

The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

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

October 2013

Meetings

Todd Bird Club meetings begin at 7:00 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. We will socialize and snack till 7:30 when the meeting will be called to order. Refreshments are provided at each of our meetings. In May we hold our banquet meeting which starts at 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 5 – Birder and photographer Steve Gosser will present “Photos from Steve’s Birding Adventures.” Steve is an active member of the Three Rivers Birding Club and is no stranger to Todd Bird Club. He presented a program on Florida birding at our April 2011 meeting. Steve has won wide acclaim for his excellent bird photography.



Steve Gosser photographed this striking Louisiana Waterthrush at Cochran’s Mill in Armstrong County.



Bob Greene photographed this majestic young Bald Eagle.

Tuesday, December 3 – Bob Greene, an accomplished birder-photographer from Pittsburgh, will present his birding videos at this meeting. Because of technical difficulties, Bob was unable to present his videos at our May banquet. Instead he presented a great slide program. Now he is coming back with all the tech problems solved. Check out his great website at www.bobbygreene.com and don’t miss this one!

This is also our Christmas cookie extravaganza. Please bring a dozen of your favorite cookies to share.

Tuesday, January 7 – This is our annual Members’ Night. Please bring something to share – photos, stories, memorabilia, etc.

Outings

Tuesday morning outings, mostly at Yellow Creek, will continue until deer season. Meet at 8:00 at the park office located on Rt. 259 just off Rt. 422 east of Indiana. Everyone – from beginner to expert birder – is welcome. If you have questions, contact Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667) or Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

Saturday, October 5 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office.

Tuesday, October 8 – Hawk Watch trip to the Allegheny Front. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Yellow Creek State Park office to carpool, or meet at the hawk watch around 9:15. For further information, contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). Bring something to sit on and dress warmly as it is often cold and windy on the Front. Also, bring your lunch.

Saturday, October 12 – Blacklick Valley Natural Area, led by Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667). Meet at the end of McFeaters Road just off Route 22 east of Armagh.

Saturday, October 19 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Georgette Syster (724-349-6293). Meet at 8:00 at the park office.

Saturday, October 26 – Mahoning Shadow Trail, led by Tom Glover (tomnglover@comcast.net). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Valier trailhead.

Saturday, November 2 – Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Yellow Creek State Park office. This is the date for our annual joint outing with Three Rivers Birding Club, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). After the

outing, we'll head to the Chinese buffet in Indiana for lunch.

Saturday, November 9 – Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Yellow Creek State Park office. This outing will be led by Gloria Lamer and will focus on water birds.

Saturday, November 16 – Saylor Park and the Ghost Town Trail, led by Tom Glover. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the large parking lot at Saylor Park, located near Blacklick. For directions, contact Roger Higbee (724-354-3493).

Saturday, November 23 – Blue Spruce County Park, led by Ray Winstead. Feed chickadees in your hand! Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the first large parking lot past the park office.

Friday, November 29 through Monday, December 2 – Birding the Niagara Frontier. *You must have a passport or a passport card to enter Canada and return to the US. We will bird mostly in Canada.* This four-day trip will cover Dunkirk Harbor en route to the Peace Bridge as well as areas along the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. We plan to stay at either the Best Days or the Super 8 near the falls on the Canadian side. You may take part in the entire trip or in only a day or two by meeting us there. If you are interested in going or have questions, please contact the Higbees (724-354-3493).

Last year's Niagara highlights included Brant, King Eider, all three scoters, Purple Sandpiper, Little Gull, Franklin's Gull, Thayer's Gull, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Northern Saw-whet Owl. For a complete report, go to our website <http://toddbirdclub.org/cgi-bin/events.pl?ACTION=DESCRIPTION&EVENTID=123>.

Christmas Bird Count

Our 31st annual Indiana Christmas Bird Count will be held on Thursday, December 26. The count's 15-mile-diameter circle is centered at Second and Grandview in Indiana, so if you live within 7.5 miles of that intersection, you live inside the circle. If you live in the count area, you may count the birds at your bird feeders, in your yard, or nearby. Otherwise, you may join one of our field parties. Either way, it's a lot of fun. New birders are always welcomed! Beginning birders as well as the more advanced are invited to participate. Then after

a cold day hiking or driving around with the car windows open (or sitting inside a warm house looking out the windows), it's always fun to come to the Christmas Bird Count dinner which will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, the 26th at Hoss's. During the dinner, we'll compile the list and vote for "the bird of the count." The recipient receives the James Dearing Award. If you have any questions, please contact Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

Outing Report

by Tom Glover

Our regular Tuesday outing on September 17 proved to be anything but regular. Every now and then the birds cooperate to provide an exceptional day.

Four members, Lee Carnahan, Margaret and Roger Higbee, and I, met early on the chilly north shore of Yellow Creek State Park and were greeted by two juvenile Bald Eagles soaring along the south shore of the lake. We noted after a while that the eagles were the highlight of our early morning start. We were expecting a better show of birds on the north shore based on our recent outings, but today we had to settle for Blue Jays, crows, catbirds, and goldfinches.

