

# The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Todd Bird Club  
[www.toddbirdclub.org](http://www.toddbirdclub.org)

October 2015

## 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 by 7:00 to socialize and snack. Refreshments are provided at each of our meetings. In May we hold our banquet meeting which starts at 6:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, October 6** – Join Mike Shaffer, Park Naturalist at Moraine and McConnells Mill State Park for an interesting look into the color of autumn. Learn why plants are green and ultimately why they turn the colors they do in the fall.

**Tuesday, November 3** – “Journey to the North Atlantic: Iceland” is the title of Geoff Malosh’s presentation. We’ll travel with him across the “Land of Fire and Ice,” with his excellent photos of Atlantic Puffins, Whimbrels, Black-tailed Godwits, Parasitic Jaegers, and more!

Geoff and his wife Kristin spent two weeks during the summer of 2013 touring Iceland, noted for its spectacular beauty and unique culture.

Geoff, a 1997 Michigan State University graduate who majored in physics, started birding just before he turned 8. He states, “One of my earliest memories is a Red-eyed Vireo just ten feet away outside the bedroom window of my childhood house in Scott Township. Another early

formative memory from 1984 was holding a Black-throated Blue Warbler and an American Redstart in my hand at Ron Leberman’s banding station at Presque Isle State Park.”

Geoff serves as the editor of the magazine *Pennsylvania Birds* and is well known for his superb photography.



Scott Stoleson photographed this Crested Owl in Costa Rica’s Corcovado National Park.

**Tuesday, December 1** – Scott Stoleson will present a program titled “Pura Vida! An Ornithologist’s Adventures in Costa Rica” on December 1. His presentation will highlight some of the diversity and birdlife of this wonderful Central American country. Scott is the Research Wildlife Biologist with the Forest Service’s Northern Research Station in Warren, PA, and a Research

Associate of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, Jamestown, NY. He received a B.A. in Biological Sciences from Dartmouth College and his M.S. and Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology from Yale University. He has published over 65 scientific papers and book chapters on avian biology and conservation based on research in Pennsylvania, the western U.S., Mexico, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Ecuador. In addition he has led natural history tours to the Caribbean and Latin America. He first became enchanted with the people and wildlife of Costa Rica during his first visit in 1979 and has had the privilege of visiting numerous times since then for research, leading natural history tours, and for fun.

# Outings

**Tuesday morning outings** at Yellow Creek will continue till the first Tuesday of deer season. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office located on Rt. 259, just off Rt. 422 east of Indiana. Early comers are invited to meet at the pavilion on the north shore shortly after dawn. As the days grow shorter, the north shore stop becomes problematic, so we just meet on the south shore at 8:00. Everyone – from beginner to expert birder – is welcome. If you have any questions, contact Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667) or Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

**Saturday, October 10** – Ghost Town Trail, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot at Dilltown.

**Saturday & Sunday, October 10-11** – *Birdwatcher's Digest's* Big Sit. Create your own 17-foot-diameter circle then count all the birds you see, or find a pre-existing circle to join. Our state has led the whole world with the most circles. For more information, go to the website: [www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit/about-the-big-sit.php](http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit/about-the-big-sit.php)

**Saturday, October 17** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Gloria Lamer (724-349-1159). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office.

**Tuesday, October 20** – Hawk watch trip to the Allegheny Front. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Yellow Creek State Park office to carpool or meet at the hawk watch at 9:15 a.m. For information contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). Bring your lunch and something to sit on. Dress warmly as it is often cold and windy on the Front.

**Saturday, October 24** – Mahoning Shadow Trail, led by Tom Glover ([tomnglover@comcast.net](mailto:tomnglover@comcast.net)). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Valier trailhead parking lot.

**Saturday, October 31** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office.

**Saturday, November 7** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office. This is the annual fall joint outing with the Three Rivers Birding Club. The group will enjoy lunch after the outing at the Fortune Buffet in Indiana.

**Saturday, November 14** – Blue Spruce Co. Park, led by Ray Winstead (724-349-2506). Meet in the large parking lot near the park office at 8:00 a.m.

**Saturday, November 21** – Pine Ridge Co. Park, led by Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667). Meet at the park entrance at 8:00 a.m. From Indiana, take Rt. 119 past the Rt. 22 exit and take the second left after going under Rt. 22 onto Pine Ridge Road. Stay left at the Y. Drive less than ½ mile to the park.

**Friday, November 27 - 30** – The Niagara Frontier, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee. *You must have a passport or a passport card to enter Canada and return to the US. We will bird mostly in Canada.* This four-day trip will cover Dunkirk Harbor en route to the Peace Bridge, as well as areas along the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. We plan to stay at the Super 8 near the falls on the Canadian side. You may take part in the entire trip or in only a day or two by meeting us there. If you are interested in going or have questions, please contact the Higbees (724-354-3493).

**Saturday, December 26** – Indiana Christmas Bird Count. Contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493) if you plan to participate.

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## A Message From Your Co-President

Greetings, I hope everyone has had an opportunity to get out and enjoy sighting the large number of warblers and shorebirds that are passing through our area. Even though the calendar says autumn, cardinals and goldfinches can still be seen gathering seeds from our feeders for their fledglings in the bushes. The coneflower seedheads are also a popular gathering spot for the goldfinches. A few hummingbirds are still coming to the feeders, and I know the day will soon be here that they will all have headed to

warmer climates.

