

Todd Bird Club Newsletter



Indiana, PA

April 2007

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. In May we hold our banquet meeting which starts at 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 2 – This is our annual banquet meeting. Our speaker will be Deuane Hoffman from Harrisburg, who will present a program about the history, birdlife, and conservation issues of the Conejohela Flats, Lancaster County, one of Pennsylvania's best birding locales. Deuane, one of the top listers in PA, has been birding since he was 9 years old. He has birded on four continents. In addition he has been an active member of the PA Society for Ornithology, serving as a board member and a trip leader at many of our annual meetings. He is responsible for conducting International Shorebird Surveys at the Conejohela Flats. Don't miss this entertaining, educational program!

Dinner begins at 6:00. Please bring your own place settings and a dish to share.

Outings

Saturday, April 21 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). This joint outing with Friends of the Parks will target late waterfowl and early migrant passerines.

Saturday, April 28 – Buzzard Swamp, led by Flo and Jim McGuire. Meet at the Higbees' (724-354-3493) to carpool at 6:00 a.m. or at the Buzzard Swamp parking lot at 8:00.

Directions: From Clarion, take Rt. 66 north to the main intersection in Marienville where six roads meet. Turn right just before the Bucktail Hotel, and follow this road for 1.2 miles. (You will pass the post office on your left.) A brown sign for Buzzard Swamp will be on the right; turn left. From here it is 2.9 miles to the parking lot. This level three- to four-mile hike passes through mixed habitats of hedgerows, fields, water, woods, and possibly mudflats.

May 5 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by John Taylor (724-397-2040). This is our annual warbler pilgrimage, so be prepared to hike.

May 12 – Pennsylvania Migration Count, both Indiana and Armstrong Counties. Please contact Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493) if you can participate.

May 18-20 – PSO Weekend at Harrisburg. In conjunction with the Appalachian and Quittapahilla Audubon Chapters, the 18th annual PSO meeting will be held at the The Best Western Inn and Suites located just off of Exit 247 of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The meeting will feature field trips, local vendors, Saturday afternoon sessions, and a presentation Saturday evening by renowned Pulitzer Prize finalist author and naturalist Scott Weidensaul.

Tuesday, June 12 – Yellow Creek State Park Pontoon Trip, led by park naturalist, Mike Shaffer. Meet at the boat rental on the south shore in the main day-use area at 4:00



Buff-breasted Sandpiper is just one of the many shorebirds that use the Conejohela Flats as a migration stop.

Photo by Roger Higbee

a.m. This outing is limited to the first nine participants. To register contact Margaret Higbee at 724-354-3493. Last year this outing yielded a Sandhill Crane flying overhead in the predawn hour.

Other birds included the usual mockingbird by the apple tree, 4 Brown Creepers, and a towhee. We were happy that the Ruperts joined us and hope they come back.

– Lee Carnahan

Outings Revisited

January 13, 2007



Front Row: Erma Dovenspike who is pointing at her Red-breasted Nuthatch.
Second Row: Margaret Higbee, Lorraine Uplinger, Georgette Syster.
Back Row: Lee Carnahan.

The annual armchair outing to the home of Erma and Sonny Dovenspike in Yatesboro, Armstrong County, was, as usual, a grand success. The morning's highlight was the appearance of a Red-breasted Nuthatch which returned repeatedly to the feeders right outside the Dovenspike's windows. We all enjoyed Sonny and Erma's gracious hospitality and the warmth of their home.

– Georgette Syster

March 24, 2007

Five persons – Gloria Lamer, Dory Jacobs, Dan and Tyler Rupert, and I – showed up for the March 24 outing at Yellow Creek, led by Gloria. The morning fog made visibility difficult, but we got a few counts on waterfowl and some estimates on others as the fog moved in and out. There were at least 6 Common Loons, 6 Wood Ducks, 16 Am. Black Ducks, 26 N. Pintails, 12 Green-winged Teal, 4 Common Mergansers, and 5 Ruddy Ducks. The highlight was a flock of 5 Long-tailed Ducks and 12 Redheads. We estimated 20 Am. Wigeons, 40 Mallards, 175 Ring-necked Ducks, 20 Lesser Scaup, 15 Common Goldeneyes, and 35 Hooded Mergansers.

April 7, 2007

Only four of us braved the cold, biting wind and almost horizontal snow flurries to bird Yellow Creek State Park on Saturday, April 7; the wind chill was 13°. Besides Roger and me, Ian and Margaret Haigh from the Three Rivers Birding Club were the only participants. The area around the park office which is usually good for passerines yielded very few species as it was just too windy. At the marsh overlook below the maintenance building we spotted 4 Am. Black Ducks, 4 Mallards, 18 Green-winged Teal, 10 Buffleheads, 114 Am. Coots, and 3 Bonaparte's Gulls on the water. Two Ospreys were perched in the trees on the north shore. Just as we were getting ready to continue to our next stop, we spotted a Common Loon, a life bird for the other Margaret.

Our next stop, the boat launch, yielded two of the day's five highlights – 2 Great Egrets and a Greater Yellowlegs stood at the edge of the marsh across Little Yellow Cove. Here we also added both Ruddy Ducks and Pied-billed and Horned Grebes. We did not stay here very long as the wind was whipping directly in our faces.

The pines in the main recreational area, which offered a little shelter from the wind, yielded 4 E. Phoebes, 2 E. Bluebirds, and 3 Pine Warblers – all on the ground! Our first pair of Wood Ducks was perched on downed branches along Little Yellow Creek. A stop at the beach added two more year birds – a Red-necked Grebe and 2 N. Rough-winged Swallows – in addition to 2 Killdeer on the beach and a raft of 64 Red-breasted Mergansers on the water.

