

# The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

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

January 2022

## Meetings Canceled until Further Notice

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent increase in the number of cases in our area, Todd Bird Club has decided to cancel our regularly scheduled meetings until we see the number of cases diminishing. We are hoping to resume normal operations soon.

We have scheduled a few outings, but we ask that anyone who is not vaccinated please wear a mask during the outing. We also encourage our members to go out and bird on their own or with family members or close friends. Please eBird your data or submit as indicated on page 13 of this newsletter.

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## Outings

**Tuesday morning outings** will continue, weather permitting. For all Tuesday Yellow Creek outings, meet on the north shore near the gazebo shortly after dawn. We will spend more time on the north shore during our Tuesday outings. Everyone is welcome. If you have any questions or weather concerns, please contact Roger (412-309-3538) or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

**Saturday, January 29** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Court Harding ([chardinglou@gmail.com](mailto:chardinglou@gmail.com)). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office, located on Rt. 259 just off US 422 east of Indiana.

**Saturday, February 18 - 21** – Great Backyard Bird Count; for details, see article on page 4.

**Saturday, February 26** – Allegheny River Trip, led by Carol Guba (724-840-5700). If you're interested, please call as we plan to scout to see the best places to bird the river.

**Saturday, March 19** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Gloria Lamer (724-349-1159). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office, located on Rt. 259 just off US 422 east of Indiana. Waterfowl are our targets.

**Saturday, March 26** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee; meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office. This is a joint outing with the Three Rivers Birding Club and should be near the peak of the waterfowl migration.

# Birds and Bears

By Tom Glover

At this writing we have lived in Tuxedo Park, NY, almost one year and four months. For the most part we have settled in our new home. It has been a delight to be closer to our daughter and her family. I get to pick up our granddaughter Phoebe twice a week from school. But I will have to admit I will never get over a bit of culture shock by moving from rural western PA to one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world! Tuxedo Park is a small community bordered on the west by Sterling Forest State Park and on the east by Harriman State Park. Both parks encompass a large area, giving the local surroundings a bit of a rural flare. But being only 25 to 30 miles north of New York City, that rural flare has its limits. For example, this past spring on a warm sunny Saturday my son Jud and I were out birding. We decided to check out the trails in Harriman Park. As we drove around, we found that every trailhead we checked had up to 30 plus vehicles parked in the lots and overflowing onto the roads. I will never get over that example of culture shock!

But the local area has its surprises as a large, healthy population of black bears live in the area. Bear sightings are very common. Jud, this past month, saw one casually strolling up our street in the middle of the night. Needless to say, the bears are very familiar with the town's trash cans. It is not unusual to see litter scattered about yards from a bear's visit the night before. Some bears have even figured out that trash pickups occur twice weekly in Tuxedo Park on Mondays and Thursdays. There is one local bear that makes the rounds the night before the pickups. The bear must know that is when the trash cans

are at their fullest. About a month ago late in the evening when everything was quiet, I heard the bear up the street checking out the trash cans. I could tell the bear was getting closer to our house by the banging of the can lids. It wasn't long before I heard the lid on our can flop open.



Mama Bear peers over the railing of the Glovers' back porch while her cubs are safely in the tree.

The next morning Jud found our trash can tipped over with the contents scattered over the area. Luckily the bear did not find anything to its liking.

Just before we moved to Tuxedo Park, while Tom, Elyse, and Phoebe were working on our house, they heard all kinds of commotion behind the house. When they investigated, they found a mother bear with three little cubs just off our back deck. The three cubs were up a tree while mother bear was on guard on the ground. The bear is looking over the deck's railing to let everyone know to stay away from her cubs! The same bear family was seen numerous times in our area. You can

find many photos on Face Book (Meta) of the family plus a whole trove of other bear photos from the area. Many of the bears are working on bird feeders!

Our son-in-law Tom explained that you have to wait till just around Christmas to start feeding the birds for winter. They learned this the hard way when one morning they found their bird feeders destroyed. The bear even bent the metal pole holding the feeders.

I am hoping that the weather here will turn cold enough to stimulate the bears to den for the winter. I know the birds, along with the hungry squirrels, are waiting for me to put their feeders on the back deck.

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## What Was Your First Bird on January 1?