As we announced at the September meeting, we will be holding elections at our December meeting. As per our by-laws, elections are to be held every two years. We are long overdue for an election. Please consider supporting Todd Bird Club by becoming an officer.

– Donna Meyer

# Parker Dam State Park—A Three-Hour Tour

By Richard Nugent

About 30 years ago my wife, two children, and I camped at Parker Dam SP. We swam in the icy water and at night heard a Barred Owl calling. Other than the owl, I don't recall any other birds, but I do remember a beautiful park in Clearfield County.

On Thursday, July 16, 2015, I made a return visit with the goal of exploring the park and finding as many birds as possible. I arrived at the park at 9:13 a.m. and stopped at the park office to pick up a map. The park office building hosted a colony of Barn Swallows, including a few fledglings on a wire.

With map in hand, I drove the short distance to the boardwalk where Laurel Run enters the lake. As I ambled along the boardwalk, I was greeted by a singing Willow Flycatcher and Cedar Waxwings flycatching above the marsh. A Common Yellowthroat sang, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was active in a treetop, and I glimpsed a Yellow Warbler in the emergent vegetation. I was pleased to find no mosquitoes here or anywhere in the park.

On the other side of the road I walked a loop, heading out the Souders Trail and back on the Skunk Trail. This loop proved very scenic and birdy. Part of the trail passed through an Eastern Hemlock forest along Laurel Run with the remainder being in open deciduous forest. My bird highlights along this loop were:

Black-throated Green Warbler	Dark-eyed Junco
Veery	American Redstart
Winter Wren	Magnolia Warbler
Broad-winged Hawk	Ovenbird
Blue-headed Vireo	Common Raven
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Hermit Thrush

I then checked out Parker Lake. The lake was smaller than I remembered, but sticking my hand in the water proved that the water is still quite cold (despite global warming). Waterbirds were not numerous and included only two Canada Geese, two Mallards, and a lone Wood Duck. A Great Blue Heron flew overhead, and a Belted Kingfisher loudly announced its presence.

Another boardwalk beckoned from a marshy area on the west side of the lake. My hike was cut short by a beaver dam, which had flooded the trail with water too deep for my hiking shoes. I did add Red-winged Blackbird (the only one for the park) and Baltimore Oriole.

I moved on to check out the Beaver Dam Trail. This trail was not very productive and soon entered a dense hemlock woods with almost no undergrowth. I did not find any beaver dams.

Near the park office was an excellent butterfly/ hummingbird garden, complete with a Ruby-throated Hummingbird sipping nectar from the Bee Balm. Next to the Bee Balm was a very intensely colored patch of Purple Bergamot. I also got a brief glimpse of a small snake as it retreated into the tall flowers. Sadly, I did not identify the snake. As I walked back to my car, I spotted a male and female Scarlet Tanager in the top of a medium sized tree. Just a little past noon as I drove out of the park, I heard a Black-throated Blue Warbler singing loudly along the road. I ended with 52 species for my visit to the park. My complete bird list follows:

Canada Goose	Wood Duck
Mallard	Great Blue Heron
Turkey Vulture	Broad-winged Hawk
Mourning Dove	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker	Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker	Eastern Wood-Pewee
Willow Flycatcher	Eastern Phoebe
Blue-headed Vireo	Red-eyed Vireo
Blue Jay	American Crow
Common Raven	Tree Swallow
Barn Swallow	Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse	White-breasted Nuthatch
House Wren	Winter Wren
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Eastern Bluebird
Veery	Hermit Thrush
American Robin	Gray Catbird
Cedar Waxwing	Ovenbird
Common Yellowthroat	Hooded Warbler
American Redstart	Magnolia Warbler
Yellow Warbler	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Eastern Towhee	Black-throated Green Warbler
Chipping Sparrow	Song Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco	Scarlet Tanager
Red-winged Blackbird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Baltimore Oriole	American Goldfinch



# Conneaut Harbor Trip Revisited

By Margaret Higbee

Sue Dickson, Roger, and I left home at 6:04 a.m. on August 29 to head to Conneaut, OH, for our annual shorebird outing. When we arrived at Conneaut at 9:00, we were pleased to find that the road to the beach was open. We had heard that it had been under water and therefore had been closed the day before. The sky was overcast, the air cool, and it was windy. A group of birders was already present. Besides the three of us, our Todd participants also included Tony Bruno, Debbie Kalbfleisch, Flo and Jim McGuire, and Richard Nugent. Tony informed us that he had arrived several hours before us and had already seen an American Golden-Plover, but it had been chased by a Merlin.

The first birds we sighted were three Bald Eagles. Three Caspian Terns flew by, followed by another flock of 21. We tallied at least 6 Great Blue Herons and 21 Double-crested Cormorants standing on the jetty. Shorebird activity was slow with five Semipalmated Plovers the first to arrive. A Peregrine Falcon caused some excitement as it flew through. We were happy to find one Bonaparte's Gull amid all the Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. The only other shorebirds we spotted were Least Sandpiper, Sanderling, Killdeer, and Semipalmated Sandpiper – all singletons.

