

# The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Todd Bird Club

January 2010

## Meetings

Todd Bird Club meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. the first Tuesday of the month, September through April, at Blue Spruce Lodge in Blue Spruce County Park, located just off Route 110 east of the town of Ernest. Arrive early to socialize. Refreshments are provided at each of our meetings. In May we hold our banquet meeting which starts at 6:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, February 2** – Gary Edwards and Ron Montgomery, members of the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society, will present a program entitled *The Life and Times of Piney Tract...a Reclaimed Surface Mine*. Forty years ago it was an active strip mine; today it's an Important Bird Area.

Gary Edwards and Ron Montgomery have been involved in various aspects of this Clarion County transition and will share their Power Point presentation describing how the transformation came about. It's a small town success story fueled by persistence and cooperation – but with plenty of frustration, gnashing of teeth, and a lot of good fortune along the way. They'll also discuss some of the grassland bird research that has been performed at Piney Tract. Special emphasis will be on everyone's favorite songster, the Henslow's Sparrow. Please join us for an interesting and informative program.

**Tuesday, March 2** – Yellow Creek State Park Naturalist Mike Shaffer will present *Everything You Ever*



Special emphasis will be placed on Henslow's Sparrow at our February meeting.

Photo by Margaret Higbee

*Wanted to Know about Feeding Birds* at this meeting. Come learn about the birds in our backyards and what they prefer to eat. Mike is no stranger to Todd Bird Club, and his enthusiasm is contagious. Don't miss this great program.

**Tuesday, April 6** – Jason Hill, an Iowan native, obtained his Bachelor's of Science degree in Wildlife Biology at the University of Montana. Following graduation he worked on a number of research projects for universities and state and federal agencies, including work with sea otters, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, the Po'ouli and other honeycreepers, and House Wrens in Costa Rica. He received his Master's degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut studying the post-fledging ecology of saltmarsh sparrows. He is currently a second-year PhD candidate in Ecology at Penn State. His research involves the population ecology of grassland birds on reclaimed surface mines and determining the factors that regulate these populations. He will discuss his current research as well as misconceptions concerning factors that control bird populations.

**Tuesday, May 4 – 6:00 p.m.** Our annual covered dish dinner. Please bring a covered dish to share and your own place settings. Drinks will be provided. Details will be provided in the next newsletter.

## Field Trips

**Tuesday Morning Outings at Yellow Creek** will continue. For all Yellow Creek outings, meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office located on Rt. 259 just off Rt. 422 east of Indiana. Everyone – from beginner to expert birder – is welcome.

**Saturday, March 13** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Lee Carnahan (724-465-7323). This outing will target early waterfowl.

**Friday - Sunday, March 19-21** – Coastal New Jersey. This trip will target Barnegat Light, Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge, Cape May, and Sandy Hook. Possible species include Brant, Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Great Cormorant, Northern Gannet, Purple Sandpiper, and Am. Oystercatcher. We'll check the list serves for other possible rarities. If you are interested in going, please contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

**Saturday, March 27** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Gloria Lamer (724-349-1159).

**Saturday, April 3** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). This is a joint outing with Three Rivers Birding Club.

**Saturday, April 10** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). This is a joint outing with Friends of the Park..

**Saturday, April 17** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Lee Carnahan (724-465-7323).

**Saturday, April 24** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Marge Van Tassel.

## Support Your State Bird Club Join PSO!

The Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology was founded in 1990 to foster the study and appreciation of the birds of Pennsylvania and to promote the conservation of birds and their habitat.

When you join PSO, you receive four issues of the magazine *Pennsylvania Birds* and four issues of the newsletter *The PSO Pileated*. To join, go to <http://www.pabirds.org>.

## President Julie Mibroda Resigns

Our president Julie Mibroda has regrettably resigned because her work load as a graduate student has been much greater than she originally anticipated. We will miss her! Julie will return to a more active role in Todd Bird Club when she completes her degree. We wish you only the best, Julie!

At our February 2 meeting, we will hold a special election to elect a president to complete Julie's term.

## The Great Backyard Bird Count February 12-15 It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent and in Hawaii. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, February 12-15, 2010. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day. You can also submit more than one checklist per day if you count in other locations on that day.

2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time. You may find it helpful to print out your regional bird checklist to get an idea of the kinds of birds you're likely to see in your area in February. You could take note of the highest number of each species you see on this checklist.

3. When you're finished, enter your results through the web page. You'll see a button marked "Enter Your Checklists!" on the website home page <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>, beginning on the first day of the count. It will remain active until the deadline for data submission on March 1.

If you want to participate but don't have access to a computer, contact the Higbees (724-354-3493).

# Algonquin – Wolves, Bears, Foxes, and More!

by Jack Solomon

For more than 20 years my wife Sue and I spend a few weeks to over a month at Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario, Canada, usually from mid August to sometime in September. Several northern specialties are always a possibility there; otherwise, the birding ranges from good to just fair that time of year, but we love the place. Sue and I often have seen both male Spruce Grouse displaying (why so late is not clear to me) and a female Spruce Grouse, tame as could be, within 10 feet or less, dust bathing with her 5 chicks. Another northern bird we see, and touch, are Gray Jays which feed from our hands. Boreal Chickadees, with their brown caps where ours have black, and their wispy chickadee calls, aren't too hard to find. On perhaps one fourth of our trips we've seen a Black-backed Woodpecker. Red-breasted Nuthatches abound, and many years there are crossbills, depending upon the cone crop.

The park is a paddler's dream come true, with miles of rivers, well marked portages, and countless lakes. The back country, more than 3,000 square miles of it, is close to being wilderness, with no roads near the canoe routes. Several backpacking trails are available, with loops suitable for trips from a few days to a week, through the mixed evergreen and deciduous forests and along streams and lakes.