Were you awakened by a hooting Great Horned Owl at 3:00 a.m.? Were the cardinals at your feeder starting to chip at 7:00? Or did you hear the wings of a Mourning Dove as you headed outside? Or none of the above? Thanks to all who let us know. We compiled the list of "First Birds" seen or heard by 18 of our members. Check list on page 9.

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## Are You a Bird Lister?

Many of us are anxious to start compiling a year's list, so we go birding on January 1. Some birders have a goal of reaching 100 species by the end of January. Others don't set the bar quite that high. Some birders aim for 200 in the year while others want more species.

We thought it might be interesting to compile a year's list of the birds seen by Todd members. The January 1 list is already at 59 species. At the end of 2022 (or before), please forward your list to [bcoriole@windstream.net](mailto:bcoriole@windstream.net) or mail it to the Higbees at 3119 Creekside Road, Indiana, PA 15701.

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## Purple Martin Round-up

by Ron Alsop

We had a very good year this summer of 2021 with the most martins and babies we've had to date. I had added a third pole last year with only two sections, that included 16 cavities. I had been building a new four-section unit. This year I was able to add the other two sections for an entire unit consisting of 32 cavities on one pole. That increased our total cavities available to 68, and this year we had confirmed 61 pairs. For the first time, I was not able to continue my regular nest checks because some babies were old enough that they might pre-fledge. I was concerned and didn't want to continue to lower the units. Regardless, as of the last nest check we had a total of 177 babies and eggs. We then observed several additional cavities (not in that count) that also produced babies that fledged. I'm certain we exceeded 200 fledges, but I don't have an exact number for the reasons stated.



A pair of Purple Martins sit by their cavity.

Cold weather with rain and snow caused lots of problems for the past two years, but we got through it. At one point, I was doing supplemental feeding, and the martins were consuming about 20 eggs per day! We still lost a few birds but not nearly as many as some other landlords have reported. My disappointment has been regarding Luke Stauffer as he has only had one pair again this year. I was hoping his numbers would have increased, but they haven't.

Todd Bird Club members really need to try to visit next year shortly after the fledging begins. It is remarkable to see the adults and babies returning in the evenings and circling the units together. There are easily 150 to 200 martins returning to nest, and it makes an impressionable sight. As always, any interested club members are always welcome!

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## European Bird Declines Similar to Those in North America

According to research published in *Ecology and Evolution* this past November, bird populations across the European Union have declined by almost 20 percent since 1980. This translates that during the past forty years, roughly 600 million breeding birds have been lost.

The study was authored by scientists from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, BirdLife International, and the Czech Society for Ornithology. Huge declines have occurred among species that breed in agricultural areas and grasslands as well as long-distance migratory birds. The results of the study parallel the research that

determined that 29 percent of North American breeding birds have declined since 1970. In other words, this is a net loss of 3 billion breeding birds in North America.

Causes cited have included loss of habitat, agricultural practices, and global warming.

The top five species in decline in North America include Evening Grosbeak (by 90 percent), Black Swift and Bank Swallow (both by 89 percent), Chestnut-collared Longspur (by 88 percent), and King Rail (by 86 percent).

# The Great Backyard Bird Count

February 18 - 21, 2022

Each year people from around the world come together to watch, learn about, count, and celebrate birds. Join the Great Backyard Bird Count on February 18-21, 2022.

Count birds anywhere you like for at *least* 15 minutes—or for as long as you wish. Keep track of the kinds of birds you see and how long you watched.

Make your best estimate of how many birds you saw of each species. For example, 5 Northern Cardinals, 3 American Crows, etc. Huge flocks may be a challenge, but your best guess is still valuable.

Put in a new checklist:  
for each new day  
for each different location  
for the same location, same day, if you counted at  
a different time of day

The Great Backyard Bird Count uses eBird, one of the world's largest nature-databases, with more than 100 million bird sightings contributed each year and used by professionals for science and conservation. Contribute your sightings to eBird and become a citizen scientist.

If you have never participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count before, or have not participated since before 2013, you'll need to set up an account. Merlin Bird ID app, eBird Mobile app, or eBird.org will walk you through the process of setting up an account. You will be asked to provide your name and email and choose a personal username and password. Additional profile information is optional.

It's a lot of fun! Plan now to go birding on at least one of the four days, February 18, 19, 20, or 21, 2022. Let us know if you participate (bcoriole@windstream.net).