Around 11:50 we decided to leave to bird elsewhere. As we were driving back along the marshy edge, we heard a Marsh Wren singing. Our next stop was at Subway for lunch before we headed to Pymatuning, where we arrived at 1:15. The spillway area yielded 2 more Caspian Terns, 6 Double-crested Cormorants, and roughly 400 Ring-billed Gulls. We next drove to the fish hatchery where we added 170 more Ring-billed Gulls and a Bald Eagle. Great Egrets lined the shore behind the island. With the hope of seeing shorebirds, we made our next destination Millers Ponds. The only shorebirds here were Killdeer, but we were delighted to see three Sandhill Cranes, two adults and a juvenile, walking along the back edge of the first pond. Other species seen in the area included 2 Belted Kingfishers, 2 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, and one Eastern Phoebe.

On the way home, we decided to stop at Moraine State Park's Watts Bay to look for the immature Laughing Gull that had been reported there. We were fortunate to find it almost immediately. Our total number of species seen on the trip came to a mere 39, but we had a lot of fun and thoroughly enjoyed the day.



Semipalmated Plovers were the first to arrive.

Photo by Roger Higbee



Roger photographed this Least Sandpiper foraging on the sand.



A Semipalmated Sandpiper was one of the five shorebird species at Conneaut Harbor during our outing.

Photo by Roger Higbee

# Canada Goose Notes

By Tom Glover

It seems like every mud hole in Pennsylvania has a breeding pair of Canada Geese. Well, maybe not every mud hole.... The bird has become one of the noted success stories of recent times. The nature of the species has proven to be a recipe for establishing a thriving resident population in Pennsylvania.

Canada Geese average 35 – 45 inches and weigh about 8 – 9 lbs. Male and females look alike, with males a bit larger than the females. The bird's habitats include tundra, open country, wooded, suburban, and semi-desert settings. Often they are seen feeding in wetlands, grasslands, golf courses, cultivated fields, and your lawn. Nest clutch size averages from two to nine eggs, with an incubation period of 25 – 30 days. Hatching starts in April, and goslings fledge in six to nine weeks. The adult birds go through a molt starting in June and lasting for four to five weeks. During the molt the geese are flightless and gather in flocks on larger bodies of water. The diet of Canada Geese includes grass, grains, aquatic plants, and lesser amounts of small insects and even lesser amounts of tiny fish. It has been noted that 50 Canada Geese can produce 2½ tons of poop a year.

Just fifty to sixty years ago, Canada geese were seen in Pennsylvania primarily during spring and fall migrations. Over-wintering geese were very rare in the state. In 1936

a few wing-clipped geese were released in the Pymatuning State Game Refuge. And in 1966 the PA Game Commission introduced Canada Geese to a wildlife-management area in Lancaster County. This population of geese grew to 4,000 by the late 1970s. By the early 1990s Pennsylvania had a non-migratory population of an estimated 200,000 geese. Today that population is estimated at 250,000, down from a high of 340,000 as recently as 2004-2005. The current management goal of the PA Game Commission is a population of 150,000 non-migratory geese.

The primary control of Canada geese is through hunting. Current bag limits in Indiana County for the resident population, is five geese per day with a 15 geese in possession limit. The 2015-2016 hunting season in the Indiana County area is October 24 – November 28, December 18 – January 24, and February 1 – 29.

We have transformed our landscape into a goose haven. With our parks, golf courses, and neatly kept lawns, we have provided an ideal grazing habitat for Canada Geese to thrive and expand at an estimated growth rate of 17% per year. So the next time you see a family of geese just think, they will double in number in just a little less than five years.

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## Osprey Management Plan Approved

*Survey planned for next year could lead to upgraded status for the state-threatened bird.*

Pennsylvania has a newly approved plan for managing Osprey, and survey work planned for next year could lead to an upgraded status for the state threatened species. The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners today approved the agency's new Osprey management plan, which becomes effective immediately and will be up for renewal after 2025.

The plan was approved preliminarily in June, and made available to the public for review and comment. The draft was strengthened by incorporating feedback from the public and the Board of Commissioners.



The final plan calls for a new survey of Osprey nests to be conducted, likely next year, and for those results to then be compared to results from a 2010 survey. If the number shows population goals have been met, a proposal could be made to remove the Osprey from the state's list of threatened species, in recognition of the bird's success.

Although an Osprey had been present at Yellow Creek this past summer with sightings in both June and July, nesting has not yet been confirmed.

# Delaware Birding Revisited

By Debbie Kalbfleisch

Before dawn broke on Friday, September 11, Tom Pearson and I piled into Margaret and Roger Higbee's van to travel to Delaware for a long weekend of coastal birding. We made good time and were met at Pickering Beach by Steve Graff and his mother, Shirley Martin, early that afternoon. Many of you may remember Steve as the youngest president of the Todd Bird Club. He now lives near Dover and had agreed to show us some birds on his home turf.



Raymond Pool harbored about 300 American Avocets.

Photo by Margaret Higbee

Steve asked if we had any target birds, and I told him I had never seen American Avocets and was hoping for some that weekend. Steve nodded quietly, and at the next stop, the Ted Harvey Wildlife Management Area, we saw roughly 50 of them. Ask and you shall receive! A tree full of Great Egrets looked like a strange Christmas tree with huge white ornaments. A noisy flock of Bobolinks was a treat, as ours have been long gone. We started to rack up the shorebirds: Semipalmated, Least, and Western Sandpipers, Sanderling, Greater Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitcher, Semipalmated Plover, and Wilson's Phalarope. A flock of Glossy Ibis flew over. A Little Blue Heron was spotted, as well as Forster's Tern, Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Seaside Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak. A Clapper Rail sounded off in the distance.

