

# The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

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

January 2017

## 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 7** – Come to our February meeting to learn a little about our state parks when James H. Tweardy, Yellow Creek State Park Manager, will be our speaker. His presentation will take us to several other state parks before focusing on Yellow Creek, covering its history, features, improvements, recreational activities, and birding.

Jim Tweardy was born in Danvers, Massachusetts, but moved to Sharon, PA, when he was a toddler. Another move took his family to Uniontown where he graduated from high school. He studied forestry at Penn State and graduated from California University of PA with a BA in Parks and Recreation Management. He attended the police academy here at IUP and earned his MS in Recreation and Resource Management at Slippery Rock University. Jim entered the state park system, then



Yellow Creek State Park Manager Jim Tweardy will join us for our February meeting.

for five years he was employed by Forbes State Forest, before returning to the state park system. This past year we were privileged to welcome Jim as park manager at Yellow Creek where the Tuesday birders are often greeted by his smiling face. Jim is responsible for installing and maintaining the bird feeder behind the park office. He is married to Michelle, and they have two children, Jimmy and Madison, ages 5 and 4 respectively.

**Tuesday, March 7** – The Honduran Emerald (*Amazilia luciae*) is the only bird endemic to Honduras. This hummingbird species is included in the IUCN's Red List as endangered, and its population is considered to be in decline. Honduran Emeralds inhabit thorn forest found in arid inter-montane valleys. These inter-montane valleys have seen a

change in land use for human development purposes including activities associated with agricultural production, cattle grazing, and road infrastructure projects. Such development is the basis for the Agalta Valley's economy. As such, activities that improve existing or create new opportunities for economic growth will benefit regional communities and Honduras in



Dorian Escoto, 2015

Honduran Emerald

general. Any development project has economic and social value, but these need to advance carefully when they are in proximity or within fragile ecosystems. A scientific foundation should guide conservation and mitigation actions after development projects (i.e. road constructions).

A consultancy was commissioned to propose strategies for the conservation of the Honduran Emerald’s habitat in Agalta Valley after the construction of the Agricultural Corridor Project (ACP). The ACP phase in the department of Olancho traversed a section of Agalta Valley where dry forest patches are found. These remnants are home to this endemic bird as well as other endemic plant species. We studied the Honduran Emerald in the sector of the Agalta Valley within the ACP. Our research shows the areas with the highest probability of occurrence based on a species distribution map, and our observational data highlight the importance of the dry forest ecosystem as it is used through-out the year for diverse ecological processes. Based on this experience, we recognize the dry forest remnants’ frailty and emphasize how the on-going habitat stress makes this species and its habitat a conservation priority. These findings are intended to provide our in-country partners with science-based insight regarding patterns of the species’ distribution and resource selection in the Agalta Valley.

Fabiola is a biologist from Honduras. She has worked with birds since taking an ornithology course in college at the National Autonomous University of Honduras in 2008. She has had opportunities to learn about birds in various habitats in her country; these habitats include cloud forests, pine-oak forests, and tropical dry forests. Currently as an IUP student in the biology masters program, she continues to learn and is also enjoying her stay in the US.



This photo depicts the dry thorn forest habitat required by the Honduran Emerald.



Fabiola Rodriguez, 2015

Fabiola photographed this Honduran Emerald in its thorn forest habitat.

**Tuesday, April 4** – “April showers bring May flowers,” or so we’re told. It’s time to go out and start identifying our native (and not so native) wildflowers. The evening’s speaker will be Cindy Rogers who will teach us about some of our Pennsylvania wildflowers found right here in Indiana County.

Cindy, a retired staff development specialist and training coordinator, spent 25 years as a special education teacher. Currently president of the Evergreen Conservancy, she also served as a Friends of the Parks board member for seven years and as president for one year. She has presented numerous programs on wildflowers. She is a member of the Herb Study Group of Indiana, a board member of Friends of Yellow Creek, and a board member of the League of Women Voters. Don’t miss this interesting program!

**Tuesday, May 2** – We are privileged to have Mike Fialkovich as May’s banquet speaker. His presentation is

entitled “Birding and Nature in Southern California.” From 234 ft. below sea level at the Salton Sea to just over 8000 ft. in the San Bernardino Mountains, to the Channel Islands and deserts, this program will show the wide variety of nature the Golden State has to offer, even in the midst of a historic drought.

Mike Fialkovich has been interested in birds and nature as far back as he can remember. He is the current president of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology and a member of the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee. Mike is a founding member of the Three Rivers Birding Club in Pittsburgh where he serves on the steering committee as Bird Reports Editor and Club Historian. He was a Regional Coordinator for the Second Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas. Mike has led numerous outings for the Three Rivers Birding Club and the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, and in 2011 he was presented the W.E. Clyde Todd Award by the Audubon Society of Western PA. Mike is not a stranger to Todd Bird Club as he has presented several other great programs to our group.

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## From the President’s Desk...

If you haven’t noticed, it is cold outside. Yep, winter is here. Another way I can tell winter is here is that I am getting over a nasty cold. I found that colds curtail activity. My birdwatching was limited to feeder views out the backdoor. But this winter has cheerfully included a pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches that have been visiting our feeders since the first of October. If you check around, Red-breasted Nuthatches have been common sights this fall and winter in western Pennsylvania. Poor cone crops in the Northeast have caused the nuthatches to move south into our area, and seeing them makes us happy.

Speaking of farther south, the Todd Bird Club was approached by Ian Gardner concerning support for a conservation research project in Honduras. Ian is a board member of the Appalachian Audubon Society and a founding member of the Partners in Neotropical Bird Conservation (PiNBC), a non-profit group that operates through the Juniata Valley Audubon Society and focuses on conservation projects that benefit neotropical migrants.

Mark Bonta, president of Juniata Audubon, and Ruth Bennett, a PhD candidate at Cornell University, as well as

Ian flew to Honduras on January 4, and plan to return January 24. While in Honduras, they are doing bird surveys and studies in the Rus Rus Biological Reserve and the Botaderos National Park. They are studying endemic Honduran birds and neotropical migrants. Checking the

list of migrant birds that winter in Honduras, it looks like a “who’s who” list of neotropicals nesting in western PA and migrants moving through PA during the spring and fall. At our January 3, 2017, Todd Bird Club meeting members voted to support Ian’s request in the amount of \$100.

OK, it’s time for a Phoebe update. You might have figured out as long as I have your attention, Phoebe will be a must topic. First, in my last Phoebe update, I mentioned that she has mastered her first word “DaDa..” Now that is expected, but guess what her second understandable word was! Yes, it was “bird.” You have to love it! And she does her own bird watching. Dad loads Phoebe into her highchair, stocks the tray with oat O’s, and places her in front of their dining room window with a bird feeder just outside, and Phoebe birdwatches and snacks on O’s. Phoebe is in her tenth month, but she is a veteran of many outings. Just recently she had the chance to score Red-headed Woodpecker, Cackling Goose, and a Pink-footed Goose. But she does have one drawback – more often than not she is napping during these outings. Of course I will keep you updated on Phoebe’s birding progress.

Good birding!

Tom Glover

# Outings

**Tuesday Morning Outings** at Yellow Creek will continue, weather permitting. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office located on Rt. 259 just off Rt. 422 east of Indiana. Everyone – from beginner to expert birder – is welcome. If you have questions, contact Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667) or the Higbees (724-354-3493).

**Saturday, February 25** – Sandy Ridge Road grasslands in Jefferson/Clearfield Counties, led by Tom Glover (814-938-5618). Meet at 3:00 p.m. at the small cemetery on the left of SR 36, Colonel Drake Hwy, Punxsutawney, about 7 miles south of Punxy toward Mahaffey. Target birds include Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Harrier, and Short-eared Owl. This outing is subject to weather and dependent upon whether the roads are plowed.

**Saturday, March 11** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office. If there is any open water, we will target waterfowl; otherwise we will bird the park in search of winter birds and early arrivals.