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## Joint Todd Bird Club & Three Rivers Birding Club Outing Revisited

Sixteen birders showed up for the Yellow Creek State Park outing on Saturday, November 6. Participants included thirteen 3RBC members, seven Todd Bird Club members, and four who are members of both groups. The day started off with everyone searching their vehicles for multiple layers of clothing as the temperature was a cool 19°. By 10:00 the sun had started to warm the air, and birds finally became more active.

A stop at the maintenance building yielded our first ducks – Wood Ducks, Northern Shovelers, Mallards, Green-winged Teal, and American Black Ducks as well as Pied-billed Grebes. A few lucky birders spotted Red-breasted Nuthatches in the dead pines near Dragonfly Pond while the rest of us were checking out the lake. The PGC had released Ring-necked Pheasants at the park, so they were a big hit for a few photographers.

Continuing to the boat launch, we added a large raft of Ruddy Ducks, four Redheads, a drake Bufflehead, Belted Kingfishers, and Golden-crowned Kinglets. A walk to the beach yielded our one and only Canada Goose, bluebirds, robins, and juncos.

We next headed to the waterfowl observatory trail where Malcolm, one of the participants, spotted and had

photographed a Field Sparrow before the rest of us even raised our binoculars. A Swamp Sparrow chipping at the wetland walkway, seven Gadwalls, two Great Blue Herons, a Common Loon, three Yellow-rumped Warblers, a Pileated Woodpecker, and a Cooper's Hawk were the highlights near and at the observatory. As we were leaving the building, someone suggested a group picture so everyone climbed the steps and lined up for a picture.

When we returned to our vehicles, five more members of our group left while the remaining ten headed to the north shore where we parked at McFeaters Cove and walked to the north shore pavilion. Here we listed a Cooper's interacting with a soaring Red-tailed Hawk, one Double-crested Cormorant, and one titmouse, the latter three the only additions to the day's list. A cooperative Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was another north shore highlight as many of us had missed the one on the south shore.

It was a very sunny and enjoyable day, and many of us made new friends. We had tallied 40 species on the south shore, 16 on the north, for a total of 43 for the day.

– Margaret Higbee

# Birding in South Florida, Part II

By Debbie Kalbfleisch

In Part I, I wrote about the first half of a ten-day trip to Florida this past spring with Karyn Delaney and Kathy Saunders, guided by Kip Miller with High Lonesome Birdtours.

Day 6 was Friday, April 30. We traveled to the Glenn Garrett Memorial Park to walk along one of the ditches, searching for a Smooth-billed Ani. The bird had been seen by other people, but we never did locate it. We did come across a number of Black and Turkey Vultures roosting in trees, and had the opportunity for a close comparison of the two species. I had never noticed that Black Vultures have white legs, while Turkey Vultures sport pink legs. Of course, it's not often that we get this close to them! Afterwards, we drove farther into the Everglades for a walk along the Anhinga Trail. Yes, there were numerous Anhingas here! We got a kick out of watching a vegetarian Red-eared Slider eating a spatterdock flower. We also stopped at Long Pine Key Campground and Trail, where we noted Swallow-tailed Kite, White-winged Dove, and a Pine Warbler.

At the Flamingo Campground (alas, no Flamingos left here), located at the tip of the Florida peninsula, we drove slowly through the picnic area, looking for blackbird flocks. Sifting through a mass of Brown-headed Cowbirds on the ground, we eventually found three cowbirds with flat heads and very pointed beaks. Male Shiny Cowbirds are all black with a purple sheen, and the dull brown females boast a warmer tone than their Brown-headed Cowbird cousins. We also added Prairie Warbler to our list and enjoyed watching a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers feeding their two youngsters in their nest in a dead palm tree. After a shady picnic lunch, we checked out the marina. The water was brown and muddy, but we were able to make out a few adult manatees with their young. A single crocodile, a salt-water cousin of the alligator, appeared to be napping on the other side of the dock. A



It may look like a Red-eyed Vireo, but note its black moustache which makes it a Black-whiskered Vireo.

Photo by Karyn Delaney



Our first Magnificent Frigatebirds flew overhead.

Photo by Karyn Delaney

molting Bobolink, halfway between winter and summer plumage, was a strange combination of brown, white, and black.

