

The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Todd Bird Club

April 2009

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, May 5 – 6:00 At our annual banquet meeting Walt Shaffer will present “The Common Butterflies of Pennsylvania.” This presentation is designed for those with an interest in butterflies at a beginner's level but will also appeal to those who are more advanced. No attempt will be made to present all of the 156 species identified in Pennsylvania during the past decade. Instead, all major families and representative examples of each, will be discussed. Techniques for field identification, differentiation of similar species, and study of butterflies will be covered. Digital photos, some from this year, will augment the presentation. Walt is well known as an excellent speaker. Don't miss this excellent presentation!

Please bring a covered dish to share and your own place settings. Dinner will begin at 6:00 followed by the program. You don't want to miss this one! We plan to have a special election as we are losing our president.

Outings

Tuesday Morning Outings at Yellow Creek will continue through May. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office.

Saturday, April 18 – Blue Spruce County Park, led by Ken and Beth Marshall (724-465-8974). Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the large parking lot adjacent to the main pavilion. We'll target early warblers and other passerines.

Saturday, May 2 – Presque Isle State Park, led by Flo and Jim McGuire (814-755-3672). This is a joint outing with Seneca Rocks Audubon. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the first parking lot on the isle. If anyone would like to carpool to Presque Isle, contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

Saturday, May 9 – Pennsylvania Migration Count for both Indiana and Armstrong Counties. Please contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493) if you'd like to participate.

Saturday, May 16 – Warbler Walk at Yellow Creek, led by John Taylor (724-397-2040). Come prepared to hike.

Friday, May 15 through Sunday May 17 – PSO annual meeting in Berks County. This is a good opportunity to see a new area and meet birders from the other side of the state. Early morning field trips, afternoon presentations, and a banquet are included in this great weekend. For further information, contact the Higbees (724-354-3493).

Saturday, May 23 – Blacklick Valley Natural Area, led by Lee Carnahan (724-465-7323). From Indiana, take Route 56 to Armagh; turn left (or east) onto Route 22. Continue past the Dilltown exit to McFeaters Road on the left, and follow McFeaters to the parking lot at the end of the road. We will meet here at 8:00 a.m.

From the President's Desk....

As I sit at my desktop, watching the snow flurries and preparing to compose what I hope is the final president's column of my tenure, I'm trying to get in the mood for Easter break and some springtime weather. I still have too many things to finish in too little time. So what else is new?



The Hawaiian Goose or Nene is one of the endangered birds that is gradually increasing with a population estimate of 1700 up from a low of 30 individuals.

Speaking of what is new – “The State of the Nation’s Birds” was recently released for public viewing. Check it out at www.stateofthebirds.org. I learned a great deal from just the first few paragraphs of the overview. The brief introductory video is also very enlightening. Out of the more than 800 species of birds in the United States/Hawaii, 67 are endangered or threatened and another 184 are species of conservation concern because of their small distribution, high threats, or declining populations. Every U.S. habitat has birds in need of conservation. It remains up to us citizen ornithologists, as well as the professional biologists, to continue to monitor populations and crusade for increasing conservation measures. On a positive note, wetland species, coastal birds, and hunted waterfowl populations have shown an increase in population in the last 40 years. This is surely a response to our local and global efforts to clean up our waterways. Another positive outcome to our conservation efforts is felt whenever we can go on an outing and observe a Bald Eagle or a Peregrine Falcon here at home. Remember Rachel Carson (a Pittsburgh native)!

Some parting comments. . . Just as certain birds are the bellwethers of our local populations and habitat conditions, the well-being and integrity of our organization (Todd Bird Club) is as strong as the members and their individual contributions. The time has come to ask yourself a few questions. How much have I done for our club? How many outings have I attended lately? What could I be doing to boost the integrity of our organization? Let's all take time to think about these questions and more. It's time to assess our present situation and make plans for the future. Consider taking on a role in the leadership of our organization, offer some suggestions for future programs, and make time in your busy schedules to attend our meetings. Hope to see you soon.

– Linda Jones

Citizen Science Opportunity for Residents of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Washington D.C., and Virginia

Christy Beal, a Ph.D. student at the University of Delaware is looking for volunteers in the mid-Atlantic region to help her keep track of the types of trees on which birds are foraging in spring. If you think you might be interested in helping her, read her description of the project below and contact her directly at niobe@udel.edu.

