

The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Todd Bird Club
www.toddbirdclub.org

August 2020

The Sighting of the Kite

by Joseph Pumford

The morning of the kite sighting, May 13, was sunny with clear skies and many migrating birds. Before the kite showed up, several species of warblers and a Cooper's Hawk were also observed. When the Mississippi Kite first flew in, I saw it loop around the house and land on a snag in our backyard. At first, I wasn't sure what it was, but when I got a better look at it, I realized that it was a Mississippi Kite. I called inside to my brother James and told him that a Mississippi Kite was outside. James came out, and we got some good pictures of it.



This Mississippi Kite, photographed by Joseph Pumford, was a second county record.

After watching it for a few minutes, we recorded it on eBird and alerted several local birders. It stayed at our house for about four days, and over that period of time in-county and out-of-county birders came to observe the kite. While it was at our house, we enjoyed watching its acrobatic dives and its soaring around our house, eating insects on the fly.

We were honored to receive a Certificate of Appreciation from the PSO for allowing birders to come to see the kite.

Meetings and Outings Canceled

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the officers and other concerned members have decided to follow the course set by other birding organizations – Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology, Three Rivers Birding Club, Audubon, etc. – and cancel our fall programming. We hope to reschedule everything in 2021.

The Christmas Bird Count, scheduled for Saturday, December 26, has not yet been canceled. Most people bird with family members or by themselves. Mark it on your calendar now, and we'll keep you posted.

Meanwhile, please bird on your own, enter your data in eBird, or submit it to Margaret Higbee at bcoriole@windstream.net or mail it to 3119 Creekside Road, Indiana, PA 15701-7934.

Take the opportunity to bird in your own yard, neighborhood, or on a local trail. The birds are there and waiting! It's amazing what's out there. Migration has already started.

Stay safe!!!

Birding during The Pandemic

By Debbie Kalbfleisch

Well, this has been a weird year. First of all, I hope that you and your loved ones have made it through safely so far. Please continue to wear a mask, practice social distancing, and wash your hands! Yes, this is the new normal. No, it won't be forever. But, it will seem like forever. Sorry! During this time, it's more important than ever to have hobbies and diversions to keep ourselves occupied and safe.

I think, as birders and nature lovers, that we've been luckier than most. We have only to look out our window, seeing a cardinal at the feeder, to feel a spark of joy. When Butler County locked down because of Covid-19, I confined myself to home and yard birding. With some restrictions lifted, I allow myself to bird farther afield, but I limit myself to an hour of travel time.

With some variations, depending on your tolerance and level of risk, you are probably experiencing much the same. Alas, one of my favorite places, Yellow Creek State Park, is now slightly out of reach! I have heard that more people are discovering this gem, and while I've heard some grumbling about crowded conditions, I think we need to look on the bright side. More people are now discovering the thrill of birding, and this means that more people will find that we actually need to work to protect wild places. I'm especially happy that families are taking a new look at the natural world. Hopefully, a few of them will join the Todd Bird Club! Children especially are welcome!

The limitations I've set myself does mean that I've had to set new challenges. Luckily, I get a lot of satisfaction out of building lists, and according to eBird, my checklist streak is now 109 days, which corresponds exactly to the beginning of the shutdown! My new goal is to enter at least one checklist every day. Additionally, my yard bird list is up to 60 species.

One discovery among my birding buddies during this interesting time is how many of us are adding new yard birds! Reports from friends came in of Red-headed Woodpeckers, Orchard Orioles, and Wild Turkeys starting in March. I myself added four new birds: American Pipit, White-crowned Sparrow, Common Nighthawk, and Eastern Phoebe; and I live in a well-manicured suburban community! Last year, I only added a total of three new species for the yard. Of course, we are all having our coffee every morning next to the window, rather than running our usual errands and general running around; but we also wondered if nature is creeping closer to us with

the decreased traffic patterns. Indeed, Youtube videos soon proved this to be the case. If you didn't know about this, just google "wildlife in cities coronavirus."

Since Magee Marsh and Presque Isle are now off limits to me, I've had to exert more effort to discover local parks and patches. For this, eBird has been invaluable. In my former life, I asked eBird to alert me to birds in the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. After a few weeks of shutdown, I realized it was too depressing to wade through hundreds of birds, most of which seemed to be on the eastern side of the state. If you're on eBird and haven't yet done this, it's quite easy — go into Explore, then Alerts. I went in and deleted my previous statewide search, and limited my Needs Alerts for species I hadn't recorded for the year in just four counties. This is much more manageable. For example, I've been on a hunt for a Red-headed Woodpecker in my immediate vicinity, and I discovered that someone had found a family group not that far from me. Going deeper into his list, I found that the birder added some useful details about the location and included photos. For the past month, I've stopped by a tiny ball field that I never would have guessed held such a wealth of birds. Even though I wasn't getting the Red-headed Woodpecker, I delighted in finding Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Killdeer, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Kingbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, and Indigo Bunting, to mention just a few. And, finally, on my fourth and most recent visit, a Red-headed Woodpecker! I'll continue to visit this location, at least until they start playing ball again, especially since it's only 15 minutes away! I seriously doubt that I would have investigated this tiny park in my pre-pandemic life, so it's definitely in the Win Column. I'm looking forward to discovering even more spots close to home in the future!

You will notice that I've mentioned eBird several times, and I do recommend it. However, keeping lists is not for everyone, and that's more than okay. That's one of the best things about birding — you decide how you want to bird.

Good birding, wherever you call home! And stay safe!