We continued to the observatory. Along the trail were a Brown Creeper and several Golden-crowned Kinglets. We added more of the same ducks in addition to 2 Am. Wigeons, 2 Blue-winged Teal, and 14 Lesser Scaup. We also counted another raft of 65 Am. Coots. Flying over the water and perched in the cattails were an estimated 150 Tree Swallows. Thirteen Bonaparte's Gulls landed directly below the observatory while 7 Ring-billed Gulls were walking about on the spit. At times the snow squalls really limited visibility, but just as we were leaving the park, the sun peaked out. Overhead soared a Broad-winged Hawk, the first of the year, and a life bird for the Haighs. The outing ended at the King Chinese Buffet in Indiana where we had a very enjoyable lunch with Ian and Margaret.

– Margaret Higbee

A Note from Our President

If you ever wanted to be able to take photos of birds like the ones you buy, you missed your chance to find out how at our last meeting. Geoff Malosh's presentation on bird photography was just one more of those outstanding programs offered by Todd Bird Club. Jeff showed us how to edit our photos but stressed that patience is a key ingredient. He discussed waiting for four hours for a scoter to swim by. It never ceases to amaze me what you can do with patience, a little knowledge, and a computer.

These excellent programs don't just happen. I know that, to some of us, these programs seem to just appear in the newsletter and we think, "Wow, this really sounds like a good one." But we must keep in mind that there is "someone" who is taking her time and effort to make phone calls and send emails and adjusting schedules to make sure that these programs actually happen. At this time I would like to publicly thank Margaret for all that she does for our club, and particularly for her efforts in assuring that we have programs that attract all aspects of our birding hobby.

Somehow, a mere printed thank you doesn't seem to cover all the hours of effort, but I at least want to go on record to offer my appreciation and acknowledgment for all that Margaret does for us. This isn't to say that she is the only one who is actively doing something for the club, but I would truly define Margaret as our "keystone species" in the Todd Bird Club. Are the rest of us necessary? Yes, by all means, we members and officers, by regularly attending meetings and dutifully performing our jobs and participating in club events are essential to the group. But there's always one particular connection that binds the entire organization together and that's our keystone species, Margaret.

In closing, a reminder that one of our most important meetings is coming in May – our covered dish dinner. In the past our club members have certainly showcased their culinary efforts at this pleasant social event. Please come and share in our company at this final meeting of our calendar year. Don't miss Deuane Hoffman's enthusiasm as he informs us of the conservation issues and the birdlife on the Conejehela Flats along the Susquehanna River.

As always, we're planning for next year, and your ideas and input for future programming will be appreciated.

– Linda Jones

Out My Window

by Georgette Syster

How does a wild animal survive under adverse conditions? My guess is they don't think about it too much. I surmise that they just get on with the business of survival.

A crow has been feeding in my yard since the beginning of January. Usually he appears under the feeder by himself but occasionally with a small flock. He stands out because he is missing one of his legs below the knee joint. Flying and hopping on one foot are his main modes of transportation, and he's actually very good at it. If he finds an area with lots of seeds, he sits down and reaches out around him until they're gone. He then hops to another spot and repeats the procedure.

Sometimes I throw stale bread under the feeder. The crows love it. If they find a large chunk, they carry it into the woods, land on a branch where they consume it. The one-legged crow also heads for the woods, but he lands on the path to eat there.

This morning I found him perched above my feeder. It's early, and I haven't yet gone out in the snow and cold. He is calling very loudly. This is the first time I have seen him on a branch, and it does not appear to be easy for him. The wind and snow are blowing quite briskly, and he is in constant motion. He's balanced on his normal leg, but the missing one does not come close to the branch. He constantly adjusts the stump searching for the perch. To maintain balance, he must use his wings. He hops along the branch twisting from side to side until he finds a position that allows him to sit down.

With all the snow we now have, he is able to prop his breast on a small mound and lean outward as far as he can to eat everything near him. My guess is that he hasn't figured out he's missing a leg; and I suppose he never will. Apparently his buddies haven't noticed anything unusual, or at the very least, they haven't mentioned it! He can't look in a mirror, but he wouldn't understand what he was seeing anyway. He's all about the business of survival. After all, his is not to reason why; his is but to do or die!



President Linda Jones talks with member Gary Ferrence after our April meeting.

Winners Announced

Todd Bird Club recently held a coloring contest at the Indiana Mall during the Family Fun Fest. The fair's theme was "Get active—get outdoors." About 50 children between the ages of 2 and 11 participated in our contest. The drawings were displayed at our April Todd meeting and members present voted. The winners were:

Rachel Kwisnek, age 10
Maggie Kwisnek, age 5
Sarah Brown, age 4

The Kwisneks are from Nicktown, and Sarah Brown, from Clymer.

Special thanks to all the members who participated in the fair at the mall: Dan and Marcy Cunkelman, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Pat Johner, Linda Jones, Gloria Lamer, John Somonick, Georgette Syster, and Carl Trout. Georgette and Gloria set up their "Birds of Indiana County" display and another depicting feeder birds. In addition, Georgette drew a cardinal for the children to color. Marcy and Roger brought laptops with looping bird photos which really attracted a lot of attention. Marcy also brought feeders, seed samples, and suet recipes. Lee Carnahan built bluebird and screech-owl boxes for the display. We handed out Todd Bird Club brochures and a few newsletters to interested persons.

We also welcome our two new members who stopped by our table at the mall – Sharon Brimmer and Ann Marsh. Welcome!

