

The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Todd Bird Club

January 2011

Meetings

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

Tuesday, February 1 – Steve Gosser, a member of the Three Rivers Birding Club, will present some of his favorite digital slides at our February meeting. Steve's slides will depict birds of Florida, including Roseate Spoonbills, various plovers, Marbled Godwits, and Burrowing Owls, as well as the Snail Kites at Harnes Marsh and other species photographed in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Some of Steve's favorite birding spots include Yellow Creek, Moraine, Pymatuning, and Presque Isle State Parks, the various Lawrence county hot spots, and Conneaut, Ohio.



The hardy American Tree Sparrow, one of our winter residents, breeds high in the tundra region.

Photo by Steve Gosser

Originally from the Lower Burrell area, Steve is an Edinboro University graduate who majored in art. He is currently employed by Travelers Insurance in downtown Pittsburgh. Steve's photos have been published in the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, the *Valley News Dispatch*,

and the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology's newsletter, *The Pileated*. Don't miss this chance to appreciate great photography!

Tuesday, March 1 – Brian Shema is the Director of Conservation at the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania. He is responsible for administering and coordinating ASWP's Science, Conservation, and Stewardship programs and has been with the organization for more than 10 years. His degrees from The

Pennsylvania State University are in Wildlife Biology and Forest Science, though he has always had a passion for birds. In fact, he began his career doing research for Penn State and the EPA on Louisiana Waterthrush and riparian habitats.

In 2005, Brian developed ASWP's "Eco-tour" program, an opportunity for local bird-watchers to travel with him to bird the best locations in the country. As of 2010, Brian has led trips from coast to coast, including Oregon's Klamath

Basin, the Rio Grande Valley, S.E. Arizona (twice!), Colorado's Rocky Mountains, and Coastal Maine. Participants who have attended all of the trips have tallied nearly 500 species of birds. Colorado's prairie chickens and California's coastal and pelagic species are on the agenda for 2011.

Brian will present ASWP's traveling bird watching program and share some highlights from previous trips.

Outings

Tuesday Morning Outings at Yellow Creek will continue as long as the roads are clear. 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 (724-465-7323) or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

Sunday, February 20 – The West Lebanon/Elders Ridge strips and environs, led by Marcy Cunkelman. Meet at Marcy's between 1:30 and 2:00 to enjoy a bowl of homemade soup before heading out to the strips. Please call Marcy (plant4nature@dishmail.net) or 724-459-7229 if you plan to attend.

Saturday, March 19 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Lee Carnahan (724-465-7323). If the lake has thawed, we'll target waterfowl; otherwise, we'll bird the park for

passerines and other species.

Saturday, March 26 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). Early migrating waterfowl will be the target species for this joint outing with Friends of the Park. Meet at 8:00 at the park office.

Saturday, April 2 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Gloria Lamer (724-349-1159). Meet at 8:00 at the park office.

Saturday, April 9 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). This is a joint outing with the Three Rivers Birding Club. Meet at 8:00 at the park office. A trip to the Chinese buffet in Indiana will follow the outing.

From the Co-President's Desk...

The Christmas cookie meeting was great! Jeff Larkin somehow always manages to schedule his visits to our Todd meetings to coincide with something good to eat. Thanks to all the members who brought their goodies to share at the December meeting. I know that I shouldn't say this out loud and single out just one type of cookie, but those chocolate meringue cookies were certainly worth my calories. And too bad Tom F. was too busy "birding" (or was it running?) in Florida to sample my annual contribution to the cookie meeting. Better luck next year on getting some cookies and finding those elusive birds in Florida. Anyway, we did enjoy hearing the update on the Golden-winged Warbler. Jeff's research is a real story about biology in action. Through the hard work and dedication of Jeff and his colleagues the habitat of the GWWA is gradually taking shape. Hopefully, the birds will appreciate all of his efforts. We must remember to ask Jeff to come back for more cookies (and more information about the success of his Golden-winged Warbler study).

December proved to be a cold, snowy month – surprise – it is winter in Indiana County. Due to the weather our presence as "guest hosts" for an evening at the Festival of Lights was cancelled. I think several people were disappointed to hear this. It wasn't just because of the promised hot chocolate and s'mores. Our volunteer activity is a wonderful way for our club to give something back to Blue Spruce Park and Ed Patterson for allowing us to use the park facilities for our monthly meetings. I can't say enough good things about the

well-maintained and well-lit facilities of Blue Spruce Park and how fortunate we are to be able to have such a great location for our meetings. Also, if you have never attended the Festival of Lights, you have missed something. Not only is it a great experience to drive around the park in your warm car to enjoy the lights, but we have also taken time to walk around the park to experience the ambience of the holiday display. It really is a nice showcase for our lovely County Park.

Our most recent meeting was Members' Night. It is always interesting to relive the vacations and experiences of our club members. Hearing the excitement in their voices about finding life birds, finding birds earlier than expected and in larger numbers than expected can be rather infectious. I overheard several people muttering under their breath that they wished that they could have been on some of the various trips or outings. For those of you who weren't there, we are always interested in seeing and hearing about what you have experienced. You don't have to wait for a special evening to show off your pictures. Check with Margaret and schedule some time during another meeting to share with us.

Happy New Year 2011! Let this be the year that you find some new life birds, find some new "hot" birding spots and truly enjoy your birding experience whether it is hiking around the countryside or sitting inside drinking hot cocoa and watching your bird feeder.

– Linda Jones, Co-President

Indiana CBC Revisited

This year's Christmas Bird Count was held on Monday, December 27. All still water was frozen and many of the streams were also partially frozen. The ground was snow covered in depths ranging from 0.5 to 3 inches, depending upon the location. Because of the lack of open water, we saw few ducks or other water birds. Our main deterrent this year, however, was strong wind which caused many of the smaller birds to go into hiding. We did well to list the 55 species that we found.

Our previous average had been 64.96 species per count while the mean was 64. In addition, this year our total number of individuals was a low 7253, somewhat below our previous average of 9593. Only four previous counts had lower species numbers, and they all occurred before 1989. Seven prior counts tallied fewer individuals, but they were all prior to 1993. We set only one high this year, Purple Finch which surpassed the previous record by five individuals. But we set an all-time low on House Finch with a count of 157; our previous low, set in 1983 on our very first count, had been 221. The conjunctivitis outbreak certainly took its toll on House Finches, but the weather also attributed to this low count.