Before returning to the hotel, we stopped to observe an active Cave Swallow colony under a bridge next to the Portofina Plaza where we enjoyed having them zip around us. Four immature White Ibises foraged on the grass next to us. Dinner that evening was at a Cuban restaurant, and just before sunset we set out again for Long Pine Key. Two Common Nighthawks were darting about at the entrance to the Everglades, and we didn't go too much farther before the van jerked to a halt. A Chuck-will's-widow was in the middle of the road! It took off, and we all piled out in time for it to zoom over our heads and land on a nearby snag. Kip already had the scope out, so we got fantastic looks at its pulsating throat as it made weird grunting noises. A few

minutes later, another Chuck-will's-widow came in and they took off, chasing each other. This was a lifer and the best birthday present ever!

We got an early start on Day 7, trying to beat the boaters heading to Black Point Park and Marina. A Black-whiskered Vireo with its thin mustache was a lifer for almost everyone in our group. We also looked for a Mangrove Cuckoo that had been sighted here earlier but could not find it. We next tried the Key Largo Hammocks State Botanical Site, again with no luck. Least Terns nest on top of the Marathon Government Center in the Keys, and we enjoyed watching their graceful flight. We also spotted Brown Pelicans and our first Magnificent Frigatebirds.

We drove deeper into the Florida Keys, stopping at The Blue Hole on Big Pine Key, to search for one of the rarest birds in the country. The Blue Hole is an abandoned rock quarry, and while we would consider it tiny, it is the

largest body of fresh water in the Keys. Black-faced Grassquits are generally found in the Caribbean, but this one had blown in with a hurricane two years ago. While its favorite activity is attacking the side mirrors of cars in the parking lot, we found it next to the water. Lifer for everyone, even Kip! On Big Torch Key, we discovered several Clapper Rails, as well as one of the Key Deer, a tiny diminutive buck.

We stopped again at the Marathon Government Center on our way back, and this time, found several Roseate Terns in among their Least Tern cousins. Some of us spotted a White-crowned Pigeon just before we pulled into the Blackfin Resort and Marina in Marathon. We would make this our base for the next two nights. After dinner, we headed for Grassy Key and parked on the side of a quiet country road. Black-necked Stilts were feeding in the distance, and a Gray Kingbird, flirting with death, chased a Merlin out of its territory. We heard the buzzy hiccup of two Antillean Nighthawks before we saw them, and watched as they swiftly passed over us.

Sunday, May 2, had been reserved for a trip to the Dry Tortugas, so we drove to Key West in the pre-dawn hours. As we walked to the Bight Ferry Terminal, we saw several of the wild Red Junglefowl that have roamed Key West and terrorized local gardeners since at least the 1950s. They are still not countable by the ABA, but eBird does have a slot for them! Northern Gannet, Brown Pelican, Least Tern, Royal Tern, and Sandwich Tern saw us off as the Yankee Freedom III left at 7 a.m. Two and a half hours later, we crowded the upper deck to catch a glimpse of a colony of Masked Boobies on Garden Key, a smaller island adjacent to Fort Jefferson.

We disembarked to find five Ruddy Turnstones foraging on the beach. Sooty, Bridled, and Royal Terns flew overhead as well as Magnificent Frigatebirds and Brown Noddies. We were surprised at the large size of the fort, and the constant din from the calling birds. A Black



Two Cattle Egrets drink from the water.  
Photo by Karyn Delaney



Sooty and Bridled Terns were at Fort Jefferson.  
Photo by Karyn Delaney



A Brown Noddy colony is a highlight at Fort Jefferson.  
Photo by Karyn Delaney

Noddy had been reported in the breeding colony, and Kip briskly led the way up the granite spiral staircase of Fort Jefferson and across the seawall, where he was able to find and get the Black Noddy in the scope. His troops, however, followed much more slowly, with Karyn and me bringing up the rear; and Kip suffered several minutes of anxiety that the bird would fly before we got there! Retirees are a laggard lot! However, the bird cooperated, and we all enjoyed great looks at this rarity, another lifer for everyone.

We boarded the boat again just long enough for a lunch of sandwiches and chips. Then we explored the rest of the fort and island. A tiny fountain in the middle of the fort is the only source of fresh water for the warblers and other migrating birds that sometimes get stuck here. A Merlin makes regular strafing runs and is probably one of the few land birds here content with its lot. We identified Yellow-billed Cuckoo; Veery; Northern Waterthrush; Hooded Warbler; American Redstart; and Cape May, Magnolia, Blackpoll, Palm, and Canada Warblers. Cattle Egrets grazed on the lawn. Our trip's only Cooper's and Broad-winged Hawks made an appearance, as well as a Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

We boarded the boat and left Garden Key at 3:00 p.m. for the trip back to Key West. Back on land, we got very good looks at a couple of White-crowned Pigeons. Kip was striding ahead, but he had learned to glance back to check on his charges. He quickly backtracked when he saw our upraised binoculars! We enjoyed an excellent dinner at the Stoned Crab in Key West, and some of us may have dozed on the ride back to Marathon Island.