After that slow start, we motored to the park office where Sue Dickson joined us. As usual we hung around the office and checked the surrounding trees, expecting a decent show of warblers, but the trees provided only a few warbler species – Black-throated Green and Chestnut-sided Warblers and Common Yellowthroat – as well as a Scarlet Tanager and an Indigo Bunting. Both the latter birds wore their fall plumage and blended in with the trees. The tanager was a male that had a mix of orange and yellow with a hint of its summer red that perfectly mimicked the changing oak leaves. In fact the bird was almost invisible but for its movement among the still leaves. We were also treated to a singing Blue-headed Vireo at the office.

Next we decided to walk to the lakeshore to check the mudflats in Yellow Creek Cove for shorebirds, but in keeping with the day's ongoing theme, the shorebirds were not there. We did find a few ducks including Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal and a lone Northern Shoveler. After that we moved to the maintenance building where we were greeted by Don Quixote, the European Starling, and a few of his friends riding the windmill tail. At the maintenance building we added a few more ducks to our list, Mallards, Wood Ducks, and three American Black Ducks that flushed from the cove near Kingbird Point and flew to Yellow Creek Cove. Also flying from the same cove were four female Hooded Mergansers.

Up to that point the outing was mediocre, but that all changed with the appearance of a male Merlin. We first saw him flying over the lake toward Yellow Creek Cove,



Sue Dickson excitedly pointed out the Merlin perched in the top of a nearby snag.

Photo by Margaret Higbee

and then he flew back in the opposite direction. We next observed the Merlin near Little Yellow Cove as he chased a small bird. It is spectacular to see the sharp turns a Merlin can make while in pursuit of its prey. We moved to the south shore boat launch and checked the mud flats in Little Yellow Cove. This time we did find shorebirds, Killdeer. At first we noted five Killdeer, but suddenly about twenty were flushed from the flats by the Merlin. We thought that was a sight till Sue excitedly pointed out a bird perched atop a dead snag about 35 feet off the ground, no more than about 75 feet in front of us. It was the Merlin. For the next half hour this bird stayed atop the snag. This was one of those rare occasions when a quality bird allows a close look for an extended period of time. This observation was right from the text book. All told close to 400 photos of this bird were taken while it preened,

scratched, stretched, and kept an eye on its surroundings. At one point the Merlin got excited when a few American Goldfinches flew over, but he stayed perched on the snag. After a while he did fly off, and we all agreed that we were treated to a rare birding opportunity. We moved on thinking that was going to be the single high point of the outing. But we had another surprise awaiting us at the beach.

Lately we have been checking the beach area with the hope of finding a few migrant shorebirds, but lately this stop has been nonproductive. This time, however, the beach yielded only two shorebirds, but those two birds proved to be winners. Our usual practice has been to sit on the benches next to the ranger's beach station and to watch the horizon for soaring birds. As we were looking for raptors, a lone small shorebird called as it landed on the right side of the beach. We pulled ourselves up and walked closer to the beach to check out the bird. To our surprise a second larger shorebird was foraging alongside the smaller bird. Unfortunately our view of the two birds was obstructed by the goose fence, so it took us a while to see details and determine the species. We knew immediately that the smaller bird was a sandpiper and the larger bird, a plover, but which ones? Here again we observed these birds for at least half an hour. By the process of careful examination, the smaller bird proved to be a Baird's Sandpiper and the larger bird, an American Golden-Plover.