We fielded 36 birders who hiked a total of 39.4 miles and drove 675.4 miles in their search for "just one more species." Twenty-four persons counted the birds at their feeders and spent 67.75 hours in this pursuit. Field birders claimed that all the birds were at feeders while feeder watchers reported either "no birds" or "reduced numbers."

At 6:00 that evening we met at Hoss's to eat dinner and compile the list. Only 23 observers attended this dinner meeting. We were saddened this year by the absence of Jim Dearing, who passed away on November 26. Jim was present on our very first count in 1983, and he participated in almost every one since then. Jim always birded the north shore of Yellow Creek Lake in the morning with the group headed by John Taylor. In the afternoon, the group usually split up to cover more territory with Jim's area being downtown Indiana and environs.

Every year we vote on "the bird of the count," and the winner is awarded a prize. John Taylor and Ed Donley came up with the idea of naming this award, The James C. Dearing Award. Everyone thought this was a great idea and a fitting tribute to Jim. This year's Dearing Award was given to Pat Johner for her finding a roosting Eastern Screech-Owl in a Norway spruce.

Even though we had to deal with strong winds, we still had some exciting finds. One was an Eastern Meadowlark, listed by Gloria Lamer and Georgette Syster; meadowlark has been found on only four of our previous

counts. Gloria and Georgette also noted the count's only American Black Duck, one of only two Field Sparrows, and 24 of our 26 Horned Larks. Gary Ferrence's crew, which included Tom and Janet Kuehl, Tom Pearson, and Ken Byerly, observed one of our Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and two of our three Ring-necked Pheasants on Gary's property; the third pheasant was spotted by Bill Betts near Musser's Pond. Ray and Daniel Winstead, our youngest participant, birded Blue Spruce County Park where they tallied the best count of 16 Golden-crowned Kinglets as well as two Brown Creepers, which were in short supply this year. We joked that the "claim to fame" for Lee and Roger Carnahan and Richard Nugent was a Brown-headed Cowbird; two more were added by Joyce Griffith at her feeder near Creekside. Lee's group also sighted one of only two Northern Harriers and one of two Northern Flickers; the other harrier was found by Ken and Beth Marshall, and the other flicker, by Ed and Donna Meyer. The Meyers also reported 53 of our 61 American Robins and an amazing 36 Purple Finches. Carol Guba detected two of our six American Kestrels, the lowest kestrel count since 1985. Marcy and Dan Cunkelman and Anita Duffalo observed the count's lone Ruffed Grouse as well as a Common Grackle, which Marcy photographed. On the north shore of Yellow Creek Lake, John Taylor, Ed Donley, and Mark Strittmatter came through once again this year with the addition of two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, two Common Ravens, and the count's only Eastern Towhee. Tom Glover, Roger, and I hiked the trails on the south shore of Yellow Creek. We hiked the first hour and listed only four species, but things started to pick up mid-morning. Our best birds were a Hermit Thrush and a Field Sparrow.

We added seven new counters this year— Judy Buggey, Lauralee Bunton, Sue Dickson, Anita Duffalo, Tom Glover, Richard Nugent, and Ginny Winters. Welcome to the Indiana CBC!

Tom and Betsy Fetterman added a Common Redpoll for count week; unfortunately, it was only present on December 25-26. Gloria Lamer and Beth Marshall both added Great Blue Heron to the count week list.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the CBC. All of the data gathered is important, even if it is not mentioned above as it contributed to the overall success of the count. As usual, our feeder watchers did a superb job. Sometimes we have to remember that negative data is just as important as positive data. But positive data is much more fun to collect!

— Margaret Higbee, CBC Compiler

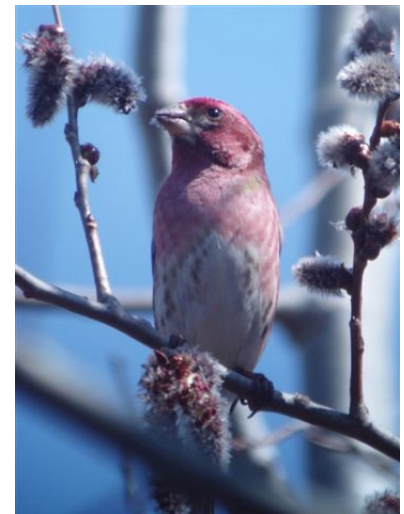


Indiana Christmas Bird Count Results



28th Annual CBC – December 27, 2010

Snow Goose (CW)		Ring-billed Gull (50)		Dark-eyed Junco (2272)	1079
Canada Goose (2081)	305	Herring Gull (1)		Lapland Longspur (6)	
Mute Swan (4)		Rock Pigeon (366)	127	Snow Bunting (225)	
Tundra Swan (200)		Mourning Dove (1117)	287	Northern Cardinal (584)	342
Wood Duck (2)		Eastern Screech-Owl (13)	1	Red-winged Blackbird (3570)	
Gadwall (30)		Great Horned Owl (10)	3	Eastern Meadowlark (10)	1
American Wigeon (14)		Barred Owl (5)		Rusty Blackbird (13)	
American Black Duck (190)	1	Long-eared Owl (1)		Brewer's Blackbird (CW)	
Mallard (670)	154	Short-eared Owl (2)		Common Grackle (503)	1
N. Shoveler (2)		Belted Kingfisher (9)		Brown-headed Cowbird (46)	3
N. Pintail (10)		Red-headed Woodpecker (1)		Pine Grosbeak (1)	
Green-winged Teal (3)		Red-bellied Woodpecker (72)	50	*Purple Finch (84)	89
Canvasback (9)		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (8)	3	House Finch (1563)	157
Redhead (14)		Downy Woodpecker (177)	74	Common Redpoll (63)	CW
Ring-necked Duck (41)		Hairy Woodpecker (58)	34	White-winged Crossbill (CW)	
Greater Scaup (2)		Northern Flicker (40)	2	Pine Siskin (375)	2
Lesser Scaup (24)		Pileated Woodpecker (25)	20	American Goldfinch (637)	174
White-winged Scoter (1)		Northern Shrike (1)		Evening Grosbeak (566)	
Long-tailed Duck (3)		Blue Jay (566)	310	House Sparrow (746)	546
Bufflehead (52)		American Crow (3275)	797		
Common Goldeneye (7)		Fish Crow (8)		Total Individuals (18,833)	7,253
Hooded Merganser (22)		Common Raven (5)	4		
Common Merganser (5)		Horned Lark (200)	26	55 Species on 12/27/10 + 2 for CW	
Red-breasted Merganser (2)		Black-capped Chickadee (808)	456	CW = Birds Seen During Count	
Ruddy Duck (69)		Tufted Titmouse (394)	236	Week but Not Count Day	
Ring-necked Pheasant (21)	3	Red-breasted Nuthatch (51)	8	CW = December 24-30	
Ruffed Grouse (22)	1	White-breasted Nuthatch (201)	118		
Wild Turkey (345)	26	Brown Creeper (25)	7	* Record-breaking or Equal High	
N. Bobwhite (1)		Carolina Wren (61)	13	Tally (one)	
Red-throated Loon (1)		Winter Wren (4)	1	**Species New to the Count (none)	
Common Loon (9)		Golden-crowned Kinglet (106)	41	() Highest No. Seen on Any	
Pied-billed Grebe (29)		Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4)		Previous Indiana CBC,	
Horned Grebe (4)		Eastern Bluebird (152)	50	1983-2009	
Red-necked Grebe (1)		Hermit Thrush (6)	2	127 Species on Count since 1983	
Double-crested Cormorant (1)		Wood Thrush (CW)		(including 4 CW only species)	
Great Blue Heron (8)	CW	American Robin (1626)	61		
Turkey Vulture (2)		Gray Catbird (2)			
Bald Eagle (1)		Northern Mockingbird (12)	6		
Northern Harrier (9)	2	Brown Thrasher (1)			
Sharp-shinned Hawk (14)	4	European Starling (8656)	1220		
Cooper's Hawk (15)	5	Cedar Waxwing (212)			
N. Goshawk (1)		Yellow-rumped Warbler (18)			
Red-shouldered Hawk (5)		Pine Warbler (1)			
Red-tailed Hawk (70)	57	Eastern Towhee (3)	1		
Rough-legged Hawk (3)		American Tree Sparrow (483)	184		
Am. Kestrel (26)	6	Chipping Sparrow (2)			
Merlin (2)		Field Sparrow (13)	2		
Peregrine Falcon (1)		Savannah Sparrow (2)			
Virginia Rail (1)		Fox Sparrow (3)			
Am. Coot (811)		Song Sparrow (152)	56		
Killdeer (7)		Lincoln's Sparrow (1)			
Wilson's Snipe (1)		Swamp Sparrow (14)	2		
Am. Woodcock (2)		White-throated Sparrow (214)	90		
Bonaparte's Gull (6)		White-crowned Sparrow (36)	3		