On Monday, our next to the last day of the trip, we headed to Key Largo Hammock State Botanical Site to search again for the elusive Mangrove Cuckoo. Many White-eyed Vireos were calling, as well as a few of their whiskered cousins, and several Yellow-billed Cuckoos

made an appearance but none of their secretive relatives. Karyn and Kathy followed us at a more leisurely pace; when we joined them on the way back to the van, they reported that they had enjoyed a good look at a Mourning Warbler that had popped up in the shrubs!

As we got closer to Miami, we had noticed smoke from a brush fire, so we had to detour a bit as several roads were blocked off. We had lunch at Panera's before heading to Matheson Hammock Park where we once again observed the odd sight of stacked nesting holes in dead palm trees. Orange-winged Parrots, Eastern Screech-Owls, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Hill Mynas peacefully, although not quietly, shared several palm trees with the baby birds peeking from their nest holes.

We traveled on to Crandon Park on Key Biscayne, where we successfully hunted for a Least Grebe, a continuing



An Eastern Screech-Owl peers from a cavity in a palm.

Photo by Karyn Delaney



A Least Grebe was found at Crandon Park.

Photo by Karyn Delaney

pleased to get 34 lifers!

rarity, on one of the ponds. We saw numerous Indian Peafowl here as well. One of the peacocks made a point of advancing to the sidewalk and proudly displaying in front of us!

On our final morning, May 4, we made one last trip to Black Point Park, but Mangrove Cuckoo was not to be on our final list of birds. Truly, I think we saw almost every bird in South Florida except for that one! We stopped at the Pine Woods Park in Kendall, searching for and finding several Scaly-breasted Munia, a small and rather attractive reddish-brown songbird from Asia, also known as Nutmeg Mannikin, as well as two more Red-whiskered Bulbuls.

We ended up with 175 species for the trip, and I was especially

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## Bat Falcon Story

By Susie Solomon

An unusual falcon was photographed at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge on December 8, 2021. Over a week later, it was recognized as being the first USA record of a Bat Falcon when one was confirmed during the Santa Ana CBC.

On the afternoon of December 12, a neighbor and I drove the 15 miles to Santa Ana, observing a Burrowing Owl on a water tower as we drove down. A good omen. At the refuge, we walked the road toward the hawkwatch tower where many returning birders told us they had enjoyed good views of the falcon. Other birders, leaving with smiles, advised us to continue beyond the tower where the bird was perched on a dead snag, 30 feet away.



Bat Falcon photographed by Steve Franklin and used with permission.

We watched that bird for about 10 minutes when the famous falcon flew off, presumably to catch dragonflies or an early bat. While watching the bird, we saw Tiffany Kirsten, a well-known local bird guide on a Lower 48 Big Year. The falcon was her number 725 for 2021, breaking the previous record by one. Returning happily to the parking lot, we assured the others arriving that the bird was still there.

[**Note from Jack Solomon**, Susie's typist: I was too lazy to join in on Susie's try for the falcon. Her story fails to mention that the icing on her falcon cake was her gloating to me that her trip was successful.]

[**Note:** Susie Solomon is probably the only Todd Bird Club member who has seen this bird!]

# Christmas Bird Count 2021 Revisited

Several birders have called this “the worst CBC weather ever.” Maybe, maybe not. There was the year that multiple birders slid off icy roads. There was the year of the mud when boots had decided to stay put in the slop while the birders attempted to trudge onward. Then there was the year of the 12" snow that had not yet ended. Hmmm. Yes, we had rain, sleet, snow, and wind, as well as a thunderstorm, but it could have been worse. It was actually the first Indiana CBC with a thunderstorm!