Are you looking for something to do now that Project Feederwatch is over for the season?

Migrating and breeding birds need high quality protein to support their increased energy needs and to feed their quickly growing young. Most birds in North America fulfill their protein needs by eating caterpillars. There have been many studies over the last several years showing that there are more insects present on native plants than on non-native plants. I am trying to understand how this affects the foraging behavior of birds during migration and breeding.

What we are asking volunteers to do:

Time commitment: 8-10 sunny mornings 7:00-9:00 between April 27 through May 25 (only including days when the trees have fully leafed out).

Volunteer responsibilities:

1. Determine what bird species are foraging on trees in your yard. We are defining foraging as any kind of searching behavior made by birds as they move among the tree leaves – whether they be on leaves or on the tree's bark. We will need to know what kinds of trees the birds are foraging on for this project; if you are unsure of the species of trees in your yard, we will be happy to identify them for you through pictures or leaf samples.
2. Provide a very general list of the kinds of trees that are found in the local area. This list can be as simple as 10% oak, 80% Pine, 10% dogwood; or a more complicated list.
3. Provide your home address so that we can look at the vegetation on the satellite maps and gain a general idea of how your yard fits with the surrounding habitat.

Interested? Contact Christy Beal at niobe@udel.edu with any questions or to sign up for this season.

Birding the Las Vegas Area

by Steve Graff

Back in 2008, my brother and his fiancée decided to have their wedding in the Valley of Fire State Park, one hour northeast of Las Vegas, Nevada, on March 20, 2009. My first thought was “Oh, Las Vegas, but my mom and I have already birded there before.” My next thought was “Hmmm, but we were there in December and maybe some early spring migrants might show up, and we could try for some of the species that we missed the first time.”

When March 15, 2009, rolled around, my mother and I hopped on a plane from Baltimore, Maryland, to Las Vegas. From the airport where we rented a car en route to our condo for the week, our first birds were Rock Pigeon, Great-tailed Grackle (year bird), N. Mockingbird, and House Sparrow.

March 16 – The first stop on our itinerary was the Bird Viewing Preserve in Henderson, located just southeast of Vegas. Because of the three-hour time difference between Nevada and our home in Delaware, and considering our bodies were still on eastern time, we were awake and ready to go way before the crack of dawn. I had forgotten that it only takes about 20 minutes to get from downtown Vegas to Henderson, so we sat in front of the preserve for about half an hour in the dark waiting for the 6:00 a.m. opening time.

We had been at the Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve before, and it was a very good stop. Upon checking in at the office, a Nevada Birding Map is available, or it may be ordered on line at www.travelnevada.com sponsored by the Nevada Commission on Tourism. The preserve was originally and still is the sewage treatment plant for the town of Henderson. But don't let that dissuade you from going. The following list should entice you: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Cinnamon Teal, Green-winged Teal, N. Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Gambel's Quail, Eared Grebe, Great Egret, N. Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Virginia Rail, Common Moorhen, Killdeer, Avocet, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, Ring-billed Gull, California Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Black Phoebe, Tree Swallow, N. Rough-winged Swallow, Verdin, Bewick's Wren, Marsh Wren, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Crissal Thrasher, N. Mockingbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Abert's Towhee, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and House Sparrow. We also saw Desert Cottontail Rabbits.

From Henderson, we decided to head south to Wee Thump Joshua Tree Forest near Searchlight, Nevada. Along the way we saw ravens doing their usual roaming

for food. At the Wee Thump area we got two lifers, Black-throated Sparrows, spring migrants that had just arrived, and Gilded Flicker. Other birds we noted here included Turkey Vultures which were feasting on a deceased Black-tailed Jackrabbit, Red-tailed Hawk, three Am. Kestrels, and Loggerhead Shrike. We also saw some roadrunner food – Side-blotched Lizards (*Uta stansburiana*).

March 17 – Our destination this day was Havasu National Wildlife Refuge along the Colorado River between Arizona and California. We arrived first at the Topack Marsh Unit of the Refuge where we identified two new life birds – Ash-throated Flycatcher and Lucy's Warbler, which we were lucky to see as the warbler had recently arrived. Here, too, we heard a Great Horned Owl hooting mid morning. We also listed the following species: Cinnamon Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Gambel's Quail, Pied-billed Grebe, Western Grebe, Clark's Grebe, Am. White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, N. Harrier, Am. Kestrel, Am. Coot, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Gila Woodpecker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, N. Flicker, Black Phoebe, N. Rough-winged Swallow, Verdin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Marsh Wren, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Spotted Towhee, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, and House Sparrow. As we were leaving Topack Marsh, a Prairie Falcon flew over.