Purple Finch was the only species to hit an all-time high on the 2010 CBC.

Christmas Bird Count Observers

Pat Andrascik
Bill Betts
Tom Betts
Sid Blair
Vernon Blystone
Judy Buggey
Lauralee Bunton
Ken Byerly
Lee Carnahan
Roger Carnahan
Dan Cunkelman
Marcy Cunkelman
Sue Dickson
Ed Donley
Anita Duffalo

Gary Ferrence
Betsy Fetterman
Tom Fetterman
Don Frew
Marie Frew
Sue Gatti
Tom Glover
Joyce Griffith
Carol Guba
Roger Higbee
Margaret Higbee
Pat Johner
Paul Johner
Connie Johnston
Linda Jones

Jessica Jopp
Janet Kuehl
Tom Kuehl
Gloria Lamer
Mary A. Little
Howard Mandigo
Beth Marshall
Ken Marshall
Gib McLaughlin
Donna Meyer
Ed Meyer
Richard Nowell
Richard Nugent
Tom Pearson
Sara Pulliam

Pat Rawls
Don Rodgers
John Somonick
Linda Stormer
Rodger Stormer
Mark Strittmatter
Georgette Syster
John Taylor
Mary Lu Tucker
Ila Tuorinsky
Steve Tuorinsky
Marge Vatter
Daniel Winstead
Ray Winstead
Ginny Winters

CBCs Are Important!

– by Donna Meyer

I have just completed my second Christmas Bird Count. Until last year, I had never heard of the CBC. When I first learned of the count, I thought it would be fun to be outside on a beautiful winter day looking for birds. However, December 26, 2009, proved to be anything but a “beautiful winter day.” A drizzly mist caused the snow-covered world to be enveloped in a cloud. As I hiked the fog covered hill at College Lodge, I wondered, “Why am I doing this?” Surely 2010 would yield better weather and more bird sightings.

I was wrong! The misty fog last year was replaced by a perpetual wind that even kept the birds away from the feeders. I think they were smarter than I because they sought shelter while I was out there looking for them.

On January 3, though, an editorial by David Yarnold, president of the National Audubon Society made me realize how important the CBC really is. His article

entitled “Why falling birds put humans on alert” focused on the massive and mysterious bird kill in the sky over Beebe, Arkansas. He asks “Why do birds – and their struggles – matter so much to people?” When birds stop flying an essential piece of hope falls away from people as well.” He reminds us that many of our birds are slipping into oblivion. Mr. Yarnold applauds the “citizen scientists” who are wrapping up the 2010-2011 CBC, and participating in the largest and longest-running program of its kind in the world. Even the federal government relies on this for its annual State of the Birds report.

So, if you have never participated in the CBC, I hope you will be out there next year – helping to preserve a part of nature for creatures that fly. As Emily Dickinson said, “Hope is the thing with feathers.”

Let's Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count!

Let's see how many Todd members can participate!!! We'll list all of our Todd participants in the next newsletter. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, February 18–21, 2011. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day. You can also submit more than one

checklist per day if you count in more than one location on that day.

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

(continued on page 11)

Notes from a Novice

Birding Can Be Dangerous

by Thomas N. Glover

My wife, Emry, and I spent the winter of 2009-2010 near Rockport, located along the Texas coast. During that time I was introduced to birding by my daughter, Elyse, and her husband, Tom Fuller, who are both avid birders. They are familiar with birding in south Texas, and introduced me to the Aransas National

Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The refuge became one of my favorite birding locations during our stay in Texas, and I had the opportunity to bird the ANWR on five different occasions.

The ANWR is located along the Texas Gulf Coast north of Rockport. It was established in 1937 by an Executive Order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The original Refuge totaled 47,261 acres but has grown to five different units now totaling 115,670 acres. The ANWR was created to protect breeding and migratory birds and other wildlife. In particular the ANWR is the winter home of the only natural wild migrating flock of Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*).

If there were ever to be a critically endangered species "poster child," the Whooping Crane has to be the leading candidate. This species has expanded from only 15 known individuals in 1941 to a wild migratory population potential of 290 individuals expected to winter in and near the ANWR this season of 2010-2011. The Whooping Crane migrates a distance of 2,400 miles to Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Alberta, Canada, their summer home for breeding. My wife and I were introduced to Whoopers through a Christmas gift from Elyse and Tom. They gave my wife and family a Whooping Crane tour of ANWR aboard the "Skimmer," captained by Tommy Moore out of Fulton, TX. The tour provided us with the opportunity to view two Whooper



The "Lobstick Pair" are considered Whooper Royalty.