The weather held good for our second morning and we got an early start at Bombay Hook. At the Raymond Pool, we had a few Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, and Northern Pintails mixed in with over a hundred Northern Shovelers. A large group of Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets were off to one side. There were close to 300 American Avocets here, as well as 120 Black-bellied Plovers, half a dozen Semipalmated Plovers, and both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. We picked out three Marbled Godwits. While we watched, the sky was suddenly filled with swirling, twisting birds. Margaret looked up and pointed: a Peregrine Falcon was cruising by, panicking every bird on the water.

At the Shearneck Pool, we had even more egrets, both Great and Snowy, and there we added Semipalmated Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, and Savannah Sparrow to our list. Laughing Gull was the dominant gull on the Delaware shore, but we added Herring Gull here, and had a few Great Black-backed and Ring-billed Gulls over the

weekend. Our first Pectoral Sandpiper was along the Parson Point Trail. Bear Swamp turned up a roost of Black-crowned Night-Herons. Steve did a careful count and came up with nine, but the rest of us "only" spotted six, including a couple of young birds.

Raptors were common throughout the weekend including Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, and many Osprey. We saw all

three falcons, American Kestrel, Merlin, and Peregrine. Turkey Vultures were always floating in and out of sight, and we counted three Black Vultures.

The weather was overcast and cloudy on Sunday as we headed to Cape Henlopen State Park in search of Brown-headed Nuthatches. The feeders were active, with House Finches, Northern Cardinals, Mourning Doves, Carolina Chickadees, and even a Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Baltimore Oriole in the mix but no nuthatches. It wasn't until we were on our way back to the cars that we heard high-pitched squeaking and rushed back. We soon spied three of the tiny birds, moving quickly through the branches of the pines.

Near the lighthouse, an early Common Loon was swimming near the many Double-crested Cormorants. We soon turned up Willet and Ruddy Turnstone, as well as Northern Mockingbird, Pine Warbler, and Indigo Bunting. Blue Grosbeaks were common enough that I was beginning to recognize their metallic call notes. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo flashed past and provided a bit of excitement.

Steve was nice enough to provide a picnic lunch for us on both Saturday and Sunday, complete with homemade pickles! Yum! Plus more time to spend birding!

The threatening rain arrived soon after lunch in fits and starts, and we spent part of Sunday afternoon birding from the cars at Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge. It's amazing what you can see from a car. We glimpsed a Sora taking a bath in a puddle along the side of the road! When the rain let up, we watched Black Skimmers skimming and a tight group of eight Black Terns foraging. We added our first Fish Crows, Pied-billed Grebes, and

Green Heron. On a lovely, long walk to the beach, four immature White Ibis flew over us, and we gazed after them until they disappeared. Ten American White Pelicans, a continuing rarity in the area, resembled large mounds of strange snow in the marsh.

A Clapper Rail was discovered out in the open, carefully preening and rearranging every feather. I was ecstatic, as I had heard but never seen one before, and I certainly never thought I would be able to study one at my leisure! All together, we had at least eight of the elusive beasts. Icing on the cake: four Red Knots that flew in, all in winter plumage. And put a cherry on top: a Saltmarsh Sparrow on the edge of the path!

Common Yellowthroat and Pine Warbler were our only warblers for the weekend, so on our last morning



Debbie counted this Clapper Rail as half of a life bird as she had previously only heard them.

Photo by Margaret Higbee



Four Red Knots were "the icing on the cake."

Photo by Margaret Higbee

we traveled to Killens Pond State Park for a walk in the woods. With Eastern Wood-Pewee and Carolina Wren providing background music, we found Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Cape May Warbler, Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, and Black-throated Blue Warbler. We also added Eastern Phoebe, Least Flycatcher, Field Sparrow, and Scarlet Tanager to our list.

We were a tired and happy bunch of birders as we headed home. Many thanks to Steve for his guided tour of some of the best birding spots in Delaware, and to Margaret and Roger for arranging everything and doing all the driving! We had a trip list of 127 species.

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## Nesting Broad-winged Hawks

By Susan Dickson

This past summer I was able to observe a Broad-winged Hawk nest close to my home. Over the hill from my street is a heavily wooded area that is accessible by a gas-well road. I often walk there to look at the many birds and wildlife. A small stream that trickles through it eventually flows into Yellow Creek. This is where I saw my first Louisiana Waterthrush a few years back.



Sue Dickson photographed these two nestlings on July 1.

road using my scope and phone camera, and by hiding behind the ever growing Japanese Knotweed that this year seemed to take over along the road's edge. It was a joy to follow the two babies until they fledged, always under the watchful eye of the momma. They say "eyes like a hawk," and that is so true.