We welcomed seven new participants to our count this year – Robert and Sally Gordon, Court Harding, Seth Jordan, Tom Lace, Kathy Phillips, and Bob Simms. Robert and Sally covered the area around Penn Run. Court took Tom Glover’s old territory. Seth hiked from the end of Hoffman Road at Yellow Creek to the dam while Tom and Kathy worked “the boot,” the area south of Indiana. Scott and Bob Simms, Scott’s brother and John Taylor’s nephew, arrived in town early and walked around the borough. We appreciated their willingness to bird during the discouragingly wet weather! Thank you!!! I wish we could promise better weather next year.

Field birders spent almost 36 hours hiking in miserable conditions, logging 25.59 miles; road birders drove for 52 hours, 6 minutes, covering 402.08 miles. Feeder watchers watched for 62 hr., 36 min. Everyone who participated provided data; even negative data is important – it’s just not as much fun to collect. Thanks to everyone!

We tallied the lowest number of species since 2010 and the lowest number of individuals since 1989. The weather certainly was a major factor as birds tend to take cover when it rains.

On the “upside,” there were numerous highlights. Two Lick Reservoir hosted two Tundra Swans and two Pied-billed Grebes for both Lee Carnahan and Carol Guba. By visiting the lake at different times of day, Lee was able to add a Bufflehead and Carol, 23 Hooded Mergansers, which were more numerous in the count circle than in most years. Musser’s Lake provided 18 more Hooded Mergansers and a Belted Kingfisher for Tom Betts. Pat Johner found our only three Northern Pintails in a pond along Rt. 286 and one of our four Northern Harriers.

Gloria Lamer and Alice and Buck Beatty added the only two Redheads, the only Common Goldeneye, the only three Ruddy Ducks, our single pheasant, and the only four coots to the list. That crew also started their day off right. Last year in the Beatty’s yard as the group was leaving, to

start the CBC, they spotted a Barred Owl; unfortunately, their yard is outside the CBC circle. This year, as they were driving along near Simon’s Rock, Alice in the back seat started excitedly telling Gloria to stop; I think her exact words were, “Bird!” Alice was finally able to alert Gloria and Buck that a Barred Owl was sitting on a wire behind them. This year their Barred Owl was *in* the circle! Great spotting, Alice!

Sue Dickson had regularly been seeing and hearing Winter Wrens at the Waterworks Conservation Area. Thanks to Sue for the count’s only Winter Wren! And thanks, too, to John Taylor and Mark Strittmatter for finding a Merlin in their territory.

Covering Tom Glover’s old territory in the northwestern part of the circle, Court Harding listed our only Northern Flicker and one of two Eastern Towhees; the other towhee was noted by our New Jersey birders, Chris and Paula Williams, in the southwestern part of the count; Paula and Chris also sighted the CBC’s only Great Blue Heron. Lee Carnahan also added the count’s lone White-crowned Sparrow in his yard while Bob Ramsey found the only Hermit Thrush near the beagle club. Bob also listed half of our 16 Cedar Waxwings, and Robert and Sally Gordon found the other half. Joseph Pumford listed ten of our eleven Swamp Sparrows at Yellow Creek while the Williams found the eleventh; two of those seen by Joseph were also listed by Gloria Lamer at Yellow Creek.

Since the weather was so awful in the early morning, Roger and I birded our yard near Shelocta as we had been seeing Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Fox Sparrow on a regular basis, all species hard to find on the CBC. We succeeded in listing the latter two, but we missed the sapsucker which we saw the following day for a count week bird at Yellow Creek. Next we headed to the trails that we hike every year at Yellow Creek. It was still mostly raining as we hiked almost two miles in more than three hours and saw only 34 individual birds of eight species of which only three were new for our list. At home we’d already listed 18 species. We decided to cut our losses and head to the area west of Creekside to try to add species to our meagre list. It had been the right choice as by the time dusk had arrived our bird list stood at 30 species.

Fifty birders tallied 63 species on count day. An additional 7 were noted for “Count Week,” three days before the count and three days after the count. Special thanks to Lee Carnahan for adding count week birds –

8 Bonaparte's Gulls at Yellow Creek on 12/26. In addition, the Tuesday group, which included Lee, Court Harding, Debbie Kalbfleisch, and Roger and me, added Ring-necked Duck and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker for Count Week on the 28<sup>th</sup>. John Taylor, who had staked out an allegedly reliable roosting Eastern Screech-Owl, failed to see the owl on count day, but fortunately added it for Count Week. (What owl looks out during a thunderstorm?) Roger Higbee, who was releasing a mouse caught in a live trap, walked outside to hear a Great Horned Owl at 11:48 p.m. on 12/29; he returned to the house to tell me, so I also went out to hear it. While he was releasing the mouse, he heard the pair hooting back and forth. Dennis Lauffer, whose home is within the circle, looked

out his window the day after the count and saw a Rusty Blackbird, another Count Week Bird. Court Harding, a member of the Tuesday Yellow Creek group on 12/28, spotted a Common Yellowthroat at McFeaters Cove. The yellowthroat was a first Count Week Bird as it had never before been spotted for the CBC. The rest of the group also saw it and several were able to photograph it.