Photo by Tom Fuller

family groups, and in particular one of those families, the "Lobstick Pair" is considered "Whooper Royalty." The male of this pair is 31 years old, very old for this species.

ANWR offers the birder a recorded 397 different bird species throughout the year. The refuge boasts seven different

trails, a number of viewing locations, a 16-mile auto loop, and an observation tower. I did see Whooping Cranes from the tower on three different occasions. ANWR has a diverse collection of habitats – fresh water lakes, open fields, live oak forests, marshes, and sea-shore. One of our favorite encounters was with a foraging Reddish Egret along the shore off a boardwalk near the observation tower. The bird put on a creative dance as it fed in the shallows.



A foraging Reddish Egret put on a creative dance as it fed in the shallows.

Photo by Tom Fuller

But the ANWR does have its "dark side." One of my favorite stops in the ANWR is the Alligator Viewing Area overlooking the Thomas Slough near the entrance. On every visit to this location I was entertained by a mixed flock of vocal and gregarious Common Moorhens and American Coots. And on one occasion I got a glimpse of a Least Bittern foraging in the cattails at this stop. The Alligator Viewing Area lives up to its name as I have counted as many as 16 different alligators of various lengths in this area.

On my last visit to ANWR I birded the 0.3-mile Rail Trail that runs parallel to the Thomas Slough. The trail gets its name for the potential of viewing various rail species, but I did not see any rails. One of my first encounters was with a friendly foraging armadillo along the trail's edge; but about 150 yards farther, I stopped dead in my tracks! There, no more than five feet from me, lying in a light cover of grass was a huge alligator, watching me! This animal had to be more than ten feet in length. I could see

this monster's eyes watching every guarded move I made. At that moment I experienced that primeval fear of a prey animal. I had visions from those wildlife films out of Africa of the crocodiles ambushing the wildebeest along the river's edge. And at that time a fearful thought came to me, "How fast can a 62-year-old man run? Not fast enough!" Well, after what was the longest two minutes of my life, I came to the conclusion that this alligator was more interested in sunning itself than in me. So like a good tourist, I took its picture.

That evening after my final visit to ANWR, I shared my alligator experience with my wife. And after I graphically described my close encounter with death, my wife of 40 years appropriately responded, "Tom, one of these days!"



"So, like a good tourist, I took its picture."

Photo by Tom Glover

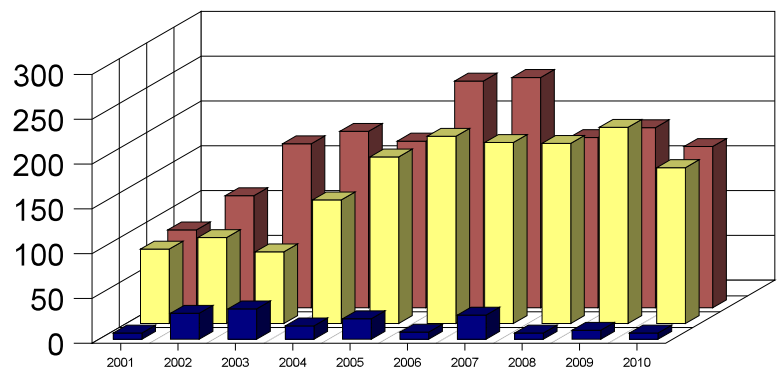
Bluebird Nest Box Results for Prince Gallitzin State Park

by John Salvetti

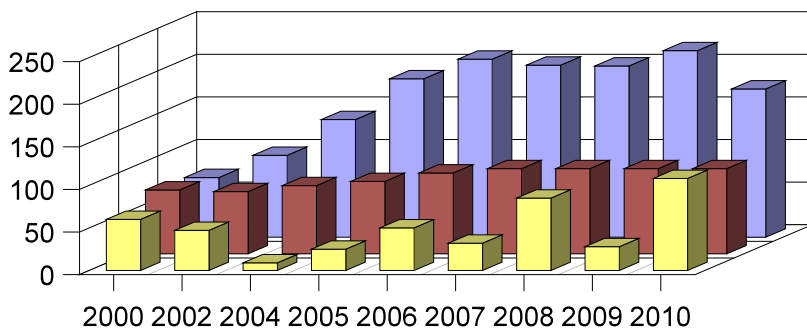
During early April 2010, warm weather in our area allowed bluebirds to begin nesting earlier than usual. Late April and early May, however, brought freezing temperatures and snow resulting in a devastating loss of eggs and unfledged young because of a lack of available food. This loss of 28 eggs and 80 young was a record yearly loss at Prince Gallitzin State Park.

Tree Swallows and Black-capped Chickadees were unaffected since they began nesting later in the season.

Species Fledged



Bluebirds at Prince Gallitzin



- Bluebirds Fledged
- Bluebird Boxes Available
- No. of Bluebird Eggs/Young Lost

- Tree Swallows Fledged
- Eastern Bluebirds Fledged
- House Wrens Fledged

Black-capped Chickadees nested in two of the boxes, laying 10 eggs which all successfully hatched and the young fledged.

Prince Gallitzin's nest box program also included two American Kestrel nests and three Purple Martin nests. The kestrels laid 9 eggs of which 8 hatched and fledged successfully. The martins laid 15 eggs of which 13 hatched and 12 fledged.

Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria County Report

Fall - August 1 through November 30, 2010

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@windstream.net.

