it comes from offshore oil and gas royalties. Some of the funds go to states and the rest is used for federal conservation projects. One proposal would guarantee that states receive 40% of available funding. Cindy Adams Dunn, DCNR Secretary, supports this, since any number of local or state parks could benefit.

The LWCF is actually supported by both parties in Congress (quite a rare thing in DC these days), but our leaders have not reached a consensus on how to continue the program. A bill to permanently renew LWCF was advanced out of both the House and Senate committees earlier this year, but now H.R.502/S.569 is languishing – and that’s pretty “lame,” in my opinion.

Failing to take action at the federal level means that our leaders are “ducking” their responsibilities.

National Audubon and The Wilderness Society support permanent reauthorization of the program. The Wilderness Society’s website states, “LWCF also helps support America’s strong outdoor recreation economy, which generates more than [\\$887 billion in annual consumer spending](#) and supports 7.6 million jobs. For example, it helps ensure rock climbers, hunters, and anglers have access to exceptional natural landscapes and bolsters the recreation infrastructure rural communities rely on for tourism revenue.” We can add birders to the list of groups that benefit from access to wild areas protected by the LWCF. I think it would be really lame if we birders and bird-lovers didn’t do something to get this bill flying toward the finish line.

Both Pennsylvania Senators need to take action on LWCF, so please take a few minutes to email Senator Toomey’s aid: Wesley Wright: Wesley_wright@toomey.senate.gov Then email Sen. Casey’s aid: Adam Tarr: adam_tarr@casey.senate.gov

Please ask each Senator to support permanent reauthorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund by cosponsoring S.569. Please email your Congressman, too, and ask him/her to cosponsor H.R.502.

The Farm Bill

Next, repeat those emails, but ask your legislator to support reauthorization of the Farm Bill. The Farm Bill impacts wildlife because forest management falls under agriculture. Many programs that help private forest landowners protect and improve forests receive funding from the Farm Bill. Birds like Cerulean Warblers, Golden-winged Warblers, American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, and Eastern Whip-poor-wills benefit from projects funded by the Farm Bill. I have firsthand experience, since my husband and I received federal

funding that helped us turn an unhealthy forest into a young, healthy forest that supports Yellow-breasted Chat, Cerulean Warblers, and Hooded Warblers (to name a few).

We know that populations of birds are decreasing rapidly, but passage of these two bills will help slow that trend. Make those phone calls – just because it’s a lame duck session doesn’t mean you should duck your responsibility!

Laura Jackson
Bedford County
mljackson2@embarqmail.com

Christmas Bird Counts Held in Pennsylvania

	Name of Count	County	Compiler	Phone Number	E-mail Address	Date
1	Allentown	Lehigh/Berks	Rett Oren		rettoen@gmail.com	12/15/18
2	Audubon	Montgomery Delaware Chester	Vincent Smith	484-410-1157	Nyctea34@aol.com	12/22/18
3	Bald Eagle	Centre	Bob Snyder	814-753-2629	rhs2@psu.edu	12/30/18
4	Beaver	Beaver	Rick Mason	724-847-0909	richarddmason@gmail.com	12/15/18
5	Bedford	Bedford	Laura & Mike Jackson	814-652-9268	jacksonlaura73@gmail.com	12/29/18
6	Belsano	Indiana Cambria	Robert Gordon	814-418-8412	rhgiii@robertgordoniiiiviolinmaker.com	12/29/18
7	Benezette	Clearfield, Elk	Mark Johnson	814-546-2886	luckybirder@gmail.com	12/30/18
8	Bernville	Berks	Ed Barrell	610-926-2962	ed.barrell@comcast.net	12/29/18
9	Bethlehem-Easton	Northampton	Elaine & Donald Mease	610-346-7754	measede@enter.net	12/29/18
10	Bloomsburg	Columbia	Karol Pasquinelli	570-351-5120	karol2@ptd.net northbranchbirders@gmail.com	12/16/18
11	Buffalo Creek	Washington	Larry Helgerman	412-508-0321	bobolink1989@gmail.com	12/16/18
12	Buffalo Creek Valley	Butler Armstrong	George Reese	724-353-9649	g.reese@gaiconsultants.com	12/15/18
13	Bushy Run	Westmoreland	Dick Byers	724-593-3543	otusasio@lhtot.com	12/30/18
14	Butler	Butler Lawrence Mercer	Glenn Koppel Mary A Koeneke	703-203-3362 703-203-6337	macatilly@gmail.com macatilly@icloud.com	12/15/18
15	Central Bucks	Bucks	Diane Allison	267-733-3868	dalliso@mail.ptd.net	12/30/18