Mammals are a big treat with moose fairly easy to find; otters play in clear view now and then; beaver abound; and minks, martens, and other weasels are sometimes viewable. Mammals in fact have supplied the biggest thrill, and it was hearing them, rather than seeing them, that was the biggie. It's a Public Wolf Howl that I'm talking about. My first experience with it was there in 1997. Twelve hundred people showed up at the theater for a two-hour evening program and instructions, then for a half an hour, cars were guided out of the lot in the dark of night and taken to the point on the one paved road of any length in the park where wolves had responded to the howls of park naturalists the night before. It's a through highway which was closed off while the program was in progress, a period of perhaps 25-30 minutes. The night was very dark and clear by then with hundreds of cars lining each side of the two lane road, while the occupants stood silently beside them. No light was on or even noticeable in the distance. The sky was studded with stars, and I observed two satellites, the Milky Way, and even some dim stars in Draco and the handle and bowl of the Little Dipper while I waited for the howling to begin. After a short interval of silence, the lead human howler

started. His first howl elicited only silence. His plan was to howl alone several times, and if no response was received, his assistant howler would join him in a "group howl." The latter imitates a pack of several animals, replete with the yapping of the year's cubs who in August start trying, with the characteristic ineffectualness of adolescents of many species, to join their elders' howling. Whether or not the real wolves responded – presumably to tell the howlers to get out of their territory – the plan was to wait 10 minutes after either a response or lack of response, then try again. The human howler raised his eerie voice a second time in the darkness, and as his howl tailed off, a pack of wolves, seemingly less than 100 yards from me, made sounds that made me tingle. There must have been three to six adults and as many cubs. The adults' wails and yaps of the year's youngsters went on for what seemed to be a long time probably a full minute or two.

Total silence returned, and we stood, not even fidgeting for 10 minutes. A few motor vehicles were allowed to pass through, their lights painful to my night-adapted eyes. Then, a return to total darkness and total silence. Again, a single human howl...then another. Nothing. A "group" human howl followed. Before it ended, the wolves keened and yipped again; the second howl thrilling me as much as the first, although I already had the comforting knowledge that, unlike the two other wolf howls I'd attended – one at Algonquin and one in Minnesota – where the wolves weren't on the job, this time they were performing, and I'd be able to relive the experience (yes, and brag, too) by telling you about it.

The next day, news of a bear frequenting the marsh behind the Visitors' Center took us to the deck with a scope. The bear, apparently eating berries at about a quarter mile, was there on our arrival, and we were able to drop the scope to let little German tourist kids get a look, too. My fears that my German language ability had deteriorated since I last spoke to Kaiser Wilhelm were fully justified, but their parents were fluent in English, and pointing to a bear and smiling will get you by in a tough spot.

On another day, some young red foxes fearlessly continued pouncing on roadside grasshoppers, just like kittens, as we drove by. We stopped. I approached closely enough to get pictures (within 20 feet – I have no telephoto lens) but they ran into the nearby weeds and woods. I apologized for spooking them to nearby

photographers with professional looking gear, who assured me the foxes would come back. So I sat down and waited. The two foxes returned to their sport and feeding. They looked like they were having fun. Too bad nobody there in '97 had a digital camera.

Need some howling lessons? I may offer some at the next PSO Annual Meeting at Presque Isle in May. There are dark skies in Erie, almost like Algonquin. Who knows? Long ago wolves howled in Presque Isle State Park. Maybe if we sing out, we'll hear their ghosts in the distance.



## Yellow Creek Outing Revisited

A chilly morning greeted the 19 birders who gathered at the Yellow Creek State Park office for the joint Three Rivers Birding Club-Todd Bird Club outing on Saturday, November 7. While we waited for everyone to arrive, we checked the surrounding trees for passerines. Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creeper, and Golden-crowned Kinglets were among the first on the list. Passing overhead were Am. Crows and Am. Robins. Special thanks to park manager Ken Bisbee who opened the park office for restroom use. As Lee Carnahan drove into the park, a Cooper's Hawk sailed across the road in front of him.

Our first stop was at the maintenance building where we crossed the road to check the lake. A conglomeration of water birds included 274 Am. Coots, 49 Ruddy Ducks, 2 Pied-billed Grebes, 2 Mallards, one Bufflehead, and 2 Redheads. A Great Blue Heron, whose head we spotted hidden in the marsh vegetation, finally stepped out of the grasses for a good scope views. Just as we were preparing to move to the next spot, Lee Carnahan spotted 2 Common Goldeneyes, the first of the season against the north shore. While observing them, Mike Fialkovich exclaimed, "I see a phoebe across the lake!" We soon located Mike's phoebe in the scopes so everyone could add the species to his or her list.

We continued to the boat launch where a Field Sparrow

and several White-throated Sparrows foraged in the shrubbery. Here the Pied-billed Grebe count increased by 22. The glassy smooth lake offered perfect reflections, and the sun appeared causing many to peel their layers.

Our next stop in the main recreational area was a disappointment after the previous Tuesday's bird bonanza. The highlight was a Pileated Woodpecker perched in a tree along Rt. 259 and another calling from the woods behind us. Ian Haigh on his independent snipe hunt added one of the released Ring-necked Pheasants to the list. Several of us later noted a pheasant in the same area.

A brief stop at the beach yielded only one Horned Grebe, so we headed to the observatory trail. Along the trail we added more of the same species – Red-bellied, Downy, and Hairy Woodpeckers, chickadees and titmice, and Golden-crowned Kinglets. Because of the narrowness of the trail the group was strung out, and the last few in line observed a hen Northern Harrier hunting over the marsh.

Among the 169 coots in front of the observatory were 9 Ring-necked Ducks, 5 Lesser Scaup, and more Ruddy Ducks and Pied-billed Grebes. A Turkey Vulture and several Red-tailed Hawks were observed soaring above the horizon. We returned to the cars, and just as we arrived, a Northern Flicker called, bringing our total list to a mere 38. We decided it was just "too nice a day."

Fifteen members of our group headed to the King Buffet in Indiana where we spent an enjoyable hour or more eating lunch and reliving our various birding adventures. Special thanks to the Gerrishes and Shryers for commandeering enough seating and rearranging tables for our group!

– Margaret Higbee

## Participants

Lee Carnahan  
Shawn Collins  
Mike Fialkovich  
Randi Gerrish  
Sarah Gerrish  
Ian Haigh  
Margaret Haigh  
Margaret Higbee  
Roger Higbee  
Carol McCullough

Fred McCullough  
Nancy Moller  
Tom Moller  
Richard Nugent  
Judy Schryer  
Tony Schryer  
Janet Trice  
Nancy Trice  
Marge Van Tassel



Lee Carnahan, Richard Nugent, Mike Fialkovich, and Roger Higbee are among those recognizable in this photo.