**Monday, March 13, through Thursday, March 16** – Coastal New Jersey. This trip will visit Barnegat Light, Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, Cape May, and possibly Sandy Hook. Possible species include Brant, Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Great Cormorant, Northern Gannet, Purple Sandpiper, and American Oystercatcher. We will remain flexible so that we can check the local list serves for possible vagrants. If you are interested in going, please contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

**Saturday, March 18** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Gloria Lamer (724-349-1159). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office. This is usually a good waterfowl outing.

**Saturday, March 25** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Margaret and Roger Higbee (724-354-3493). This is a joint outing with the Friends of the Park. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office. Waterfowl will be our targets.

**Tuesday, March 28** – Joint Yellow Creek outing with Allegheny Front Audubon. Meet at the park office at 8:00 a.m.

**Saturday, April 1** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Margaret and Roger Higbee (724-354-3493). This is our annual spring joint outing with the Three Rivers Bird Club. Meet at the park office at 8:00 a.m. Plan to join us for lunch afterwards at the Fortune Chinese Buffet in Indiana.

**Saturday, April 8** – Blue Spruce Park. Come to the park to check on our Black-capped Chickadees and friends to make sure that they will still feed from our hands. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot nearest the park entrance.

**Saturday, April 15** – Pine Ridge County Park, led by Lee Carnahan (724-388-4667) and Tom Glover (814-938-5618). We will walk the level trails and look for early migrants. Meet at the park entrance at 8:00 a.m.

**Saturday, April 22** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Sue Dickson (734-388-5000). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office.

**Saturday, April 29** – Scripture Rocks Park, led by Tom Glover (814-938-5618). This award winning four-acre park is dedicated to Douglas Stahlman and his work carving scriptures on rocks around the Brookville area. Not only is this a birding venue, but it's a park with history and natural history lessons.

**Directions:** From Indiana, take US 119 north; turn left onto PA 436 just before Punxsutawney. Turn left just after a bridge onto PA 36 toward Brookville, making a right at the first stoplight in Brookville onto PA 28 north. Continue through Brookville toward I-80 on PA 28. At the US 322 and PA 28 split, turn left onto PA 28. The park is about 0.5 mile on the right. From I-80, take Exit 81 (Hazen), heading south on PA 28 toward Brookville for about 0.4 mile. The park will be on your left. Meet at **8:30 a.m.** at the park entrance parking lot.

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## Great Backyard Bird Count

The 20<sup>th</sup> annual GBBC will be held Friday, February 17, through Monday, February 20, 2017.

This annual four-day event engages birdwatchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are.

GBBC checklists can be accepted from anywhere in the

world!

Everyone is welcome to participate – beginning birdwatchers to experts. You may spend as little as 15 minutes

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# Moraine Outing Revisited

by Debbie Kalbfleisch

Mike Shaffer and Katie Edmiston, Park Naturalists at Moraine State Park, recently issued an invitation to several bird clubs in western Pennsylvania to join them on a bird walk on the South Shore of Moraine. They were particularly pleased when birders from four clubs showed up on the morning of Tuesday, September 20, 2016. In attendance were members of the Todd Bird Club, The Three Rivers Birding Club, Bartramian Audubon Society, and Seneca Rocks Audubon Society – 27 people in all. Despite the distance, Todd was well represented with at least 10 people. It helped that they picked a beautiful fall day for their outing!

We met at the first parking lot on the South Shore, where we greeted old friends and became acquainted with new ones. We watched a large group of gathering Killdeer noisily fly off while we waited for late stragglers. A few Chimney Swifts, the last remnant of summer, also flew over. We chose to walk the long loop of the Sunken Garden Trail that skirts the shore of Lake Arthur before entering the woods.

A crowd of Ring-billed Gulls lounged on the far shore of Lake Arthur, and we picked out six Double-crested Cormorants on the buoys and in the water. A few people

managed to find a Green Heron, well hidden among the weeds, and then painstakingly pointed it out to the rest of us. With such a large number of people, we were pretty well strung out along the trail and not everyone saw the same birds, but most people saw between 30 and 40 species. It's always interesting to compare notes afterwards!

I found myself at the tail end of the group where we were fortunate to find a nice wave of warblers and other birds while we were in the woods. We noted Northern Parula, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Hooded, and Common Yellowthroat, as well as Blue-headed and Red-eyed Vireos, Swainson's Thrush, Eastern Towhee, Scarlet Tanager, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Sometimes it's good to dawdle! Other birders on the trail recorded Tennessee, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, American Redstart, Bay-breasted, and Blackpoll Warblers.

After the walk, six people in the Todd contingent drove to Butler for a Chinese lunch at the Fortune Star Buffet.

Thanks again to Mike Shaffer and Katie Edmiston for arranging a lovely day!

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## Prince Gallitzin Nest Box Report

by John Salvetti

Species	Eggs Laid	Eggs Hatched	Birds Fledged
Eastern Bluebird	256	201	182
Tree Swallow	276	190	175
House Wren	35	29	27
Purple Martin	62	61	60
American Kestrel	?	?	13

I am sorry to report that the tree that supported the eagle nest and the nest were destroyed by heavy winds during the nesting season. No eagle report is available.

# Joint Todd - Three Rivers Birding Club Outing Revisited

by Margaret Higbee

Eighteen birders showed up at the Yellow Creek State Park office on Saturday, November 5, and were greeted by a chilly morning. The woods were pretty quiet with Carolina Wren, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, and Blue Jays as the only birds listed.

Because of high water levels and 18 participants, we decided to go directly to the maintenance building for looks at the lake. When we arrived, we found the lake totally socked in with fog. We could barely see the silhouette of the Lesser Scaup that had been on Dragonfly Pond since spring. We debated hiking the trail up the hill behind Dragonfly, but Lee Carnahan commented, "It looks foggy up there, too." In the distance we noted that we could actually see trees in Little Yellow Cove, so we decided to head to the boat launch; however, by the time we arrived, it, too, was completely foggy, and the trees were no longer visible. Not too far from shore, we spotted a Common Loon – again, just a silhouette – and we heard our first American Crow. Six American Coots were very near shore, and 15 Canada Geese flew by in the fog. A Song Sparrow chipped and four Cedar Waxwings flew overhead. With almost no bird song and poor viewing conditions, we hauled out the muffins and contented ourselves chatting and munching. Ken Truitt decided to run reconnaissance and returned to the maintenance building as it looked as though the fog were rolling toward us and that the area behind us was clearing. He returned about five minutes later with a good report. We all returned to our vehicles and headed back to the maintenance building. There really was a lake out there!

We walked across Rt. 259 to check out the water and the surrounding habitat. Here were 2 Blue Jays, one Eastern Bluebird, 26 European Starlings, 13 Cedar Waxwings, 6 Dark-eyed Juncos, and 5 American Goldfinches. On the water were 86 Canada Geese, one Gadwall, one Ring-necked Duck, 304 Ruddy Ducks, a small flock of Pied-billed Grebes, a Double-crested Cormorant, and 178 American Coots. Thanks to Tom Glover who counted the ruddies and the coots. The waterfowl highlight here was a striking pair of Common Goldeneyes, the first of the season. A rattling Belted Kingfisher flew toward the shallow end of the lake affording nice views. A Swamp Sparrow sang once from the underbrush along the shore which harbored several Song Sparrows, and a Purple Finch flew overhead ticking. Perched atop a tree was a Northern Mockingbird. We also added a Black-capped Chickadee, one White-breasted Nuthatch, 3 American Robins, and 2 Northern Cardinals.

By 9:55 we had returned to the boat launch where in Little Yellow Cove we could actually see the Common Loon as well as a Wood Duck, 4 Gadwalls, one American Black Duck, 7 Mallards, 2 Lesser Scaup, 6 Buffleheads, 5 Pied-billed Grebes, and 41 more coots. A Great Blue Heron fished near the edge of the vegetation across the cove. The willows nearby yielded 2 Black-capped Chickadees, a White-breasted Nuthatch, 2 Song Sparrows, and a White-throated Sparrow. Across the road we heard a Pileated Woodpecker calling.

A brief stop along Rt. 259 near the curve in the road produced better views of the Gadwalls and upped our count of Buffleheads to 9. A Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2 chickadees, a robin, and a flock of about 60 starlings rounded out the list here. We also heard another Purple Finch fly overhead ticking.