16	Chambersburg	Franklin	Valerie Barnes	717-352-4397	barnesva4@comcast.net	12/15/18
17	Clarion	Clarion	Gary Edwards	814-671-1273	gedwards@csonline.net	12/15/18
18	Clarksville	Greene	Terry Dayton	724-627-9665	tdayton@windstream.net	12/22/18
19	Culp	Blair	Laura Jackson	814-652-9268	mljackson2@embarqmail.com	12/15/18
20	Curtin	Dauphin	Scott Bills	717-896-8859		12/27/18
21	Dallas Area	Luzerne	Rick Koval	570-991-0580	pocononaturalist@yahoo.com	12/15/18
22	Dingman's Ferry	Pike	Derek Scott	570-828-2310 x 234		
23	DuBois	Clearfield	Marianne Atkinson, Joc Smrekar		marianne5@windstream.net	12/15/18
24	Elverson	Chester	Jim Cook	610-587-7545	escjim@windstream.net	12/22/18
25	Emporium	Cameron	Bob Martin	814-486-1990	bmartin@zitomedia.net	12/23/18
26	Erie	Erie	Michele Franz		isomorphun@roadrunner.com	12/15/18
27	Gettysburg	Adams	Mike O'Brien	717-642-6676	maddogobrien@gmail.com	12/15/18
28	Glenolden	Delaware	David Eberly	610-543-3499	david.eberly@gmail.com	12/15/18
29	Grove City	Butler Mercer Lawrence Venango	Brendyn Baptiste	724-496-4856	brendynbaptiste@yahoo.com	12/22/18
30	Hamburg	Berks Schuylkill	Laurie Goodrich	610-756-6961 570-943-3411 x106	goodrich@hawkmtn.org	12/30/18
31	Harrisburg	Dauphin	Deuane Hoffman	717-564-7475	corvuscorax@comcast.net	12/15/18
32	Huntingdon	Huntingdon	Deb Grove	814-643-3295	dsg4@psu.edu	12/16/18
33	Imperial	Allegheny Washington	Bob Mulvihill		robert.mulvihill@gmail.com	12/23/18
34	Indiana	Indiana	Roger & Marg Higbee	724-354-3493 412-309-3538	bcorirole@windstream.net rvhigbee@windstream.net	12/26/18
35	Johnstown	Cambria	Jeff Payne	814-279-8142	paynemt@gmail.com	12/16/18
36	Lake Raystown	Huntingdon Blair	Jon Kauffman	717-413-5522	jvk5019@psu.edu	12/23/18
37	Lancaster	Lancaster	Barbara Hunsberger Roger Stoner	717-393-4091	phunsberger@comcast.net	1/5/19
38	Lebanon	Lebanon Dauphin	Fritz Heilman	717-273-0487	volks5@verizon.net	12/15/18

39	Lewisburg	Union,Snyder, Northumber- land	Allen Schweinsberg	570-524-0432	aschwein@bucknell.edu	12/15/18
40	Lewistown	Juniata	Abram Troyer Chad Kauffman	717-994-6715	chadkauffman@earthlink.net	12/15/18
41	Linesville	Crawford	Clare Nicolls	814-587-6395	tcnicolls@windstream.net	12/16/18
42	Lititz	Lancaster Lebanon	Ted Nichols	717-856-3851	tanicholsii@gmail.com	12/30/18
43	Lock Haven- Jersey Shore	Clinton Lycoming	Wayne Laubscher	570-748-7511	wnlaubscher@comcast.net	12/15/18
44	Mansfield- Wellsboro	Tioga	Gary Tyson	570-724-5789	gnats3@ptd.net	1/1/19
45	Montrose	Susquehanna	Evan Mann	570-663-2621	7evanmann@gmail.com	12/15/18
46	New Bloomfield	Perry	Annette Mathes	717-514-4512	amathes19@verizon.net	12/22/18
47	Newville	Cumberland	Vern Gauthier	717-385-9526	verngauthier14@gmail.com	12/29/18
48	Ohiopyle	Fayette Somerset	Matt Juskowich	412-999-0394	jusko88@yahoo.com	1/5/19
49	Northern Lycoming	Lycoming	David Brown	570-772-9262	davidebrownpa@gmail.com	12/29/18
50	Penns Creek	Centre	Cathy Pierce		winghaven.nursery@gmail.com	12/15/18
51	Pennypack Valley	Philadelphia	Peter Kurtz	215-342-3638 215-685-0470	peter.kurtz@phila.gov	12/15/18
52	Philipsburg	Centre Clearfield	Greg Kojadinovich	814-237-5964	gsak40@gmail.com	12/29/18
53	Pittsburgh	Allegheny	Brian Shema	412-963-6100	bshema@aswp.org	12/29/18
54	Pittsburgh South Hills	Allegheny Washington	Nancy Page	412-221-4795		12/15/18
55	Pleasantville	Venango	Russ States	814-676-6320	pelagics202@gmail.com	12/30/18
56	Pocono Mt.	Monroe	Brian Hardiman	570-629-3061	bhmccd@ptd.net	12/16/18
57	Potter County	Potter	Dave Hauber	814-274-8946	haubers3@penn.com	12/16/18
58	Reading	Berks	Ken Lebo	610-856-1413	klebo@dejazzd.com	12/16/18
59	Rector	Westmoreland	Luke DeGroot	724-593-7521	degrootel@carnegiemnh.org	12/23/18
60	Ryerson	Greene	Marjorie Howard	724-852-3155	birdwatcher108@comcast.net	12/29/18
61	Scranton	Lackawanna	Mark Catalano Cheryle Stone	570-760-6556	cstone@epix.net	12/15/18
62	South Butler	Butler	Chris Kubiak	412-963-6100	ckubiak@aswp.org	12/16/18