Thanks again to everyone who participated! We hope you will all join us again next year.

Good birding!

Margaret Higbee  
Indiana CBC Compiler

## First Birds of 2022

Last year we started a new tradition. What is the first bird you sighted in 2021? Well, we're continuing this tradition. Below is a list of the "first birds" seen in 2022 by 18 participants.

Common Merganser – Marge Van Tassel  
Red-bellied Woodpecker – Nancy Murphy  
Hairy Woodpecker – Flo McGuire  
Blue Jay – Marcy Cunkelman  
American Crow – Gary Ferrence, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Scott Simms  
Black-capped Chickadee – Patience Fisher, Melissa Little, John Taylor

Tufted Titmouse – Gloria Lamer, Jim McGuire  
White-breasted Nuthatch – Dan Cunkelman  
Carolina Wren – Tom Kuehl  
Curve-billed Thrasher – Jack Solomon  
American Robin – Joseph Pumford  
House Sparrow – Debbie Kalbfleisch

It looks like American Crow takes first place this year, followed closely by Black-capped Chickadee. It's amazing that Northern Cardinal didn't even place!!!!

## January 1, 2022, Todd Bird Club List

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Bald Eagle	Common Raven	American Robin
Greater White-fronted Goose	Red-shouldered Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Cedar Waxwing
Canada Goose	Red-tailed Hawk	Tufted Titmouse	House Sparrow
Mallard	Eastern Screech-Owl	Golden-crowned Kinglet	House Finch
Ring-necked Duck	Belted Kingfisher	White-breasted Nuthatch	American Goldfinch
Hooded Merganser	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Brown Creeper	Altamira Oriole
Common Merganser	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	Dark-eyed Junco
Wild Turkey	Downy Woodpecker	European Starling	White-crowned Sparrow
Pied-billed Grebe	Hairy Woodpecker	Curve-billed Thrasher	White-throated Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Northern Flicker	Brown Thrasher	Song Sparrow
Mourning Dove	American Kestrel	Long-billed Thrasher	Brown-headed Cowbird
Wilson's Snipe	Great Kiskadee	Northern Mockingbird	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Herring Gull	Tropical/Couch's Kingbird	Eastern Bluebird	Wilson's Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Blue Jay	Hermit Thrush	Northern Cardinal
Cooper's Hawk	American Crow	Clay-colored Thrush	

# CBC 2021: Better than Expected (But Still Mostly Miserable!)

by John Taylor

As if the steady deterioration of the weather forecast for December 27 through the week leading up to the CBC wasn't disheartening enough, Ed Donley sent me an e-mail on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup>, informing me that he was ill and would have to sit this one out. Had he not participated consistently as a member of our North Shore crew over the past two decades, sometimes in downright hideous conditions, I might have wondered if he, too, had been monitoring the weather forecast and elected to behave rationally for a change and watch the feeders from the comfort of his country home. Fortunately, Mark Strittmatter had neither an illness, nor the common sense, to prompt him to stay inside on the 27<sup>th</sup>, so the two of us spent the day traveling our usual route along the north shore of Yellow Creek Lake and to several locations on/near the south side of the IUP campus.

As forecast, the weather was arguably the worst I've ever experienced on a CBC, especially in the first few hours, when it was barely above freezing and pounding us with rain and heavy winds. Adding insult to injury, the birds had better sense than the humans and were hiding out of view in sheltered areas. The roughly half-mile hike that we take from our parking spot at the north park boundary at the start of every CBC, down a steep slope along the tree line that marks the boundary, across the stream at the bottom of the slope, through the woods beyond the stream, back across the stream, and through the farm fields back to the Jeep, yielded a grand total of ... two Song Sparrows! The stream crossings were adventures in themselves with all the rain that had fallen. But, as I've explained to many friends and family members through the years, the CBC usually isn't something you enjoy; it's something you *survive*.