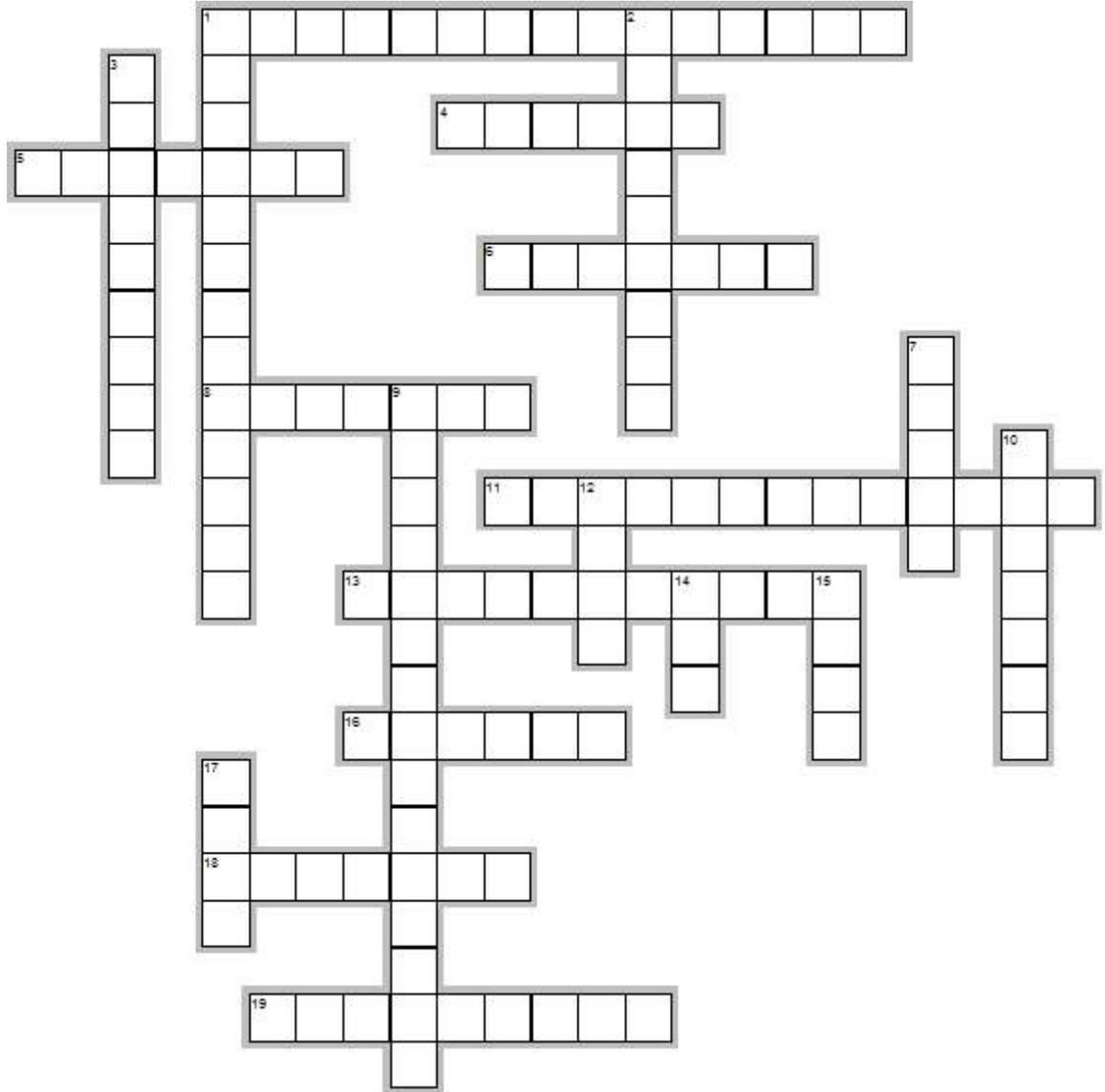
So a day that started out slowly with our thinking that the two juvenile Bald Eagles would be the highlight, turned into one of those rare days that birders live for. How

often do you get the chance to view up close a Merlin, Baird's Sandpiper, and an American Golden-Plover for extended periods of time all in the same day!

Crossword

Across

1. Mrs. Charles Will; her husband is deceased
4. Flycatcher that favors thickets and low trees along streams, ponds, and lakes
5. The grandfather of American Ornithology
6. Our smallest falcon
8. According to R. T. Peterson, "the patron saint of American ornithology"
11. Bay-winged bunting
13. Bird whose diet includes mostly bones and marrow
16. Color of Blackpoll Warbler feet
18. Author of "One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of a March thaw, is the spring."
19. Warbler with long, thick-based bill



Down

EclipseCrossword.com

1. Coiner of the saying, "A dead bird does not help the appearance of an ugly woman, and a pretty woman needs no such adornment."
2. 7,000,000 pairs breed on Christmas Island
3. Shorebird that made two appearances at Yellow Creek this year, one in spring and another in fall, for the first time since 2005
4. A murder of crows; a _____ of finches
5. Bird that made a non-stop 7200-mile flight across Pacific from Alaska to New Zealand
6. A parrot that flew away
7. Porzana carolina
8. Smallest North American owl
9. A bird named because it flares its ornamental neck feathers as part of courtship display
10. Taxidermist friend of Audubon for whom a vireo is named

Birders from Around the State Find Rare Birds on PSO Pelagic Trip

By Frank Izaguirre

On the second weekend of August, Todd Bird Club members Margaret and Roger Higbee, Adrienne Block, and I joined a cadre of other Pennsylvania birders for the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology's summer pelagic trip out of Hatteras, North Carolina. The group was comprised of birders from every corner of the state looking for birds in every corner of the Outer Banks.

While landbirding in the days preceding the back to back pelagic departures, the group discovered many excellent species of shorebirds and other coastal species, like Stilt Sandpiper, both dowitcher species, Black Tern, Gull-billed Tern, and a flyby Whimbrel. Those who birded early Sunday morning had a non-avian highlight: a group of four water moccasins. No one got too close, but scopes afforded everyone great views of this venomous and easily overlooked snake.

The next morning's pelagic required birders to be up and ready at the thrilling hour of 4:30 a.m., and the boat was on the sea by 6:00 a.m. The first highlight was ichthyological: flying fish shot themselves out of the choppy waves and glided alongside the boat. Before long, the captain announced a Cory's Shearwater over the boat's speaker system. More shearwaters were soon sighted: Great Shearwater as well as the tiny Audubon's Shearwater. A Sooty Tern added to the day's tally.