63	Southeastern Bradford	Bradford	Rebecca Lesko	570-592-2629	EMNCinfo@yahoo.com	12/29/18
64	Southern Bucks	Bucks	Mark Gallagher	215-378-8162	mgallagher@princetonhydro.com	12/15/18
65	Southern Lancaster County	Lancaster	Bob Schutsky	717-548-3303 (10 a.m. to 9 p.m.)	info@birdtreks.com	12/16/18
66	State College	Centre	Jim Dunn Bob Fowles	814-863-8625 814-238-1990	jwd6@psu.edu rbf@psu.edu	12/16/18
67	Tamaqua	Schuykill Carbon	Jonathan DeBalko		jonathan.debalko@wilkes.edu	12/28/18
68	Tunkhannock	Wyoming	Rick Koval	570-991-0580	pocononaturalist@yahoo.com	12/16/18
69	Upper Bucks	Bucks Montgomery Lehigh	Bill Etter	215-964-3613	billetter01@gmail.com	12/15/18
70	Warren	Warren	Michael Toole	814-723-4714	m_t_toole@verizon.net	12/15/18
71	Washington	Washington	Tom Contreras	724-223-6118	tcontreras@washjeff.edu	12/15/18
72	West Chester	Chester	Barry Blust Anthony Fernandes	610-458-5616	BarryBlust@comcast.net jets741@verizon.net	12/15/18
73	Western Chester	Chester	Larry Lewis	484-340-7672	earlybirdtours@comcast.net	12/30/18
74	Western Schuylkill	Schuylkill	Dave Kruel	570-622-3704	dkrue1300@comcast.net	12/23/18
75	White Mills	Wayne	Barb Leo	570-253-2364	barbaraaleo@earthlink.net	12/15/18
76	Wild Creek– Little Gap	Carbon Monroe	Corey Husic	570-269-7509	coreyhusic@gmail.com	12/23/18
77	Williamsport	Lycoming	David Brown	570-772-9262	davidebrownpa@gmail.com	12/15/18
78	Wyncote	Montgomery	Andy Fayer		AndyFayer@aol.com	12/15/18
79	York	York	Bernie Frick	717-843-6675	bernardfrick@alum.lehigh.edu	12/15/18
80	York Springs	Adams Cumberland York	Vern Gauthier	717-385-9526	verngauthier14@gmail.com	12/27/18

Christmas Bird Count for Kids to Be Held in York County

A Christmas Bird Count for kids will be held December 27, 2018 at Nixon County Park. Kids must be 8 or older. To register, call York County Parks and Recreation at 717-840-7440.

Waggoner's Gap PSO Hawkwatch 2018 Revisited

by Chad Kauffman

Our annual Golden Eagle field trip on the first weekend of November took us to Waggoner's Gap again this year. The Golden Eagle trip is the only hawkwatch that PSO plans annually, and it's one to which I personally look forward each year.

Many regular hawkwatchers know when and where to go, but some birders do enjoy these types of trips for the social aspect, as well as for having the benefit of a group to help see, learn, and discuss the birds flying overhead and alerting us to those coming from "out there in the sky." This is the third year in a row that my young son Noah has accompanied me on the hawkwatch weekend. Since it is so close to our home, we didn't stay in a motel, even though Noah really enjoys those types of trips.

This year, the peak of the Golden Eagles came early by a week or so, but I knew we could still get eagles if the winds and weather cooperated. The downside of planning hawkwatch trips so far in advance is that you are really dependent on Mother Nature's moods.