Locations: Blue Spruce County Park (BS), Crooked Creek Park (CC), Indiana (IN), Keystone Reservoir (KR), Kittanning (KT), Lewisville (LV), Prince Gallitzin State Park (PG), Shelocta (SH), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

After several bleak years of low numbers, counts picked up a tad this year. In addition, arrival dates were generally earlier for most migrant duck species, and the lakes remained open through the end of the period. An adult **Snow Goose** appeared on YC lake 11/16 (LC,TG,DM, MH) and was still present two days later (JB). Top counts of **Canada Geese** were 245 at YC 11/07 (3RBC,TBC), 161 at KR 10/7 (MH), 149 at CC 10/22 (MVT), and 165 at PG 11/5 (JB). First **Tundra Swans** were 7 on YC lake and 93 overhead (LC,MH,GL) for an exact YC total of 100 and 5 at PG (JB), all 11/5; 9 appeared at CC 11/16 (MVT) and remained through 11/18 (MVT); CC's high was 27 on 11/19 (MS) while other high tallies included 110 at PG 11/16 (JB), 125 over LV (MC), and 242 over SH (MH), the latter two reports 11/20. YC yielded 220 on 11/23 (LC,MH, MVT) and 183 the next day (RN). High **Wood Duck** tally of 120 occurred 9/30 (JB) at YC; last sighted 11/16 were 16 at PG (JB) and a singleton at YC (LC,TG,MH,DM). First **Gadwall** arrived 9/28 (LC,MH,GL,MVT) at YC while top count of 52 was reached 11/5 (LC,MH,GL), also at YC; PG also yielded 10 on 11/5 (JB); last noted were 4 on 11/28 (AL) at YC. Two **American Wigeons** were first arrivals 9/30 (JB) at YC while the high count of 15 was achieved 11/16 (LC,TG,MH,DM) at YC where a singleton 11/23 (LC,MH, MVT) was last. Six **American Black Ducks** were first found 9/4 (LC) at YC; high counts were only 14 at YC 11/5 (LC,MH,GL) and 26 at PG 11/16 (JB). Best **Mallard** tally was 89 at YC on 11/2 (LC,TG,MH,DM,RN,MVT); KR yielded 29 on 9/16 (MH) and 15 on 10/7 (MH).

Blue-winged Teal moved through our region between 8/10 (LC,TG) with the arrival of the first 4 at YC and 10/12 (LC,TG,MH,MVT) when the last 9 were sighted at YC; 11 stopped at PG 9/22 (JS); YC on 9/25 (LC,TG,MH,RH,DM) produced the high of 44. One to 5 **Northern Shovelers** were noted on 5 dates at YC between 8/28 (TB,LC,MH, RH) and 11/16 (LC,TG,MH,DM). First **Northern Pintail** stopped at YC 9/28 (LC,MH,GL,MVT); peak number at YC was 12 on 10/3 (LC); PG hosted 2 on 11/5 (JB). Unusual was the sighting of a pintail as the lead bird in a flock of 19 Tundra Swans (ph. MVT) flying over YC 11/23 (MH,MVT). A **Green-winged Teal** arrived at YC 8/24 (LC,SD,MH,ML, DM,RN); top count was 32 at YC on both 9/24 (LC) and 10/6 (JB). KR harbored 3 on 10/7 (MH) while a singleton was at PG 11/16 (JB). Last sighted were 8 at YC 11/24 (RN).

Eight **Canvasbacks** appeared 10/30 (LC,SD,TG,DM,MVT) at YC and were still present 11/5 (LC,MH,GL); 5 dawdled on the lake 11/28 (AL). Two **Redheads** were first arrivals

11/16 (LC,TG,MH,DM) at YC; high count and the last to depart were 9 on 11/28 (AL), also at YC. Two **Ring-necked Ducks** were first listed 9/30 (JB) at YC; numbers peaked at 135 on 11/6 (3RBC,TBC), up from the high of a mere 9 last fall; 55 was PG's best count 11/9 (JS). Nov. 28 (AL) produced the last 13 before freeze-up. **Greater Scaup** reports included 10 at PG 11/16 (JB), 7 at YC 11/18 (JB), and 8 at YC 11/24 (RN). First **Lesser Scaup** were 2 on 11/2 (LC,TG,MH,DM,RN,MVT) at YC and 60 on 11/5 (JB) at PG; numbers peaked at 135 at YC 11/6 (3RBC,TBC). Five **Surf Scoters** were nice finds 10/21 (JB) at YC; 2 remained on the lake 10/23 (TS). A **Black Scoter** appeared at YC 11/18 (JB) and was still present 11/24 (RN); JB found another at PG 11/16. **Buffleheads** began arriving 10/21 (JB) when the first 2 were sighted at YC, where they peaked with a tally of 66 on 11/5 (LC,MH, GL); 115 was PG's best tally 11/16 (JB). First **Common Goldeneye** appeared 11/5 (JB) at PG, where 3 were noted 11/16 (JB); a female was listed at YC 11/23 (LC,MH, MVT) and 11/24 (LC). First **Hooded Mergansers** included 4 at YC 11/5 (LC,MH,GL); AL tallied the high of 101 at YC 11/28. Two **Common Mergansers** were spotted at YC 11/25 (TS); 7 were still present at CC 11/26 (MVT). Single **Red-breasted Mergansers**, which are usually in higher numbers at YC, appeared only on 10/19 (LC,SD,TG,DM) and 11/18 (JB); PG's high was a mere 6 on 11/18 (JS). One **Ruddy Duck** arrived at YC 9/28 (LC,MH,GL,MVT); peak numbers occurred 11/5, both at YC with a count of 418 (LC,MH,GL) and at PG where 310 (JB) were tallied; by 11/18 (JS), PG's total had dropped to 46 and by 11/28 (AL) the YC count had decreased to 197.

Ruffed Grouse still continue on the low side but with a few more reports this season at five locations (v.o.).

PG yielded a single **Red-throated Loon** 11/16 (JB) and 11/18 (DG). Twenty-three **Common Loons** arrived at YC 11/5 (LC,MH,GL); 2 were at CC 11/18 (MVT); 6 occurred at Hemlock Lake 11/19 (TG); last were 12 at YC 11/21 (LC). PG had the top loon counts with tallies of 45 on 11/5 (JB) and 118 on 11/20 (JB). **Pied-billed Grebes** peaked at 24 at PG 11/9 (JS) and at 75 at YC 11/18 (JB). PG yielded the first 9 **Horned Grebes** 11/2 (JS) while YC's first 8 arrived 11/5 (LC,MH,GL); best YC count was 9 on 11/18 (JB); last individual lingered at YC 11/28 (AL). A **Red-necked Grebe** visited YC 11/18 (JB). The season's first **Double-crested Cormorants** were spotted at CC 8/27 (MVT) and at YC 9/21 (TG,MH,ML,RN,MVT); 3 was the high count 10/5 (LC,SD,TG); one was last listed at PG

11/16 (JB). Single **Great Egrets** were found 9/10 (MVT) near Leechburg, 9/16 (MH) at KR, and one flew over YC 10/1 (LC,MH,GL,MVT). Last **Green Herons** were 2 at YC 9/30 (JB).