Local Birding Options

Many local birders have been spending a lot of time in their yards, and several have experienced top-notch birding. Joseph and James Pumford have quite an impressive yard list this year. Not only did they find a Mississippi Kite and a Wilson's Warbler in Indiana, but they listed many other interesting species besides. Other birds they noted at home included Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Blue-headed Vireo, and a fly-over Merlin. Just outside Indiana Sue Dickson has had a Yellow-billed Cuckoo and a Common Raven in her yard. Vicki Stelma listed Mallards, Cooper's Hawk, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Brown Thrasher, and Eastern Bluebirds for the first time in her yard this year. Also for the first time this year Barb Fletcher near Homer City observed a Yellow Warbler in her yard, then just recently a Common Raven flew over. Marcy Cunkelman near Lewisville watched a Sandhill Crane fly overhead. Near Penn Run Dave and Alice Beatty enjoy Barred Owls on a regular basis as well as Common Ravens and Wild Turkeys. Dave even heard an Eastern Whip-poor-will calling one evening in early May. Just up the hill from Dave and Alice Beatty, Gloria and Clayton Lamer have experienced Hooded Mergansers on their pond, both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Broad-winged Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Purple Finches. Unfortunately, Gloria missed the leucistic Black-capped Chickadee spotted by her husband. Near Shelocta Ed Donley enjoyed the company of a Great Egret this spring besides his nesting Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers. Roger and Margaret Higbee have listed 93 species in their yard including flyover Common Loon, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, and a nice variety of warblers including Golden-winged, Palm, and Pine. Over in Armstrong County Marge Van Tassel's yard yielded both Orchard and Baltimore Orioles as well as a Red-shouldered Hawk fledgling this year.

If you're tired of yard birding, try some of our local trails. The Ghost Town Trail (GTT) with its many accesses offers good birding. The section from Dilltown to Clarke Run has been productive in the past for both spring and fall migrants. The old Rexis Branch, which is now the C&I Extension of the GTT is a favorite of many. The stretch from Red Mill to PA 422 is particularly good for nesting warblers including both Black-throated Blue and Canada. Starting at Vintondale and walking toward Ebensburg, varied habitat – including mine drainage treatment ponds, marshes, other wetlands, and deciduous forest – provides food and cover for a variety of species. In winter the section from Wehrum toward Clarke Run is productive for Brown Creeper and Winter Wren.

Just north of us in Jefferson County is the Mahoning Shadow Trail. Tom Glover likes the first section that starts at Valier because of the Bald Eagle nest, the marsh and wetland habitat, and the fact that birding usually is productive. The other sections are different but just as interesting. The Armstrong Trail, especially the part that starts near Mosgrove at Lock & Dam 8 heading north, is excellent throughout the year. Theo Rickert birds this quite a bit and always reports a good variety of species. Near Apollo, the Roaring Run Trail and its tributary trails offer riverside and streamside birding. In spring and summer Louisiana Waterthrushes and Yellow-throated Warblers are present in numbers. Weaving back and forth between Indiana and Westmoreland Counties, the West Penn Trail provides great habitat and lots of species. Most recently Dennis Lauffer found a Swainson's Warbler that was still present near the end of July along the Indiana section. Starting right in Indiana is the Hoodlebug Trail that follows PA 119 to Blairsville.

Indiana County also boasts, besides the trails, a great county park system. Blue Spruce Park is great for both spring and fall warblers. An early morning walk along Getty Run Trail in September can also turn up Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Philadelphia Vireo. Hemlock Lake in the northeastern part of the county is under-birded but has great habitat. Blacklick Valley Natural Area near Armagh, Pine Ridge Park near Blairsville, and Smicksburg Park are other options.

Yellow Creek State Park is the place to go for migrant water birds and shorebirds in Indiana County. The total species eBirded is 274, but all the species on the park's list have not been entered in eBird. Yellow Creek offers the county's best chance of seeing a rarity.

In Armstrong County, Crooked Creek Park is another great birding spot. At Keystone Reservoir off PA 210 near Elderton 191 species have been eBirded. Right now there is good shorebird habitat, but a scope is required.

In Cambria Prince Gallitzin is a fabulous state park with reports of many rarities. Most recently Tony DeSantis photographed a Brown Pelican at the park. It also covers a huge area, so it's not wall-to-wall people.

Our state game lands also provide habitat for good birding, especially during the no hunting seasons. SGL 153 along the Conemaugh River, 174 in northeastern Indiana Co., 248 near Two Lick Reservoir, 262 near Gipsy, 273 along the south side of Yellow Creek, and 276 east of Blairsville are other areas to explore in Indiana.

There are many state game lands in Armstrong and Cambria that are worth exploring. Theo Rickert prefers SGL 247 southwest of Kittanning. SGL 108 covers a large area in Cambria. Tina Alianiello birds here frequently.

You don't have to travel far to bird. Many of us get into a rut, going to the same location week after week. Explore new areas near your home. You never know what species might turn up – even in your own back yard.

An Unexpected Pleasure

by Donna Meyer

Exploring Pennsylvania's state parks can result in unexpected surprises. While visiting Clear Creek State Park, I spent some time in the campground's nature museum. I was drawn to the informative display about the Clarion River. Included on the wall was a poem – "Among the Clarion Hills."

As I read the poem, a voice came to me. I was no longer reading the poem but hearing it being recited by a familiar voice:

– the voice of an early Todd Bird Club member

– the voice of a person with whom I often chatted at St. Andrew's Village about his birding adventures

– the voice of a person who shared his beautiful avian paintings and carvings with me

It was not until I came to the conclusion and read his name that I knew he had recited it to me.

Read and enjoy. I hope if you knew Leon Hue that you will also hear him.

Among the Clarion Hills

by Leon Hue

I am the River Clarion.
My name comes from the beautiful sounds made by the waters clattering over rocky streambed.

I suppose I got my start from waters of receding glaciers.
I certainly was here before the first red man built his camp fires along my banks.

Before the Indians, the deer, the bear, and their next of kin drank from my waters.
I saw sunrise before the first grouse drummed or the first call of the Wild Turkey.

I saw sunsets before the first call of the Barred Owl.
I heard the howl of the wolf before I heard the howl of the Senecas.

I gave birth to many a pine and hemlock seed.
The same can be said of the mountain laurel and the rhododendron and their needs.

I am well acquainted with the flight of the eagle
and the Osprey's silent glide.

Sunny days may come and sunny days may go,
but I go on forever.

I now offer you a path for the hiker, water for the canoeist,
and shade for the picnicker, the artist, and the poet.
I offer you a sunset in the evening and a new day at dawn.

I offer you dark shadows from my pines and the nights of the full moon.
I offer you snow in winter; bursting buds in spring.
I offer cool breezes in summer and of course the full glory of autumn.