Photo by Marge Van Tassel

# Bluebird Nest Project Is a Success at Prince Gallitzin

by John Salvetti

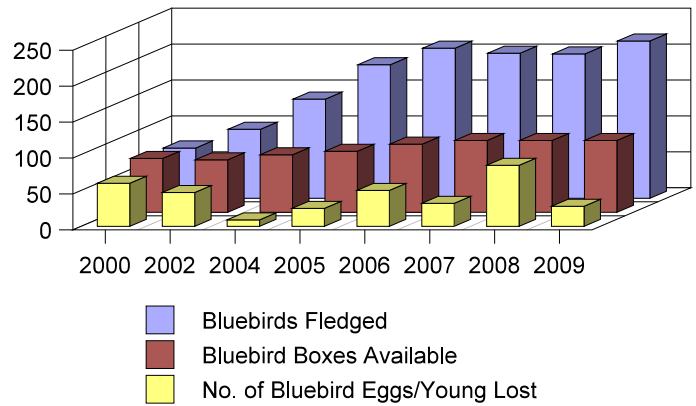
Bluebird nesting boxes were first erected at Prince Gallitzin State Park in the 1970s. At present 100 nesting boxes are located on both sides of Glendale Lake and are monitored weekly during the nesting season by dedicated volunteers.

A program to add predator guards to all boxes has been successfully completed. The guards increased fledging success immeasurably. In 2009, the 219 bluebird fledglings resulted in a new record high for the park. Also fledged were 201 Tree Swallows 10 House Wrens.

Dedicated volunteers, Arlene Eyer from Ashville, Ken and Judy Letso from Patton, and Jackie Stinson from Ebensburg, were responsible for making the program so successful.

Ever since Margaret Higbee introduced me to bluebird monitoring at Yellow Creek State Park 25 years ago, I have enjoyed the bluebirds in their recovery at Prince Gallitzin State Park. The success at this park would not have been achieved without the complete cooperation of park management.

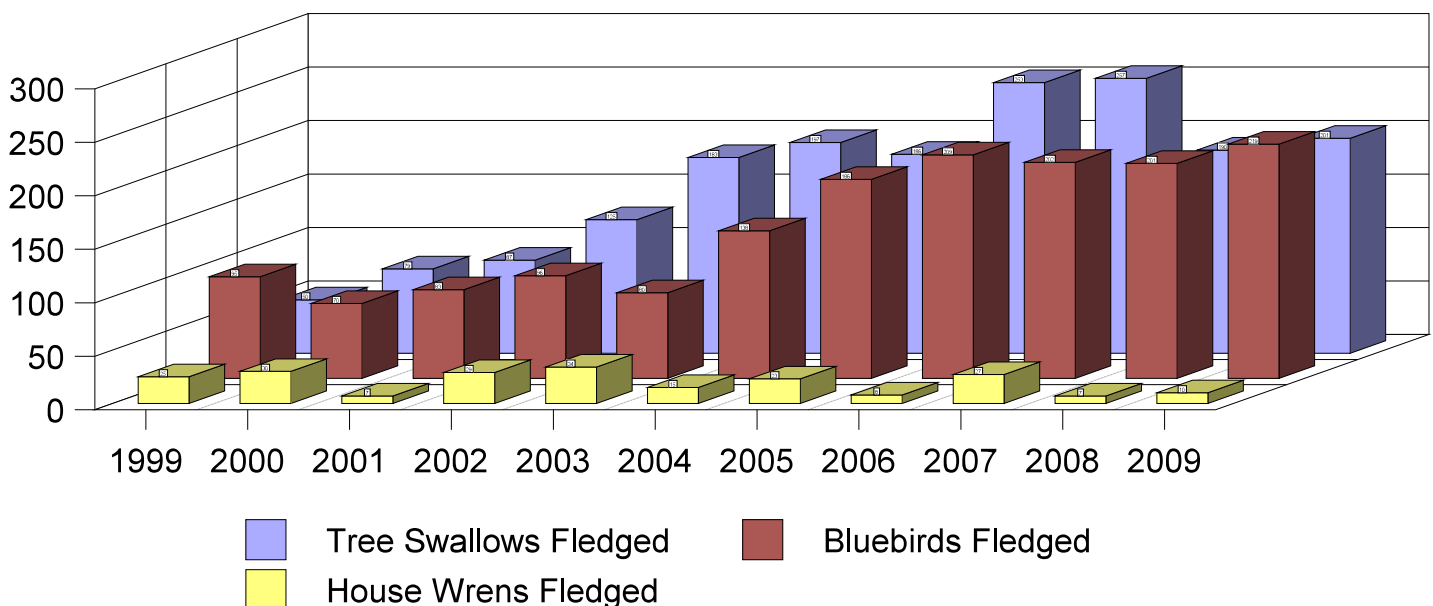
## Bluebirds at Prince Gallitzin



This male Eastern Bluebird uses ground-sallying as its foraging method. The bird perches on a branch or other object, watches the ground below, sails forth and lands briefly on the ground to capture an insect before returning to its perch.

Photo by Margaret Higbee

## Prince Gallitzin Nest Boxes



# Christmas Bird Count Participants

Pat Andrascik  
Steve Andrascik  
Bill Betts  
Tom Betts  
Sid Blair  
Vernon Blystone  
Lee Carnahan  
Kathy Chave  
Dorcas Clark  
Dan Cunkelman  
Marcy Cunkelman  
Jim Dearing  
Kristi Dearing  
Chuck Drysdale  
Janet Drysdale  
Gary Ferrence

Tom Fetterman  
Betsy Fetterman  
Sue Gatti  
Joyce Griffith  
Carol Guba  
Roger Higbee  
Margaret Higbee  
Dory Jacobs  
Pat Johner  
Paul Johner  
Tom Kuehl  
Jan Kuehl  
Gloria Lamer  
Mary A. Little  
Howard Mandigo  
Beth Marshall

Ken Marshall  
Flo McGuire  
Jim McGuire  
Donna Meyer  
Ed Meyer  
Marjorie Peterson  
Don Rodgers  
Linda Stormer  
Luke Stormer  
Rodger Stormer  
Georgette Syster  
John Taylor  
Ila Tuorinsky  
Steve Tuorinsky  
Daniel Winstead  
Ray Winstead

## Count Highlights

Special thanks to everyone who helped with our 26<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Bird Count on December 26. This was not one of our better counts as we listed only 56 species on count day plus an additional 4 during count week. The steady morning rain, which was sometimes heavy, did not deter most of our stalwart birders who hiked a total of 40.5 miles and drove 661.5 miles to census the birds in our circle. We fielded 17 parties and had observers at 18 feeders.