Friends of White's Woods Nature Center – An Excerpt

"The Friends of White's Woods are very concerned about the prospect of timbering our community Nature Center. Approximately twelve years ago the White Township Supervisors proposed selectively timbering White's Woods Nature Center. At that time there was such an organized, public outcry regarding the desecration of White's Woods that the idea of logging was dropped. Now a new proposal for timbering the White's Woods is being prepared for the White Township Supervisors. The Friends of White's Woods again have to fight in order to maintain the natural quality and vitality of the Nature Center. The stated purpose of the Nature Center is to promote: recreation, conservation, and the historical value of this piece of land. The Friends of White's Woods believe that *ANY* selective timbering of White's Woods violates the stated purpose of the Nature Center. Man is *NOT* needed to maintain a mature or late successional forest. In fact, forests similar to what we know today have been doing just fine without

human intervention for 100 million years. We respectfully request answers to the following questions before any further action is considered with respect to our community Nature Center."

– Friends of White's Woods Steering Committee

Please log onto friendsofwhiteswoods.org for more information.

More on White's Woods

Representing Todd Bird Club at the White's Woods evening hike on Tuesday, April 10, were our conservation chairperson, Len Hess, and members Ray Winstead and Roger and Margaret Higbee. Attending the follow-up meeting at the Commonplace Coffee House and the subsequent township meeting was Dory Jacobs.

Dory writes:

"Who proposed the timbering question from 1994-1995 again? Other than to promote "good forest health" as quoted to attendees of the April 11, 2007, Supervisors' Meeting at the White Township facility – who benefits from the revenue generated by this 10-year project?

Will the public have a vote as previously for or against this proposal?

Have the potential problems related to erosion, sedimentation, water runoff, and impact on our township and borough roads been considered?

Will the recreational use of the woods be possibly limited during this 10-year period? Have the immediate and long-term impacts on the animal, bird, and plant life been considered?

What about noise and air pollution?"

Last year two Atlas trips through White's Woods yielded some interesting species including Broad-winged Hawk, Acadian Flycatchers, Yellow-throated Vireo, Black-throated Green Warblers, Blackburnian Warbler, Hooded Warblers, and Scarlet Tanagers. These neotropical migrants require large unbroken tracts of woods, and many will disappear if the nature center is logged.

Too Many Deer In Too Many Places Damaging Forest Ecosystems, Agriculture

Audubon Pennsylvania Presents Comments Before Senate Committee

LEBANON, Pa., April 5 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/

The over-browsing of Pennsylvania's forests and agricultural areas by too many deer in too many places has eliminated thousands of acres of habitat for birds and other wildlife, and represents the largest single threat to bird habitat, after urban sprawl, according to Timothy D. Schaeffer, Ph.D., Executive Director of Audubon Pennsylvania, the state office of the National Audubon Society.

Dr. Schaeffer made the comments before the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee at a listening session on rural and agricultural issues in Lebanon, Pennsylvania.

"The impact of deer on our forest ecosystem, the crop and forest products losses, the loss of life and property from deer/car collisions, and the impact on public health from the incidence of Lyme disease carried by deer have all been documented, and the picture painted by these numbers is not good," said Dr. Schaeffer.

A study released in March by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources showed fewer than 25 percent of the 41,650 forest plots they looked at across the state showed desirable forest regeneration, and almost 45 percent lacked any new, woody growth.

"Here in the Lebanon area – the Conrad Weiser Forest District – the results are even worse," Dr. Schaeffer explained. "59 percent of the 1,126 forest plots surveyed showed no forest regeneration and 28 percent showed regeneration with undesirable species."

The DCNR study and a 2005 study by Audubon Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Habitat Alliance show that high deer populations have greatly altered forest understories. The abundance of native wildflowers and other forest-floor plants has been greatly diminished, shrub species have been dramatically decreased or eliminated, and the variety of tree species has declined.

From a bird and wildlife resource perspective, nearly every one of Audubon's 84 Important Bird Areas in Pennsylvania has experienced significant damage caused by deer over-browsing, reducing much-needed habitat areas. These are areas of habitat critical to the survival and diversity of bird populations that must meet dozens of science-based criteria for designation.

"In addition to habitat losses, there is an estimated \$90 million in agricultural crop loss and \$73 million in damage to our forest products every year caused by deer, according to the Department of Agriculture," said Dr. Schaeffer. "Nurseries are losing an average of \$20,000 a year due to deer damage, and state taxpayers lose \$18 million a year in deferred and lost timber stumpage sales."

In addition, a 2006 hearing by the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee found –

- Over \$78 million in property damage occur in the over 39,000 deer/car collisions each year in Pennsylvania, not counting the deaths and injuries to the people involved, the highest of any state in the nation; and

- The incidence of Lyme disease, a debilitating and sometimes fatal illness spread by deer ticks, has increased by over 9,000 percent between 1987 and 2004, according to the Department of Health.

"Hunters will never agree on how many deer there should be in the woods, and deer certainly don't go where hunters want them to; they go where there's food and cover," said Dr. Schaeffer. "Deer are having a devastating impact on forest ecosystems and many agricultural areas, and we need to continue common sense policies to stem these losses."

Audubon Pennsylvania made several recommendations to the Committee –

- The first priority should be the restoration and maintenance of fully functional forest ecosystems, containing a full component of native biological diversity at all levels. It is the best way to serve the long-term interests of the people and wildlife of Pennsylvania.

- Policy-makers and land managers should focus on the indicators of forest health – rather than the number of deer people are seeing – to assess whether our forests are recovering.

- Until data shows Pennsylvania's forests are recovering, it would be imprudent and irresponsible to further limit hunter effectiveness through restrictions on hunting such as shorter seasons and smaller antlerless allocations.

- Support House Bill 550, sponsored by Rep. Hershey (R-Chester) and Rep. Tom Caltagirone (D-Berks), allowing the owners of farms, forestland and landscape nurseries to better protect agricultural commodities from the damage caused by deer and other wildlife and would make it easier for landowners, local governments, and communities to obtain deer removal permits. Sen. McIlhinney (R-Bucks) is considering introduction of a similar bill in the Senate.