I share these with the deer, the bear, the eagle, and the Barred Owl.
They all love it here; and so do I.



*I saw sunsets before the first call
of the Barred Owl.*

Photo by Roger Higbee

2020 Indiana County Migration Count Revisited

by Margaret Higbee

Most birders describe the May 9, 2020, Indiana County Migration Count (ICMC) as the worst on record – the weather was horrible; the birds were quiet; and coverage was low. Quoting Carol Guba: “These numbers seem more like a Christmas Bird Count than a migration count.” Beth Marshall writes, “Are you sure this wasn’t the Christmas Bird Count? The weather was terrible, windy, cold with snow.”

Now that sounds very negative – almost like the count wasn’t worth doing. Not true!!! This year we tallied 139 species, actually seven more than last year! The total number of individual birds was 6,944 – 938 more than last year! Not bad...considering. The temperature at 6:00 a.m. was 26° F. Some parts of the county had snow cover while most of the area experienced snowfall throughout the day. Wind, too, was an issue. Yes, this was winter coat and glove weather – and not just for me (I’m always cold!), but none of our observers reported being too warm all day! But things started looking up. By 7:28 it was already 28°.

Roger and I birded our yard from 6:15 till 7:20 as we were waiting for our Lincoln’s Sparrow to put in his appearance. This bird had shown up on May 4 then reappeared the previous morning, May 8, and we hoped that he would stay for the count. We often miss Lincoln’s Sparrow on the ICMC; in fact, the last time we had this species on a migration count was in 2005!. We finally spotted him at 7:20 a.m., so after adding him to the list, we headed out to cover northeastern Indiana County. Imagine our surprise 2 ½ hours later when we spotted another Lincoln’s Sparrow in the blowing snow along Shields Road near Gipsy!

Other field birders added a nice variety of species to our list. At Yellow Creek Gloria Lamer spotted a late Ring-necked Duck, one Bufflehead, two Double-crested



No, this isn't a scene from the Christmas Bird Count. May 9 at Hemlock Lake was a tad cold, snowy, and windy for Roger and Margaret Higbee.



Hermit Thrushes were foraging in the grass at Hemlock Lake.
Photo by Margaret Higbee



An Ovenbird foraging in the snow is a rare sight.

Photo by Margaret Higbee

Cormorants, and the count’s lone Black-throated Blue Warbler. In addition, Gloria added one of the only two Broad-winged Hawks; Donna Meyer spotted the second one. Gloria also listed one of three Red-shouldered Hawks; Bob Ramsey near the Shelocta Beagle Club and Mark Strittmatter at Blacklick Valley Natural Area noted the other two. Later in the day Gloria also added the two American Woodcocks on the list.

The beagle club area also yielded Bob Ramsey’s two Yellow-throated Vireos and one Warbling Vireo, the only ones counted on May 9.

Joseph and James Pumford also contributed significantly to our count. With Gloria Lamer they shared the sighting of the only Ring-billed Gull and the only Pine Warbler at Yellow Creek. Their trip to West Lebanon yielded 10 Greater and one Lesser Yellowlegs as well as one of only two Horned Larks; the other lark was spotted by Beth and Ken Marshall near Jacksonville. Ken and Beth also noted two Rusty Blackbirds, a rather late date for this species, and the only Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows on our list.

At Two Lick Reservoir Carol Guba added another Common Loon and the count’s lone Cliff Swallow. Pat Johner heard the one Fish Crow while Pat Andrascik listed the only Prairie Warbler. Blue Spruce produced the count’s only Great Crested Flycatcher for Ray Winstead.

An early morning trip to Climax Road yielded a Swainson’s Thrush and three Blackburnian Warblers for Ed Donley and John Taylor. Of great concern for birders during the day was the complete lack of Chimney Swifts. What had happened to them? The only one on the list was spotted by John and Ed at IUP South Campus. Their checklist from the same location also sported the only Eastern Screech-Owl sighted on

May 9. John's stop on Kimmel Road produced both a Solitary Sandpiper and a Wilson's Snipe, again the only ones reported on the count. John was also responsible for the only Barred Owl which he found at Blue Spruce in the early evening. John's Blue Spruce list also included another Lincoln's Sparrow. His late return trip to IUP South Campus yielded both a Sora and a Merlin, again the only ones on the count.

In Armstrong Twp. Rodger and Linda Stormer found the only Great Horned Owl and Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Two of the most unusual reports involved a species that occasionally appears in the county in winter, this winter apparently was not an invasion year. Periodically the northern finches move south in the winter to find food when food crops in the north are poor. Common Redpoll is one of these species, but the winter of 2019-2020 was not one of these years as food crops to the north were excellent. Two reports of one to three redpolls in December and January were eBirded in Centre and Mercer counties. After no reports of Common Redpoll in our region this past winter, Tom Glover and his son Jud observed and described a Common Redpoll on the

unheard-of date, May 9. My first reaction was, "What??? Is he joking?" We all know Tom is a reliable birder and recognizes the species he's seeing. But life got a little more interesting when I received a note from Sid Blair who reported that his wife Jean had also seen a Common Redpoll on the count. Asking for more information, I received another good description of a Common Redpoll. This is probably one of the most unusual birds we've ever recorded on a migration count.

Stationary birders, too, added interest to our count. Gary Ferrence noted the count's first-ever Black Vulture. Two Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported, both with photos for documentation. The lucky birders were Cindy Rogers and Linda Logue. A Red-breasted Nuthatch visited Peggy Skinner's feeder. Near Marion Center Sandra Newell listed a Green Heron, an Osprey, and an American Kestrel. Marilyn Moore and Ron Alsop listed the count's only Purple Martins –Marilyn noted 35 of them, Ron 46!

These are just a few of the count's highlights. Everyone's observations contributed to our count. Sincere thanks to all of our participants and a special thank-you to those who simplified compilation by eBirding their data!