The temperature ranged from a low of 26 to a high of 42 during the day. Fortunately there was little wind. Depending upon the location, snow depth varied from half an inch to just over two inches. Unfortunately, most still water, including Yellow Creek Lake, was frozen, severely limiting our species of water birds. Two Lick Reservoir, however, yielded some open water but few waterfowl. Lee Carnahan found two Tundra Swans, 18 Am. Black Ducks, 4 Ruddy Ducks, and 6 Pied-billed Grebes at Two Lick.

Some birders will do anything to get out of the Christmas Bird Count. Gary Ferrence decided to break his leg, so he was one of our feeder watchers this year instead of a field birder. Tom and Jan Kuehl who usually bird with Gary covered their usual territory and spotted 2 Tundra Swans in flight. In addition, we sent the Kuehls on a wild Fish Crow chase and they succeeded in finding 5 near Revco in Indiana.

Everyone contributed to the success of our count, and several persons or groups were the only ones to note some of our species. Tom Betts succeeded in finding our only Ring-necked Pheasant. Carol Guba's list included the only

2 Great Blue Herons. Pat Johner was awarded the Bird of the Count Award at our compilation dinner at Hoss's for her 2 Killdeer. We don't find Killdeer every year. Ken and Beth Marshall encountered the only Belted Kingfisher of the count as well as 18 Horned Larks. In the afternoon John Taylor birded the area around St. Bernard's spotting our only 3 Yellow-rumped Warblers. Roger and I added a Turkey Vulture near Creekside, a bird not seen every year, a Red-breasted Nuthatch coming to our feeder, and 3 of the Hermit Thrushes at Yellow Creek.

Blackbirds were in short supply. Georgette Syster and Gloria Lamer found the only 6 Red-winged Blackbirds seen on the count. Marcy and Dan Cunkelman listed one of the two Common Grackles; the other visited Don Rodgers feeder in Indiana. Ila and Steve Tuorinsky's feeder hosted 3 Brown-headed Cowbirds, the lone report.

Daniel Winstead, our youngest participant, has learned the call of Golden-crowned Kinglets and managed to tally 10 in his territory, more than any other field party. In addition Daniel and his father Ray also added a Hermit Thrush to the list.

Jim Dearing and John Taylor on the north shore of Yellow Creek in the morning found 2 White-crowned Sparrows this year; the Cunkelmans also noted one.

Although our count was below average, we did our best to count the birds present. And it certainly wasn't the worst count on record. We actually set one record this year – our highest count of Mourning Doves since the count's inception.

# Rusty Blackbird Blitz Planned

Last year, birders throughout the US scoured the countryside for wintering Rusty Blackbirds to help us understand their distribution and find important local concentrations (hot spots). We learned a lot (see [http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty\\_Blackbird/blitz\\_results.cfm](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty_Blackbird/blitz_results.cfm)).

But there is much more to learn. We want to blitz for several years to both locate more hot spots and determine how stable these hot spots are from year to year. Already, the information gained is being used to implement research and conservation efforts!

With your help, the "Return of the Rusty Blackbird Blitz" will be bigger and better than the original.

Why a blitz? The Rusty Blackbird has been steeply declining, with estimates of an 85-99% population drop over the past 40 years. Although the cause for this alarming decline is not known, winter habitat loss and degradation are likely candidates. Rusties are getting scarce and patchy in their winter distribution, making it difficult to focus research and management we need to save the species. Collaborating with Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's and National Audubon Society's e-Bird project, we are enlisting the power of the birding public (you!) to help locate local, but predictable wintering concentrations of Rusty Blackbirds. We are mobilizing an all out blitz to locate Rusty Blackbirds and create a map of wintering Rusty Blackbird "hot spots" that will help focus research, monitoring and conservation attention..

Who? Birders from all of the Rusties' winter range.

What? During a single 17-day period, volunteers will search for Rusty Blackbirds in any locations and habitats deemed as potentially suitable for wintering Rusty Blackbirds, particularly flocks or concentrations (e.g., dozens or even hundreds of birds). Areas of concentration will be revisited in the future to determine if they are indeed Rusty Blackbird hot spots.

When? January 30 through February 15, 2010 – when Rusties become easier to find (males sing!) and the population is relatively sedentary.

Where? The focus is on southern states where most Rusty Blackbirds overwinter, but we also are looking for information in Pennsylvania and neighboring NJ and Ohio. Pennsylvania is at the northern edge of the Rusty's winter range, but that makes it a fun challenge to find a few. Some PA birders have announced a few observations of Rusty Blackbirds in SE PA, but how many more are out there if we looked for them? Some of the wet-

lands of southern PA and NW PA counties might be good places to look.

How? It's simple! Use whatever you like – your data base of previous sightings, birding intuition, local legend, or local knowledge – to search the most likely places for wintering Rusty Blackbirds. You can go wherever you like, whenever you like, and as often as you like anytime between the dates of 30 January - 15 February 2010. Checking known places is good. Exploring the unknown for new hot spots is even better! We are simply seeking observations on the number of birds present at each location visited, along with very basic habitat information. All you have to do is submit your observations via e-Bird. We will do the rest! (Failure to find Rusties is important information as well).

Additional Information: We will soon post additional instructions and information on identification, habitat preferences, etc., on the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center's Rusty Blackbird website:

[http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty\\_Blackbird/](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Research/Rusty_Blackbird/)

Information and instructions will also be available on Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's e-Bird site: [ebird.org](http://ebird.org). You may enter your Rusty Blackbird data through the PA eBird site: <http://ebird.org/content/pa/>

Good Blackbirding!

Douglas A. Gross

PA Game Commission Wildlife Biologist  
Endangered Bird Specialist & PA eBird Coordinator  
106 Winters Road, Orangeville, PA 17859  
570-458-4109; dogross@state.pa.us

## Special Thanks!

Sincere thanks to Lee Carnahan, Carol and Michael Guba, and Gloria and Wimp Lamer for representing Todd Bird Club at the Festival of Lights. The five collected entrance fees at Blue Spruce County Park on Monday, December 28, a night not fit for man nor beast!

The impending snow storm hit with blowing winds and driving snow. Temperatures were in the low 20s. Fortunately the shack erected for the money collectors is furnished with two space heaters. Outside a windbreak surrounds the burning bonfire. According to Lee Carnahan, the evening passed quickly with "a laugh a minute." Because of the weather, fewer than 20 cars arrived to view the lights, but the crew had a great time nevertheless.