Wilson's Storm-Petrels began trailing the chumline behind the boat, their proportionally long legs pattering on the surface of the waves. One of the better diagnostic marks of this globally common tubenose is the projection of its feet past the end of its tail while flying. Because this tiny ocean wanderer was such a constant companion of the boat, diligent observers were able to view the bright yellow webbing between its toes, a burst of color among otherwise drab seabirds. As many as ten of these charismatic birds trailed the ship throughout the day.

The appearance of a Black-capped Petrel cutting across the waves was the first of many sightings of this endangered seabird, a specialty of the region. The bird is among the more straightforward identifications at sea. It has a black head, white neck, black back and wings, white rump, and black tail, giving it a unique black-white-black-white-black pattern. Some Black-capped Petrels have a much lighter face, while others have a stronger black cap

and neck collar, and both were observed on the trip. Interestingly, recent mitochondrial DNA analysis indicates these different birds may comprise two distinct subspecies or perhaps even species. A third race of the Black-capped Petrel, the Jamaican Petrel, colloquially known as the Blue Mountain Duck, was its own subspecies, and may have even been its own species, but sadly is now extinct.

The greatest bird was yet to come. A Trindade Petrel flew up close to the ship, followed by another individual. Birders scrambled along the sides of the tiny ship to get a look, but the birds were marvelously cooperative, affording everyone suitable views. Not long after, a third Trindade was spotted, which may have been either a repeat appearance by one of the other birds or perhaps a third individual. The Trindade is the dark morph of the Herald Petrel complex.

Throughout the day, shearwaters and Black-capped Petrels continued zooming past the boat, but the next big sighting was a Band-rumped Storm-Petrel mixed in among the Wilson's, noticeably larger than its peers even as it darted and dove among the chop.

The boat eventually entered new habitat: large clumps of Sargasso seaweed, where even more species were added: a Red-necked Phalarope bobbing calmly on the water, and a Bridled Tern further out among the seaweed.

Perhaps the strangest sighting of the day was made by Margaret Higbee: a cloudless sulphur, briefly sighted fluttering over the deep blue waves, miles and miles from shore. We wondered why and how a creature so delicate and out of place had come to find itself amid the starkness of the sea.

The day had been long and arduous. The ship began its return to land, but not without the unlikely visit of a Long-tailed Jaeger. After nearly twelve hours offshore, tired, burnt, and nauseated birders clambered back onto the pier, perhaps wondering what had driven them to flutter so far away from land.

Partner in Flight V Conference on Full Life-Cycle Stewardship

by Doug Gross

The 5th International Partners in Flight (PIF) Conference took place in Snowbird, Utah, in late August. It truly was an international conservation rally to “bring back the birds.” The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) organized the meeting and included many organizations in key conference roles and in the many working groups. The theme of the meeting was creating a unified vision for full life-cycle needs of our migratory birds. With their broad geographical migration patterns, birds can bring like-minded people together on behalf of birds and their habitats. Therefore, it was great to see very diverse participation and state representation. Participating were more than 225 people including 45 from Latin America and the Caribbean, and those representing 120 agencies and organizations and 14 countries. Considering the conference theme, the geographical representation was appropriate, gratifying, and inspiring. The Conference went beyond being a pure “passive listening” meeting and was truly a “conservation workshop” with geographic working groups and theme-based committees working on projects.

Among the presentations given there, George Fenwick pledged that ABC will raise \$50,000,000 for migratory bird conservation over 10 years with the strong support of its many partners. For ambitious projects needed to bridge the gap between needs and application, we must set high goals and work together to meet these goals, including the fiscal needs for effective bird conservation projects on an international scale.

Pennsylvania was represented at the PIF V by Dan Brauning and me of the PGC, Jeff Larkin of Indiana University of PA, Laurie Goodrich of Hawk Mountain, and Sarah Sargent of Audubon Pennsylvania. Our broad interests in migratory birds kept us all very involved and connecting to people from several states, provinces, and countries. We all were very engaged in the various committee workshops with an international scope and participation that reflected the broad geographical needs of the birds we are attempting to monitor and conserve. It was delightful to visit with former PA Audubon staffer, Steve Hoffman, who has recovered well from recent health issues.

The recognition of the significant contributions to bird conservation also were made at the historic meeting, some with connections to our state and region. The 2013 award winners included George Angher, Panama Audubon and

the Smithsonian; Barbra Besson, U.S. Forest Service; David Buehler, University of Kentucky; National Trust for the Cayman Islands; Jennie Duberstein, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); and Thomas Will, USFWS. Dave Buehler has been essential to the success of the Cerulean Warbler Forest Management Project in the Appalachians. At the award banquet, all attendees who have been part of the Cerulean project were honored including our own **Jeff Larkin**. Tom Will works in Minnesota as a USFWS wildlife biologist, but functions on an international scope on behalf of birds especially Golden-winged Warblers. Tom is a native Pennsylvanian! His previous work in Chiapas, Mexico, and Nicaragua has informed him of potential opportunities for partnerships in Latin America. He was stationed at Gettysburg for a short while. I’ve had the pleasure to work with Tom on several projects, and it was great to see him be so honored.