We observed a male Anna's Hummingbird doing an interesting display at close range. As is typical of hummingbird displays, the male was flying a large U-shaped pattern with the object of his interest below the bottom of the U. But when he came to the top of the each summit, he would do a back flip to start his descent downward. Next he quickly rolled over so that his ventral side was oriented correctly. That is quite a roller coaster ride!

We continued farther south to the main area of Havasu State Park where our only new birds were Costa's Hummingbird and Brewer's Blackbird. We saw more Side-blotched Lizards as well as Desert Spiny Lizards. Since we were so close, we drove into Lake Havasu City and over The London Bridge. As we were leaving the city, we picked up Eurasian Collared-Dove, another trip bird.

As it was time to head north, we decided to travel a different route so that we could be in California for a while. We went through Needles, California, and were traveling up Needles Highway when we noticed a lot of green fields in the valley. We took the next road, River Road, and drove down to investigate. Here were a bunch of irrigated fields of hay and grass for a lot of beef cows.

All this green in the middle of the desert should certainly attract some interesting birds, and it did. We found many Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Wilson's Snipe as well as Turkey Vulture, N. Harrier, Mourning Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Common Raven, Horned Lark, European Starling, Phainopepla, Western Meadowlark, and Brewer's Blackbird. I scanned and scanned and scanned and scanned and scanned and scanned for a Mountain Plover, but they must have already migrated northward. So, we continued northward.

Our next stop was just south of Big Bend State Recreation area near Laughlin, Nevada, along the Colorado River. A pull-off along the road overlooked the river and a marshy area. Here were Am. Coots, N. Rough-winged Swallows, Phainopepla, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. With the daylight starting to fade after a long day of birding, we headed back to Vegas.

March 18 – Up to this point on our trip the weather had been fantastic with highs in the 80s, and while we were farther south at Havasu, highs in the 90s! But this morning was a bit windy causing the cool desert morning air to be a bit chilly. It was a good thing we had taken our winter coats.

Our first stop of the day was at Floyd Lamb State Park located northwest of Vegas. The habitat here included several ponds with trees and green grass in the park along with some brushy areas around the perimeter. Our list here included Ross's Goose, Canada Geese, Mallards, Cinnamon Teal, Ruddy Duck, Gambel's Quail, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Am. Coots, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Anna's Hummingbird, N. Flicker, Black Phoebe, Verdin, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick's Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, W. Bluebird, Am. Robin, N. Mockingbird, European Starling, Am. Pipits, Phainopepla, Lucy's Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, House Finch, and Am. Goldfinch. The park also has a large flock of domestic geese and peacocks running around.

By the time we finished birding Floyd Lamb State Park, the wind had died down and the temperature was starting to rise; so we headed to the Corn Creek section of the Desert National Wildlife Range. On the way in, we scanned for Sage Sparrows but could not locate any. We did get one life bird which was an early spring migrant Bell's Vireo. In addition we saw Red-tailed Hawk, N. Flicker, Say's Phoebe, Western Scrub- Jay, Common Raven, Horned Lark, Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Am. Robin, European Starling, Phainopepla, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Spotted Towhee, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow,

White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, and House Finch.

Next on the destination list was the higher elevation Mt. Charleston area. Yes, there are mountains in the desert, and, yes, this one gets snow. The environment is completely different from the desert valleys below. The higher elevations are covered in various types of pines and junipers. To get there, you must drive up and up and up and up. On the way, we saw wild burrows and wild horses! The highest point along the road on Mt. Charleston is at 8,250 feet, and the scenery is spectacular. We picked up Pinyon Jay, another lifer that we had missed on our first trip. Pygmy Nuthatches were super abundant here, and the N. Rough-winged Swallows must have been migrating because we've seen them at every stop on this trip. Other birds here were Red-tailed Hawk, W. Scrub-Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, and W. Bluebird,

March 19 – West of Vegas is an area known as Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. A loop road provides many stops along the way including one of the best at Willow Springs Canyon. Here we added Black-chinned Sparrow, another migrant that had just arrived, and one life mammal, White-tailed Antelope Squirrel. Other birds sighted were White-throated Swift, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Say's Phoebe, W. Scrub-Jay, Common Raven, Rock Wren, Canyon Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet Spotted Towhee, Black-throated Sparrow, and House Finch.