Indiana County Migration Count Observers

Pat Andrascik	Barb Fletcher	Mary A. Little	Cindy Rogers
Sharon Baldrige	Jud Glover	Linda Logue	Peggy Skinner
Tom Betts	Tom Glover	Beth Marshall	Nancy Smeltzer
Jean Blair	Carol Guba	Ken Marshall	Vicki Stelma
Sid Blair	Margaret Higbee	Donna Meyer	Linda Stormer
Laura Burns	Roger Higbee	Marilyn Moore	Rodger Stormer
Marcy Cunkelman	Dory Jacobs	Nancy Murphy	Mark Strittmatter
Sue Dickson	Pat Johner	Sandra Newell	John Taylor
Ed Donley	Debbie Kalbfleisch	Margarita Orlova	Dawn Winstead
John Dudash	Gloria Lamer	Sara Pulliam	Ray Winstead
Judy Emigh	Hunter Lieb	James Pumford	Jan Woodard
Bob Fairman	Brandon Lippert	Joseph Pumford	Jim Woodard
Emmy Fairman	Rita Lippert	Bob Ramsey	LJ Woolcock
Gary Ferrence			

Total Participants = 53

Total Parties = 43

Party Hours on Foot = 34.23

Party Hours by Car = 45.10

Party Hours by Other = 88.37 (Stationary)

Total Party Hours = 167.70

Party Miles on Foot = 24.75

Party Miles by Car = 324.35

Total Party Miles = 349.1

Indiana Pennsylvania Migration Count 2020

Canada Goose	142	Northern Flicker	64	Purple Finch	17
Wood Duck	15	Pileated Woodpecker	22	Common Redpoll	2
Mallard	32	American Kestrel	7	American Goldfinch	353
Redhead	4	Merlin	1	Grasshopper Sparrow	2
Ring-necked Duck	1	Least Flycatcher	2	Chipping Sparrow	119
Bufflehead	1	Empidonax sp?	2	Field Sparrow	18
Hooded Merganser	3	Great Crested Flycatcher	1	Dark-eyed Junco	6
Common Merganser	3	Eastern Kingbird	8	White-crowned Sparrow	30
Red-breasted Merganser	7	Eastern Phoebe	46	White-throated Sparrow	37
Wild Turkey	65	Yellow-throated Vireo	2	Savannah Sparrow	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	Blue-headed Vireo	8	Song Sparrow	150
Rock Pigeon	32	Warbling Vireo	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	3
Mourning Dove	170	Red-eyed Vireo	10	Swamp Sparrow	1
Chimney Swift	1	Blue Jay	255	Eastern Towhee	175
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	29	American Crow	256	Eastern Meadowlark	12
Sora	1	crow sp?	20	Orchard Oriole	11
American Coot	2	Fish Crow	1	Baltimore Oriole	144
Killdeer	33	Common Raven	12	Red-winged Blackbird	402
American Woodcock	2	Horned Lark	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	84
Wilson's Snipe	1	Bank Swallow	2	Rusty Blackbird	2
Spotted Sandpiper	16	Tree Swallow	116	Common Grackle	485
Solitary Sandpiper	1	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	8	Ovenbird	38
Lesser Yellowlegs	1	Purple Martin	81	Louisiana Waterthrush	1
Greater Yellowlegs	10	Barn Swallow	277	Northern Waterthrush	2
Ring-billed Gull	1	Cliff Swallow	1	Blue-winged Warbler	1
Common Loon	5	swallow sp?	3	Black-and-white Warbler	6
Double-crested Cormorant	3	Black-capped Chickadee	125	Tennessee Warbler	3
Great Blue Heron	11	chickadee sp?	4	Nashville Warbler	6
Green Heron	3	Tufted Titmouse	114	Common Yellowthroat	13
Black Vulture	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	Hooded Warbler	9
Turkey Vulture	60	White-breasted Nuthatch	70	American Redstart	12
Osprey	8	Brown Creeper	3	Cape May Warbler	3
Northern Harrier	1	House Wren	17	Northern Parula	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Carolina Wren	46	Magnolia Warbler	2
Cooper's Hawk	5	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	15	Blackburnian Warbler	3
Bald Eagle	7	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	6	Yellow Warbler	22
Red-shouldered Hawk	3	Eastern Bluebird	55	Chestnut-sided Warbler	8
Broad-winged Hawk	2	Veery	3	Blackpoll Warbler	1
Red-tailed Hawk	33	Swainson's Thrush	1	Black-throated Blue Warbler	1
Buteo sp?	1	Hermit Thrush	15	Palm Warbler	3
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	Wood Thrush	68	Pine Warbler	1
Great Horned Owl	1	American Robin	821	Yellow-rumped Warbler	22
Barred Owl	1	Gray Catbird	106	Prairie Warbler	1
Belted Kingfisher	5	Brown Thrasher	14	Black-throated Green Warbler	20
Red-headed Woodpecker	2	Northern Mockingbird	8	Scarlet Tanager	27
Red-bellied Woodpecker	76	European Starling	488	Northern Cardinal	214
Downy Woodpecker	68	Cedar Waxwing	8	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	138
Hairy Woodpecker	30	House Sparrow	163	Indigo Bunting	14
		House Finch	57		

Total Number of Species = 140
Total Number of Individuals = 6,945

Note: The five sp? are not counted as species since other members of those families are already on the list, but the numbers are included in the final total.

Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria County – Spring 2020

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

Abbreviations: Allegheny River (AR), Armstrong Trail (AT), Blue Spruce Co. Park (BS), Conemaugh Dam (CD), Crooked Creek Park (CC), Indiana (IN), Kittanning (KT), Lewisville (LV), Lock & Dam (L&D), Prince Gallitzin (PG), Shelocta (SH), State Game Lands (SGL), Two Lick Reservoir (TL), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

A **Trumpeter Swan** visited PG 5/13 (MD, TD); prior to 2020, the previous and only eBirded report of 2 occurred 3/6/16 (RL) at PG. Last **Tundra Swan** flock of 102 was noted at YC 3/3 (LC, BF, MH, RH, DK, TR, KaT) while as many as 200 were noted on the lake at PG 3/8 (WI, RL).