Top **Turkey Vulture** count was 47 at Two Lick Reservoir 10/21 (PJ); last reported was one 10/30 (LC,SD,TG,DM, MVT) at YC. First **Osprey** passed over SH 9/6 (MH) while singletons were also found near Vandergrift 9/20 (MVT), at Milton Loop 10/16 (MVT), and at CC 10/28 (MVT). An amazing 12 **Indiana Bald Eagle** reports were received of which ten were at YC (v.o.), one near LV (MC), and one near Homer City (fide JD); last noted was one at YC 11/24 (RN). In *Armstrong* eagles were noted on nine dates, of which six reports occurred at CC; an immature bird was found 9/16 (MH) at KR where an adult was observed 10/7 (MH); another adult was near Vandergrift 9/20 (MVT). In *Cambria*, PG yielded a single Bald Eagle 9/13 and 10/15 (JS) and 2 individuals 11/2 (JS). The only **Northern Harriers** reported were an earlier arrival near Homer City 8/4 (LC), one at PG 10/15 (JS), one at YC 10/26 (ML,DM, MVT), one near Rossmoyne 10/30 (SB), another at YC 11/9 (MH,MVT,KV,LW), and one over SH 11/20 (MH).

Sharp-shinned Hawks were noted at 3 locations (v.o.) and **Cooper's Hawks** at 6 (v.o.). Last **Broad-winged Hawk** was one at Camerons Bottom 9/21 (AB). Two **Rough-legged Hawks**, one light and one dark morph, flew across YC Lake 11/9 (MH,MVT,KV,LW). An unusual number of **Merlin** reports were received including individuals at YC on 9/12 (JB), 9/14 (LC,MH,ML,MVT), 9/28 (LC,MH,GL,MVT), and 10/1 (LC,MH,GL,MVT, + United Kindergarteners). Last report was one over SH 10/7 (MH).

A Merlin sighting on October 1 created quite a stir. Lee Carnahan, Gloria Lamer, Marge Van Tassel, and I were showing a group of Kindergarteners from the United School District various birds at Yellow Creek State Park. We all had our scopes focused on a Red-winged Blackbird when suddenly a Merlin appeared overhead. The group watched as the Merlin chased a Barn Swallow, both birds twisting and turning at high speeds in flight. One of the kids questioned, "Why is he doing that?" When we explained that the Merlin was hungry, the kids started cheering for the swallow. The Merlin finally gave up and flew directly away, and the swallow disappeared over the lake.

—Margaret Higbee

A **Sora**, first spotted in Little Yellow Cove at YC 8/28 (LC, TB,MH,RH), continued through 9/18 (LC,TG,MH,RH, JM,LM,TM,DM); 2 were present at the same location 10/9 (LC,MH,DM,MVT). The first 6 **American Coots** arrived at YC 9/21 (LC,TG,MH,ML,RN, MVT); by 11/6 (3RBC,TBC) 1738 were counted, thanks to TM who diligently counted each coot; numbers, however, continued to peak till more than 2000 were present 11/21 (LC).

Receding water levels produced a better than average shorebird migration at YC. First **Black-bellied Plover** arrived 9/25 (LC,TG,MH,RH,DM) at YC and was present through 10/6 (JB); 4 was a nice count 11/5 (LC,MH,GL). Single **Semipalmated Plovers** were noted at YC on 13 dates between 8/12 (LC) and 9/25 (LC,TG,MH,RH,DM) with reports of 2-3 on 4 additional days in that range; 2 were also listed at CC 8/22 (AH). High **Killdeer** tallies at YC included 48 on 9/24 (LC) and 51 on 10/21 (JB). **Greater Yellowlegs** passed through YC between 8/22 (LC) and 11/16 (LC,TG,MH,DM) with the best count of 13 on 11/5 (LC,MH,GL). Four **Lesser Yellowlegs** was the top number 8/31 (LC,TG,MH,ML,DM,MVT) at YC; KR yielded one 10/7 (MH) while a singleton at BS 10/11, 15 (MA) was last. **Solitary Sandpipers** continued into the period with reports at YC of 1-4 on 19 dates between 8/10 (LC,TG) and 10/12 (LC,TG,MH,MVT). Last **Spotted Sandpipers** were 2 on 8/31 (LC,TG,MH,ML,DM,MVT) at YC and 2 at KR 9/16 (MH). Two **Semipalmated Sandpipers** visited YC 8/9 (LC) while an individual was sighted there 10/23 (TS) and 10/26 (ML,DM,MVT). **Least Sandpipers** were observed at YC on 27 dates between 8/3 (LC,SD,TG,DM, MVT) and 10/12 (LC,TG,MH,MVT); 2 at CC 8/21 (SG) were the only ones found in *Armstrong*. CC hosted a **Baird's Sandpiper** 8/21 (SG); the Baird's was still present the following day (AH). An injured Baird's was found 10/14 (JB) at YC and remained through 10/21 (JB). One to 5 **Pectoral Sandpipers** were listed on 16 YC trips between 8/22 (LC) and 11/11 (JB). First 2 **Dunlins** were spotted 10/6 (JB); a flock of 36 was a good count 11/5 (LC,MH,GL) while last reported were 11 on 11/18 (LC). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** made its appearance 8/22 (LC) at YC, the lone report. **Wilson's Snipe**, noted at YC between 8/10 (LC, TG) and 11/11 (JB) included as many as 8 on 11/9 (MH, KV,MVT,LW). An **American Woodcock** was at Nolo 10/16,18 (DB); YC yielded one 11/10 (JB).

A single **Bonaparte's Gull**, listed 11/4 (JB) and 11/5 (LC,MH,GL) at YC, comprised the entire report for this species. **Ring-billed Gulls** were once again in short supply at YC with reports of only 1-2 birds between 10/1 (LC,MH,GL,MVT) and 11/18 (AL). The only ones reported in *Armstrong* were 2 on 11/7 (MH) at KR, where the water level was extremely low; 6 appeared at PG 11/18 (JS). A **Herring Gull** on the river at Vandergrift 9/20 (MVT) was the lone report for the entire region. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** on 11/4 (JB) provided a first *Indiana* record.

Three **Caspian Terns** were sighted at PG 10/5 (JB). Three **Common Terns** appeared at YC 9/12 (JB), and one was also found 9/14 (LC,MH,ML,MVT), the only reports. A **Forster's Tern** arrived 9/18 (TB,LC,MH,RH,JM,LM,TM, DM); another appeared 9/25 (LC).