We continued into the main recreation area where Lee Carnahan and Dennis Smeltzer sighted a Northern Flicker. We walked through the pines finding another Red-bellied Woodpecker, one Downy, and 2 Hairy Woodpeckers. We also added a Tufted Titmouse and four Dark-eyed Juncos as well as more of the same species we had spotted earlier at our other stops.

As we pulled up to the beach area, a Ring-necked Pheasant ran across the grass toward the wooded edge. The beach was non-productive as a man with two boys walked along the sandy edge. We continued to the Observatory Trail which was very worthwhile. New to the list here was a Golden-crowned Kinglet. We had a nice assortment of passerines including chickadees, 2 Eastern Bluebirds, Song Sparrow, juncos, and goldfinches. The view from the observatory added our Mute Swan and 2 American Wigeons besides 5 more ruddies and 14 more Pied-billed Grebes. As we were leaving, someone spotted a raptor flying over the ridge. It turned out to be a Turkey Vulture, but we quickly realized there were more. We counted a flock of 29 vultures circling and gaining altitude.

Since it was after 12:00, we decided to head to Indiana for lunch at the Fortune Chinese Buffet where 14 of us enjoyed good conversation and a delicious meal. After lunch, seven members of the group continued to Blue Spruce County Park where they hand-fed chickadees and a White-breasted Nuthatch.

# Todd Bird Club Trip to the Niagara Frontier Revisited

by Debbie Kalbfleisch

Early (very early!) on the day after Thanksgiving, Tony Bruno and I joined Margaret and Roger Higbee to begin a journey to the Niagara Frontier. As we traveled on I-79, a steady rain began to fall just north of Grove City. After the sun rose, we kept an eye out for birds along the highway and spotted Canada Geese, Red-tailed Hawks, Ring-billed Gulls, Rock Pigeons, American Crows, European Starlings, and Red-winged Blackbirds.

By 8:30 a.m., we had reached the Dunkirk City Pier in New York and were taken aback to find duck hunters in the harbor! In spite of occasional gunfire, our first Bufflehead, Common Goldeneyes, Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, Horned Grebes, Double-crested Cormorants, Bonaparte's Gulls, and a Common Loon were sighted. Our only American Coots for the trip were here. Also present were Canada Geese, a Mallard, and Ring-billed Gulls. The biting cold rain turned into a downpour and soon forced us back into the van.

At Wright Park Beach in Dunkirk, with the rain letting up, we added Greater and Lesser Scaup, as well as Herring Gull to our list. By this time, we were getting hungry, so we found a Tim Horton's Restaurant for breakfast. It took about half an hour to get over the Peace Bridge into Canada and through customs, arriving at 11:15 a.m.

Along Lakeshore Road in Fort Erie, we found Gadwalls, American Black Ducks, White-winged Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Common Mergansers, Mourning Doves, Black-capped Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Song Sparrows, and American Goldfinches. We counted at least 800 Buffleheads along this beautiful, scenic road that follows the Niagara River.

After a stop to change some of our American dollars, we continued birding to the railroad bridge, finding our trip's only Pied-billed Grebe. By now, the sun was coming out and the day was warming up. Continuing along the Niagara Parkway, we stopped to check out a Bald Eagle nest across the river and discovered both birds sitting near the nest. A Merlin flew over and kept going into New York. Also seen on the river were Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, and a single Double-crested Cormorant. Red-tailed Hawks and Dark-eyed Juncos were spotted along the shore, along with an occasional black squirrel.

Just after 2 p.m., we got to the Upper Falls of the Niagara River and walked from the Dufferin Islands Park to just

below the control gates, then back to the greenhouse area along the river. While we scanned the vicinity, Margaret announced that she had two Harlequin Ducks on a small island in her scope! Closer scrutiny produced two more; all four were drakes. Also new here were a Ring-necked Duck, a Lesser Black-backed Gull, three Great Black-backed Gulls, and a Downy Woodpecker. Other waterfowl included Canada Geese, Gadwalls, American Black Ducks, Mallards, a Long-tailed Duck, a couple of Bufflehead, many Common Goldeneyes, and Hooded and Common Mergansers. We saw numerous Bonaparte's, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, too many to count, even for Margaret!

As we walked back to the van, Margaret and Roger had just finished explaining that Tufted Titmice were not common in the area, when familiar scolding calls in the trees alerted us to six! They hastily amended that to say, "except in Dufferin Island Park!" Black-capped Chickadees, a Downy Woodpecker, and our first Northern Cardinal also appeared in the trees that ringed a small pond containing Mallards and American Black Ducks. We checked into the Super 8 Motel in Niagara Falls and finished the day with dinner at John's Family Restaurant.

On Saturday, we left the motel at 7 a.m. and drove to the Tim Horton's at the Welcome Center in Grimsby, spotting eight Red-tailed Hawks and an American Kestrel along the way. The day promised to be sunny and not too cold. Indeed, temperatures stayed mainly in the 40s over the next few days. Sandra and Frank Horvath joined us as we were finishing breakfast, and we followed them to the end of Fifty Road on the edge of Lake Ontario. Two King Eiders, one a female very close to the shore and the other an immature drake, stood out among the many Common Goldeneyes and Surf and White-winged Scoters. We also listed one Long-tailed Duck and ten Red-breasted Mergansers.

On Winona Road, we were thrilled to spy two more King Eiders, again a female and an immature male. Margaret and Roger were elated and stated that they had never had four King Eiders in one day! It was lovely to see Surf and White-winged Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, and Common Goldeneyes stretching out on the water as far as the eye could see. We picked out four Lesser Scaup among them.

We continued traveling along Lake Ontario, stopping at Fruitland Road, Green Road, and Grays Road, always gazing out at numerous scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Common Goldeneyes, and Red-breasted Mergansers.

Long-tailed Ducks talked quietly among themselves, and we were close enough to the Goldeneyes to hear them beeping like nighthawks. At Red Hill Creek on Woodward Avenue, we added Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, and Double-crested Cormorant to the day's tally. At Windermere Basin in Hamilton, we had five new species for the day: Gadwall, American Black Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, and Great Blue Heron.

As many of you know, Tony Bruno is known for his uncanny ability to find and photograph owls, and we had teasingly asked him to find a Snowy Owl for us. It took a few minutes at the Tollgate Ponds in Hamilton to realize that he was not kidding and had actually found his life Snowy Owl sitting on a dike! We got good looks at this heavily-marked bird through the scopes. There were also 117 Ruddy Ducks at this location.

Lunch was at Hutch's on the shore of Lake Ontario, where we could both eat and check out the gulls flying past the large windows. In spite of our efforts, we saw only Ring-billed at this location. After lunch, Sandra and Frank took us to the Oakville Sewage Treatment Plant at Sedgwick Park. This hotspot is known for warblers, even in winter, and we were on the hunt for a continuing Orange-crowned Warbler. It took some patience, but in addition to the Orange-crowned, we also snagged a Yellow-rumped Warbler, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, a Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and American Robin.

The day was coming to a close, but we hurried to LaSalle Park and Marina in Burlington for Trumpeter Swans. One Mute Swan was in the flock of 23 Trumpeters, and Roger and Tony were able to take some photos in the fading light. Also here were some of the tamest Canada Geese and Mallards I've ever seen! Lesser Scaup, Buffleheads, and Red-breasted Mergansers kept their distance farther out on the water. We ended the day at the East Place Chinese Restaurant in Hamilton, where we discussed the many wonderful birds we had seen that day. We started to seriously hunt for gulls early on Sunday morning at the Sir Adam Beck Hydro Plant. From the viewing platform, hundreds of gulls, mostly Bonaparte's, Ring-billed, and Herring, glided below us over the water. A Lesser Black-backed Gull wasn't too hard to pick out, but I was amazed that Margaret and Roger were able to get me on two Iceland Gulls, an immature and an adult, among the constantly swirling birds! This was my lifer for the trip. It helped that the immature landed on a rock and stayed in one place! Led by the Horvaths, we headed toward Niagara-on-the-Lake, a lovely place. From the Golf Course Overlook, we surveyed Greater Scaup, a few Long-tailed Ducks, and Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, and many Red-breasted Mergansers. Eight

Red-throated Loons, new for the trip, were spread out over the lake, as well as one Common Loon. Here in Pennsylvania, birders periodically head out to farmlands in winter, looking for fresh manure spread on fallow fields, hoping for Snow Buntings. We were astonished when we realized that flocks of Snow Buntings were skimming by us over the lake! We estimated a total of 240 birds in four separate flocks.