Wood Duck maxima included 48 on 4/2 (TR) and 40 on 4/24 (TR), both sightings along the AT n. of L&D 8; a hen and 12 ducklings 5/11 (ED) on a private pond near SH were the first reported Wood Duck progeny this year; a pair with 9 young at YC on 5/13 (MH, RH) were next. Last single **Blue-winged Teal** lingered 5/13, both at PG (TD) and at YC (MH, RH). What we believed to be the last 8 **Northern Shovelers** graced YC Lake 3/31 (LC, MH, RH), but on 5/1 (MH, RH) a drake Northern Shoveler appeared; PG's last were 3 on 4/12 (TA). Four **Gadwalls** and 9 **American Wigeons** remained on YC lake 3/31 (LC, GL, MH, RH) while RT still hosted 7 Gadwalls and one wigeon 4/12 (AB, SG, TR). Last 4 **American Black Ducks** were sighted 4/18 (ReH, SM) at YC. Twenty was a good last count for **Northern Pintails** 3/2 (TR) at YC, but 10 were photographed 3/8 (RL) at PG where one lingered through 3/14 (TA). Ten **Green-winged Teal** 3/14 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DM, JT, KT) and 3/28 (JA) were YC's last while 6 at RT 3/10 (AB) were *Armstrong's* lone report. PG hosted the last 2 on 4/19 (TA).

Last **Canvasbacks** included 8 at PG 3/8 (RL), 4 at Hemlock Lake 3/10 (AK, JK), and 17 through 3/31 (LC, MH, RH) at YC. Two kayakers had a close encounter with the season's last drake **Redhead** 5/23 (LCh, HL) at YC. Two **Ring-necked Ducks** were last seen at YC 5/9 (GL). Four **Greater Scaup** lingered through 4/12 (TA) at PG while 3 at YC 4/18 (ReH, SM) were last. The last **Lesser Scaup** listed were 2 on 4/16 (ABu, SG) at KT L&D 7; 12 on 4/19 (TA) at PG; and one on 5/2 (ReH, SM, PS) at YC. **Long-tailed Ducks** were widespread this season with reports ranging from 3/3 to 4/13. Long-tails were noted on four dates at YC: 2 on 3/3 (LC, BF *et al*); 4 on 3/27 (SM); and one adult drake on both 3/29 (LC) and 3/31 (MH, RH); 2 were also at Hemlock Lake 3/3 (AK, JK). In *Armstrong* first 2 were seen along the AR from the Tarrtown Road 3/17 (SG); one was found along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 3/24 (TR); 3 were observed from the east side of the river 3/27 (SG); and the last in the region were found 4/13 (ABu,

SG) at KT. Reports from *Cambria*, all at PG, included 9 on 3/17 (TD), 3 on 3/19 (TA, SVH), and one of 3/22 (RL). A flock of 350 **Buffleheads** along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 4/30 (SG) was noteworthy; 5 at PG 5/11 (TD) and 2 at YC 5/14 (ReH) were late. Two **Common Goldeneyes** were last observed at YC 4/26 (LJW).

A pair of **Hooded Mergansers** stopped at a private pond near SH 3/29 (ED) and repeatedly visited one of the Wood Duck boxes; the hen stayed during what should have been the incubation period, but the observer did not see any fledglings. Another Hooded pair spent the day on a Nolo pond in the observers' yard 4/2 (CL, GL). A female Hooded Merganser was at BS 4/29 (MH, RH); the Indiana Migration Count yielded 3 at North Point 5/9 (NS). Two Hooded Mergs at SGL 108 (Dugan's Marsh) 5/18 (TD) were *Cambria's* last. Late **Common Merganser** reports, indicative of locally breeding, included 3 at North Point 5/9 (NS); 3 at CD 5/14 (JT), one at YC 5/16 (ST), and one hen on polluted Blacklick Creek 5/25 (MH, RH). Three **Red-breasted Mergansers** lingered at YC 5/9 (GL, JaP, JP) where they were photographed (JP).



Tony Bruno found this Eastern Whip-poor-will in Indiana County 5/27.

Ruddy Ducks continued in the region with the best counts on 4/18 of 524 at PG (CE, LP), 356 at YC (ReH, SM), and 85 n. of L&D 8 (ABu, SG); last seen was a singleton 5/1 (JKu, TK).

Ruffed Grouse included a singleton along the Roaring Run Trail 3/22 (DRa), one n.w. of Loretto 4/11 - 5/2 (v.o.), one drumming between Penn Run and Nolo on 5/2 (HL), and another at PG 5/13 (TD).

Last **Pied-billed Grebes** and last 5 **Horned Grebes** respectively remained at YC through 5/16 (PF) and 4/23 (PF); a Horned Grebe south of L&D 8 on 4/25 (SG) was the region's last. An **Eared Grebe**, photographed in breeding plumage at YC 4/8 (RL), was a third *Indiana* record.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo arrival dates included 5/15 for one in IN (JaP, JP) and 2 at YC (KB); 5/16 in *Armstrong* for single birds at CC (SG) and east of KT (ABu); and 5/17 (TA) in *Cambria* at SGL 108 (Fallentimber). May 16 (JKe) marked *Indiana's* first **Black-billed Cuckoo** at Pine Ridge Park. Black-billed Cuckoos were not nearly as widespread this spring as Yellow-billed.

More commonly reported in the fall, 2 **Common Nighthawks** flew over Nolo 5/17 (GL). Single **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were listed 5/2 (DB) at Nolo, 5/19 (JT) at C.F. Lewis N.A., 5/22 (LCh, HL) near Penn Run, and 5/27 (TB, MH, RH) near West Lebanon. *Cambria's* SGL 108 yielded 3 on 5/23 (TD).

Dates of return for **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** were generally late with the earliest reports 5/1 near IN (SD), near LV (MC), near Creekside (MA, AL, MAL); 5/2 (SN) near Marion Center; 5/3 (TA) at SGL 108 (Fallentimber); and 5/4 (VD) south of Slabtown.