- The General Assembly, Governor's Office, and the Game Commission should identify a funding base that is more stable and equitable than funding derived almost exclusively from sources such as license dollars and timber sales on game lands in order to facilitate the shift from single-species management to ecosystem management.

For more information, visit Audubon Pennsylvania's website at: http://pa.audubon.org/deer_report.html or call 717-213-6880.

Contact: Timothy D. Schaeffer (717-213-6880)
Audubon Pennsylvania
tschaeffer@audubon.org

An Atlas Update – Region 73



Member Tom Kuehl recently attended the regional coordinators' meeting at Bald Eagle State Park.

Spring is upon us, and it's time to gear up for Year 4 of 5 for the 2nd PA Breeding Bird Atlas. To all of you who have contributed to our substantial progress in Region 73, a big thank you, from Janet and me.

How are we doing in Region 73? In summary, OK, but lots of effort is still needed. The total species count is 149. Of

the 84 Blocks, 15 are complete. (Blocks are set complete when 75% of target species are identified, or for priority Block 6's, 90% of targeted species.) Thirty-six blocks are owned, however about ten of those have had little or no observations entered by the owners. On average 47% of targeted species have been recorded. Based on the minimum targets mentioned above, that means that we are roughly 61% complete or on pace for 3 out of 5 years. For the curious, the information is available on the Atlas website www.pabirdatlas.org. Go to "View Results," enter Region 73, and click on Block or Species Summary.

Here's the help needed from you as Janet and I plan our efforts for 2007:

If you have any data that has not been entered, please do so as soon as possible, as we want to work from the most up-to-date information.

If you are a block owner, we need to know if you will be able to complete the block. If you need assistance to do so, then contact us.

For those of you who have completed, or largely completed, your owned blocks, please take on ownership of other blocks.

As we start Year 4, the areas that need the most coverage are the Indiana County areas in the northern part of the region, the limited access areas along Laurel Ridge, and the Somerset area. If you are ready to work another block (or blocks), but would like some help in making a selection,

contact me and I'll direct you to the blocks that need coverage. To review where effort is needed on your own, you can use the tools available on the website. I have included a listing below sorted by blocks with the least coverage on top. Taking ownership of any of the unowned blocks would be a big help.



Todd member Janet Kuehl is co-coordinator for Region 73.

I'd also like to remind you that you can enter data not only in your owned blocks but anywhere in the state. So please enter observations of those "good" species that you come upon not just while atlasing, but also in your regular birding or in your daily travels. For the present, check out that nest that you know about to see if a Great Horned Owl is sitting on it. Janet spotted a Red-tailed Hawk on one near Vintondale last month. And check out your local woodcock spot. They were safe April 1, and those territorial displays are good for a "T" observation. Janet and I heard them from our driveway!

Last year Janet and I started hitting those blocks that we thought were likely to get limited or no coverage. We also completed the very limited number of wetland surveys that were required in Block 6s and did several of the owl surveys. We came up empty at Laurel Summit bog, but had Northern Saw-whet Owls at several spots near Bolivar with John Fedak, who completed priority Bolivar 6 (Block 73A56) on a World Series of Atlasing/family camping weekend with us last June. Needless to say – a fun weekend.

Of the 16 priority blocks in our region, three are complete, and four are owned and are a long way towards being completed. Only one block 73B76, Johnstown 6, is owned but has minimal coverage. Only two, 73D66, Somerset 6, and 73C76, Hooversville 6, have only minimal coverage. Other Block 6s that need owners or coverage are:

73A46 – Blairsville 6 (south of Blairsville)
73A76 – Vintondale 6 (north of Johnstown)
73B56 – Wilpen 6 (Waterford)
73B66 – Rachelwood 6 (Northfork Reservoir)
73D56 – Bakersville 6 (east of Somerset)
73D76 – Stoystown 6 (Lake Stoneycreek)

Once again, thanks for your participation. And please don't hesitate to contact Janet and me by phone or e-mail, as knowing both what you can do to help, and what you won't be able to do is important to our planning effort to complete Region 73.

Tom Kuehl (724-325-1918)
tjkuehl@adelphia.net

An Atlas Update – Region 59

On Saturday, March 24, regional coordinators from across the state met at Bald Eagle State Park to discuss the state of the Atlas and determine strategies for the final two years of field work. Several important decisions were made. First of all, our focus during this next year is to be on all Block 6s which have been deemed priority blocks. Here in

Region 59, we have no empty blocks—they all have at least some data; however, 17 blocks contain fewer than 50 species, and one of those is a priority block. The following table depicts the status of each of our Block 6s, starting with the ones that need the most work:

Quad Name	No. of Species	No. Possible	No. Probable	No. Confirmed	No. Required for Completeness
Commodore 6	45	31	10	4	96
Plumville 6	55	22	20	13	96
Marion Center 6	56	24	17	15	98
Indiana 6	61	29	11	21	105
Strongstown 6	63	22	17	24	103
Distant 6	66	51	6	9	101
Brush Valley 6	69	18	30	21	101
Punxsutawney 6	70	31	22	17	97
Clymer 6	73	28	24	21	104
Rochester Mills 6	74	16	36	22	98
Valier 6	75	10	35	30	100
McIntyre 6	76	35	26	15	104
Ernest 6	81	22	10	48	95
Rural Valley 6	86	22	30	34	99
Dayton 6	94	21	47	26	95
Elderton 6	97	19	31	47	95

As you can see, we have reached the target in only one block, Elderton 6. If anyone would like a list of missing species to help complete some of these blocks, please contact Roger or me. We need **YOUR** help! All of the priority blocks must have completed owl surveys and marsh bird surveys. In our region we have completed the owl survey in only Elderton 6 and Dayton 6. That means there are 14 more to do. Please consider helping out!