# Indiana Christmas Bird Count Results

26<sup>th</sup> Annual CBC – December 26, 2009

Snow Goose (CW)		Wilson's Snipe (1)		Fox Sparrow (3)	
Canada Goose (2081)	634	Am. Woodcock (2)		Song Sparrow (152)	62
Mute Swan (4)		Bonaparte's Gull (6)		Lincoln's Sparrow (1)	
Tundra Swan (200)	4	Ring-billed Gull (50)	CW	Swamp Sparrow (14)	3
Wood Duck (2)		Herring Gull (1)		White-throated Sparrow (214)	77
Gadwall (30)		Rock Pigeon (366)	300	White-crowned Sparrow (36)	3
American Wigeon (14)		*Mourning Dove (906)	1117	Dark-eyed Junco (2272)	783
American Black Duck (190)	20	Eastern Screech-Owl (13)		Lapland Longspur (6)	
Mallard (670)	266	Great Horned Owl (10)	4	Snow Bunting (225)	
N. Shoveler (2)		Barred Owl (5)	CW	Northern Cardinal (584)	246
N. Pintail (10)		Long-eared Owl (1)		Red-winged Blackbird (3570)	6
Green-winged Teal (3)		Short-eared Owl (2)		Eastern Meadowlark (10)	
Canvasback (9)		Belted Kingfisher (9)	1	Rusty Blackbird (13)	
Redhead (14)		Red-headed Woodpecker (1)		Brewer's Blackbird (CW)	
Ring-necked Duck (41)		Red-bellied Woodpecker (72)	49	Common Grackle (503)	2
Greater Scaup (2)		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (8)	CW	Brown-headed Cowbird (46)	3
Lesser Scaup (24)		Downy Woodpecker (177)	72	Pine Grosbeak (1)	
White-winged Scoter (1)		Hairy Woodpecker (58)	21	Purple Finch (84)	39
Long-tailed Duck (3)		Northern Flicker (40)	15	House Finch (1563)	282
Bufflehead (52)		Pileated Woodpecker (25)	14	Common Redpoll (63)	
Common Goldeneye (7)		Northern Shrike (1)		White-winged Crossbill (CW)	
Hooded Merganser (22)		Blue Jay (566)	409	Pine Siskin (375)	
Common Merganser (5)		American Crow (3275)	602	American Goldfinch (637)	218
Red-breasted Merganser (2)	CW	Fish Crow (8)	5	Evening Grosbeak (566)	
Ruddy Duck (69)	4	Common Raven (5)	CW	House Sparrow (746)	645
Ring-necked Pheasant (21)	1	Horned Lark (200)	29		
Ruffed Grouse (22)	11	Black-capped Chickadee (808)	357		
Wild Turkey (345)	49	Tufted Titmouse (394)	184		
N. Bobwhite (1)		Red-breasted Nuthatch (51)	1		
Red-throated Loon (1)		White-breasted Nuthatch (201)	122		
Common Loon (9)		Brown Creeper (25)	5		
Pied-billed Grebe (29)	6	Carolina Wren (61)	15		
Horned Grebe (4)		Winter Wren (4)			
Red-necked Grebe (1)		Golden-crowned Kinglet (106)	35		
Double-crested Cormorant (1)		Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4)			
Great Blue Heron (8)	2	Eastern Bluebird (152)	48		
Turkey Vulture (2)	1	Hermit Thrush (6)	4		
Bald Eagle (1)		Wood Thrush (CW)			
Northern Harrier (9)		American Robin (1626)	76		
Sharp-shinned Hawk (14)	9	Gray Catbird (2)			
Cooper's Hawk (15)	4	Northern Mockingbird (12)	8		
N. Goshawk (1)		Brown Thrasher (1)			
Red-shouldered Hawk (5)		European Starling (8656)	1411		
Red-tailed Hawk (70)	40	Cedar Waxwing (212)			
Rough-legged Hawk (3)		Yellow-rumped Warbler (18)	3		
Am. Kestrel (26)	15	Pine Warbler (1)			
Merlin (2)		Eastern Towhee (3)			
Peregrine Falcon (1)		American Tree Sparrow (483)	131		
Virginia Rail (1)		Chipping Sparrow (2)			
Am. Coot (811)		Field Sparrow (13)			
Killdeer (7)	2	Savannah Sparrow (2)			
				<b>Total Individuals (18,833)</b>	<b>8,472</b>
				56 Species on 12/26/08 + 5 for CW	
				CW = Birds Seen During Count	
				Week but Not Count Day	
				CW = December 23-29	
				* Record-breaking or Equal High	
				Tally	
				**Species New to the Count (none)	
				( ) Highest No. Seen on Any	
				Previous Indiana CBC,	
				1983-2008	
				127 Species on Count since 1983	
				(including 4 CW only species)	



# Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria County

August 1 - November 30, 2009

Please submit your reports at the end of each month to Margaret Higbee, 3119 Creekside Road, Indiana, PA 15701-7934 or e-mail to [bcorole@windstream.net](mailto:bcorole@windstream.net).

**Locations:** Blue Spruce County Park (BS), Crooked Creek (CC), Keystone Reservoir (KR) Lewisville (LV), Marion Center (MC), Prince Gallitzin (PG), Shelocta (SH), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