PG yielded 2 **Virginia Rails** and a **Sora** 4/18 (CE, LP); Long Run produced both Virginia Rail and Sora 4/26 (TB). Virginia Rails first turned up 5/8, both near Clarksburg (TB) and near Cowansville (SG), and 5/24 (ABu, SG) at KR. Sora was also present at KR 5/9 (ABu). Another Sora 5/9 (JT) and a **Common Gallinule** 4/23 (JT) were great finds at the Kovalchick Slough. The slough Sora was still present 5/14 (DL). The gallinule was still present 4/29 (MH, RH) and 4/30 (JT). Gallinules were also listed 5/17 (TA) at SGL 108 (Dugan's Marsh) and 5/23 (LF) at Apollo where one was heard in the small wetland between the railroad tracks and the AR. The highest **American Coot** tally was a mere 11 at YC 3/8 (DR); the region's only other coots, all singletons, were spotted at PG 3/1 (TD) and along the AT near L&D 9 on 4/5 (CW). Where are all the coots?

A **Sandhill Crane** was a great "yard bird" as it flew over near LV 4/11 (MC).

A **Semipalmated Plover** appeared at YC in the early afternoon 5/16 (CF, CrF); by late afternoon (ST) 3 were present. Two **Upland Sandpipers** were reported in *Indiana*—one 4/11 (SM) near CD and the other 4/29 (DL) near IN; another was found at Gallitzin S.F. in *Cambria* 5/25 (LG). A **Ruddy Turnstone** appeared on the beach at YC 5/13 (MH, RH) where it was subsequently seen by 15 others through 2:00 p.m. on 5/16 (ChF, CF). By 5:00 p.m. on the 16th (JH), 2 Ruddies were present on the beach and were eBirded by an additional four birders through 5/17 (m.ob). First **Dunlin** arrived 4/18 (CE, LP) at PG; 3 were noted on 5/15 (ReH) at YC where they remained through the next day. A **Least Sandpiper** was found in a flooded field near West Lebanon 5/6 (MH, RH); another stopped at YC 5/14



Steve Manns photographed this Upland Sandpiper near Conemaugh Dam on 4/11.



This Ruddy Turnstone, photographed by Margaret Higbee at Yellow Creek 5/13, is the 13th spring record since 1983.

Gloria and Clayton Lamer were driving in northeastern Indiana County on May 6 when they spotted a flock of 24 Forster's Terns heading toward Hemlock Lake. They detoured to the lake, hoping to see the terns on the water, but the terns had not stopped.

When they got home, Gloria decided that it would be a good time to check Yellow Creek. It was a wise choice as she added 19 more Forster's Terns as well as a Black Tern.

(ReH) while 3 were noted along the *Indiana* section of the West Penn Trail 5/16 (MH, RH); PG yielded another 5/18 (TD). Two **Semipalmated Sandpipers** visited YC 5/15 (ReH, SM) and 2 stopped at PG 5/18 (TD). Two **American Woodcocks** were still displaying near WL 5/27 (TB, MH, RH). A **Wilson's Snipe** was noted at Kovalchick's Pond 3/16 (JT) and again 5/13 (JT); the WL flooded field yielded 9 on 4/17 (TB) and 6 on 4/24 (MH, RH); PG's only report mentioned one 4/20 (MD). Another was near Home 5/9 (JT). Other first dates include 4/29 (DL) near IN, 4/30 (SD) near IUP, and 5/1 (PI, TA) at PG for **Spotted Sandpiper**; 4/18 (MHu) in Croyle Twp. for one, 4/21 (SG) near KT for one and 4/25 (DL) near IN for 3 **Solitary Sandpipers**; 4/22 (MVT) at Parks Bend Farm and 4/24 (MH, RH) for **Greater Yellowlegs** near WL; and 5/2 (ReH, SM, PS) near WL and 5/13 (TD) at PG for **Lesser Yellowlegs**. Yellowlegs maxima were 21 Greaters and 37 Lessers on 5/6 (MH, RH) on two different wet areas, both near WL.

Three **Bonaparte's Gulls** arrived 3/21 (DR) at PG while one was spotted 3/27 (SG) along the AR n. of KT. Peak numbers were 51 near the

Cowanshannock boat ramp along the AR 4/5 (SG) and 34 at YC 4/28 (PF). Seventy was the high **Ring-billed Gull** count as they flew high over a yard near SH 4/5 (MH, RH). Single **Herring Gulls** were observed at YC 3/31 (LC, MH, RH) and 4/21 (MH, RH) and at PG 5/13 (TD); the nesting pair was present at KT 3/11 (TR) through the end of the period. Seven **Caspian Terns** appeared at KR 4/23 (SG) while 2 were noted at YC 4/27 (VS) and again on 5/15 (MB, CE, ReH, SM, EZ). First **Forster's Tern** was listed at KR 4/12 (ABu, SG); 5 was PG's best count 4/18 (CE, LP) while 2 to 3 moved through YC between 4/18 (MK, JKe) and 5/17 (DJ, KS, ST, NV, LJW) with a peak of

19 on 5/6 (GL). A **Black Tern**, the only one in the region, was a great find at YC 5/6 (GL).

April 18 was the day to find **Red-throated Loons** in the region. Singletons were spotted at YC (ReH, SM), along the AR n. of KT (ABu, SGO), and at PG (CE, LP); the YC loon was still present 4/21 (MH, RH). High **Common Loon** counts also occurred 4/18 with 72 at PG (CE, LP), 63 n. of L&D 8 (ABu, SG), and 11 at KR (JS); YC's peak reached 20 the next day, 4/19 (LJW); 2 remained on YC lake 5/31 (LJW).

A **Least Bittern** was a welcomed find near Cowansville 5/8 (SG). The only **Great Egrets** noted were singletons at PG on seven dates bracketed by 4/18 (CE, LP) and 5/17 (RL); along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 4/19 (ABu, SG, MH, RH); on a private pond near SH 4/21-23 (ED); and one at YC 5/19 (JH). A **Snowy Egret**, a second county record, was a great find near CD 5/30 (TB). Not often seen in our region, a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was found at McGrann 4/18 (JB) and was still present later that day (ABu, SG).



The Red-throated Loon at Yellow Creek remained on the lake 4/18 through 4/21. Rebecca Hart photographed it on the 18th.