PIF was launched in 1990 in response to growing concerns about declines in the populations of many land bird species and to emphasize conservation of birds not covered by existing initiatives. For more information see <http://www.partnersinflight.org>.

New Geographically Focused Bird Conservation Business Plans

At the PIF V Conference, the many participants engaged in building “business plans” for advancing full life-cycle stewardship of birds in eight different geographical regions. Birds that nest in USA and Canada tend to link to certain areas of Latin America and the Caribbean region. For Pennsylvania, there are strong links to the Gulf Coast of Mexico and Central America, the Central and South American Highlands, and the Caribbean.

These new “business plans” for geographical focus areas are a new, direct approach to bird conservation. For Pennsylvania, the wintering grounds of Golden-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Wood Thrush are the highest priority for conservation work. Thirty participants worked on the Central and South American Highlands area. The group identified several broad-scale threats to bird populations in this region and focused on four of these at the meeting. These included: mitigating the conversion of forest to agriculture; sustaining the status of protected areas, increasing the

value of forestry practices for birds, and increasing government and popular support for biological conservation. One proposed project is a bird fair in Central America that will first be held in Nicaragua in December 2014. The idea is to use this as a prototype for more bird fairs in Central American which deserves more attention by birders and more acceptance by the public concerning the importance of the countries for biodiversity and birds. By connecting the financial benefits of tourism to bird conservation initiatives, we can break down some of the false dichotomies between economic and ecological considerations. The Caribbean basin plan also calls for more ecotourism.

The geographical working groups are continuing to develop bird conservation business plans and drafts of these plans will be widely released for review and comment fairly soon. It is interesting and fun to work with people from several countries for common goals. It is a new era in bird conservation. Keep tuned!

Good birding!

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Jakeb Rising Takes on Kestrel Project

Last year, after Emily Thomas's presentation, members of the Todd Bird Club had discussed the possibility of building nesting boxes for the American Kestrel. Shortly after our decision to go ahead with this project, we were contacted by Boy Scout Jakeb Rising, a member of Troop 50 in Marion Center, who wanted to do something with wildlife for his Eagle Scout Project. Jakeb is now working in conjunction with our bird club and Indiana County Parks and Trails on the Kestrel Project.



Our smallest falcon, the American Kestrel, is the most colorful of all the regularly occurring falcons.

Photo by Steve Gosser

He is planning to construct and erect five nest boxes in the county, one at Blue Spruce, another at the Smicksburg Park, one at the Waterworks Conservation Area, and two at Pine Ridge Park. Kestrels normally nest in cavities excavated by flickers and other woodpeckers. There are many suitable locations for nest boxes in our county parks as kestrels will accept a wide variety of open habitat.

The total cost of the project will be roughly \$450. If you are willing to help him out, please make checks payable to "BSA Troop 50" and mail to Jakeb Rising, 2287 Hood School Road, Indiana, PA 15701. He will then forward all checks to Indiana County Parks to cover the cost of materials for construction and installation.

The Raptor Population Index, a joint project of Hawk Mt. Sanctuary Association, The Hawk Migration Association of North America, and Hawk Watch International, Inc., states in regard to the American Kestrel that for the eastern region, "The trends in counts for this species continue to raise alarms as numbers remain lower than those recorded during the 1980s and 1990s and no population rebound is evident."

Sincere thanks to Jakeb for taking on this project. Please support him in his efforts to help this important species.

Bob and Bob Honored

If you haven't read the latest issue of *Birding*, be sure to read pages 16-21. Bob Leberman and Bob Mulvihill, who manned one of the longest running, year round banding stations at Powdermill Nature Reserve near Rector, were interviewed. Bob Mulvihill, project coordinator of the 2nd

PA Breeding Bird Atlas, has presented several programs to Todd Bird Club. The interview is both interesting and enlightening. If you'd like to borrow the July-August copy of *Birding*, see the Higbees.

Special Thanks to the Cunkelmans

Once again this year Dan and Marcy Cunkelman hosted the joint Todd Bird Club and Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club picnic at their home. The August 18 picnic was well attended. Although it had rained earlier in the morning, the skies cleared and it was an enjoyable day with lots of good food. Maybe you were there!

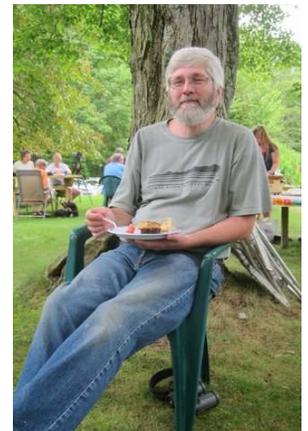
Marcy took us on a tour of the yard where we were lucky to find an egg mass of a Tawny Emperor on her hackberry tree. In addition we were treated to sightings of numerous butterflies including Tiger Swallowtails and Pearl Crescents. Although this picnic didn't produce the Olive-sided Flycatcher, we had nice looks at Eastern Bluebirds, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, and a nice variety of feeder birds.