This year on the Pennsylvania Migration Count, May 9, I was walking the gas-well road through the woods when I noticed a large stick nest in one of the trees. It was easily seen because the leaves were not on the trees yet. Previously I had seen a Broad-winged Hawk in the area, but that morning in the nest was the momma Broad-winged Hawk. The nest was visible through the trees about 100 feet from the road. I was able to follow the progress of this nest and take pictures from the gas-well

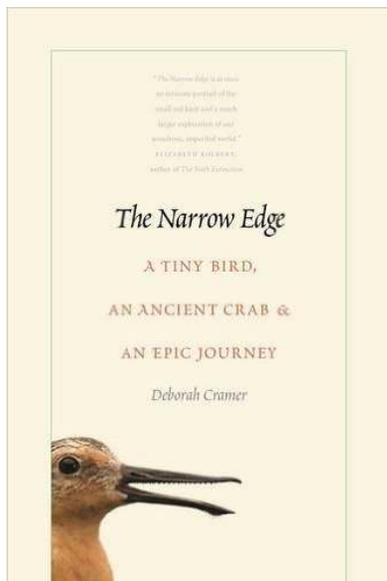


One nestling remained in the nest July 10.

# Book Review

by Tom Glover

Cramer, Deborah. *The Narrow Edge – A Tiny Bird, An Ancient Crab & An Epic Journey*, Yale University Press, 2015.



Published this year by the Yale University Press and written by Deborah Cramer, *The Narrow Edge* details the life of the Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*). This bird is one of six lineages of Red Knots worldwide. *Rufa*, the youngest of all knots, flies the greatest distance between Tierra del Fuego and the Arctic.

The main story line centers on Deborah's journey that follows the migration of the Red

Knots starting on the beach at Bahia Lomas, Chile, through Argentina and Brazil, with stopovers on the east coast of the United States, and onto the Canadian Arctic. Along the way Deborah not only relates the plight of the Red Knot, but goes into detail about her searches for the bird. On these outings she enlists the aid of researchers and local birders, and her stories provide an entertaining dialog filled with first-hand experiences. She blends these experiences with facts and observations of the Red Knots.

One of the main themes of the book is the dwindling numbers of Red Knots and the impact man has on the bird. Observed flocks of Red Knots have decreased from the thousands to mere hundreds at the most over the recent decades. Deborah goes into detail on the relationship between the horseshoe crabs and Red Knots along the east coast of the United States. Included in this part of the book is the story of the horseshoe crab and its dwindling numbers that has impacted the bird. The crab population has been reduced by its use as bait by the fishing industries, by the crab's use for medical purposes, and by the human changes to the environment. Deborah also details alternative sightings of Red Knots in the United States. She explores the Texas Gulf coast area for reported knots that winter there as opposed to flying to South America. And she tells the story how the birds in Texas are fitted with geolocators and tracked. She also relates other studies using geolocators attached to Red Knots.

The book is strong in its story line of the environmental plight of the Red Knot, but it also provides a history of observations and details of the bird's behavior. For the birder in all of us, the author also includes her sightings of other species of shorebirds along her journey from South America to the Arctic. The book provides a good foundation of information about Red Knots. I recommend it for your up-and-coming winter reading list.

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## Give the Gift of Todd Bird Club

Do you know someone who is interested in birds? Do you need a gift for a birder? Dues are \$5 student, \$10 individual, or \$15 family. Please send dues to our treasurer:

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

Amount Paid \_\_\_\_\_

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Newsletter – I prefer (please select one)

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# Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria Counties

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

**Locations:** Ghost Town Trail (GTT), Keystone Reservoir (KR), Kittanning (KT), Lewisville (LV), Lock & Dam (L&D), Mahoning Dam (MD), Patton (PT), Red Mill (RM), Shelocta (SH), Waterworks Conservation Area (WCA), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

**Wood Duck** reports were non-existent in *Cambria* and sparse in *Armstrong* this summer with one to 2 noted n. of L&D 8 respectively on 6/21 (TR) and 7/16 (MH, RH); a singleton was at KR 6/22 (DH); YC's top Wood Duck tally was 37 on 7/14 (TG); this count included many young. An **American Black Duck**, associating with a female Mallard, continued at YC through 6/2 (LC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DM, EY). A drake **Ring-necked Duck** spent much of June at YC with sightings 6/16 (LC, MH, RH), 6/23 (LC, TG, MH, RH), and 6/30 (LC, SD, TG, MH, RH); after disappearing for 20 days, it reappeared 7/21 (WA, LC, SD, TG, MH, RH, DK). A hen **Lesser Scaup** also lingered at YC through 6/2 (LC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DM, EY). A female **Hooded Merganser** was sighted at North Point 6/13 (MH, RH). A **Common Merganser** flying over Brick Church 6/6 (MH, RH) was one of two reported; the other, an adult hen, swimming on Curry Run 6/20 (MH, RH), was unexpected.

Six young **Ruffed Grouse** were a nice find along the GTT near Dilltown 6/20 (MH, RH).

Two **Common Loons**, one in basic and the other in alternate plumage, lingered at YC through 6/2 (LC, TG); the basic plumaged bird was still present 6/9 (LC, TG, MH, RH). An adult **Pied-billed Grebe** was spotted at YC 7/21 (WA, LC, SD, TG, MH, RH, DK).

YC hosted 14 **Double-crested Cormorants** 6/2 (LC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DM, EY); one appeared 6/4 (TA) at PG where it was still present 6/6 (TA); last reports this season occurred 6/22 (DH), both at YC and at KR; this was *Armstrong's* lone report.

A **Great Egret** was photographed near West Lebanon 7/14 (MVT). Two **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were a great find at KR 6/2 (RB), the first seen there since 2002.