Queens Royal Park produced a couple of Long-tailed Ducks, a Red-breasted Merganser, and one Red-throated Loon. A scaup species was too far out to be identified. Here were mostly Bonaparte's Gulls, with a few Ring-billed and Herring among them. We had a quick lunch at Tim Horton's and then decided we needed more gulls, so we headed to the Whirlpool, back at Niagara Falls. We just managed to claim spots at the railing as a bus full of Japanese tourists invaded the overlook. A quick scan showed nothing unusual, so we proceeded to the greenhouse, admiring a rainbow on the way, where a Golden-crowned Kinglet and Cedar Waxwing whispered high in the trees.

From the greenhouse, we hiked to the Control Gates to view many more Greater and Lesser Scaup and Common Goldeneyes. We also picked out a couple of Gadwalls, a Ring-necked Duck, and Red-breasted Merganser, as well as more Mallards, Canvasbacks, Redheads, Buffleheads, and Hooded Mergansers. There were 18 Tundra Swans as well, completing our trifecta of swans. The water was higher than it had been on Friday, but we were able to find the island where we had seen the Harlequin Ducks and two were still easily visible. We also detected a couple of Lesser Black-backed and Great Black-backed Gulls.

We stopped briefly at the Upper Falls and tallied more Canada Geese, Mallards, a few Double-crested Cormorants, and a Red-breasted Merganser but only the usual assortment of gulls. After consulting with the Horvaths, we decided to look for Black Vultures instead. This was not a species I was expecting to see in Canada, but Frank and Sandra know where they hang out! We journeyed to the Queenston Overlook and set up our scopes. We were almost ready to go to look for gulls again when four vultures were finally spotted – two Black and two Turkey!

We raced the fading light back to the Sir Adam Beck Hydro Plant. More gulls than before were flying now, and out of the hundreds below us, Margaret and Roger called out a Lesser Black-backed Gull and a possible Iceland/Thayer's Gull. This last one had the good manners to land, and after studying it, Margaret pointed out that it had dark eyes and black on the primaries, making it not an Iceland, but a Thayer's Gull! This was Tony's fifth lifer of the trip, along with Trumpeter Swan, King Eider, Snowy

Owl, and Orange-crowned Warbler. We celebrated with dinner at Lee's Chinese Restaurant in Niagara Falls, then said our goodbyes to the Horvaths. Thank you, Sandra and Frank, for being marvelous guides and sharing your birding hotspots with us!

Monday morning started with an early breakfast at Tim Horton's (you may have noticed a theme here), and afterwards, we found three Great Black-backed Gulls among the usual suspects at the Queenston Boat Launch. Seven Great Blue Herons flew off in the distance. We paused again at the Queenston Overlook and were able to relocate one Black Vulture and three Turkey Vultures. Our only Sharp-shinned Hawk of the trip appeared and disappeared quickly. In Fort Erie, we stopped at the International Railway Bridge and found 46 Double-crested Cormorants, along with a few Ring-billed Gulls. The Catherine Street parking area down the road was a bit more productive, with Lesser Scaup, Buffleheads, a Common Goldeneye, Common Mergansers, Horned Grebes, and more Double-crested Cormorants. A few Herring Gulls accompanied the many Ring-billed Gulls.

Coming back, it only took ten minutes to get across the Peace Bridge and back into the United States. A stop at Wilkeson Pointe in Buffalo turned up Mallards, Hooded Mergansers, Double-crested Cormorants, and a single Long-tailed Duck. On the walk to the beach, we listed a Downy Woodpecker, American Crows, Black-capped Chickadees, American Tree Sparrows, and an American Goldfinch. We also had a Red-tailed Hawk and an American Kestrel.

Just south of Buffalo is the small Tiff Nature Preserve. There the pond hosted Hooded Mergansers along with Canada Geese, and the woods beckoned us. However, our stomachs were growling as well, and we decided to have lunch first. It was after 2 p.m. when we returned to the

Preserve. This time, we noted a flock of 29 Green-winged Teal, 30 Mallards, a Gadwall, and American Black Duck, in addition to 11 Hooded Mergansers.

Walking deeper into the woods, we were startled when a gang of Black-capped Chickadees accosted us. Margaret and Roger always travel with sunflower seeds, but, alas, the bag was back at the car! Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Tufted Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, and American Robins also investigated us. At the edge of the woods, we came to a road with a wide field on one side that looked good for Northern Harrier. This turned out to be a longer road than anticipated, and after another hour, we realized that we might also have good prospects for Short-eared Owl, as dusk was quickly approaching! No harriers or owls appeared, and we went on until a high chain-link fence boxed us in. Apparently, we had unknowingly left the main trail when we took the road less traveled! Red-winged Blackbirds were now calling as they went to roost. Roger and Tony seemed unperturbed by the darkening skies. (Of course, Roger and Tony always look unperturbed.) They led us on, skirting the marsh and a deep gully. As they paused at the edge of the woods, discussing options, a flock of small birds came in, including Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Tree and Song Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and a Northern Cardinal. With a bit of bush-whacking, we made it back to one of the main trails and the van before night overtook us. A very exciting way to end the day!

Over the four days of our trip, we had a total of 76 birds, including over 30 species of waterfowl and seven species of gulls: Bonaparte's, Ring-billed, Herring, Thayer's, Iceland, Lesser Black-backed and Great Black-backed Gull. Thank you, Margaret and Roger, for a grand Canadian adventure! I can't wait to go on the next trip with you!

## Your Dues Are Now Due

January 1 started a new year for Todd Bird Club. Please remit your \$5 student, \$10 individual, or \$15 family dues to our treasurer ASAP: Gloria Lamer, Treasurer

515 Laurel Run Road  
Penn Run, PA 15765

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

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I prefer: a hard copy G the electronic version G.

# **The Genius of Birds**

A Book Review by Tom Glover

You will notice I have not reviewed a “bird book” for “*The Todd Nuthatch*” for some time. I have to admit that I read in spurts, and one of those spurts started this past summer when Lee Carnahan loaned me a biography on Charles Darwin. It proved to be a very interesting read. Here we have one of the pillars of scientific history, but his personal life was a surprise. The man apparently never had to work for a living as he was supported by his father and his father-in-law even after their deaths. It seems Charles was sick half his life, and he was also paranoid about his status in the scientific community. I wonder if he ever saw the paradox of his theory of evolution supported by the survival of the fittest with his marriage to his first cousin that produced ten children. Enough about Darwin...the review here is about *The Genius of Birds* by Jennifer Ackerman, published in the spring of 2016 by the Penguin Press, New York, New York. But I am sure Charles would find this book to his liking.

***“For a long time, the knock on birds was that they’re stupid. Beady eyed and nut brained. Reptiles with wings. Pigeon heads. Turkeys. They fly into windows, peck at their reflections, buzz into power lines, blunder into extinction.”***

The above is a quote from the very first paragraph in the introduction of Jennifer’s book. She starts out with all the negative reflections directed toward birds, all summed up with the expression “bird brain.” But she quickly turns to the facts that different bird species are capable of mental feats comparable to those found in primates. And she goes into birds’ capabilities that surpass those of humans.

Jennifer divided her book into eight chapters. Each chapter covers different aspects about birds’ behavior and physical makeup. Chapter 1 starts with Betty and 007, New Caledonian Crows, that not only used tools in solving complex problems but created tools to aid them in the retrieval of food like nice juicy grubs. And she noted that further research into these birds in the wild showed that young New Caledonian Crows learned how to make tools from their elders. Chapter 8 starts off on how the nondescript House Sparrow has spread everywhere in the world except for Antarctica. Before 1850 you would not have found a House Sparrow in the New World. Now they number in the millions, all from a few introduced in the New York City area. This bird was thought to hitch a ride with humans starting 10,000 years ago with the advent of agriculture. House Sparrows can quickly adapt to new environments and the changing environments created by man.