Tom Glover



Leonard Anderson, John Somonick, Linda Jones



Ed Donley



Dan Cunkelman, Bob Greene, Bob Mulvihill, Curt Lehman, and Marcy Cunkelman



Bob Greene, Curt Lehman, and Marcy Cunkelman



Finding this Tawny Emperor egg mass and caterpillars was a highlight at Marcy's picnic.

Thanks, Marcy & Dan!



Marcy's yard hosts an abundance of butterflies including this Pearl Crescent.

Book Review

by Tom Glover

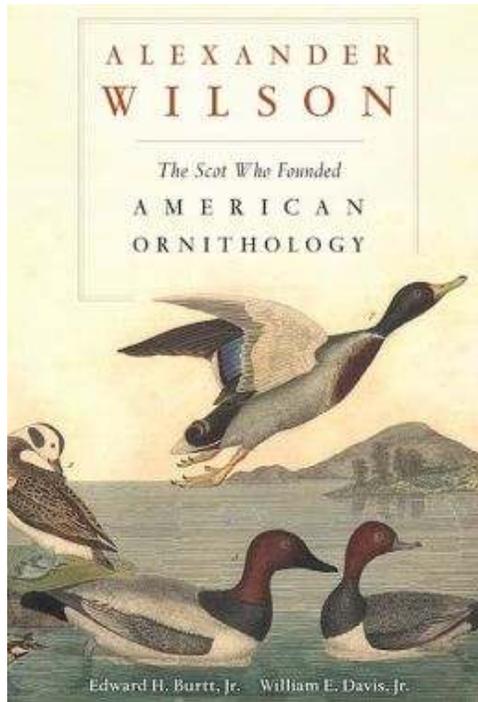
Burt, Edward H., Jr., William E. Davis, Jr. *Alexander Wilson: The Scot Who Founded American Ornithology*, Harvard University Press, 2013.

If you were to be asked who is the father of American Ornithology, it might be understandable that your answer might be John J. Audubon. But that title actually goes to Alexander Wilson. Harvard University Press's recent publication, *Alexander Wilson: The Scot Who Founded American Ornithology*, co-authored by Edward H. Burt and William E. Davis, not only details the life of Alexander Wilson but also explores Wilson's accomplished nine-volume *American Ornithology*.

Alexander Wilson was born on July 6, 1766, to Alexander and Mary Wilson in the area of Paisley, Scotland. The older Alexander was a weaver, and after the younger Alexander finished his elementary education, he apprenticed as a weaver. During his early teen years he started writing poetry, and that poetry led to trouble for Alexander. As a young adult he became a labor activist, and he expressed his views through poetry. His labor activity put him in danger of prosecution and imprisonment, and by January of 1794 he made the decision to leave Scotland for a fresh start in America. During Alexander's youth and young adult years he developed a love of nature and painting, and when he arrived in America, his life would eventually revolve around ornithology. In 1802 Alexander met William Bartram, a well noted naturalist, and with William's encouragement he undertook his life's project, *American Ornithology*.

Burt and Davis devote the majority of their effort to Alexander's *American Ornithology* and his fresh views on ornithology. Alexander approached ornithology through observation. He traveled up to 12,000 miles around the eastern half of America not only selling subscriptions to

his *American Ornithology*, but closely observing birds. He included these observations in his publication. This approach was novel for its time. Burt and Davis go into detail on Alexander's preparation of the illustrations included in the publication. Not only did he write the text, but he drew the illustrations, helped with the engraving of the illustration printing plates, and hand colored a majority of the illustrations in the finished volumes.



One story that Burt and Davis feature is when Alexander visited Washington, DC, during December 1808. While in Washington he stopped by the White House and knocked on the door and asked to see President Thomas Jefferson. He and Jefferson talked about birding and nature for an entire afternoon, and Jefferson bought a subscription. This illustrates Alexander Wilson's commitment to his work. In his travels he developed a network of observers who would supply him with samples of birds and observation.

Alexander Wilson died on August 23, 1813, before he completed the ninth and final volume of his *American Ornithology*. Friends completed and published his final volume.

Burt and Davis's book may be too tedious for the general public, but for birding enthusiasts and naturalists, it is an educational read into the life of an early American ornithologist and naturalist. The book details the changing approach to natural science from one of anecdotal descriptions to one of actual observations. I recommend it for your winter reading list.

Did you know that the elegant Plush-crested Jay is commonly found in the forests and woodlands of south central South America where it is endemic? Thanks to our Tuesday morning outings and Melissa Little for this informational tidbit.

Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria Summer Report

Please submit your reports at the end of each month to Margaret Higbee, 3119 Creekside Road, Indiana, PA 15701-7934 or e-mail to bcoriele@windstream.net or marghigbee@gmail.com.