Most waterfowl numbers at YC were down this year from previous years. Top counts of **Canada Geese** included 196 at YC 10/10 (LC,MH), an estimated 200 at the VFW 10/18 (MH,RH), 248 at CC 10/29 (MVT), and 120 at PG 11/11 (DK). A single **Tundra Swan** at the Ernest treatment ponds 9/19 (MH,RH) was unusually early; flocks began moving through our area 11/3 (LC,MH,MVT) when 216 were counted at YC; other top reports included 31 at PG 11/11 (DK), 50 over Brush Valley 11/21 (TF) and 100 over Penn Run 11/28 (TF), and 252 over KR, also 11/28 (LC). High **Wood Duck** tallies were 68 at YC 10/9 (LC) and 11 at PG 9/18 (JS); last sighted were 4 at YC on 11/3 (LC,MH,MVT). First 2 **Gadwalls** arrived 10/27 (MJA,MH,JL) at YC while top counts were a mere 4 at YC 11/3 (LC,MH,MVT) and 5 at PG 11/12 (JS); 4 also visited Two Lick Reservoir 11/24 (LC). Four **Am. Wigeons** were first arrivals 10/20 (LC,MH,MVT) while the high count of 10 was achieved 11/28 (LC), all reports at YC. A single **Am. Black Duck** found at BS 8/31 (MH) was still present 9/25 (MH); highest counts were 9 at YC 11/3 (LC,MH,MVT), 10 at PG 11/12 (JS), 18 at Two Lick Reservoir 11/24 (LC), and 32 at CC 11/30 (MVT). **Mallard** maxima were 31 at YC 9/22 (LC,MH,MVT), 34 at BS 9/25 (MH), and 12 at PG 11/12 (JS). **Blue-winged Teal** moved through our region between 9/7 (SC) and 10/27 (MJA,MH,JL) with counts ranging from 2-18. One to 2 **Northern Shovelers** were noted at YC between 9/1 (MH,MVT) and 10/13 (LC,MH, MVT). A single **Northern Pintail** stopped on YC lake 11/19 (LC), the lone report. Nine **Green-winged Teal** arrived at YC 9/22 (LC,MH,MVT); BS hosted 2 on 9/25 (MH); top count was 14 at YC 9/26 (MH,RH). **Canvasback** reports, all from YC, included 4 on 11/16 (LC), 6 on 11/28 (LC), and one 11/29 (LC,SC). Two **Redheads** were first arrivals at YC 11/7 (3RBC,TBC); high count was 10 at YC 11/28 (LC). Seven **Ring-necked Ducks** were first listed at YC 10/9 (LC); Margus Lake yielded 30 on 10/18 (MH,RH) while YC's best count was a mere 9 on 11/7 (3RBC,TBC); PG hosted 13 on 11/6 (JS). First **Lesser Scaup** were 2 on 10/20 (LC,MH, MVT); this was one of only three species to reach triple digits with a count of 274 at YC 11/28 (LC), the same day 17 visited KR (LC). A female **Black Scoter** accompanied by one male **Long-tailed Duck** 11/17 (LC,MH,MJS) was a nice find at YC; the only other Long-tailed Duck was noted a week earlier 11/10 (MJA,MH,JL). **Buffleheads** began arriving at CC 11/2 (MVT) with a count of 4 at CC and 11/3 (LC,MH,MVT) at YC when 18 appeared; peak counts included 32 at PG 11/11 (DK) and 162 at YC and 131 at KR, the latter two reports 11/28 (LC). One to 2 **Common Goldeneyes** were listed between 11/7 (3RBC, TBC) and 11/28 (LC). First **Hooded Mergansers** included 6 on a pond near YC, one at Margus Lake 11/7 (NM,TM), 2 at

CC 11/9 (MVT) and 11 at PG 11/11 (JS); JS had the high of 25 at PG 11/12 while LC tallied YC's high of 17 on 11/27. A **Common Merganser** appeared at CC 10/2 (MVT); top count was 43 at Robb's Fording 11/18 (MVT). Best YC **Red-breasted Merganser** counts were 19 on 11/17 (LC,MH,MJS) and 34 on 11/27 (MVT); 2 visited CC 11/30 (MVT). Twenty-one **Ruddy Ducks** arrived 10/18 (MH,RH) at Margus Lake while 10 stopped at PG 10/30 (JS); YC's first were 80 on 11/3 (LC,MH, MVT); top count of 115 occurred at YC 11/24 (LC,MH, MVT). Seven at KR 11/28 (LC) was the only *Armstrong* report.

**Ruffed Grouse** continue on the low side but with a few more reports this season – a family group of 8 at YC 9/5 (LC), 2 drumming along the Ghost Town Trail 10/18 (MH RH), one near YC 11/22 (TF Jr.), and one at YC 11/28 (LC). Unusual were the reports of late young **Wild Turkeys**; 14 about 2-3 weeks old accompanied a hen near Brush Valley 9/15 (AJ); ten days later at another location near Brush Valley, AJ sighted another brood including 10 young which were also roughly 2-3 weeks old; the best turkey count was 26 n. of MC 9/22 (SB).

A **Red-throated Loon** (ph MVT) was a great find at CC 11/22 (MVT) while another singleton which visited YC 11/24 (LC, MH,MVT) was still present 11/27 (MVT). First **Common Loons** were single birds at PG 9/18 (JS) and at YC 9/22 (LC, MH,MVT); a fallout of 87 occurred at YC 11/27 (LC) while on the following day 16 were tallied on KR (LC). **Pied-billed Grebes** peaked at YC at 65 on 10/6 (LC,MH,MVT); 11 was the count at PG 9/18, 10/30 and 11/12 (JS); one stopped at CC 11/30 (MVT). YC yielded the first 2 **Horned Grebes** 10/20 (LC,MH,MVT); best count was 3 on 10/28 (LC); PG's first appeared 11/6 (JS). The season's first **Double-crested Cormorant** was spotted at YC 8/25 (TF,MH,JS); 8 were present for the MC 4<sup>th</sup> graders' field trip 10/8 (MH,JS); PG's high of 5 occurred 9/29 (JS); singletons were last listed at YC 11/3 (LC,MH,MVT) and at PG 11/11 (DK). Last **Green Herons** were ones at PG 9/14 (JS), at KR 9/18 (MVT), and 2 at YC 9/22 (LC,MH,MVT).

Top **Turkey Vulture** count was 16 near LV 9/16 (MC); last reported was one 11/7 (3RBC,TBC) at YC. First **Osprey** arrived at Idaho 8/13 (MH) and at YC 8/30 (MS); single birds were at CC 8/31 through 10/21 (MVT), and one was at KR 9/5 (KB); one at YC 11/23 (JW) was rather late. In *Indiana* an amazing 11 **Bald Eagle** reports were received of which six were at YC (v.o), three near LV (MC), and 2 at Indiana (TF); last noted was an adult near Indiana 11/30 (TF). In *Armstrong*

one Bald Eagle was noted at KR 9/5 (KB) and again 9/18 (MVT); 3 were observed at Robb's Forging 10/12 (MVT). *Cambria* yielded four reports of 1-2 eagles at PG between 8/22-9/29 (JS). The only **Northern Harriers** reported were one n. of MC 9/21-25 (SB), at YC 10/27 (MJA,MH,JL) through 11/17 (LC,MH,MJS), and one migrating over SH 11/4 (MH), and one at PG 11/12 (JS). **Sharp-shinned Hawks** and **Cooper's Hawks** were each noted at 7 locations (v.o.). Last **Broad-winged Hawks** were one on 9/14 (MVT) at CC and 14 over LV 9/21 (MC). Single **Merlins** were nice finds at PG 9/14 (MH,JS) and at YC 10/13 (LC,MH,MVT). A **Sora** was noted at PG 8/22 (JS); another, first spotted in Little Yellow Cove at YC 8/25 (MH,JS), continued through 9/8 (MH,MVT). The first 146 **Am. Coots** arrived at YC 10/6 (LC,MH,MVT); by 11/7 (3RBC,TBC) 443 were present; this peak number, however, was less than half the usual high. PG's best count was 28 on 10/30 (JS).