Secondly, if you have found a Species of Special Concern, you must complete a Verification Form which is available both on the website (<http://www.carnegiemnh.org/atlas/materials.htm>) and from us. Please complete those as

soon as possible and submit them to us.

If you have data that you have not yet entered, please do that immediately. We do not need to duplicate effort, and if your data is not showing up on the website, we will not know that the block has been worked.

Thanks so much to everyone who has submitted data to the Atlas! If you are able to work in another block, please contact us! Good atlasing!

– Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493)
bcoriole@alltel.net

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 \$7.50 individual membership or \$10 family membership dues to:

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

Amount Paid _____

Name (s) _____
Address _____
Phone _____ E-mail _____

Hawai'i Part II

by Margaret Higbee

[This is Part II of III, continued from the January 2007 newsletter detailing an August 2006 trip to Hawaii.]

We flew from Honolulu to the island Kaua'i early in the morning, landing in Lihu'e. The short 37-minute flight was on a plane much larger than the express jet between Pittsburgh and Houston. At the airport Red Junglefowl, Red-crested Cardinals, and House Sparrows were immediately apparent. We picked up our rental car and headed westward on Route 50 toward Kōke'e State Park in Waimea Canyon. It seems like there are a lot of "Waimeas" in Hawaii.



The Hawaiian Goose is Hawaii's state bird.

We stopped first at an overlook for the 'Alakoko Fish Pond where we spotted numerous Japanese White-eyes, both the Spotted and Zebra Dove, and Cattle Egrets. Acting like our own European Starlings, Common Mynas walked along most of the roadsides. Our next stop was at Po'i pū Beach. We thrilled to the sight of White-tailed Tropicbirds flying overhead and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters skimming the water's surface. Near Salt Pond Beach Park are several shallow ponds that are worked to evaporate sea water for salt. These salt pans yielded a large flock of Black-necked Stilts as well as several Ruddy Turnstones. At the park itself, a Great Frigatebird soared overhead on motionless wings.

Spectacular Waimea Canyon, located on the western edge of the island of Kaua'i, is approximately ten miles long and as deep as 3,000 feet. Mark Twain dubbed it the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific." Kaua'i, the oldest of the large islands comprising Hawai'i, sits on top of a huge volcano which rises from the ocean's floor. About 4 million years ago a portion of the island collapsed during an eruption, forming a depression which filled with lava. Centrally located Mount Wai'ale'ale is one of the wettest places on earth receiving about 34 feet— not inches! — of rain each year. West of this mountain is a high plateau that is not quite as wet as the mountain but receives enough rain that the area is known as the Alaka'i Swamp. Eroding rainwater feeding into various streams has helped to carve this beautiful canyon.

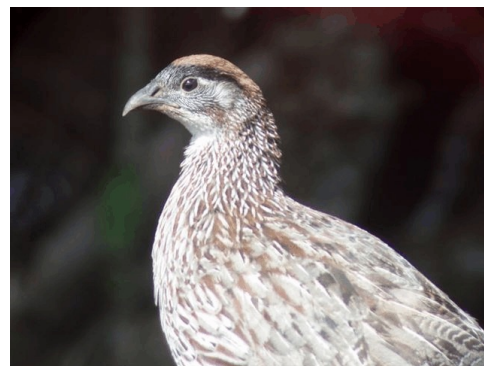
At the lower canyon overlook we watched White-tailed Tropicbirds gracefully flying in the canyon. An Erckel's Francolin was standing along the edge of the road. A Northern Cardinal carrying food reminded me of the ongoing Atlas Project back at home in PA. We also watched a Japanese White-eye feeding young. But best of

all was a pair of Nēnē, Hawaiian Geese, which grazed in the grass and other vegetation. We continued up the canyon to Kōke'e State Park where we had made reservations to rent a cabin. The cabin was a bit of a surprise as it was rather old and deteriorating, but the surrounding habitat made up for the unswept floors, the dim lighting, and the worn bedding. We had planned to cook our own meals, but when we checked out the silverware and cookware, we decided against it. Nothing was very clean, and food baked on utensils was unappetizing.

Fortunately, the park boasted a restaurant which proved to be very good; however, by the time we had arrived, it had closed. We always travel with snacks, so dinner consisted of crackers and cheese and junk food. Before dark, we hiked a short trail near our cabin, but there was not much birdsong as it was too late in the day. We did spot one new bird, a Kaua'i 'Elepaio with its orangish breast and cocked wren-like tail.

We awakened very early after a poor night's sleep (the mattress was uncomfortable) to a cacophony of bird song, most of which I did not recognize. Japanese White-eyes were flitting about. A family of Red Junglefowl, acting like they were waiting for us to feed them, walked onto the cabin's porch. Zebra Doves were singing. Another Kaua'i 'Elepaio was busy feeding in a shrub directly behind our cabin. Red 'Apapanes with their black decurved bills flew across the back, perched in the very tops of the trees, and sang. New for the trip was another Hawaiian honeycreeper, a Kaua'i 'Amikihi. Our guidebook recommended hiking the Pihea Trail for more honeycreepers, but before we set out, we checked at the office to see whether one of the newer cabins was available; it wasn't.

Pihea Trail offered another surprise. It started out as a roadbed, quickly deteriorated to a muddy road, then to an eroded waterway. It took a lot of effort to climb from one section of trail to the next. The mud was extremely slippery, and we had to pull ourselves up using roots of trees and rocks. After five hours of struggling along this "trail," it started to rain so we returned to the park



This Erckel's Francolin was photographed in Waimea Canyon.

restaurant where our younger son and his wife, Jon and Heidi, appeared and joined us for lunch. A drive that evening yielded several flocks of Rose-ringed Parakeets in cornfields as well as Cattle

Egrets. Driving back up the canyon toward our cabin we counted six Short-eared Owls hunting right along the road.