Last **Black-billed Cuckoos** were singletons at BS 9/8 (EF,MF,MH) and at Smicksburg Park 9/17 (MH). **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**, continuing to be scarce this year, was last sighted at Blacklick Valley Natural 8/21 (LC,TG,DM). **Eastern Screech-Owls** and **Barred Owl** were each noted at 3 *Indiana* locations (v.o.); **Great Horned**, at 4. Eight **Common Nighthawks** flew over a yard near LV 9/3 (MC); one over SH 9/12 (MH,RH) was the only other one

reported. Last **Chimney Swifts** were 3 at YC 10/9 (LC, MH,DM,MVT). Single **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** lingered near Leechburg 9/22 (MVT) and LV 9/28 (MC). First **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** arrived 9/18 (TB,LC,TG, MH,RH,JM,LM,TM,DM) at YC where one was observed through 10/9 (MH,RH); 2 visited a yard near SH 10/5 (MH); single birds were at KR 10/7 (MH) and at CC 10/10-11 (MVT) while 2 were at BS 10/8 (MH).

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was a great find at the joint TBC-Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club picnic at the home of Dan and Marcy Cunkelman 8/22; it was viewed through a scope by all 25 participants. Another was found at YC 8/28 (LC,TB,MH,RH). An **Eastern Wood-Pewee** lingered n. of IN through 10/5 (SB). A single **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was found 9/18 (TB,LC,TG,MH,RH, JM,LM,TM,DM) at YC. Last dates include: 9/14 (LC,MH, ML, VT) for **Acadian Flycatcher** at YC; 8/3 (LC,SD,TG, DM,MVT) for **Willow Flycatcher** at YC; 8/25 (MH) for **Least Flycatcher** near SH; 10/19 (LC,SD,TG,DM) for **Eastern Phoebe** at YC; 8/27 (MVT) for **Great Crested Flycatcher** at CC; and 8/31 (LC,TG,MH,ML,DM,MVT) for **Eastern Kingbird** at YC.

Last vireo dates included 9/21 (LC,TG,MH,ML,RN,MVT) for **White-eyed** at YC; 10/12 for **Blue-headed** at YC (LC, TG,MH,MVT) and 10/13 (MVT) at CC; 9/11 (LC,TG,MH, RH,JT) for **Yellow-throated** at BS; and 9/23 (MH,JV,MVT) for **Warbling** at CC. BS yielded single **Philadelphia Vireos** 9/3 (MH) and 9/8 (EF,MF,MH) and 2 on 9/11 (LC,TG,MH,RH,JT); one stopped at YC 9/12 (JB). A **Red-eyed Vireo** at YC 9/30 (JB) was last. Two **Fish Crows** were calling in IN 8/28 (MH,RH). **Common Ravens** were found only at YC and LV this period (v.o.).

Last dates included 11/6 (3RBC,TBC) for **Tree Swallow**, 9/21 (MH) for 2 **Northern Rough-winged Swallows**, and 10/21 (JB) for 2 **Barn Swallows**, all at YC.

One to 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were present near SH throughout the period (MH,RH); singleton were found at YC 9/18 (TB,LC,TG,MH,RH,JM,LM,TM,DM) through 11/2 (RN) and at LV 9/26 (MC). Top count of **Brown Creepers** was 4 at YC 11/27 (EFu,TFu,TG). Last **House Wren** was one at YC 9/30 (JB). The only **Winter Wrens** were 2 found at BS 10/8 (MH); singletons at YC 10/9 (LC,MH,DM,MVT), 10/12 (LC,TG,MH, MVT), and 11/18 (JB); one at CC 10/13 (MVT); and another at Milton Loop 10/16 (MVT). **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were found in the region between 9/28 (MH,RH,JT) and 11/10 (MH) with 9 reports of 1-8 birds.

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers lingered at BS 9/11 (LC,TG,MH,RH,JT) and near Vandergrift 9/20 (MVT). **Swainson's Thrush** was noted only at YC 9/14 (LC,MH,ML,MVT) and at CC 9/23 (MH, JV,MVT). **Hermit Thrush** was listed at Smicksburg Park 9/17 (MH), at BS 10/8 (MH), and at YC 10/9 (LC,TG,MH, DM) and 10/12 (LC,TG,MH,MVT). Smicksburg Park

harbored the last **Wood Thrush** 9/17 (MH). A **Gray Catbird** dawdled at YC 11/6 (ST). Last **Brown Thrasher** was found on IN's Reservoir Hill 10/15 (PJ).

BS yielded 10 **American Pipits** 9/3 (MH); YC, 1-6 on four dates between 9/21 (LC,TG,MH,ML,RN,MVT) and 9/28 (LC,MH,GL,MVT). A **Snow Bunting** at YC 11/4 (JB) was a nice find; one was also listed there 11/6 (3RBC,TBC).

This fall's warbler migration was not as good as last year's, and there were no major fallouts. Last **Blue-winged Warbler** was noted at BS 9/8 (EF,MF,MH). **Tennessee Warblers** moved through our area between 8/17 (LC,TG, MH,MVT) and 10/7 (MH). Single **Nashville Warblers** were listed on 6 dates between 8/15 (PJ) and 9/29 (MC). Last dates included 9/11 (LC,TG,MH,RH,JT) for **Northern Parula** at BS; 8/10 (LC,TG) at YC and 8/16 (MVT) at CC for **Yellow Warbler**; 9/18 (TB,LC,TG,MH,RH,JM,LM,TM, DM) at YC and 9/23 (MH,JV,MVT) at CC for **Chestnut-sided Warbler**; and 10/1 (LC,MH,GL,MVT) at YC and 10/7 (MH) at KR for **Magnolia Warbler**. **Cape May Warblers** migrated through the region between 8/27 (MVT) and 9/30 (JB) with best count of 4 at YC on 9/14 (LC,MH,ML,MVT). One **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was noted on seven dates with last at BS 10/8 (MH). **Yellow-rumped Warblers** arrived 8/3 (LC,SD,TG,DM, MVT) at YC where maxima included 42 on 10/5 (LC,SD, TG) and 39 on 10/9 (LC,MH,DM,MVT). KR yielded the last **Black-throated Green Warbler** 10/7 (MH) and Smicksburg Park, the last **Blackburnian Warbler** 9/17 (MH). YC produced last dates for 2 **Pine Warblers** 10/9 (LC,MH,DM,MVT). **Prairie Warbler** lingered at KR 10/7 (MH). The only **Palm Warblers** found were one 9/12 (JB), 3 on 9/30 (JB) and one 10/12 (LC,TG,MH,MVT), all at YC, and 4 at PG on 10/15 (JS). **Bay-breasted Warblers** were listed between 8/31 (LC,TG,MH,ML,DM,MVT) and 9/30 (JB) with high count of 4 at BS 9/11 (LC,TG,MH,RH,JT). **Blackpoll Warblers** passed through our counties between 9/3 (MH) and 10/11 (MVT) with best count of 20 at YC 9/30 (JB). Last were a **Black-and-white Warbler** 9/28 (LC) and 2 **American Redstarts** 9/18 (TB,LC,TG,MH,RH, JM,LM,TM,DM), both species at YC. YC produced the last **Ovenbird** 9/25 (LC, TG,MH,RH,DM). A **Kentucky Warbler** 8/21 (MH) near SH, a **Common Yellow-throat** at BS 10/8 (MH), and a **Hooded Warbler** at YC 9/28 (LC,MH, GL,MVT) were last.