March 20 – The day of my brother's wedding – the reason I was in Vegas again. The wedding took place in the Valley of Fire State Park, an hour's drive northeast of Vegas. We did not get to bird the area, but during the wedding ceremony we heard a Rock Wren singing in the background and a raven flew over. When the ceremony was over, the sun had just gone down below the ridge, and an unidentified bat was foraging in the night.

March 21 – We were accompanied by other people today, so we figured we would make our way to Hoover Dam, but along the way we stopped at Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve for a quick look for a visiting Black-chinned Hummingbird. We were not successful. Our next stop was at my great aunt's home in Boulder City, where she had both a seed and a hummingbird feeder in the front yard. Attending her feeders were Mourning Doves, White-crowned Sparrows, Great-tailed Grackles, House Finches, and Lesser Goldfinches. While we were sitting on the porch, a Costa's Hummingbird buzzed up and sat on a bush a foot behind my brother's head for about 10 seconds. We also noted a Eurasian Collared-Dove perched on a telephone pole up the street.

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Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria County Report

Winter 2008-2009 – December 1, 2008, through February 28, 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. Please note the new e-mail address.

Abbreviations: Blue Spruce Co. Park (BS), Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Crooked Creek Park (CC), Indiana (IN), Keystone Reservoir (KR), Kittanning (KT), Leechburg (LB), Lewisville (LV), Patton (PT), Prince Gallitzin (PG), Rosston (RT), Rural Valley (RV), Shelocta (SH), Two Lick Reservoir (TL), Winter Raptor Survey (WRS), Yatesboro (YB), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

Canada Goose maxima included 836 at TL 12/25 (LC), 456 at YC 12/16 (LC), 226 at KT 1/11 (MH,RH), and 800 at PG 2/27 (JS). Two **Mute Swans** were noted at RT 12/23-1/31 (MVT) while PG yielded 6-8 between the beginning of the season and 1/13 (JS). PG's last 41 **Tundra Swans** occurred 12/9 (JS); 8 were at YC 12/24 (LC, RH); last reported was a singleton at TL 12/25 (LC).

Four to 5 **Gadwalls** were sighted at YC 12/2-4 (LC); PG's counts were 25 on 12/9 (JS) and 18 on 12/15 (JS); KR yielded 2 on 12/14 (MH,RH).

Last 2 **Am. Wigeons** lingered at KR 1/11 (MH,RH) while 7 had returned to PG by 2/27 (JS). **Am. Black Duck** maxima included 37 at YC 12/2 (LC) and 71 at TL 12/23 (LC); last spotted were 2 at PG 1/3 (JS), 11 at YC 1/6 (LC,MH), and 6 at KR 1/11 (MH, RH); but by 2/28 (MH,RH,JK) the first 28 spring migrants had returned to YC. Top **Mallard** count was 133 at TL 12/23 (LC). Twenty **N. Pintails** at PG 12/27 (JS) had dwindled to 8 by 1/3 (JS); 18 were noted 1/6 (LC,MH) at YC; a single pintail found on a pond near Gypsy 1/31 (CG,MH,RH) was the season's last report; by 2/28 (JK) partially open water at YC provided refuge for 14 heading north. Two **Green-winged Teal** lingered at KT 1/11 while the first 6 heading north arrived at YC 2/28 (MH,RH). Thirty-eight **Canvasbacks** were nice finds 12/11 (DY) at RT; a singleton was spotted at YC 12/26 (GL,GS); arriving at YC 2/28 (MH,RH, JK) were the first north-bound 7. Seven **Redheads** visited PG

12/9-27 (JS); 12 were noted 2/28 (MH,RH,JK) at YC. Single **Ring-necked Ducks** lingered 12/27 (JS) at



This male Ring-necked Duck was an early spring arrival at Yellow Creek.

Photo by Margaret Higbee

PG and 1/6 (LC,MH) at YC while 14 had arrived at PG by 2/27 (JS) and 49 appeared at YC the following day (MH,RH,JK). Three **Greater Scaup** at RT 12/11 (DY) and one at YC 12/24 (LC) were the only ones noted. The high **Lesser Scaup** tally was 64 at YC 12/12 (LC); last reported were 7 at TL 12/26 (LC,RC), one at PG 12/27 (JS), and 3 at RT 12/11 (DY). Lingered **Buffleheads** included 4 at YC 1/6 (LC) and an equal number at



An incredibly large flock of Wild Turkey appeared almost daily north of Indiana.