The following morning a Hwamei, also known as Melodious Laughing-Thrush, visited the shrubbery in front of our cabin. This 9-inch, rust colored bird with white spectacles skulked in the dense underbrush, but I was able to get several poor digiscoped photos anyway. We explored another trail adding a small flock of Nutmeg Mannikins and a White-rumped Shama before checking out of the cabin and heading back toward Lihū'e. Stops included Spouting Horn, a blowhole that shoots a large plume of sea water into the air with each incoming wave, and 'Ōpaeka'a Falls before we checked into the Kaua'i Sands Motel in Wailua. Dinner was at a Thai restaurant.

On August 11, we left the motel early for Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge, the highlight on Kaua'i. We arrived about an hour before the refuge opened, so we parked outside the gate and scoped the ocean and the cliffs. Nesting on the cliffs were Red-footed Boobies, and with the scope we found a nest of Red-tailed Tropicbirds under a shrub. Once the refuge opened, we drove inside the gates and parked. Along the walkways were burrows with nesting Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. Several Hawaiian Geese grazed around the parking lot. Overhead was constant traffic—Red-tailed Tropicbirds, White-tailed Tropicbirds, Great Frigatebirds, Red-footed Boobies, and even one Brown Booby. Ruddy Turnstones foraged on the rocks, and the ever-present Japanese White-eyes busied themselves in the shrubbery. Here we met well-known photographers Rob and Ann Simpson from Stephens City, VA.

Our next destination was Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge where our list included Hawaiian Ducks, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Common Moorhens, Black-necked Stilts, and Pacific Golden-Plovers. A stop at Haena State Park yielded hundreds of Black Noddies, yet another life bird. Near Hanalei we spotted a Western Meadowlark. On our way back to the motel we stopped in Kapa'a for dinner at the Wahoo Seafood Bar and Grill; we voted this the best meal of the trip. Tomorrow we would drive back to Lihū'e to fly to the Big Island.



This Wedge-tailed Shearwater was nesting in a burrow right along the walkway at Kīlauea Point.

Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria County Report

Winter 2006-2007 – December 1, 2006, through February 28, 2007

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

Locations: Allegheny River (AR), Crooked Creek Park (CC), Freeport (FP), Indiana (IN), Keystone Power Plant (KPP), Keystone Reservoir (KR), Kittanning (KT), Lewisville (LV), Manorville (MV), Prince Gallitzin (PG), Rosston (RT), Shelocta (SH), Urling Treatment Pond (UTP), Winter Raptor Survey (WRS), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

Two **White-fronted Geese** were found on the AR at RT on the afternoon of 1/27 (DY); they were still present at dusk (EF, MF, MH, RH) but could not be found the following morning (MV).

Canada Goose maxima included 142 at PG 12/4 (RB), 214 at KR and 320 at YC 12/10 (LC), an even 1200 on the IN CBC 12/26



Note the three smaller, shorter necked Cackling Geese in front of the five Canada Geese photographed at Keystone Reservoir 12/10/2006.

Photo by Margaret Higbee

(v.o.), 600 near LV 1/7 (MC), and 300 at FP 2/5 (DY). Three **Cackling Geese** were a great discovery at KR 12/10 (LC), a first county record, and were seen later that day (MH, RH) and again the following morning (JS). Two **Mute Swans** were

present at RT 1/27, 2/10 (MH,RH). **Tundra Swan** reports mentioned 36 at PG 12/7 (RB), 3 at YC 12/10 (LC), 210 over IN 12/27 (DJ), and 3 at PG 1/26 (RB).

January 23 was the last date at YC for waterfowl as the lake froze completely shortly thereafter. At PG the water was 99 percent frozen on 1/27 and completely frozen by 2/3. **Gadwall** reports included 6 on 12/12 (LC) with 3 lingering through 1/16 (LC,MH) at YC and 9 at PG 12/24 (RB) with 4 still present 1/27 (RB). Last **American Wigeons** were 8 at KR 12/10 (LC) and 4 at PG 1/26 (RB). Eleven **American Wigeons** appeared at the UTP 2/27 (RH) which remained open due to pumping of the mine pool. Before freeze-up YC yielded 12 **American Black Ducks** on 1/9,23 (LC,MH); KR, a singleton 1/11 (MH); CC, 2 on 1/14 (MH,RH); PG, an amazing 58 on 1/21 (RB); 7 arrived on Dunmire's pond near Saltsburg 2/21 (MAD). When cold weather finally arrived freezing all the area lakes, the AR harbored the wintering ducks. On 2/10 (MH,RH) 15 blacks were on the river at KT while a singleton was farther downriver at MV. Top **Mallard** counts were 92 at YC 12/5 (LC), 27 near Two Lick Reservoir 12/8 (PJ); 140 at PG 1/24 (JS); 17 visited the UTP 2/10 (MH,RH), the same day a river trip between KT and FP yielded 168 individuals in addition to another 20 at KPP. The only **Northern Shovelers** reported were 7 on 12/10 (LC) and 11 on 12/12 (LC), all at YC. Two **Northern Pintails** at YC 1/16 (LC,MH) and 3 at PG 1/21 (RB) were the only ones noted.