She is not afraid to compare birds to us humans. Yes, we have skills that birds do not possess, but birds have behaviors that we struggle to understand. The author in Chapter 7 goes into great detail on research and theories on how birds navigate over long distances. One interesting note that I found was her review of the how the hippocampus part of bird’s brain played in the navigation of different species. It appears that birds with exceptional navigation skills, like homing pigeons and those that make long migrations, have larger hippocampi. As a sidebar she also gave examples on how the hippocampus played a role in human ability to navigate. She used the example of how studies were done on cabbies in London, England. It was found that as they learned to navigate the streets of London over the years, the gray matter of their hippocampi increased with experience. Now here is one for all you who depend on GPS units for navigation. Jennifer cites a study by researchers at McGill University. They found by using brain scans that older adults who relied on GPS units had less gray matter in their hippocampi than those older adults who navigate on their own. And as a further note, those who were not GPS dependent showed less overall cognitive impairment compared to those GPS dependent for navigation.

The book’s main theme is the genius of birds supported by numerous literature sightings on bird research and anecdotal observations. But she also intertwines the storyline with her own birding experiences and that of others. The birder in me found this refreshing. But the scientist in me was also satisfied by her detailed inspection of bird behavior supported by numerous publications. The book is an excellent summary of past and recent research into bird behavior. It gives the reader a glimpse into the world of bird research. She provides the reader with a wealth of cited resources for further study. For me personally, I found her coverage of Black-capped Chickadees fascinating. These little birds that we hand feed at Blue Spruce Park have a complex interacting behavior that warrants more investigation.

In summary, as you can see I found the book of great interest that has given me new insights into different bird species’ behaviors. It has also provided me with new talking points about birds. We all need new talking points when it comes to birds. So I highly recommend *The Genius of Birds* by Jennifer Ackerman.

# Indiana Christmas Bird Count Results

34th Annual CBC – December 26, 2016

Snow Goose (CW)		Bald Eagle (4)	3	Pine Grosbeak (1)	
Canada Goose (2081)	1391	Northern Harrier (9)	4	Purple Finch (89)	16
Mute Swan (4)		Sharp-shinned Hawk (14)	5	House Finch (1563)	270
Tundra Swan (533)	6	Cooper's Hawk (15)	8	White-winged Crossbill (62)	
Wood Duck (2)	1	N. Goshawk (1)		Common Redpoll (63)	
Gadwall (30)		Red-shouldered Hawk (5)	1	Pine Siskin (375)	1
American Wigeon (14)		Red-tailed Hawk (71)	60	American Goldfinch (637)	179
American Black Duck (190)	66	Rough-legged Hawk (3)		Evening Grosbeak (566)	
Mallard (670)	128	Eastern Screech-Owl (13)	2	Lapland Longspur (6)	
N. Shoveler (2)		Great Horned Owl (10)	4	Snow Bunting (225)	
N. Pintail (10)		Barred Owl (5)	CW	Pine Warbler (1)	
Green-winged Teal (4)		Long-eared Owl (1)		Yellow-rumped Warbler (18)	
Canvasback (15)		Short-eared Owl (2)		Eastern Towhee (3)	2
Redhead (14)	CW	Belted Kingfisher (9)	2	American Tree Sparrow (483)	40
Ring-necked Duck (41)	1	Red-headed Woodpecker (1)		Chipping Sparrow (4)	
Greater Scaup (5)		Red-bellied Woodpecker (72)	51	Field Sparrow (13)	
Lesser Scaup (32)		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (8)	1	Savannah Sparrow (2)	
Surf Scoter (CW)		Downy Woodpecker (177)	72	Fox Sparrow (3)	1
White-winged Scoter (1)		Hairy Woodpecker (58)	22	Song Sparrow (152)	54
Black Scoter (1)		Northern Flicker (40)	3	Lincoln's Sparrow (1)	
Long-tailed Duck (3)		Pileated Woodpecker (36)	26	Swamp Sparrow (14)	3
Bufflehead (52)	CW	Am. Kestrel (26)	15	White-throated Sparrow (214)	51
Common Goldeneye (7)		Merlin (2)		White-crowned Sparrow (36)	13
Hooded Merganser (34)	10	Peregrine Falcon (1)		Dark-eyed Junco (2272)	457
Common Merganser (15)	11	Eastern Phoebe (1)		Northern Cardinal (584)	211
Red-breasted Merganser (2)		Northern Shrike (1)		Red-winged Blackbird (3570)	13
Ruddy Duck (223)	4	Blue Jay (566)	221	Eastern Meadowlark (10)	
N. Bobwhite (1)		American Crow (3275)	470	Rusty Blackbird (13)	1
Ring-necked Pheasant (21)	2	Fish Crow (8)		Brewer's Blackbird (CW)	
Ruffed Grouse (22)	3	*Common Raven (5)	6	Common Grackle (503)	75
Wild Turkey (345)	55	Horned Lark (225)	26	Brown-headed Cowbird (46)	CW
Pied-billed Grebe (29)		Black-capped Chickadee (808)	354		
Horned Grebe (7)	CW	Tufted Titmouse (394)	149	<b>Total Individuals (18,833)</b>	<b>7666</b>
Red-necked Grebe (1)		Red-breasted Nuthatch (51)	19	70 Species on 12/26/16 + 5 for CW	
Rock Pigeon (392)	135	White-breasted Nuthatch (201)	106	CW = Birds Seen During Count	
Mourning Dove (1117)	879	Brown Creeper (25)	8	Week but Not Count Day	
Virginia Rail (1)		Winter Wren (4)		CW = December 23-29	
Am. Coot (811)	1	Carolina Wren (61)	22	* Record-breaking or Equal High	
Sandhill Crane (2)		Golden-crowned Kinglet (106)	23	Tally (1)	
Killdeer (20)	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4)		**Species New to the Count (0)	
Wilson's Snipe (3)		Eastern Bluebird (152)	68	( ) Highest No. Seen on Any	
Am. Woodcock (2)		Hermit Thrush (6)	1	Previous Indiana CBC, 1983-2015	
Bonaparte's Gull (6)	1	Wood Thrush (CW)		131 Species on Count since	
Ring-billed Gull (50)	15	American Robin (1626)	16	1983 including 4 CW only species)	
Herring Gull (1)		Gray Catbird (2)			
Red-throated Loon (1)		Brown Thrasher (1)			
Common Loon (9)		Northern Mockingbird (22)	7		
Double-crested Cormorant (1)		European Starling (8656)	1504		
Great Blue Heron (8)	4	Cedar Waxwing (212)	14		
Turkey Vulture (4)	1	House Sparrow (809)	272		

## Christmas Bird Count Observers

Pat Andrascik	Bob Fairman	Connie Johnson	Linda Stormer
Steve Andrascik	Emmy Fairman	Debbie Kalbfleisch	Luke Stormer
Alice Beatty	Gary Ferrence	Brian Kane	Rodger Stormer
Tom Betts	Barb Fletcher	Gloria Lamer	Garrett Strittmatter
Jean Blair	Sue Gatti	Dennis Lauffer	Mark Strittmatter
Sid Blair	Jud Glover	Mary A. Little	John Taylor
Lee Carnahan	Tom Glover	Howard Mandigo	Mary Lu Tucker
Roger Carnahan	Carol Guba	Donna Meyer	Ernest Walker
Dorcas Clark	Alicia Hall	Ed Meyer	Noel Watkins
Dan Cunkelman	Margaret Higbee	Sara Pulliam	Chris Williams
Marcy Cunkelman	Roger Higbee	Bob Ramsey	Paula Williams
Jim Dickson	Dory Jacobs	Cindy Rogers	Daniel Winstead
Sue Dickson	Pat Johner	Scott Simms	Ray Winstead
Ed Donley	Paul Johner		

## CBCs Past and Present

Year	Total Species	Count Week	Individuals	Year	Total Species	Count Week	Individuals
1983	56	3	4188	2000	64	2	12397
1984	57	5	9540	2001	77	2	14365
1985	51	2	4468	2002	62	2	9739
1986	54	2	7453	2003	72	4	9687
1987	60	3	5676	2004	72	5	8788
1988	48	3	6670	2005	62	7	12130
1989	52	4	4309	2006	64	5	8762
1990	65	6	8502	2007	82	3	14344
1991	60	5	6004	2008	71	8	14329
1992	67	8	6435	2009	56	5	8472
1993	70	9	13490	2010	55	2	7174
1994	67	4	10759	2011	71	4	9029
1995	71	5	8637	2012	80	3	9094
1996	65	7	9994	2013	68	6	8843
1997	74	3	10180	2014	74	7	5693
1998	82	7	10873	2015	70	4	8835
1999	73	2	18833	2016	70	5	7665

## Great Backyard Bird Count (continued from page 3)

on one day, or you may count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.

Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count periods. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website.

New participants must set up a free GBBC account to submit their checklists or use login information from an existing account for any other Cornell Lab citizen-science

project. You'll only need to do this once to participate in all future GBBC events. Click "Submit Your Bird Checklist" at the top of this page or see "How to Participate" for more details. As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported.

Please visit the official website at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) for more information

## CBC Notes

The Indiana CBC was held once again this year on our traditional date, December 26, and we met at 6:00 at Hoss's to compile the list. Twenty-one birders showed up, and we tallied 67 species at the dinner. There were three nominations for the James Dearing Award. This award is given to the most unusual bird reported at the dinner. Nominations included the Lee & Roger Carnahan-Dennis Lauffer crew for the sheer numbers of birds found, Gloria Lamer and Alice Beatty's Wood Duck, and Ray and Daniel Winstead's Turkey Vulture. The vulture won, so the Winsteads received a small toy owl. Also worthy of mention was Gloria Lamer and Alice Beatty's Rusty Blackbird in a puddle at Yellow Creek.

Other highlights reported at the dinner included a Bonaparte's Gull and a leucistic Common Merganser found by John Taylor, Ed Donley, and Mark Strittmatter at Yellow Creek. Lee's crew also added most of the waterfowl and an amazing six White-crowned Sparrows. Among Dan and Marcy Cunkelman's 31 species were a Ruffed Grouse and 16 Wild Turkeys. The Winsteads also noted one of the only two Belted Kingfishers and one of two Eastern Screech-Owls. Pat Johner listed a Cooper's Hawk and a Red-breasted Nuthatch. Northern Harrier was the highlight on Tom and Jud Glover's list. Debbie Kalbfleisch, Roger, and I flushed two Ruffed Grouse in our forced march at Yellow Creek and spotted two high flying Northern Harriers – one at Yellow Creek and the other along Dark Hollow. Cindy Rogers reported two Purple Finches at her feeder, and Donna Meyer spotted the count's first Northern Flicker.

Then there were the Tundra Swans... Three adults were spotted flying over Getty Park in the afternoon by Daniel and Ray Winstead. Three were also observed by Lee Carnahan and crew at Two Lick Reservoir later in the day. But the story didn't end there. South of there and heading on a direct flight were three Tundras in Armstrong Twp., noted by Rodger Stormer. We decided that the former sets of three were the same birds, but we added the three sighted by Rodger because they were already south of Indiana, high flying, and headed in a direct line south-southeast around 10 a.m.

That evening and the next day more data arrived with good finds. Sara Pulliam heard her Great Horned Owl



Barred Owl was not seen or heard on count day, but it was added for count week as it was heard 12/29. Count week includes three days before and three days after the official count. (This Barred Owl was photographed in *Indiana* 10/30 by Tony Bruno.)

near Homer City. A Sharp-shinned Hawk and a White-crowned Sparrow visited Dory Jacobs' yard. Sue Gatti's "claim to fame" were two Eastern Towhees in her yard. Mary Lu Tucker noted four Purple Finches in addition to her 11 House Finches. In Indiana, Barb Fletcher's list included 2 Great Horned Owls hooting in the predawn and a Red-breasted Nuthatch. Chris and Paula Williams from New Jersey called to tell us that they had found a Pine Siskin visiting a feeder where they always stop during the CBC. They also saw the second Belted Kingfisher and another White-crowned Sparrow.

We also welcome newcomers to our count – Bob Ramsey birded his property and environs for seven hours, and two Massachusetts birders – Brian Kane and Noel Watkins visiting relatives in Indiana – added a few species at Yellow Creek. Alicia Hall joined our group as a feeder-watcher. We also added an incidental sighting reported by Ernest Walker.

I'd like to thank everyone who participated because everyone added something to the count.

As you can see from the chart on the previous page, we did fairly well this year. Our 70 total species tally is above our previous 33-year average of 66 and our previous mean of 67. Our total number of individuals decreased by 1,180 from last year's count, but the nice day accounts for some of the decrease.

No new species was added to the count, and only one species reached its maxima this year. The previous high for Common Raven had been 5. This year we found 6.

Twenty-five feeder-watchers spent 58.583 hours at 20 feeders; 30 field birders in 16 parties hiked 25.95 miles and drove 581.1 miles, spending a total of 98.98 hours counting birds.

Sincere thanks to all of our participants! If you know of any other birders who live within 7.5 miles of Second & Grandview in Indiana, please let them know about our Christmas Bird Count. We could certainly use more feeder watchers next year!

Margaret Higbee  
Count Compiler

# Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria County – Summer 2016

If you notice that the species in the following report are in a different than normal order, check out the new American Birding Association's checklist at [http://listing.aba.org/checklist/abachecklist\\_v7.9.0.pdf](http://listing.aba.org/checklist/abachecklist_v7.9.0.pdf) There has been a major reshuffling of species.

Please send your bird reports at the end of each month to Margaret Higbee at [bcoriole@windstream.net](mailto:bcoriole@windstream.net) or mail to 3119 Creekside Road, Indiana, PA 15701.

Abbreviations: Armstrong Trail (AT), Blue Spruce County Park (BS), Crooked Creek Park (CC), Indiana University of PA (IUP), Lewisville (LV), Prince Gallitzin State Park (PG), Shelocta (SH), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

The highlight of the season was a flock of 35 to 40 **American White Pelicans** seen over LV 8/23 (MC). The only other *Indiana* record was one at YC 4/28/1992 (TN).

A lone **Mute Swan** was present at YC from 8/30 to 11/30 (v.o.); not commonly seen in the county, the previous report of one occurred March-May 2012 (v.o.). Unusual were only three reports of **Tundra Swans** in the region; 8 were sighted over BS 11/11 (MH, RH), 5 at Margus Lake 11/21 (CL, GL), and 14 at YC 11/25 (AS). In past years Tundra Swans were much more numerous during the fall migration.



Marge Van Tassel photographed this Pied-billed Grebe 9/27 at Crooked Creek.

A high of 85 **Wood Ducks** was tallied 9/25 (TG) at YC. This count represents the fifth highest for the period during the last twenty years. Other migrating ducks were in low numbers.  **Gadwalls** moved through YC between 10/8 (LC, MH, RH, PS, KT *et al*) and 11/22 (LC, ED, MH, RH, DK) with the high of 15 on 11/19 (AP, ST); 2 stopped at Hemlock Lake 10/23 (TG) and 5 at PG 11/13 (RL).

**American Wigeons** were sparsely reported at YC – one 10/11 (LC, RC, ED, PF, MH, RH), 2 on 11/5 (3RBC, TBC), and 6 on 11/22 (LC *et al*). Hemlock Lake harbored 2 on 10/23 (TG). The region's high **American Black Duck** count was 8 at CC 11/23 (MVT). Last **Blue-winged Teal** were 11 at YC 10/29 (MH, RH, DK). **Northern Shovelers** were noted only at YC on three dates – 3 on 9/14 (DR), 4 on 11/19 (AP, ST), and 3 on 11/25 (TR). First **Green-winged Teal** appeared at YC 8/23 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, KT), peaked at 22 on 11/15 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, JSt), and were last seen a week later, 11/22 (LC, ED, MH, RH, DK).