High water levels in the region did not contribute to the shorebird migration. **Semipalmated Plovers** noted at YC included 2 on 8/2 (LC), one 9/8 (MH,MVT), and 3 on 9/26 (MH,RH). The high **Killdeer** tally at YC was 71 9/5 (LC); other top tallies included 32 near Colver 10/1 (JS), 31 at KR 9/5 (JB), and 23 at CC 9/21 (MVT); a single Killdeer was still present near Homer City 11/27 (LC).



Two Am. Avocets at Yellow Creek on October 8 were the fifth county record but the only record involving more than one bird.



Although the avocets rested most of the morning, by mid afternoon they started actively feeding.

Two **Am. Avocets** (ph. MH) appeared at YC 10/8 (MH,JS) and were also seen by the MC fourth graders and BJ. Single **Lesser Yellowlegs** were present at YC 9/8 (MH,MVT) and 9/22 (LC,MH,MVT). Two **Solitary Sandpipers** were noted on five dates between 8/18 (MH,DM) and 9/7 (SC). Last **Spotted Sandpipers** were found 8/31 (MVT) at CC, 9/5 (KB) at KR, and 9/19 (MH,RH,JT) at BS. A **Sanderling** stopped at YC 9/26 (MH,RH), the lone report. Two **Semipalmated Sandpipers** visited YC 8/25 (MH,JS), 8/26 (LC), and 9/7 (SC). Two to 6 **Least Sandpipers** were observed in Little Yellow Cove on 10 dates between 8/23 (LC) and 9/26 (MH,RH) while 2 visited KR 9/18 (MVT).

Two **Bonaparte's Gulls** 11/28 (LC) at YC comprised the entire report for this species. A **Ring-billed Gull** arrived at YC 10/13 (LC,MH,MVT) where best count of 7 occurred 11/17 (LC,MH,MJS). One **Common Tern** appeared at YC 10/24 (MH,RH).

Last **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were singletons at BS 9/17

(MH) and near Thomas Bridge 9/19 (MH,RH). **Eastern Screech-Owl** was noted at 4 locations (v.o.); **Great Horned Owls**, at 5 (v.o.). A **Barred Owl** n. of Indiana 8/29 (SB), one along the Ghost Town Trail 8/28 (JS), and 2 calling at CC 9/13 (MVT) and a **Short-eared Owl** near West Lebanon 11/27 (MVT) were the only ones reported. Six **Common Nighthawks** flew over a yard near LV 8/25 (MC). Last **Chimney Swifts** were 21 at YC 9/29 (MH). A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** lingered near LV 10/3 (MC). First **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** arrived 9/25 (MH) at BS where 4 were sighted 10/3 (MH,RH); singletons were found at CC 11/18 (MVT) and 11/27 (JB).

An **Eastern Wood-Pewee** was still present at CC 9/14 (MVT) while another lingered at BS 10/3 (MH,RH). Single **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were found 9/8 (MH,MVT) at YC, 9/9 (MH) near SH, and 9/11 (MH) at BS. Last dates include: 9/4 (MH) for **Acadian Flycatcher** at Saylor Park; 9/9 (MH) for **Willow Flycatcher** near SH (MH); 11/7 (3RBC,TBC) for **Eastern Phoebe** at YC; 9/14 (MVT) for **Great Crested Flycatcher** at CC; and 9/14 (MH,JS) for **Eastern Kingbird** at PG. A very late **White-eyed Vireo** stopped near SH 11/4 (MH); dates of departure included 10/10 (LC,MH) for **White-eyed** at YC; 10/21 for **Blue-headed** at CC (MVT); and 9/19 (MH,RH,JT) for **Yellow-throated** at BS. **Philadelphia Vireos** included single birds on 9/17 (MH) and 9/18 (EF,MF), both at BS. A **Red-eyed Vireo** foraging in a viburnum at eye level along the Ghost Town Trail 10/18 (MH,RH) seemed rather late. **Common Ravens** were found at eight locations this period (v.o.). Two **Horned Larks** 11/4 (MC) near LV were the only ones listed.

Last dates included 10/20 (LC,MH) for **Tree Swallows** and 9/29 (MH) for 3 **Cliff Swallows** and one **Barn Swallow**, all at YC.

One to 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were present near SH throughout the period (MH,RH); singleton were found at BS 9/17 (MH), at CC 10/1 (MVT), and at LV 10/2 (MC). Top count of **Brown Creepers** was 3 at YC 9/8 (MH, MVT). Last **House Wrens** included one at PG 9/14 (JS), 2 at Mahoning Lake 9/18 (MVT), and 2 near LV 9/30 (MC). The only **Winter Wrens** were 2 found at BS 10/6 (MH,RH) and one near Dilltown 10/18 (MH,RH). **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were found between 9/19 (MH,RH,JT) and 11/3 (LC,MH,MVT) with 12 reports of 1-5 birds. A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** lingered at PG 9/14 (JS) with YC's last report 9/8 (MH,MVT). This was the year for **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at BS with reports of 2 on 9/17 (MH), 9/18 (EF,MF,MH), and 9/19 (MH,RH,JT); one was still present 9/25 (MH). A **Swainson's Thrush** was window-killed near LV 9/9 (MC); CC hosted one 9/14 (MVT) and KR another, four days later (MVT). Best Swainson's Thrush counts were 7 on 9/17 (MH) and 5 on 9/18 (EF,MF,MH), with both reports from BS; last noted was one near SH 10/2 (MH). BS (EF,MF,MH) and KR (MVT) harbored the last **Wood Thrushes** 9/18. A **Gray Catbird** lingered at YC 10/18 (LC,MH,MVT) while one remained at CC 10/29 (MVT). Last **Brown Thrashers** were found at CC 9/14 (MVT) and at YC 9/29 (MH).

This fall's warbler migration was much better than last year's,

but there were no major fallouts. Last 2 **Blue-winged Warblers** were noted at BS 9/11 (MH).