Two **Canvasbacks** 1/23 (LC,MH) were YC's last; UTP harbored 3 on 2/22 (RH). A **Canvasback** at FP 2/5 (DY) and 3 **Redheads** at KPP 2/10 (MH,RH) were the lone reports for *Armstrong*. PG yielded 2 Redheads 12/4 (RB) and 3 on 12/14 (RB). Two **Ring-necked Ducks** at KR 12/11 (JS), 2 at YC 1/23 (LC,MH), and 24 at PG 1/26 (RB) were the last for the counties. The only **Greater Scaup** noted were single birds near FP 12/10 (MH,RH) and at PG 12/30 (JS). The season's high count of 6 **Lesser Scaup** occurred at YC 12/5 (LC,MH) and 1/23 (LC,MH); 2 at PG 1/26 (RB) were last. **Bufflehead** maxima were 2 at KR 12/10 (MH,RH), 3 at YC 1/2 (LC, MH), 11 at PG 1/21 (RB), 2 at FP 2/5 (DY), and 3 at KT 2/10 (MH,RH). Southward bound **Common Goldeneyes** on 12/10 included 2 at YC (LC) and one at KR (MH,RH); last lingerers before freeze-up included 2 at YC 1/23 (LC, MH) and one at PG 1/29 (RB); a pair appeared 2/11 (RH) at the UTP where the hen was still present 2/22 (RH); others, on the AR, were 2 at FP 2/5 (DY) and 1 at KT 2/10 (MH,RH). Best **Hooded Merganser** counts included 15 at YC 12/1 (GC,MH), 8 at KR 12/10 (LC), and 42 at PG 1/18 (RB); singletons were on the AR at KT and MV 2/10 (MH,RH). Among numerous reports, **Common Mergansers** on area lakes included 1 at KR 1/13 (LC,MH,GS), 48 at CC 1/14 (MH,RH), 25 at PG 1/21 (RB), and 6 at CD 2/28 (MF); the AR between KT and RT yielded 22 on 1/27 (MH,RH); 19 was the count at FP 2/10 (MH,RH). **Red-**

breasted Mergansers noted at KR included 7 on 12/11 (JS) and 3 on 1/11 (MH); PG harbored 8 on 12/30 (JS) and 10 on 1/24 (JS) while YC boasted only one 1/1 (MH,RH) through 1/2 (LC,MH). Top tallies of **Ruddy Ducks** included an even 50 at YC 12/1 (GC,MH), 42 at PG 1/24 (JS), and only one in *Armstrong* at KPP 2/10 (MH,RH).

A pair of **Ring-necked Pheasants** had apparently survived the season at a feeder near Robb's Fording 1/14 (MH,RH). The IN CBC yielded 5 **Ruffed Grouse** 12/26 (v.o.), 4 of them in or near YC, the other at the SH Beagle Club (LJ, JSo); the only other grouse reported were individuals at KR 1/11 (MH) and near Marion Center 1/27 (MH,RH). A flock of 19 **Wild Turkeys** were regular visitors to feeders near Rural Valley throughout the period (LU); maxima included 40 west of Penn Run 12/26 (BF,TF), 80 near IN 12/27 (SB), and 32 in a field near South Bend 1/14 (MH, RH).

Last **Common Loons** were one at YC 12/26 (ED,JD,JT), 4 at KR 1/11 (MH), and one at PG one week later (RB). While 33 **Pied-billed Grebes** used YC as a migration stop 12/10 (LC), other top counts were 8 at KR 12/11 (JS) and 10 at PG 1/3 (JS); 4 were last noted at KR 1/13 (LC,MH, GS) while 2 remained at PG 2/5 (RB); a singleton appeared at MV 2/10 (MH,RH). Two **Horned Grebes** were present 12/1 (GC,MH) at YC, the region's lone report.



These were two of the four Common Loons that lingered at Keystone Reservoir 1/11. Photo by Margaret Higbee

Single **Double-crested Cormorants** stopped briefly at PG 12/5 (RB) and at YC 12/12 (LC). Select **Great Blue Heron** reports mentioned 3 at KR 12/10 (LC), one at PG 12/12 (RB,JS), 2 at KR 1/13 (LC,MH,GS), and one at RT 1/27 (MH,RH). A late **Turkey Vulture** was soaring over Aultman 12/27 (BF,TF) while an early arrival was spotted north of KT 2/26 (MB). **Bald Eagles** noted at CC included as many as 3, one immature and 2 adults, on 1/12 (*fide* MM). An immature Bald Eagle was spotted at YC 1/21 (JDu,JM) and was relocated the following day (LC, MH); a first-year bird flew over SH 2/16 (MH) while an

adult was seen at Saltsburg 2/20 (AD,MAD). PG hosted 1-2 adults through 2/28 (MBo). RB located three deer carcasses which were dragged onto PG's ice in an attempt to help feed the eagles after their main course of American Coot departed for more open water. At least the crows benefitted from their effort.

One to two **Northern Harriers** were listed at YC through 1/23 (v.o.); singletons were found at PG 12/12 (RB,JS) through 2/11 (RB), e. of IN 12/26 (PJ), near Worthington 1/3,5 (CGI), at Clymer 1/9 (GL), and near LV 1/25, 2/23 (MC). A Yatesboro feeder was visited by a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** 1/29 (ED) and a **Cooper's Hawk** 1/4 (ED). **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were listed at 8 locations during the period (v.o.); **Cooper's Hawk**, at 16 (v.o.). Two WRS routes in the northern part of *Indiana* yielded 25 **Red-tailed Hawks** on 1/27 (MH, RH) and 12 on 2/3 (MH, RH), compared respectively with last year's counts of 21 and 29. Two dark morph **Rough-legged Hawks** were a nice find near Marion Center 2/18 (MH,RH). Eight **Am. Kestrels** was a high count on WRS#2 on 1/27 (MH,RH).