Locations: Armstrong Trail (AT), Cochran's Mill (CM), Crooked Creek Park (CC), Kittanning (KT), Prince Gallitzin State Park (PG), Shelocta (SH), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

A good count of 37 **Wood Ducks**, including many full grown young, was obtained at YC 7/23 (LC, TG, KT). PG hosted a **Black Scoter** on 6/6 (JS). Two **Common Mergansers** were swimming along Cowanshannock Creek 6/3 (MH, RH).

A **Common Loon** lingered at YC through 6/4 (LC, DC, EC, SD, TG, KT). A presence of a **Pied-billed Grebe** at PG 7/22 (JS) suggested breeding. YC hosted 2 **Double-crested Cormorants** 6/4 (LC, DC, EC, SD, TG, DM, KT) and one 6/18 (LC, TG, DM) while CC harbored 2 on 7/1 (MVT) and 3 on 7/9 (MO). An **Osprey** was sighted 6/4 (LC, DC, EC, SD, TG, DM, KT) at YC. Three **Bald Eagles** were noted at CC 6/9 (SG) while another was spotted circling over the Ghost Town Trail 6/15 (JH). A **Cooper's Hawk** ate a Mourning Dove at a Nolo feeder 7/24 (CL, GL).

An immature **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at the Kovalchik Convention and Athletic Center was a first county record 7/15 (JT).

A **Northern Harrier** hunted at SGL 108 on 6/29 (AF) while another was hovering at St. Lawrence 7/2 (JS).

Single **Spotted Sandpipers** were found at CC 6/5, 7/25 (MVT). First 2 **Solitary Sandpipers** were found at YC 7/30 (LC, TG). A late **Semipalmated Sandpiper** was found at YC 6/4 (LC, DC, EC, SD, TG, DM, KT). An **American Woodcock** was listed along Trout Creek 7/14 (AF).

Single **Ring-billed Gulls** were reported 7/13 (AF) and 7/23 (LC, TG, KT) at YC. Two early **Forster's Terns** were spotted at CC 7/1 (MVT) while YC's first of the season occurred 7/23 (LC, TG, KT).

Yellow-billed Cuckoos were more numerous than usual this summer. In *Armstrong* 2 each were found on the KT BBS 6/3 (MH, RH), at Nicholson Run South 6/23 (TR), along the AT 7/21 (TR), and at CM 7/25 (MVT). Single birds were found at YC between

6/18 (TG) and 7/13 (AF) and at Nolo between 6/4-18 (CL, GL); 5 was the high count at SGL 108 on 6/23 (AF) and along Trout Creek 7/14 (AF). Single **Black-billed Cuckoos** listed along the AT 6/5 (RN) and near SH 7/28 (MH) comprised the entire report for this species. **Barred Owl** reports included one at YC 6/11 (TG) and 7/13 (AF), one at Polka Hollow 6/12 (MVT), and 2 at Nolo 7/6 (AB, DB).

The **Alder Flycatcher** continued at YC through 7/7 (AF). Five was the high **Willow Flycatcher** count at YC on both 6/4 (LC, DC, EC, SD, TG, DM, KT) and 6/18 (TG); one was noted near Dilltown 6/7 (MH, RH), another at Chest Springs 6/20 (JS), and 2 at PG 7/2 (JS).

Single **White-eyed Vireos** were reported at YC 6/9 (AF), at CC 6/22 (MVT), at SGL 247 on 6/30 (TR), and yet another near Jacksonville 7/27 (MH, RH). A **Yellow-throated Vireo** along Little Mahoning Creek 6/22 (RS) was the only one reported in *Indiana*; always more numerous in *Armstrong*, sightings included 3 on the KT BBS 6/3 (MH, RH), one on the AT 6/5 (RN), 2 at CC 6/9 (SG), and 2 on the AT 7/21 (TR). **Blue-headed Vireos**, on the other hand, are usually found more readily in *Indiana* and *Cambria*; individuals were listed on the AT 6/5 (RN) and at YC 6/9 (AF), the same day one was singing near SH (MH, RH); SH also yielded one 7/29 (MH, RH). The KT BBS yielded 2 singing **Warbling Vireos** 6/3 (MH, RH); one was noted along the Ghost Town Trail 6/15 (JH) and another along the Hoodlebug Trail 6/23 (DR).

A single **Common Raven** was noted at CC on four dates between 6/5 - 7/25 (MVT); Dysart yielded 2 on 7/22 (JS). A **Fish Crow** was reported 6/1,5 and 7/2-3,11 (JT) on the IUP campus and on 6/23 (DR) at Blacklick Valley Natural Area, a new location for this species; in addition, YC yielded Fish Crows on 6/9, 7/9, 13 (AF).

Eleven was the high **Northern Rough-winged**

Swallow count along the AT 7/21 (TR); 3 were noted at YC 7/23 (LC, TG, KT). Three **Purple Martins** appeared at CC 6/22 (MVT) and 4 were counted there four days later (MVT); PG's count was 22 on 7/22 (JS).