Two **Merlins** migrated over a yard near SH 3/29 (MH); one flew over a yard near IN 4/5 (JaP, JP); another was sighted elsewhere in the county 5/9 (JT). In *Cambria* singletons were noted in Upper Yoder 3/2 (DS) and at SGL 108 on 5/10 (TA). Single **Peregrines** were observed 3/2,9 (MH, RH), 3/4 (MVT), and 3/14 (TR) near the Graff Bridge nest site; no one reported having seen a pair this spring, so concern had been expressed whether they were actually nesting this year. Flying over a yard near SH was a migrant Peregrine 4/20 (MH, RH).

Black Vulture reports included 2 sitting on the observer's house in IN 3/31 (BH) and one at C.F. Lewis NA 5/22 (JT), the only reports. Best find of the season was a **Mississippi Kite** at the home of two young birders in IN 5/13-16 (JaP, JP). Special thanks to the Pumfords for opening their yard to many birders. This was a second county record with the first occurring 6/1/2004 (CG, MH, GL, SS). A **Northern Goshawk** stopped at YC 5/13 (MH, RH), the first report since 4/27/2004 (LC, EF, MF, MH, GL, FMc, JMc, SS). The earliest dates of return for **Broad-winged Hawk** were 4/12, both at Shady Plain (MVT) and at IUP (JT), and 4/15 (ReH, SM) at both Blacklick Valley Natural Area and near Twin Rocks.



Joseph Pumford photographed the Mississippi Kite in his yard 5/13.

Dates of return for **Eastern Wood-Pewee** included 5/15 at PG (TD), CC (SG), and SGL 247 (TR); and 5/16, both near Smicksburg (MoM) and at YC (MeF). A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**, the only one spotted in the region, was recorded and photographed at PG 5/16 (TD). Other flycatcher dates of return included 5/16 at CC (ABu, SG, TR), 5/17 at both BS (MH, RH) and Loretto (SVH) for **Acadian**; 5/23 for **Alder Flycatcher** near Cowansville (ABu), at SGL 247 (TR), and at PG (TD); 5/13 (DJ) at TL and 5/16 (TD) at PG for **Willow**; and 5/2 (TA) at PG and 5/3 (MH, RH) at BS

Two young **Great Horned Owls** were found at YC 4/28 (LC, PF, MH, RH, GL) in separate areas about 0.1 mile apart. An adult was also seen flying in the same area. Great Horned Owls were listed at only three other locations this spring. Though there were various other reports, one to 2 **Barred Owls** were consistently heard only at Nolo with as many as 3 calling on 5/6 (DB). A migrant **Short-eared Owl** near the observer's home was a welcomed diversion on 4/3 (ABu) as he'd been working in the field; the observer had searched the fields specifically for Short-eared Owls previously and determined that this owl was just passing through. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was sitting in the middle of a road at 11:26 p.m. near CC 5/8 (JB); when the observer stepped from his car to check on the owl, it flew.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers arrived first in IN 3/21 (JP) and near IN 3/29 (SD) when a pair was sighted. More **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were reported this year than ever before – 2 single birds in *Indiana*, both 5/9 at two locations: along East Pike (CR) and west of IN (LL); plus another near Aultman 5/13 (MH, RH) and one at Nolo 5/17 (CL). In *Cambria* PG hosted singletons at two locations 5/23, 27 (TD) and another was listed near Loretto 5/27 (SVH).



Cindy Rogers photographed this elegant Red-headed Woodpecker in her yard near Two Lick Reservoir May 9.

for **Least Eastern Phoebe** returned first to YC 3/14 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DM, JT, KT) and to PG 3/15 (PI). **Great Crested Flycatcher** was generally late except for one at YC 5/4 (TR). **Eastern Kingbird** 5/2 - 3 (v.o.) at multiple locations in the region.

First **White-eyed Vireo** appeared nw of Blairsville 4/29 (KB); the *Indiana* Migration Count yielded none, and they were absent from previously occupied locations this spring. **Yellow-throated Vireos** were generally late with the early sighting 5/1 (TR) at CC. First **Blue-headed Vireos** were listed 4/4 (JaP, JP) in IN; this is the earliest date on record for the county; the previous early date had been 4/5/1997 (DD, JG, MH, RH, GS, DY et al) at YC; other early dates for Blue-headed Vireos include 4/7 (MC) near LV and 4/14 (CL, GL), both at YC and at nearby Simons Rock. First **Warbling Vireos** arrived 5/2, both at YC (SG) and along the AT n. of L&D 8 (ABu, SG, TR).

A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was listed at PG 3/15 (PI); 2 stopped 3/19 (VS) at IN where one was observed again 4/4 (VS); these were the only reports. **Brown Creepers** were in short supply; one visited a feeder near Homer City regularly throughout the quarter (LC); 1-3 were eBirded at YC between 3/22 (MK) and 5/17 (ST); one also stopped near Marion Center 3/31 (SN). In *Armstrong* three reports included singletons at

SGL 247 on 3/7 (TR) and along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 3/11, 4/14 (TR) as well as 4 at CC 4/4 (SG); 4/4 (AKo) also yielded 4 in *Cambria* at SGL 108 (Dean Twp.). **Winter Wrens** noted this season included single birds n. of L&D 8 on 3/11, 24 (TR) and 2 at the same location 4/18 (AB, SG); in Loretto 3/21 (SVH); at SGL 108 (Dean Twp.) 4/4 (AKo); and nw of Loretto 5/2 (PS, RW). An unexpected find was a **Sedge Wren** recorded and photographed at PG 5/13 (MD).



Tony Bruno found this gorgeous Yellow-breasted Chat near Clarksburg on 5/17.

A **Marsh Wren** was also unexpected at the Kovalchick Pond near IUP 4/29 (MH, RH) because of the very limited habitat; the last spring sighting occurred at YC 4/27/1996 (m.ob); another (?) was noted at Kovalchick Pond 5/16 (JT).



This Golden-winged Warbler was a nice surprise May 4 & 5 near Shelocla.

Veeries moved through our region between 5/3 (TR) and 5/23 (TR). The only **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** listed appeared 5/10 (DJ) at YC, 5/16 (JT) at IUP, and 5/18 (MH, RH) at Polka Hollow. **Swainson's Thrushes** moved through between 5/10 (MT) and 5/26 (JT). Single **American Pipits** near Brush Valley 4/11 (RH) and near Loretto 5/1 (PS, RW) were the only ones noted.