American Coots at YC 12/10 (LC) numbered 1700; the flock gradually decreased until by 1/16 (LC,MH), 832 remained; on 1/23 (LC,MH), the last YC report, an estimated 450 were still present with little open water. Over at PG coots numbered roughly 300 on 1/21 (RB) as gradually decreased as the water continued to freeze until the last 3 were sighted on 2/5 (RB). The only coots noted on the AR were 2 at FP 2/5 (DY) and 1 at RT 2/10 (MH,RH).

Fifteen **Bonaparte's Gulls** were standing on the ice at YC 1/23 (LC,MH). High **Ring-billed Gull** counts included 100 at PG (RB), 65 at YC, (LC), and 137 at Two Lick Reservoir (LC), all reports 12/5. Gull numbers on the AR remained low with the high count of 18 at RT 1/27 (MH, RH). A pair of **Herring Gulls** was standing beside their nest at KT 1/27 (MH,RH); 2 were also at FP 2/10 (MH, RH).

Two **Eastern Screech-Owls** responded to being called on the Ferrence farm near IN 12/26 (GF,GF_e). The CBC yielded 3 **Great Horned Owls** (v.o.). A **Barred Owl** was heard only near Creekside 2/19 (MAL). Late **Belted Kingfisher** reports mentioned 3 at PG 1/13 (RB), singletons at Rural Valley and at KR both 1/14 (LC,MH,GS), at CC 1/14 (MH,RH), and at YC 1/22 (JDu,JM). **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were spotted near LV 12/28, 1/26, and 2/10 (MC); near Smicksburg 1/21,25 and 2/5-7 (MM); and near IN 2/4 (MH,RH,DJ). An **Eastern Phoebe** appeared at Conemaugh Dam 1/29 (MF) but was not seen thereafter.

Common Ravens, which continue to spread in our region, included one at PG 12/30 and again 1/24 (JS), one on WRS#2 1/27 (MH,RH), 2 near Penn Run 1/31 (TF), 2 at Blairsville 2/10 (DC,MC), one near Covode 2/19 (GL) and 2 at YC 2/19 (MH). The ravens at KPP were on nest on

2/10 (MH,RH); the nest appeared empty, but while the observers were watching, a raven flew to the nest carrying food. His mate stood up off the nest and ate the offered food before settling back onto the nest. This didn't last long as she noticed an intruder on her territory—a Red-tailed Hawk perched in a tree about 100 yards from her nest. With repeated truncated croaks she flew directly toward him, landing on the limb above. The hawk appeared unconcerned, but the raven continued to complain.

Horned Lark maxima were 141 near Marion Center 1/27 (MH,RH) and 95 near Ambrose 2/19 (MS,JT). The CBC yielded 5 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** at 4 locations (v.o.); 1-2 near SH (MH, RH) and one at Yatesboro wintered at these locations; another visited a Reservoir Hill feeder 2/17 (PJ). Three **Brown Creepers** at YC 12/26 (MH,RH) comprised the high count; a creeper appeared at the Yatesboro feeder mentioned above 2/6 (ED) and remained through the end of the month. Four **Winter Wrens** were found at three locations on the CBC 12/26 (v.o.), but none were reported after the count. Two **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were a nice find near Homer City 12/26 (LH,LHe). YC **Hermit Thrush** reports included 2 on 12/26 (MH,RH), one 1/2 (LC,MH), and one 2/19 (MH); a singleton visited PG 1/29 (RB). Among several other reports, a **Northern Mockingbird** wintering at YC was present throughout the period; near Ford City one was noted 12/18 (FM,JM), and PG yielded another 1/5 (RB). After a count of 108 for the CBC 12/26 (v.o.), the only **Cedar Waxwings** noted were 14 roosting in a holly near SH 1/2 (MH,RH), 5 near LV 1/10 (MC), 19 at PG 1/30 (RB), and 3 near IN 2/4 (MH,RH, DJ).

Two **Yellow-rumped Warblers** wintered near SH through at least 2/19 (MH,RH), where they were feeding primarily on poison ivy berries supplemented by a bit of suet.

Single **Eastern Towhees** were noted at YC 12/26 (GL) and 1/2 (LC,MH), near Glen Campbell 2/3 (MH,RH), and near Penn Run 2/3 (MH,RH). A good count of **American Tree Sparrows** was 30 at a LV feeder 1/25 (MC). Two **Field Sparrows** near Homer City 12/26 (LH,LHe) and one at YC 12/26 (ED,JD,JT) comprised the entire report. One **Fox Sparrow** near SH 12/26 (MH,RH) was the only one noted. Single **Swamp Sparrows** still lingered at PG 12/30 (JS) and at YC 1/23 (LC, MH). The only **White-crowned Sparrows** were 16 at YC (ED,JD,JT) and one near Homer City 12/26 (LH,LHe). High **Dark-eyed Junco** feeder counts included 103 near Marion Center 1/29 (KG) and an even 100 near SH 2/14 (MH).

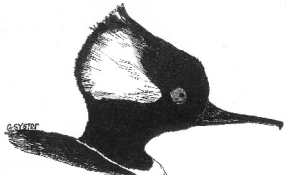
First **Red-winged Blackbirds** arrived at Rural Valley 2/9 (LU), near LV 2/19 (MC). LV also yielded first **Rusty Blackbird** 2/17 (MC), and the first **Common Grackle** 2/16 (MC). Unseasonal flocks of grackles included 50 at Yatesboro 1/19 (PB) and 2 at Rural Valley 1/25 (LU). A **Brown-headed Cowbird** remained near IN till 12/26 (DJ);

up to 19 frequented a Rural Valley feeder 1/21-2/12 (LU) while the 47 near Home 2/17 (JT) were first returnees. The only report of **Pine Siskins** involved a flock of 20 that descended on feeders near IN 2/15 (HP) and remained through the end of the period.

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