Only one **Redhead** was reported at YC 11/20 (JJ). By 11/22 (LC, ED, MH, RH, DK), **Ring-necked Ducks** had reached their high count of 127. A male **Lesser Scaup** was present on Dragonfly Pond at YC starting in the spring through Nov. (v.o.). A **Black Scoter** at YC was a nice find 11/15 (TA, LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, GL, JSt) and again on 11/25 (TR). Single **Long-tailed Ducks** were found at PG 10/28 (TR) and at YC 11/15 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, JSt)

and again 11/19 (MH, RH). The only double-digit **Bufflehead** report cited 21 at PG 11/13 (RL). Two **Common Goldeneyes** were present at YC on six Nov. dates (v.o.).

YC harbored the season's first 2 **Hooded Mergansers** 11/8 (LC, RC, MH, RH); numbers built to 15 by 11/22 (LC, ED, MH, RH, DK). An exact count of 196 **Common Mergansers** at CC 11/23-24 (JB) was the maximum; PG hosted only one 8/28 (TA) while *Indiana's* lone report mentioned two along Curry Run near SH 10/22 (MH, RH).

Only one **Red-breasted Merganser** was noted at YC 10/11 (LC, RC, ED, PF, MH, RH).

A lone **Northern Bobwhite** of undetermined origin was listed near Marion Center 8/5 (SS). Once again **Ruffed Grouse** reports were few and far between. Single birds were noted at PG 8/9 (JS) and at Nolo 8/15 (AB, DB); 3 were also found at PG 8/23 (TA); and one at BS 9/3 (ED, MH, RH, FM, JM, SSi, JT).

**Pied-billed Grebes** first appeared 9/6 (LC, RC, JH, MH, RH, DK, RN, KR, KT) at YC where the high tally was 41 on 11/19 (AP, ST); double digits were reported on 15 other dates. Elsewhere numbers were low with the highs of 2 at KR 9/11 (MH, RH), 2 at Hemlock Lake 10/16 (AK, JK), 3 at PG 11/12 (TA), and 3 at CC 11/23 (JB). Single **Horned Grebes** were observed only at YC 11/1 (LC, RC, ED, TG, MH, RH, DK, JSt, KT).

SGL 137 hosted a rather late **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** 10/8 (TR); prior to this year, this was the second latest regional date on record with the previous being 10/14/2000 (LC, BF, StG, ShG, MH, RH) at YC; it *is* the latest *Armstrong* record. Setting a new all-time late date, a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was well observed at YC 11/6 (AK, JK); the observers indicated that this was a juvenile.

More reports of **Common Nighthawks** were received this year than in recent years. Ten flew over LV 8/23 (MC), 2

over SH 8/28 (MH, RH), and another 4 over LV 9/7 (MC). Downtown Indiana continues to be a haven for migrating **Chimney Swifts**; an estimated 100 swifts were observed entering the chimney of the US Post Office 8/22 (DF, JF).

The **American Coot** high of 373 at YC 11/15 (LC, TG *et al*) did not begin to approach the four-digit numbers seen in Nov. of the years 2006-2014.

Last **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was photographed near SH 10/2 (MH, RH).

Fifteen shorebird species were recorded during the period. The first week in Aug. saw **Semipalmated Plovers, Least Sandpipers, Pectoral Sandpipers, Semipalmated Sandpipers, and Lesser Yellowlegs** migrating through YC (m. ob.).

A nice find was an **American Golden-Plover** at West Lebanon 9/29 (MH, RH). **Semipalmated Plovers** continued to visit our region through 10/11 (LC, RC, ED, PF, MH, RH). A **Killdeer** with three chicks, estimated to be about two weeks old, were viewed at a storm water pond near Seward 11/14 (TRo); this is the latest recorded nesting in *Indiana*.

A **Sanderling** was a good find at YC 9/15 (SG); the last one there had been seen 9/6/2011 (LC, TG, MH, MVT). Two **Baird's Sandpipers** stopped at KR 9/5 (MD) and were still present 9/10 (SG). **Least Sandpiper** maxima included 5 at CC 8/6 (ABu), 8 at YC 8/9 (LC, ED, TG, DK), and 18 at KR 8/12 (MH, RH). Top **Pectoral Sandpiper** reports included 2 at CC 8/6 (ABu), 2 at KR 8/12, 20 (SG, MH, RH), and 7 at YC 10/4 (LC, RC, TG, DK, GL, KT); one observed near Belsano 11/21 (CL, GL) set a new regional late date by 8 days. The previous late Pectoral sighting occurred 11/13/2001 (LC, MH, DJ, LW) at YC. **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, found only at YC and KR, included maxima of 3 at KR 8/20 (SG, MH, RH) and 4 at YC 8/30 (TB, LC, RC, ED, TG, MH, RH, DK). A **Short-billed Dowitcher** visited KR 8/12 (SG, MH, RH) and 9/5 (MD).

Two **Long-billed Dowitchers** were observed at YC 10/2 (LC, MH, RH), 10/4 (LC, RC, TG, MH, RH, DK, GL, KT) and on 10/7 (AK, JK); this is the 6<sup>th</sup> county record. A rather late **American Woodcock** was flushed at YC 11/22 (LC, ED, MH, RH, DK). Last **Spotted Sandpiper** was photographed at CC 10/19 (AK, JK). Top counts of **Solitary Sandpiper** were 4 at CC 8/6 (ABu) and at Wilmore Dam 8/18 (JS), 7 at YC 8/9 (LC, ED, TG, DK,



Steve Gosser found and photographed this Sanderling at Yellow Creek on 9/15.



Roger Higbee photographed these two Long-billed Dowitchers at Yellow Creek on 10/4.

KT), and 4 at KR 8/12 (SG); a singleton at YC 10/11 (LC, RC, PF, MH, RH) was last. Listed only at YC, **Greater Yellowlegs** peaked at 6 on 10/18 (RN), when the observer watched one eat a small frog. More widespread, **Lesser Yellowlegs** reports detailed 7 at CC 8/7 (TR), one at KR 8/12,20 (SG), and 1-3 at YC 8/7 (TH) through 10/18 (PF).

Absent from YC this entire fall, **Ring-billed Gulls** were noted only at PG where 22 was the high 11/11 (TA). Single **Herring Gulls** were noted on the Allegheny at KT 11/8 (MH, RH) and n. of Lock & Dam 8 11/13 (TR).

Three **Black Terns** were noted 8/23 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK, KT) and 11 **Forster's Terns** 10/8 (SG), all at YC.

**Common Loons**, too, were under-reported; found only at YC, 1-2 were present on seven dates between 10/29 (LC, MH, RH, DK, JSt, KT)

An **American Bittern**, sighted at PG 10/13 (JS) was the observer's first since 2007. The only **Great Egret** noted was at YC 8/16 (LC, ED, MH, RH, DK). The region's last **Green**

**Heron** was spotted at YC 10/8 (LC, MH, RH, PS, KT *et al*).

A **Black Vulture** in the company of 25 **Turkey Vultures** soared over Dilltown 11/6 (DB, LC, CL, GL); Black Vulture is the 9<sup>th</sup> *Indiana* record. **Osprey** moved through the region between 8/3 (MVT) when one was found at CC and 10/6 (DM) when one flew over IN. **Northern Harriers** were widespread with reports from all three counties. **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were found at ten locations; **Cooper's Hawks**, at 11 (v.o.). Last 2 **Broad-winged Hawks** were observed near LV 9/17 (MC).