An **Osprey**, which has never been a confirmed breeder at YC, was sighted 6/14 (LC) and 6/23 (LC, TG, RH); it was seen again throughout July with the last report 7/28 (WA, LC, TG, MH, RH, DK); one was listed at PG 6/28 (RL). Only one **Bald Eagle** was found this season at YC, an immature 6/2 (LC, PF *et al*); another was observed in *Indiana* along Rt. 954 on 7/24 (JT). One Bald Eagle was listed at Crooked Creek 7/12 (TR), the county's only report; PG harbored 3 on 6/6 (TA) and single birds 6/15 (LG), an immature, and 7/13 (TA). Single **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were spotted 7/22 (MH) near SH, 7/29-30 (CL, GL) at Nolo, and 7/30 (MC) near LV. **Cooper's Hawk** reports included single birds 6/13, both along Creek Road (MVT)

and at PG (MB); one along the GTT 6/20 (MH, RH); 2 at IUP 6/23 (JT); one near LV, also 6/23 (MC); and singletons 7/20, both at IUP (JT) and at the Gallitzin Tunnels Park (DP). Three nestling **Red-shouldered Hawks** were photographed at CC 6/16 (MVT); one was found n. of Belsano 6/19, 20 (AF); a pair was noted at YC 6/23 (LC, TG, MH, RH); one was listed again at YC 7/14 (WA, LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, DM). *Armstrong's* lone report mentioned a single **Broad-winged Hawk** along Nicholson Run 6/11 (MVT); a pair had 2 young in the nest at Forest Manor 6/26 (SD); Cambria yielded five reports (v.o.)

A **Semipalmated Plover** lingered at YC through 6/2 (LC, PF *et al*); first southward-bound individual arrived at YC 7/26 (TH) where it remained through the end of the month (LC). Fourteen was the highest tally of **Killdeer** at YC 7/31 (LC). One to 3 **Spotted Sandpipers** were noted at YC on nine dates (v.o.) this summer; single birds were noted along Cowanshannock Creek 6/7 (MH, RH) and at PG 7/20 (TA). First **Solitary Sandpiper** arrived at YC 7/23 (MH, RH); 4 was the best count three days later (TH). July 26 was the arrival date for single **Greater Yellowlegs** (LC), **Lesser Yellowlegs** (TH), and **Least Sandpiper** (LC, TH) at YC. Seven **Semipalmated Sandpipers** at YC were unusual for the late date of 6/9 (LC, TG, MH, RH), but 2 amazingly still lingered 6/14 (LC). A **Wilson's Snipe** was present 7/28 (WA, LC, TG, MH, RH, DK).

A lone **Ring-billed Gull** at YC 7/14 (WA, LC *et al*) and 4 at PG 7/19, 26 (RL) were the only ones reported. A **Herring Gull** was sighted n. of L&D 8 on 6/21 (TR). Five **Caspian Terns** resting on the mud in Little Yellow Cove were a nice surprise 7/30 (LC). A **Common Tern** was an unusual find at YC 6/2 (LC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DM, EY). One **Forster's Tern** was photographed at YC 7/26 (TH).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were noted on three dates at YC (v.o.) and on 17 dates near LV (MC); in *Armstrong* they were found at 6 locations this summer (v.o.). **Black-billed Cuckoo** reports included only four, one at Nolo 6/2 (CL, GL), one at Polka Hollow 6/13 (MVT), another at IUP 6/30 (JT), and one at YC 7/14 (WA, LC *et al*).

The only **Eastern Screech-Owls** reported were heard near LV 7/8 (MC) and at Nolo 7/21 (AB). An injured immature **Great Horned Owl** was retrieved by the PGC near SH 6/28 (MH, RH), taken to a rehabber, and subsequently released in the same area (fide PS). Two **Barred Owls** were noted consistently only at Nolo throughout the summer (AB, DB); another was spotted



WCO Zack Edwards holds the injured Great Horned Owl before transporting it to a rehabber.

near Heilwood 6/15 (DB).

A pair of **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**, nesting at Nolo, were last seen 6/17 (CL, GL); an adult with 2 young were seen just down the hill at YC 7/21 (WA, LC, SDa, TG, DK); one was n. of Belsano 6/17 (AF).

A **Merlin** flew by the YC group 7/7 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, DM), affording good views. **Peregrine Falcons** were confirmed nesting near KT on 6/10 (DF) when a juvenile was photographed; this was a first county breeding record.

Two **Acadian Flycatchers** were photographed on nest at Polka Hollow 6/13 (MVT); the Roaring Run Trail was the hotspot for Acadians when 11 were counted on both 7/1, 27 (MH, RH). A species that usually nests at YC, **Alder Flycatcher** was singing at YC 6/16 (MH, RH) but was not heard after that. YC hosted at least two nesting pairs of **Willow Flycatchers** this year (v.o.); 3 were present at SGL 247 on 6/6 & 7/18 (TR); the Patton BBS 6/7 (MH, RH) yielded only one; one was also listed at PG 6/13 (MB). The Virginia BBS 6/10 (MH, RH) produced one Least Flycatcher in *Cambria*.