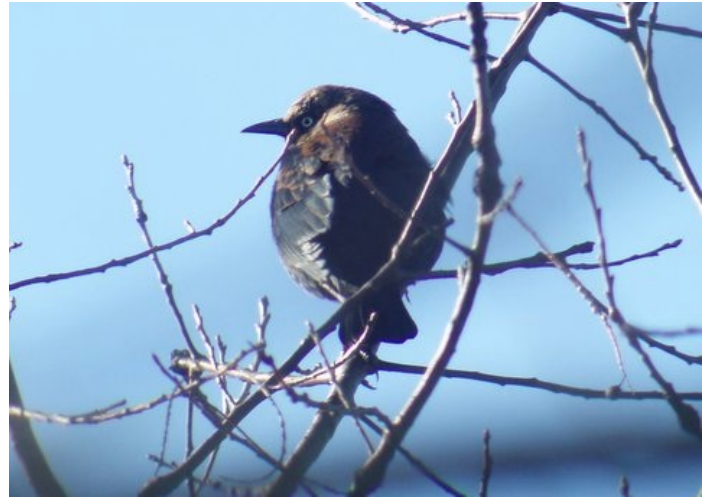
This Fox Sparrow was photographed 11/10 near Shelocta.

Scarlet Tanager was last found at YC 10/1 (LC,MH,GL,MVT). An **Eastern Towhee** continued at LV through the end of the period (MC). Arrival date for **American Tree Sparrow** was 10/19 (LC,SD,TG,DM) at YC; by 11/24 RN counted 23 at YC. A **Chipping Sparrow** was last observed at a feeder

n. of IN 10/27 (SB). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** (ph. MH, MVT) was only the second YC record 9/14 (LC,MH,ML, MVT). **Fox Sparrows** arrived at YC 10/21 (JB) and were still present in *Indiana* into the winter season; high tally



A Clay-colored Sparrow provided the second Yellow Creek record on 9/14/2010.



A flock of Rusty Blackbirds at Yellow Creek contained this individual 11/1.

was 6 on 11/10 (MH) near SH. Two **Lincoln's Sparrows** at YC 10/6 (JB) and singletons near SH and at KR, both 10/7 (MH), were the only ones reported. **Swamp Sparrow** continued at YC through the end of the season with last report 11/18 (JB). First **White-throated Sparrow** appeared 9/30 (JB) at YC; 23 were counted at BS 10/8 (MH). CC yielded the first 2 **White-crowned Sparrows** 10/6 (MVT) while last migrant was near LV 11/8 (MC). First **Dark-eyed Junco** arrived near SH 10/5 (MH).

Last dates for **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** were 10/11 (MVT) at CC and for **Indigo Bunting**, 9/30 (JB) at YC. **Rusty Blackbirds** were noted at YC between 10/2 (LC, MH,RH,GL,DM,GS) and 11/18 (JB) with the high count of 150 on 10/21 (JB). Two **Common Grackles** dawdled at YC 11/13 (MH,RH) while the last **Brown-headed Cowbirds** mentioned were 2 near LV 9/29 (MC). A **Baltimore Oriole** at YC 9/7 (LC,MH,ML,MVT) was last. Best count of 15 **Purple Finches** was achieved at YC 10/12 (LC,TG, MH, MVT). **Pine Siskins** began appearing 10/19 (PJ) with

the first report of 7 on Reservoir Hill; one stopped at a Leechburg feeder 10/27 (MVT); n. of IN 15 visited SB's feeder 11/1; 1-6 were noted near SH between 11/2-20 (MH,RH) while 1-2 visited LV between 11/8-10 (MC).

Observers: Mary Assenat, Alice Beatty, Dave Beatty, Sid Blair, Justin Bosler, Tommy Byrnes, Lee Carnahan, Marcy Cunkelman, Susan Dickson, Betsy Fetterman, Tom Fetterman, Evelyn Fowles, Mike Fowles, Elyse Fuller (EFu), Tom Fuller (TFu), Tom Glover, Dave Gobert, Steve Gosser, Amy Henrici, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Pat Johner, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Alex Lamoreaux, Melissa Little, John McCann, Lorie McCann, Trevor McCann, Donna Meyer, Tom Moeller, Richard Nugent, John Salvetti, Tim Schreckengost, Georgette Syster, John Taylor, Shannon Thompson, Josie Valasek, Marge Van Tassel, Kay Voyovitch, Linda Wagner, Three Rivers Birding Club (3RBC), Todd Bird Club (TBC).

How to Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count

(continued from page 5)

3. When you're finished, enter your results through the web page <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>. You'll see a button marked "Enter Your Checklists!" on the website home page beginning on the first day of the count (February 18, 2011). It will remain active until the deadline for data submission on March 1, 2011.

If you don't have a computer, you probably have relatives or friends who do. You may also contact anyone in the bird club to enter your data for you. Don't forget to let the Higbees know that you participated, so your name will appear in the next newsletter. Good birding!



Lorie, John, and Trevor McCann attended the September 18 outing at Yellow Creek.

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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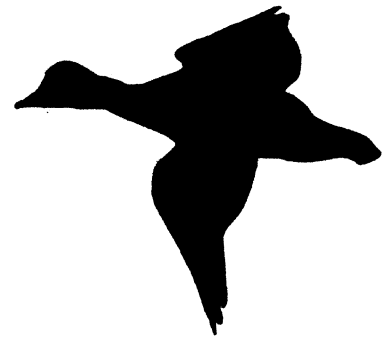
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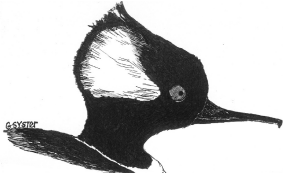


Outing participants on September 18, 2010, included Lee Carnahan, Tom Glover, Roger Higbee, and Lorie, John, and Trevor McCann. Standing too far to the left to be pictured is Donna Meyer.

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

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