**Tennessee Warblers** moved through our region between 9/8 (MH,MVT) and 10/10 (LC,MH). Two **Nashville Warblers** at BS 9/11, 17, 25 (MH) and one at YC 10/10 (LC,MH) were the only ones reported. Last dates included 10/2 (MH) for **Northern Parula**



Rusty Blackbirds were noted at Yellow Creek in October and November. See article on page 6 about the Rusty blitz.

near SH, 8/29 (AL,TL,LC,MH,RH,DM) for **Yellow Warbler** at Saylor Park, 9/29 (MH) for **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at YC, and 10/3 (MH,RH) for **Magnolia Warbler** at BS. **Cape May Warblers** migrated through the area between 9/1 (MH, MVT) and 9/29 (MH) with best counts of 10 on 9/8 (MH, MVT) at YC and 7 on 9/17 (MH) at BS; PG yielded 2 on 9/14 (MH,JS). One to 5 **Black-throated Blue Warblers** were noted on ten dates with last 5 at BS 9/25 (MH). **Yellow-rumped Warblers** arrived 9/8 (MH,MVT) at YC where maxima included 20 on 9/29 (MH) and 15 on 10/13 (LC,MH,MVT); 3 were at KR 9/18 (MVT); 7 was the best Yellow-rumped count at CC 10/21 (MVT). BS yielded the last **Black-throated Green Warbler** 10/3 (MH,RH) and the last **Blackburnian Warbler** 9/19 (MH, RH,JT). A yard near SH produced last dates for both **Pine Warbler** 10/2 (MH) and **Prairie Warbler** 8/14 (MH). A **Palm Warbler** was sighted 10/13 (LC,MH,MVT) at YC, the lone record. **Bay-breasted Warblers** were listed between 9/8 (MH,MVT) and 9/27 (MH) with high count of 4 at BS 9/11,17 (MH). **Blackpoll Warblers** were found between 8/21-9/26 (MH) with best count of 2 at BS 9/18 (EF,MF,MH). The only **Cerulean Warbler** noted stopped near LV 8/28 (MC). Last were a **Black-and-white Warbler** and an **Am. Redstart** at BS 9/25 (MH). A close-up **Worm-eating Warbler** at eye level was an unexpected find at BS 9/17 (MH). BS also produced the last **Ovenbird** 9/25 (MH). **Northern Waterthrush** reports included singletons at YC 9/8 (MH,MVT), at PG 9/14 (MH,JS), and at BS 9/18 (EF,MF,MH) and 9/19 (MH,RH,JT). A **Common Yellowthroat** near SH 10/25 (MH,RH) and a **Hooded Warbler** at BS 9/25 (MH) were last. Single **Wilson's Warblers** were listed 9/11 (MH) at BS and 9/20 (MH) near SH. The only **Canada Warbler** stopped 9/24 (MH) near SH where a **Yellow-breasted Chat** was spotted 9/9 (MH). **Scarlet Tanagers** were last found near Leechburg 9/30 (MVT) and near LV 10/2 (MC). An **Eastern Towhee** continued at YC through 11/2 (LC,MH,MVT). Arrival date for **Am. Tree Sparrow** was 11/24 (LC,MH,MVT) at YC. A

**Chipping Sparrow** was last observed at YC 11/7 (NM,TM) and at CC 11/18 (MVT). **Fox Sparrows** moved through *Indiana* between 10/27 (MJA, MH,JL) and 11/10 (MC) with high tally of 7 on 11/8 (MC) near LV. A **Lincoln's Sparrow** near LV 9/20 (MC) and another at YC 9/22 (LC,MH,MVT) were the only ones reported. **Swamp Sparrow** remained at YC through the end of the period (MH). First **White-throated Sparrow** appeared 9/25 (MH) at BS; 22 were counted at YC 10/20 (LC,MH). Only **White-crowned Sparrows** mentioned were at CC 10/21-11/9 (MVT) and near SH 10/22 (MH). YC produced the first **Dark-eyed Junco** 9/19 (LC). Last date for **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was 10/3 (MH,RH) at BS. A female **Indigo Bunting** was gathering nesting material in Little Yellow Cove at YC 9/29 (MH) but not seen thereafter; last reported Indigo was near LV the following day (MC). An **Eastern Meadowlark** flew over YC 10/27 (MJA,MH,JL), the

On September 21, 2009, George S. Young writes: "My wife and I were canoeing past the headquarters marina (south end of Lake Glendale) this Saturday morning at about 10 when we spotted a female Yellow-headed Blackbird on the railing of the westernmost breakwater. We watched the bird for several minutes through binoculars from a range of 50 feet before it flew off. We thought it was a neat sighting even for a vagrant trap like Glendale."

season's last. Interesting was the report of a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at PG 9/19 (GY). **Rusty Blackbirds** noted at YC included 2 on 10/20 (LC,MH), 25 on 10/27 (MJA,MH,JL), 7 on 11/3 (LC,MH,MVT), and 5 on 11/10 (MJA,LC, JL); 2 stopped at PG 11/6 (JS). Two hundred was the estimate of a flock of **Brown-headed Cowbirds** n. of MC 10/5 (SB); last was listed 10/21 (MH,RH) at Saylor Park. A **Baltimore Oriole** at BS 9/17 (MH) was last.

**Observers:** Anna Jennings, Mary Jane Alexander, Sid Blair, John Boback, Ken Byerly, Lee Carnahan, Shawn Collins, Dan Cunkelman, Marcy Cunkelman, Betsy Fetterman, Tom Fetterman, Tom Fetterman, Jr., Evelyn Fowles, Mike Fowles, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Bob Jackman, Anna Jennings, DJ Kaltenbaugh, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Jane Lanz, AJ Lassick, Tony Lassick, Donna Meyer, Nancy Moeller, Tom Moeller, John Salvetti, Mary Jane Seipler, Mike Shaffer, John Taylor, Marge Van Tassel, John Walker, George S. Young, Three Rivers Birding Club (3RBC), Todd Bird Club (TBC).

## Did You Know?

Some shorebirds including Spotted Sandpipers have occasionally been seen perching on utility wires.

## A Note from Our Treasurer

Todd Bird Club dues are due and payable on January 1 each year. If your address label has a red star, your membership has expired and this is your last newsletter. Please remit your \$10 individual membership or \$15 family membership dues to:

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

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This Red-throated Loon photographed by Marge Van Tassel at Crooked Creek Park on November 22, 2009, was a great find.

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

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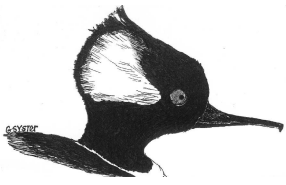
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