Noah Kauffman poses beside the Waggoner's Gap sign.
Photo by Chad Kauffman



Zach Millen photographed this gorgeous juvenile Golden Eagle at Waggoner's Gap.

Saturday morning's weather and winds looked like they would offer us a good day. We arrived early and found our position on some soft, comfy rocks. We saw flight activity on the way there and more soon after we sat down on the rocks. When you first hear that you just missed a Golden Eagle, it's bittersweet; but it didn't take long for another one to come by. Before the day was over, the official observers had counted 11 Golden Eagles. Eleven species of raptors were tallied that day, totaling 202 birds in all. Red-tailed Hawks were the most numerous, with 82 of this large Buteo counted. Bald Eagles tallied reached

28, but many more were seen as locals were just playing around in the sky but weren't migrating through. Joe Gyekis tallied the eBird checklists for us, and we had 26 total species for Saturday. Most of the day we were able to see and hear a few songbirds, with the highlights being Pine Siskin and Purple Finch.

Sunday's weather didn't call for great winds, and the temperature was colder; but the sun was out and provided a very beautiful day for us. Although eastern standard time changed the clocks, the birds didn't know the difference and came by when they were ready. The numbers of birders and birds were fewer, but we got some amazing looks at the birds.

We tallied eight Golden Eagles on Sunday, and the highlight was seeing the three different ages – adult, juvie, and subadult plumages – as they flew by, putting on a show. We were able to see the underwing of all three passing overhead, much to the delight of the watchers. The most numerous bird of the day was again the Red-tailed Hawk, with 80 birds counted. Tallied that day were 131 raptors of eight species, and we listed 40 total species on eBird.

Some surprises on Sunday included Herring Gulls flying over, a pair of Common Loons, and two Lesser Yellowlegs which zipped past us while we were watching a low flying Golden Eagle. Both the counter Eric Beck and I were a bit startled and agreed on the ID as they were very close with "naked-eye looks." This was certainly a new bird on the hawkwatch list for the location.

(continued on page 16)

Answers to Bird Quiz

(page 12)

1. Dickcissel
2. Bahama Woodstar, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Anna's, Rufous, Allen's, Calliope
3. They are in the same family Corvidae
4. Iceland Gull
5. A conspicuously long, thin tail

Waggoner's Gap Revisited *(continued from p. 14)*

A humorous thing happened while we were sitting on the rocks on Sunday. Noah said he saw a mouse in the rocks, and Dave Grove said it was probably a red-backed vole. When we got home, I was emptying Noah's backpack and noticed that shelled pistachios were falling out, so I assumed he had not closed the Ziploc bag. Then I saw a hole was chewed in the bag as well as in the bottom of his backpack. We were just glad the invader/thief escaped instead of coming home in our car or into the house.

Next year's Golden Eagle trip will take us back to Hawk Mountain, and once again it will be the first weekend in November.

PSO Newsletter

This newsletter is published four times a year by the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology. To renew your membership, either pay on line or send your check made payable to "PSO" to:

PSO
2469 Hammertown Road
Narvon, PA 17555-9730

Membership Categories

Membership Categories:

Individual	\$ 30.00	Student	\$ 25.00
Family	\$ 35.00	Electronic Student	\$ 10.00
Sustaining	\$ 45.00		

PSO Officers and Directors

Mike Fialkovich – President mpfial@verizon.net
Evan Mann – Vice President 7evanmann@gmail.com
Roger Higbee – Secretary rvhigbee@windstream.net
Frank Haas – Treasurer fchaas@PAbirds.org
Greg Grove – *PA Birds* Editor gwg2@psu.edu
Margaret Higbee – Newsletter Editor bcoriole@windstream.net
Mike Lanzone – Past President mlanzone@gmail.com

Vernon Gauthier – Pabirder@gmail.com
Doug Gross - dagross144@verizon.net
Deb Grove – dsg4@psu.edu
Laura Jackson – jacksonlaura73@gmail.com
Chad Kauffman – chadkauffman@earthlink.net
Wayne Laubscher – wnlaubscher@comcast.net
Sandra Lockerman – sandylockerman@yahoo.com
Andrew McGann – andrew.mcgann@gmail.com
Holly Merker – hcybelle@gmail.com
Emily Thomas – eht5002@hotmail.com
Linda Wagner – lwagner342@msn.com

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Indiana, PA 15701-7934
3119 Creekside Road
c/o R. V. Higbee

Ornithology
Pennsylvania Society for

Non-profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Creekside, PA 15732
PERMIT NO. 2