Photo by Roger Higbee

and one along the

AT n. of L&D 8 (SG). Twenty-four **Rusty Blackbirds** at YC 3/31(LC, MH, RH) was the largest flock in the region this spring.

Thirty-two warbler species were sighted in the region this spring. Highlights include single **Worm-eating Warblers** sighted along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 5/17 (SG) and at PG 5/24 (TA). Single **Golden-winged Warblers** appeared near SH 5/4, 5 (MH, RH), at BS 5/5 (JT), and at YC 5/16 (ST). SGL 108 (Fallentimber) hosted 2 on 5/16 (TA) through 5/18 (TA, SVH); one remained there 5/30 (TA). One **Mourning Warbler** at CC 5/16 (ABu) and 2 at BS 5/17 (JT) were good finds. First **Pine Warblers** returned 3/15 (MH, RH) near SH and 3/28 (JaP, JP) at YC. April 4 produced the region's first **Yellow-throated Warbler** at CC; Yellow-throated Warblers were concentrated in the AR, CC, and Conemaugh watersheds this spring. First **Wilson's Warbler** was spotted at IUP 5/13 (JT); May 15 yielded Wilson's Warblers at YC (MB, CE, EZ), in IN (JaP, JP), and at BS (MH, RH); May 16, one in IN (DL); and May 17 respectively tacked on 2 between Penn Run and Heilwood and one along the AT n. of L&D 8 (SG).

Unusual were two reports of a **Common Redpoll** at the extreme date of 5/9 – one in IN (JBI) and the other in *Indiana's* Canoe Twp. (TG) in a non-redpoll invasion year. Both birds were well described by the observers.

Grasshopper Sparrow continue to be difficult to find in our region; one was at SGL 276 near Blacklick 5/16 (JKe); the next day (TD) one was found at SGL 108 (Bellwood); another was listed 5/31 (PI) at SGL 108 (Dean Twp.). These were the only reports. Eight **American Tree Sparrows** lingered 3/1 (TR) along the AT n. of L&D 8 while 30 was the region's high at PG 3/1(TD); amazingly, since we normally have multiple March sightings, the only reported in *Indiana* was one near Marion Center 3/23 (SN); last noted was one 4/12 (TA) at PG. Single **Fox Sparrows** lingered near Forest Manor s. of IN 4/6 (SD), at SGL 247 on 4/15 (SG), and at PG 4/19 (PI). The only **Vesper Sparrow** reported was one singing near IN 4/6 (DL). Three **Henslow's Sparrow** reports were received – one at CC 5/15 (SG), 2 at SGL 108 (Bellwood) on 5/17 (TD), and 2 at Babcock Mine area in Gallitzin SF 5/25 (LG). A **Lincoln's Sparrow** appeared 5/4 (MH, RH) at a feeder near SH where it remained through 5/9 (MH, RH); 5/9 was the arrival date for Lincoln's both at BS (JT) and along the AT n. of L&D 8 (SG). SGL 108 (Dugan's Marsh) yielded one 5/17 (TD).

Only 3 **Yellow-breasted Chats** were reported – one 5/23 (TR) at SGL 247 and one the next day (JT) near Clarksburg.

Observers: Tina Alianiello, Moose Anderson, Michael Barney, Alice Beatty, Dave Beatty, Jean Blair (JBI), John Boback, Kristin Bomboy, Tony Bruno, Alan Buriak (ABu), Lee Carnahan, Leah Chowenhill (LCh), Marcy Cunkelman, Dave Darney, Michael David, Tony DeSantis, Sue Dickson, Ed Donley, Vicki Doverspike, Carl Engstrom, Melissa Fabbro (MeF), Chad Fike, Crystal Fike (CrF), Barb Fletcher, Evelyn Fowles, Mike Fowles, Louis Freeland-Haynes, Judy Gallo, Tom Glover, Linda Greble, Carol Guba, Sam Guthrie, Rebecca Hart (ReH), Barbara Hauge, Jared Herman, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, David Janetski, Chuck Jones, Debbie Kalbfleisch, Michael Kardos, Avis Keener, John Keener, James Kellam (JKe), Anthony Koehle (AKo), Jan Kuehl (JKu), Tom Kuehl, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Dennis Lauffer, Hunter Lieb, Amy Little, Mary A. Little (MAL), Renee Lubert, Steve Manns, Mark McConaughy, Flo McGuire, Jim McGuire, Donna Meyer, Molly Moore (MoM), Sandra Newell, Miriam Ohanjanyan, Laura Palmer, Dominic Pumford, James Pumford (JaP), Joseph Pumford, Daniel Ralph (DRa), Theo Rickert, Debra Rittelmann, Cindy Rogers, Peter Shaver, Dan Shuman, Scott Speedy, Richard Staffen, Vicki Stelma, Jill Stoddard, Georgette Syster, John Taylor, Mark Thal, Kathy Thomas (KaT), Shannon Thompson, Ken Truitt, Ding Wang, Howard West, Carole Winslow, Ryan Witham, LJ Woolcock (LJW), Debbie Yovanovich, Eric Zawatski.

Jan Woodard Remembered

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Jan Woodard on June 3. Jan was a member of the Todd Bird Club and our president's wife. Jan, along with her husband Jim, participated in our Christmas Bird Counts, our Indiana County Migration Counts, and our meetings.

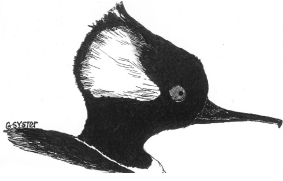
Jan loved the outdoors. She listened for birds singing at sunrise and exclaimed wonder over a brilliant sunset. Jan spoke fondly of the hills of Ireland and Scotland. She enjoyed hiking with her children through Pennsylvania, New Zealand and the mountains of Colorado.

Jan loved water – from bubbling rocks to waterfalls and hot springs to rivers and lakes; Lake Wallenpaupack and Yellow Creek were among her favorite places in Pennsylvania. She loved kayaking and swimming and, when she was young, waterskiing. She especially loved reading in a canoe on lazy afternoons while Jim fished.

She will be sadly missed.

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

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