Photo by Sid Blair

KR 1/11 (MH,RH); a puddle of open water at YC attracted 4 on 2/17 (LC); by 2/27 (JS) 2 had returned to PG.

Common Goldeneyes noted included 2 at KR 12/14 (MH,RH), 4 at YC 12/16 (LC), 2 at RT 12/23 (MVT), and one at YC 12/26 (GL,GS). Last were 2 **Hooded Mergansers** at PG 1/3 (JS), one at YC 1/6 (LC,MH), and 4 at KR 1/11 (MH,RH); 18 arrived at YC 2/28 (JK). **Common Mergansers** appeared in good numbers in *Armstrong* with 16 at KR 12/14 (MH, RH), 88 at CC 1/8 (MVT), and 31 at KR and 4 at KT, the latter two reports 1/11 (MH,RH); in *Indiana* 2 appeared at TL 12/2 (LC) and 2 visited YC 12/26 (SC,MH,RH,JK,MVT); PG yielded only one southward bound singleton 12/15 (JS). Heading north were the first at PG 2/27 (JS) and 2 at YC 2/28 (MH,RH,JK). Two **Red-breasted Mergansers** visited YC 12/26 (GL,GS). RT yielded a good tally of 62 **Ruddy Ducks** 12/11 (DY); ruddies were spotted on many YC trips with high count of 114 on 12/12 (LC), the same day (LC) TL yielded 63.

December 26 yielded 9 **Ruffed**

Grouse for the CBC (v.o.). The largest flock of **Wild Turkeys** was observed almost daily north of IN with high of 152 on 1/6 (SB); *Armstrong's* high count of 22 was achieved near LB 2/18 (MVT). The season's only **Common Loons** were sighted 12/14, 1/11 (MH,RH) at KR and 12/16 (LC) at YC, all single birds. Last **Pied-billed Grebes** were 3 found 12/14 (MH, RH) at KR and single grebes on 12/26, both at YC (MVT) and at TL (LC,



This Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was a regular visitor to a feeder near Leechburg.
Photo by Marge Van Tassel

RC). Last **Horned Grebes** were found 12/14 (MH,RH) at KR, 12/16 (LC) at YC, and 12/26 (LC) at TL.

A late **Turkey Vulture** was listed near Penn Run 12/1 (BF,TF) while the season's first soared over Ford City 2/24 (RH). An adult **Bald Eagle** was observed at KR 12/14 (MH,RH); an immature was spotted 12/21 (CL, GL) at Heilwood; one was seen at PG 12/27, 1/3 (JS); 2 were at KR 1/11 (MH, RH); an adult stopped at YC 1/13 (LC,MH,MVT); CC yielded 4 on 2/12 (MVT), only one of which was an adult. **N. Harriers** were found at YC 11/18 (LC,MH) and 12/16 (LC); the Indiana CBC yielded 6 on 12/26 (v.o.); 2 were noted at PT 1/1 (CL,GL); 3 were at Elders Ridge the following day (MC). Both **Sharp-shinned Hawks** and **Cooper's Hawks** were well reported although a low count of only 2 Sharp-shins and 3 Cooper's was reported for the CBC (v.o.). **Red-shouldered Hawks** spotted included singletons at PG

12/15 (JS) and at YC 12/26 (SC,MH, RH,JJ MVT) and 1/27 (LC,MH); 2 were found on WRS #2 on 1/17 (MH, RH). **Red-tailed Hawks** hit an all-time high of 70 for the CBC 12/26 (v.o.); in addition, WRS #2 yielded 26 on 1/17 (MH,RH) and WRS #1, 22 on 1/31 (CG,MH,RH). It was a good year for **Rough-legged Hawks**. A dark morph rough-leg wintered near PT between 1/1 (CL,GL) and 2/16 (JS). Light morph birds were nice finds 1/13, both at YC (LC,MH,MVT) and along Rt. 422 near Penn Run (MH), possibly the same bird, and near Blairsville 1/17 (DC). Two, one dark and one light, were observed near Marion Center 1/17 (MH,RH) and 2 light morph and one dark were found at West Lebanon/ Elders Ridge 1/25 (MH,RH); one dark morph was listed on an *Armstrong* WRS 1/31 (MMc). WRS #2 produced 6 **Am. Kestrels** in n. *Indiana* 1/17 (MH,RH) while WRS #1 yielded only one 1/31 (CG,MH, RH). **Merlins** were good finds near Penn Run 11/4 (BF,TF) and near PT 2/16 (JS).