At least 3 singing **White-eyed Vireos** were present at YC 6/2 (LC, PF *et al*), and 2 remained through the end of the season (v.o.); in *Armstrong* White-eyed Vireos were found at four locations this summer (v.o.) with the best count of 3 at SGL 247 on 7/18 (TR). A **Yellow-throated Vireo** was noted near LV on five dates between 6/1 -17 (MC); one was along the West Penn Trail near the Indiana trailhead 7/4 (MH, RH); 2 were still singing at Blue Spruce County Park 7/31 (MH, RH); much more common in *Armstrong*, Yellow-throated Vireos were noted at eight locations (v.o.). **Blue-headed Vireos** were listed at only nine locations this summer; the *Indiana* section of the PT BBS yielded 2 on 6/9 (MH, RH); one was s.w. of Vinco 6/10 (MH, RH); 3 were at RM and 2 near Portage 6/22 (DH); one was at YC 6/16 (MH, RH) and 6/30 (LC, SD, TG, MH, RH); another was near SH 6/5-7/29 (MH, RH); and one was n. of L&D 8 on 7/16 (MH, RH); and one was along the GTT 7/25 (MH, RH) near Twin Rocks. **Warbling Vireos** were noted at 11 locations of which seven were in *Armstrong*, three in *Indiana*, and one in *Cambria*.

**Fish Crows** continued in *Indiana* with sightings 6/24 - 7/31 (JT) at IUP and 2 on 7/4 (MH, RH) at Oakland Cemetery.

**Purple Martin** reports included one at Blue Spruce 6/5

(JP), one near the Pleasant Valley Golf Course on the Virginia BBS 6/10 (MH, RH), 2 at MD 6/13 (SG); 17 were counted at the colony at Wood's Pond 7/6 (MH, RH); high count at PG was 11 on 7/12 (RL). Four **Bank Swallows** and 2 **Cliff Swallows** stopped at YC 6/2 (LC, PF, *et al*). Bank reports included one at PG 6/6 (TA) and 6/15 (LG) and 3 near Johnstown 7/11 (SDi). On 6/22 (DH), 2 Cliff were at YC and 4 at KR; top tally at PG was 15 on 7/26 (RL).

Single **Red-breasted Nuthatches** turned up near LV 7/18 (MC) and near SH 7/24, 27 (MH, RH). Though they had nested near SH for years till 2014, again this year they were absent except for these two sightings. A **Winter Wren** near LV 7/11 (MC) was unusual. **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were again present during the breeding season in the mature spruce at YC 7/23 (MH, RH) and 7/26 (TH).

**Veery** reports included 1-2 at SGL 247 between 6/6-7/18 (TR), one along the river at KT 6/7 (MH, RH), 3 at a Virginia BBS stop 6/10 (MH, RH), and one near Johnstown 7/11 (SDi). **Hermit Thrush** reports included 2 at one stop on the *Indiana* section of the PT BBS 6/9 (MH, RH), one n. of Belsano 6/17 (AF), 3 at RM 6/22 (DH), and 3 near Gipsy 7/29 (MH, RH).

Best **Ovenbird** tallies were 21 on the Margaret BBS 6/6 (MH, RH), 18 on the KT BBS 6/7 (MH, RH), 22 on the Patton BBS 6/9 (MH, RH), and 15 on the *Indiana* section of the Parkwood BBS 6/4 (MH, RH). A **Worm-eating Warbler**, the only one reported, was noted at MD 6/13 (SG). Last **Louisiana Waterthrush** was noted 7/13 (MH, RH) feeding in an irony mine discharge near Heshbon on the GTT. **Blue-winged Warblers** were more widely reported this summer than last with birds noted at eight *Indiana* and eight *Armstrong* locations. A **Lawrence's warbler** was found and ph. near Whiskey Run 7/6 (MVT) and relocated the following day (SG). June 13 yielded *Indiana's* only reported **Black-and-white Warbler** at Forest Manor (SD); 2 were noted on the Patton BBS 6/9 (MH, RH) and singletons were spotted at PG 6/13 (MB) and 7/12 (RL); 5 was a good tally n. of L&D 8 on 6/21 (TR). **Kentucky Warblers** continue to be hard to find, but this season 4 were noted: singletons along Allshouse Rd. 6/6 (MH, RH), along Creek Road 6/13 (MVT), at North Point 6/13 (MH, RH), and at KR 6/22 (DH). **Hooded Warblers** were widespread (v.o.) with the best counts of 5 at YC 6/2 (LC, PF *et al*) and 4 along the Wehrum section of the GTT 6/24 (MH, RH); 7 were listed on the KT BBS 6/6 (MH, RH). **American Redstarts** were widely reported across the region (v.o.). The Shelocta BBS 6/3 (MH, RH) produced 3 **Cerulean Warblers** and the Margaret BBS 6/6 (MH, RH), one, all in the Crooked Creek watershed. One to 2 **Northern Parulas** were singing on territory at YC on various dates between 6/9-7/7 (v.o.); one was noted on the Virginia BBS 6/10 (MH, RH); one observed at MD 6/13 (SD) was *Armstrong's* lone report; another was along the GTT near Dilltown 6/20 (MH, RH). A **Magnolia Warbler** on the PT BBS 6/9 (MH, RH) and one at MD 6/13 (SG) were surprisingly the only mention of this species. A