One to 2 **Eastern Screech-Owls** were present near LV throughout the period (MC); another was found near SGL 247 on 8/20 (TR); one was present near Leechburg 8/25 & 10/16 (MVT); a red morph was found in *Armstrong* (TB) and photographed 10/18 (MVT); another red morph took up residence in an owl box near SH 11/19 (MH, RH) where it remained into the winter season; this owl box had been unoccupied since 2011. **Great Horned Owls**, which continue to go mostly unreported, were noted on four dates between 8/7 and 11/29 (MC, DC) near LV; SGL 103 hosted one on 8/23 (TA); singletons were heard at SGL 137 on 10/8 (TR) and at CC 10/12 (MVT); another was reported at Murphy's Bottom in *Armstrong* 11/6 (BP, KS). **Barred Owls** had been heard consistently at Nolo this fall (AB, DB); one was photographed in *Indiana* 10/30 (TB); another was heard only twice 11/1, 5 (MH, RH) near SH; these were the only reports in the region.

**Merlin** reports included singletons at SGL 108 on 8/7 (TA); at YC 9/13 (TAc, WA, LC, RC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DM, JT); at IUP 8/31, 9/15, 11/29 (JT); at CC 9/15, 19 (MVT); and 2 at YC 10/9 (TA).

Single **Olive-sided Flycatchers** visited a yard near LV 9/9, 10 (MC) and YC 9/13 (RC, MH, JT) and 9/14, (DR). An **Eastern Wood-Pewee**, our latest Oct. record, was reported at YC 10/9 (TA). Two **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were listed at BS 8/29 (MH, RH) where one was found 9/10 (SG). A **Least Flycatcher** noted at YC 9/27 (DK) is the latest on record for *Indiana*.



An American Pipit stopped at Crooked Creek Park 9/29 where Marge Van Tassel got this shot.

Last vireo dates included 9/11 (MH, RH) for **White-eyed Vireo** at KR; 9/16 (SF) for **Yellow-throated** at YC; 10/17 (MH, RH) for **Blue-headed** near SH; 9/5 (JP) for **Warbling** at YC; and 10/1 (ED, EF, TF, TG, MH, RH, DK, DM) for **Red-eyed** near SH. Blue Spruce was once again the hotspot for **Philadelphia Vireo** where one was seen 9/3 (ED, MH, RH, FM, JM, SSI, JT) and again 9/5 (MH, RH, RW); IUP's south campus yielded one 9/12 (JT).

**Fish Crows** continue in IN with counts of 4 on 11/2 (JT) and one 11/19 (JT).

Three **Purple Martins** lingered at PG 8/7 (RL). The season's last **Tree Swallow** was sighted at YC 10/4 (LC, RC *et al*). Two late **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** stopped at Creek Road 9/4 (MVT). Last were 34 **Cliff Swallows** at PG 8/7 (RL) and 5 **Barn Swallows** at YC 9/10 (LC, MH, RH, DK, KR, KT).

**Red-breasted Nuthatches** moved into PA and were widespread across the county this year (v.o.) in small numbers; 6 were noted near IN where one landed on the observer's arm 10/31 (JP). A very late **House Wren** was noted at CC 11/25 (KK). BS hosted the first **Winter Wren** 9/15 (SG) while the last report came from the AT n. of Lock 8 11/13 (TR). A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** still lingered at CC 11/26 (MVT).

Hemlock Lake harbored the last **Swainson's Thrush** 10/16 (AK, JK). A **Gray-cheeked Thrush**, found near SH 10/1 (MH, RH), comprised the entire report for this species. Last **Wood Thrush** was spotted 10/28 (MC) near LV. A **Gray Catbird** remained at BS 10/16 (MH, RH) while the last **Brown Thrasher** was listed near LV 10/9 (MC).

Single **American Pipits** were found at CC 9/29 (MVT) and at YC both 10/11 (LC, RC, ED, PF, MH, RH) and 10/15 (LC, TG, DK, MH, RH, GL); top count was 28 in a recently tilled field in Fox Hollow 10/16 (TR).

**Pine Siskins** were noted sporadically near LV where 5 was the top count 8/15 (MC); singletons were listed there 8/31, 10/6 (MC); 11/19 (MC) yielded 3; PG hosted 2 on 11/5 (TA).

Twenty-five warbler species were recorded this period. A lone **Golden-winged Warbler** was a welcomed find at BS 9/3 (MH, JT). Last dates include 9/5 (MD) for **Blue-winged Warbler** at KR and 9/15 (SG) at YC for **Black-and-white**. **Tennessee Warblers** moved through our region between 8/29 (MH, RH) when 4 were noted at BS and 10/4 (DJM) when 2 were found at IUP. Two **Orange-crowned Warblers** were great finds at YC 9/16 (SF). **Nashville Warblers** were sparsely reported with mentions of one at BS 9/5 (MH, RH), one near LV 9/25 (MC), one at IUP 9/29 (JT), and 2 at SGL 137 on 10/8 (AK, JK). A **Connecticut**

**Warbler** was well observed and described at IUP's south campus 9/12 (JT). Last **Common Yellowthroats** were found 10/8 at both SGL 137 (TR) and YC (SG). Last reported were **Hooded Warbler** at CC 10/4 (MVT) and **American Redstart** at SGL 137 10/8 (TR). **Cape May Warblers** moved through the region between 8/27 (JT) when one was observed at IUP and 10/8 (TR) when 2 were at SGL 137. Last dates included 9/23 (MC) for **Northern Parula** near LV and 10/5 (JT) at IUP for **Magnolia Warbler**. **Bay-breasted Warblers** migrated through our region between 8/29 (MH, RH) and 10/8 (TR) with respective sightings at BS and SGL 137. Reported only at BS, 2 **Blackburnian Warblers** lingered through 9/5 (MH, RH, RW). Last **Yellow Warbler** was sighted near SH 9/2 (MH, RH) while **Chestnut-sided** was still noted 9/5 (SG) at BS. The **Blackpoll** migration extended from 9/3 (MH, RH) through 10/14 (MVT) with respective sightings at BS and Cochran's Mill. IUP yielded the last **Black-throated Blue Warbler** 10/4 (DJM). Single **Palm Warblers**, mentioned at YC, were listed 9/10 (LC, MH, RH, DK, KR, KT), 9/14 (DR), and 10/4 (LC, RC *et al*); Palms also stopped at IUP 10/7-9 (JT). Last dates included 10/17 (MH, RH) near SH for Pine Warbler; 11/25 (JB) at CC for Yellow-rumped Warbler; and 10/8 at both SGL 137 (TR) and YC (SG) for **Black-throated Green Warbler**. Single **Canada Warblers** were spotted 8/29 (MH, RH) at BS and 9/13 (TAc, WA, LC *et al*) at YC, the lone reports.

Three **American Tree Sparrows** found at IUP 11/19 (JT) were first while **Chipping Sparrow** lingered till 11/7 (TA) at PG. First 2 **Fox Sparrows** arrived 10/31 (JS) at PG. Single **Lincoln Sparrows** were found at IUP 10/3 (JT) and 10/4-5 (DJM) and at YC 10/11 (LC, RC, ED, PF, MH, RH). Increasingly more difficult to find in our area. **Savannah Sparrows** included one near LV 9/28 (MC) and 2 at West Lebanon 9/29 (MH, RH). Arrival dates for **White-crowned Sparrows** and **White-throated Sparrows** were 10/8 both at YC (SG) and at SGL 137 (TR) for the former and 10/4 (DJM) at IUP for the latter.

Last dates include 10/9 (JP) for **Scarlet Tanager** at BS, 10/1 (ED, EF, TF, TG, MH, RH, DK, DM) for 2 **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** near SH, and 10/3 (MH, RH) for **Indigo Bunting**, also near SH.

**Rusty Blackbirds** were recorded only at YC, where the high of 67 occurred 10/25 (LC, RC, ED, PF, MH, RH, DK, GL), near LV where 24 were counted 11/6 (MC), and along the AT n. of Lock 8 where 11 was the tally on 11/13 (TR). Two **Orchard Orioles** 8/5 (MVT), photographed wsw of N. Buffalo, were the only ones mentioned this fall. Remaining till 9/17 (MC) near LV, a **Baltimore Oriole** was the last noted.

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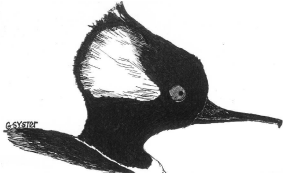
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Richard Chirichiello photographed this Solitary Sandpiper at Yellow Creek 9/20.



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