The high **Am. Coot** count this season was 600 on 12/2, 4 (LC); last noted included 3 at YC 12/26 (SC, MH,RH,JJ,GL,GS,MVT) and 6 at PG 1/13 (JS); first 6 arrived at YC 2/28 (JK). A wintering **Killdeer** was noted 1/25 (MH,RH) near West Lebanon.

A **Bonaparte's Gull** appeared at CC 2/9 (MVT), the season's lone report. Top **Ring-billed Gull** counts included 24 at YC 12/26 (m.ob.) and

40 on 2/28 (MH,RH). *Armstrong* Twp. yielded a flock of 127 **Mourning Doves** 12/17 (SB).

Three **E. Screech-Owls** were found 12/26 (TS) in White's Woods. **Great Horned Owls** were noted at only 4 locations this winter (v.o.). A **Snowy Owl** spent a good portion of the winter near PT 12/29-2/28 (JS); a second Snowy was found at another site near PT about six miles from the first bird 2/1 (JS). Single **Barred Owls** were noted between IN and Graceton 12/9 (TF) and at Rexis 12/18 (JC); one roosted in a tree at CC between 12/27-2/25 (MVT). A **Short-eared Owl** was a nice find near Conemaugh Dam 1/20 (MF).

Among many reports, **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** included one in IN 12/28 (JM) and one n. of IN 1/9-2/23 (SB); sapsuckers were found regularly 12/13-2/15 (MVT) at LB, 1/11 (MH, RH) at KR, and 1/16,21 at YB (ED).

A **N. Shrike** was a nice find near Smicksburg 1/17 (MH,RH). **Common Ravens** were not as widespread with the only reports of 2 at YC 12/26 (SC, MH,RH,JJ,MVT), one in Center Twp. 12/26 (BM,KM,CW,PW), one near PT 1/3 (JS), and one near Marion Center 1/17 (MH,RH).

High **Horned Lark** reports included 35 near Penn Run 1/12 (GL), 40 near PT 1/14 (JS), and 15 near Conemaugh Dam 1/20 (MF).

©Wayne N. Laubscher



This was the second Snowy Owl found in Cambria this winter.
Photo by Wayne Laubscher



The first Snowy Owl found in Cambria was a juvenile. Note the greater amount of black in the feathers.
Photo by Wayne Laubscher

A **Carolina Chickadee** continued near LV throughout the winter (MC). Two **Red-breasted Nuthatches** visited an IN feeder 12/26 (MP) and 1-2 used feeders near SH throughout the period. The only **Winter Wren** noted was one near Homer City 12/26 (SP). Two late **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** stopped in Center Twp. 12/26 (CW,PW). YC harbored one **Hermit Thrush** 12/26 (SC,MH,RH, JJ,MVT) and 2 on 1/27 (LC,MH); another was sighted on WRS #1 on 1/31 (CG,MH,RH). **Am. Robins** wintered locally in very small numbers with only 16 spotted on the CBC (v.o.); 47 was the high count at PG 12/27 (JS). A **Gray Catbird** lingered at YC 12/26 (GL,GS) and remained there 1/13, 27 (LC,MH,MVT); another was spotted n. of IN 2/23 (SB).

Two **Yellow-rumped Warblers** found on the CBC (v.o.) were the last seen this season.

An amazingly large flock of 134 **Am. Tree Sparrows** was counted at YC 12/26 (SC,MH,RH, JJ,MVT). A **Chipping Sparrow** and a **Field Sparrow** lingered near SH through 1/9 (MH) and 1/18 (MH,RH) respectively while another **Field Sparrow** was found at YC 1/27 (LC,MH), the last report. A **Fox Sparrow** stopped at a feeder n. of IN 12/22-24 (SB). Last **Swamp Sparrows** occurred 1/13 (LC,MH,MVT) at YC. Six **White-crowned Sparrows** visited a YB feeder 12/17 (ED); 3 were found at PG 1/13 (JS). More than the usual number of **Snow Buntings** were reported including at least 100 birds near the Jimmy Stewart Airport 12/26 (PJ), an estimated 200 near PT 1/17 (DG), and 21 near Penn Run 1/31 (CG,MH,RH).