**Blackburnian Warbler** was found at PG 6/13 (MB); 6/22 (DH) produced single **Blackburnian Warblers** both at YC and at RM. A very late **Blackpoll Warbler** was sighted at YC 6/2 (LC, PF *et al*) then again 6/16 (LC, MH, RH) when it was both heard and seen; the previous late date was 6/11/2007 (MH) when one was found at Pine Grove Cemetery near Rochester Mills. One **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was a nice find at the last stop on the PT BBS 6/9 (MH, RH); another was near Portage 6/22 (DH); the Rexis Branch of the GTT yielded 4 on 6/26 (MH, RH) and PG 2 on 7/26 (RL). **Pine Warbler** was listed near SH only on 6/23, 7/16 (MH, RH); it was unusual to not see or hear it more frequently; the YC Pine was seen or heard 6/9, 16, 22; 7/7 (v.o.). Single **Yellow-throated Warblers** were found at Cochran's Mill 6/3 (MH, RH) and at MD 6/13 (SG); a 2.26-mile stretch of the Roaring Run Trail produced 5 singing males on 7/1 (MH, RH). The West Penn Trail hosted *Indiana's* only reported Yellow-throated Warbler 7/4 (MH, RH). Only 3 **Prairie Warblers** were listed, one at MD 6/13 (SG), one at KR 6/22 (DH), and the other near SH 7/6 (MH, RH). High **Black-throated Green Warbler** count was 3 both at RM 6/22 (DH) and at YC 7/21 (TG). A **Canada Warbler** along the GTT near Twin Rocks comprised the entire report for this species. The Parkwood BBS yielded a **Yellow-breasted Chat** at one *Indiana* stop 6/4 (MH, RH).

A **Grasshopper Sparrow** at Robb's Fording 6/3 (MH, RH) and one in Buffington Twp. 6/22 (DH) were the only ones noted, as were 3 **Henslow's Sparrows** w. of North Point 6/13 (MH, RH). **Savannah Sparrows** continue to be difficult to find with the only reports mentioning one 6/3 (MH, RH) near South Bend, one 7/6 (MH, RH) near Elderton, another w. of Smicksburg 6/7 (MH, RH), 2 s.e. of Smicksburg 6/13 (MH, RH), and 2 in Buffington Twp. 6/22 (DH).



Marcy Cunkelman photographed this Pine Siskin at her feeder this summer.

Three **Bobolinks** along the road to Robb's Fording 6/3 (MH, RH), 3 seen w. of Smicksburg 6/7 (MH, RH), 2 just n.e. of KT 6/7 (MH, RH), and 6 in Buffington Twp. 6/22 (DH) were the only ones mentioned. Three **Orchard Orioles** at YC disappeared after 6/23 (LC, TG, MH, RH). **Pine**

**Siskins**, spotted only near LV, included 2 on 6/1 (MC) and singletons 6/12, 7/28-29 (MC).

**Observers:** William Acosta, Tina Alianiello, Alice Beatty, Dave Beatty, Mark Bonta, Rich Bower, Lee Carnahan, Marcy Cunkelman, Sheree Daugherty, Sally Dick (SDi), Sue Dickson, Anna Fasoli, Debbie Fazekas, Patience Fisher, Guy Foulks, Tom Glover, Steve Gosser, Linda Greble, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Deuane Hoffman, Todd Hooe, Debbie Kalbfleisch, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Renee Lubert Donna Meyer, David Poortinga, Joseph Pumford, Theo Rickert, Patrick Snickles, John Taylor, Marge Van Tassel (MVT), Ellen Yerger.

## Kingdom of the Barred Owl

By Leon Hue

Eventually the sun will rise again  
along the eastern wall,  
and forest inhabitants, both large and small,  
will scurry among mosses and ferns  
and along old stone walls.

But, hushed in the twilight,  
bright as a nightlight  
the star in the eastern sky,  
silent are the woods  
as well they should  
the smoldering embers of the sunset  
along the western wall  
while deep among the pines and hemlocks tall  
the Barred Owl gives his evening call.  
(Who cooks for youuuu, Who cooks for you alllll?)

Be it winter, spring, summer, or fall,  
The call is heard by all  
While down along the mountains valleyed walls,  
I think I hear an answering call.  
(Who cooks for youuuu, Who cooks for you alllll?)  
With head pulled down and a collar of feathers  
and body fluffed against winter weather.  
The owl is prepared for a long cold winter's night.

With talons tight and moonlight bright,  
The owl is not interested in any flight.  
Just to be left alone in his wilderness home  
Where pines and hemlocks moan and groan against  
the winter winds.  
Oh, to live in the Barred Owl's wilderness home, all  
alone.



## Plan Now to Participate in Members' Night

Members' Night is scheduled for Tuesday evening, January 5, at Blue Spruce Lodge. Please plan now to attend the first meeting of 2016 and participate! Please bring stories, photos, memorabilia, or anything you'd like to share with our members. And please let us know if you need any special equipment. We'll have the digital projector set up and ready to go! We hope to see you there.

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

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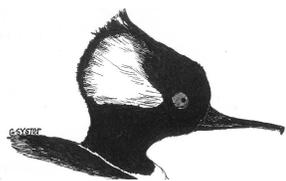
Marcy Cunkelman caught this confirmation on camera as the adult Chipping Sparrow was feeding its youngster.



A Red-winged Blackbird found a convenient perch at the Cunkelman home.



Marcy Cunkelman stopped this Ruby-throated Hummingbird's action.



*Todd Bird Club*

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