Three **Veeries** were at St. Lawrence 6/4 (JS) and one, at SGL 247 on 6/30 (TR). **Hermit Thrush** reports included one along the AT 6/5 (RN) and 2 at PG 6/19 (LG).

Best **Ovenbird** tallies were 12 on the KT BBS 6/3 (MH, RH), 22 on the Patton BBS on 6/5 (MH, RH), and 4 at Polka Hollow 6/5, 12 (MVT). Single **Worm-eating Warblers** were noted along the AT 6/5 (RN) and on Creek Road the same day (MVT). June 5 also produced single **Louisiana Waterthrushes** along the AT (RN) and at Polka Hollow (MVT). Lone **Blue-winged Warblers** were found 6/5 (MVT) at CM, 7/21 (TR) on the AT, and 7/27 (MH, RH) near Jacksonville. The KT BBS yielded 2 **Black-and-white Warblers** 6/3 (MH, RH); singletons were listed at SGL 108 on 6/23 (AF) and at YC 7/9 (LC, TG, DM, KT) while 3 were also found on the AT 7/21 (TR). **Hooded Warblers** were widespread with many reports; the KT BBS route and SGL 247 both respectively yielded 6 on 6/3 (MH, RH) and 6/30 (TR). **Cerulean Warbler** reports included singletons on the AT 6/5 (RN), on Creek Road 6/5 (MVT), and at CC 6/9 (SG); 2 were also at CM 6/5 (MVT). Two **Northern Parulas** were sighted both at YC 6/9 (TG) and at Blacklick Valley Natural Area 6/23 (DR); one was at CC 7/25 (MVT). Blacklick Valley Natural Area on 6/23 (DR) harbored 3 **Chestnut-sided Warblers** while 5 was the top count at PG 7/29 (JS). A **Pine Warbler** was still singing 6/9 (MH, RH) near SH. A **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, which is not usually a breeding species in the county, was an unusual find along the Hoodlebug Trail 6/23 (DR).

Two **Yellow-throated Warblers** continued at CM 6/5 (MVT) while another was at CC 6/9 (SG). St. Lawrence on 7/2 (JS) and Aultman's Run on 7/27 (MH, RH) each yielded a **Prairie Warbler**; best Prairie count was 5 near SGL 184 on 6/28 (JH). Three **Canada Warblers** were nice finds at St. Lawrence 6/4 (JS) while an equal number were found at Dysart 7/22 (JS). A **Yellow-breasted Chat** on the KT BBS 6/3 (MH, RH) was the only one reported.

Three **Vesper Sparrows** appeared at Chest Springs 6/20 (JS). Three **Savannah Sparrows** were counted at PG 6/15 (JS) while one was noted 6/20 (JS) at Chest Springs which also produced 2 **Grasshopper Sparrows** the same day (JS); SGL 108 yielded 10 Grasshopper Sparrows and 9 **Henslow's Sparrows** on 6/29 (AF). St. Joe's near Patton also hosted 3 Henslow's Sparrows on 7/11 (JS). One to 2 **Swamp Sparrows** were listed at YC throughout the summer; Little Mahoning Creek yielded 2 on 6/22 (RS).

Five **Bobolinks** were noted 6/3 (MH, RH) on the KT BBS and 12 were at St. Lawrence 7/12 (JS). The KT BBS produced counts of 3 **Orchard** and 8 **Baltimore Orioles**. Otherwise, Orchard Orioles were reported only at YC 6/4 (LC, DC, EC, SD, TG, DM, KT) and 7/9 (LC, TG, DM) and at PG 7/2 (JS). PG yielded 4 Baltimores 6/29 (LG).

Observers: Alice Beatty, Dave Beatty, Sid Blair, Anna Fasioli, Steve Gosser, Linda Greble, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, James Householder, Tom Glover, Jason Hill, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Richard Nugent, Melissa Ortiz, Theo Rickert, David Roberts, Russ Smiley, Marge Van Tassel.

Did you know?

A South American Teratorn (*Argentavis magnificens*) that lived six million years ago is the largest known flying bird. Its wingspan was about 22 feet, and it weighed 175 pounds. And we think eagles are big with their 80-inch wingspan!

Local Sunflower Seed Available

Jeff Watterson, a Rural Valley farmer, has grown black oil and striped sun-flower seeds again this year. If you are interested in purchasing seed from Jeff, please contact Roger Higbee (724-354-3493) for details.

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

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Tom Glover and Lee Carnahan take a break on the Tuesday, September 24, Yellow Creek outing.

Join Todd Bird Club

Todd Bird Club dues are due and payable on January 1 each year. Please remit your \$10 individual membership, \$15 family membership, or \$5 student dues to:

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

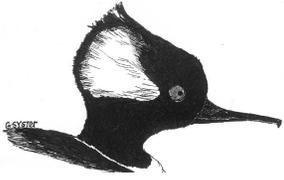
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