Last **Red-winged Blackbirds** were 77 at YC 12/26 (JD,EDo,GSt,MS,JT) and one near LV 1/30 (MC) with first returnees near LB 2/13 (MVT) and n. of IN 2/22 (SB). YC yielded one **Rusty Blackbird** 12/24 (LC); a singleton appeared near LV 1/14 (MC). **Common Grackle** reports included one near SH 12/6 (MH), 6 at YB 12/15 (PB), 2 near Home 1/10 (JT), and first returnees 2/28 both near SH (MH) and n. of IN (SB). Five **Brown-headed Cowbirds** appeared near Willet 12/2 (SB) while another was spotted near Home 1/10 (JT),

the same day 60 descended on feeders near LV (MC); the following day one female made an appearance near LB (MVT).

It was an exciting season for winter finches. **Purple Finches** were noted in small flocks. **White-winged Crossbills** were found in unprecedented numbers across the region. Sixteen at PG 1/13 (JS) were first. Oakland Cemetery in IN yielded 35 on 2/1 (MH,RH) and 80 on 2/3 (MC), the same day 6 were located at YC (LC,MH). Ten appeared near Creekside 2/11-13 (JB,VB); 18 was the count at Elders Ridge 2/14 (MC); and 10 were spotted near IN 2/27 (GF). At CC White-winged Crossbills numbered 12 on 2/11, 25 the following day, but only 4 on 2/14 (MVT). One **Common Redpoll** was found near McIntyre 1/18 (PG), and another accompanied a siskin flock near SH 1/29 (MH), the lone reports. **Pine Siskins** were noted in unbelievably high numbers with an all-time CBC record of 375 on 12/26 (v.o.), more than 80 n. of IN 1/10 (SB), and 218 near SH 1/29 (MH,RH). *Armstrong* reports included 25 at CC 12/12 (MVT), one at KR 12/14 (MH,RH), 20 at CC 1/7 (MVT), and 32 near LB 1/11,30 (MVT) while a YB yard yielded 4 on 1/14 (ED), 8 on 1/21 (ED), and 15 by 2/13 (ED). Fifty was the high count at Ebensburg 2/25 (JS). **Am. Goldfinch** count was 120 near LV 1/4 (MC); by 1/21 (ED) goldfinch numbers at YB had reached 75; numbers there spiked to 130 on 2/13 (ED).

Observers: Patty Barnett, David Beatty, Sid Blair, Jean Blystone, Vernon Blystone, Jim Carnahan, Lee Carnahan, Roger Carnahan, Susan Comfort, Dan Cunkelman, Marcy Cunkelman, Jim Dearing, Ed Donley (EDo), Erma Dovenspike, Betsy Fetterman, Tom Fetterman, Mike Fowles, Pat Gazda, Carol Guba, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Pat Johner, Jessica Jopp, John Kilmarx, Gloria Lamer, Beth Marshall, Ken Marshall, Mark McConaughy, Julie Mibroda, Marjorie Peterson, Sara Pulliam, John Salvetti, Tom Simmons, Garrett Strittmatter (GSt), Mark Strittmatter, Georgette Syster, John Taylor, Marge Van Tassel (MVT), Chris Williams, Paula Williams, Dan Yagusic.



White-winged Crossbills were found in unprecedented numbers this winter. This male is feeding on spruce cones.

Photo by Margaret Higbee



This female White-winged Crossbill was photographed in Oakland Cemetery on February 11.

Photo by Marcy Cunkelman



This is just one of the numerous siskins found near Shelocta during the winter.

Photo by Margaret Higbee



Birding Las Vegas

(continued from page 4)

March 22 – We flew back to the East Coast and back to reality. We had listed 102 species of birds for the trip, including 7 lifers and 64 year birds. In addition, we added 36 state birds. This was not too bad for an area that we had birded before.

Don't forget to come to Delaware for some good East Coast birding. We miss our Todd Bird Club friends!

Editor's note for our new members: Steve Graff served ably as Todd Bird Club's president 2000-2001. After he graduated from IUP with a biology major, he moved to Delaware. He has led many Todd outings both here and in Delaware. We truly miss him and his mother.

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

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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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Todd Bird Club

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