More disappointment awaited us at the north shore sailing base where we scanned the lake for waterfowl. Despite the lake's being completely open, waterfowl were exasperatingly scarce. All we would manage to identify all day at Yellow Creek, despite considerable time spent scoping the lake in the cold wind, were small flocks of Hooded and Common Mergansers and a solitary Ruddy Duck. It wasn't until late afternoon at the Kovalchick Slough that we would add Mallard and Wood Duck to the day's list. Hardly the kind of bounty of waterfowl we'd hoped for, given the open water and relatively warm weather through the weeks leading up to the count. The other frustration on the day was our failure to find a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker despite multiple hours spent searching diligently in the woods on the North Shore that

used to deliver one semi-regularly. **[Editor's Note: Of course, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was one of the first birds at McFeater's Cove on December 28, the day after the count, for the Tuesday birding group!]**

But despite the challenging conditions, we did surprisingly well on the day with 32 species tallied, largely due to a few breaks in the rain, some flurries of activity in a few unexpected places, and cooperation from several targeted species. Among the high points was an encounter with a multi-species flock of birds in the trees and brush on both sides of the road near the entrance to McFeater's Cove, taking advantage of the feeders below the house on the other side of the road. We picked up 7 new species for the day there, including a couple of gorgeous Golden-crowned Kinglets. Except for the sapsucker and the surprising absence of a Pileated, the scout camp area was productive with a flock of Purple Finches in the fruit trees near the chapel, a mob of Blue Jays, and assorted woodpeckers (Downy, Hairy, and Red-bellied) in another area we don't usual frequent. The hike to the dam was the usual exercise in futility that burned off some calories but didn't yield a single, cotton-picking species for the list.

We arrived in Indiana thinking that we still needed four species to reach the arbitrary target I set years ago for a respectable CBC – 30 species. A House Sparrow that flew across the road in front of us as we drove down Maple Street and the aforementioned Mallards and Wood Duck we flushed from the slough got us within one, and a Northern Mockingbird sitting in the shrubbery across Rose Street from the Robertshaw parking lot when we parked put us over the top. I was really pleased and surprised that the mockingbird showed up because I hadn't seen it for several weeks on my daily hikes across south campus. What didn't cooperate was the female Eastern Screech-Owl that I had seen perched at the opening to her roost cavity on 13 of the 22 days I had hiked past it in December and had been there as recently as Dec. 23! Instead, she continued her tradition of hiding on the one day of the year I most wanted to see her. In her defense, however, our arrival at the roost tree coincided with the peak of a brief cloudburst and our umpteenth soaking of the day! Infuriating as it was, I had to laugh as we stood there in an intense downpour, hoping she would respond to a screech-owl call on Mark's cell phone as it was drowned out by thunder. I can't recall ever

(continued on page 12)

# Indiana Christmas Bird Count Results

39th Annual CBC – December 27, 2021

Snow Goose (CW)		Turkey Vulture (4)		Evening Grosbeak (566)	
Greater White-fronted Goose (2)		Bald Eagle (5)	4	Pine Grosbeak (1)	
Canada Goose (2081)	402	Northern Harrier (9)	4	House Finch (1563)	116
Mute Swan (4)		Sharp-shinned Hawk (14)	2	Purple Finch (89)	7
Trumpeter Swan (2)		Cooper's Hawk (15)	5	Common Redpoll (63)	
Tundra Swan (533)	2	N. Goshawk (1)		White-winged Crossbill (62)	
Wood Duck (5)	1	Red-shouldered Hawk (5)		Pine Siskin (375)	
N. Shoveler (2)		Red-tailed Hawk (71)	15	American Goldfinch (637)	21
Gadwall (30)		Rough-legged Hawk (3)		Lapland Longspur (6)	
American Wigeon (14)		Eastern Screech-Owl (13)	CW	Snow Bunting (225)	
Mallard (670)	132	Great Horned Owl (10)	CW	Eastern Towhee (3)	2
American Black Duck (190)		Barred Owl (5)	1	American Tree Sparrow (483)	15
N. Pintail (10)	3	Long-eared Owl (1)		Chipping Sparrow (4)	
Green-winged Teal (4)		Short-eared Owl (2)		Clay-colored Sparrow (1)	
Canvasback (15)		Belted Kingfisher (9)	4	Field Sparrow (13)	
Redhead (14)	2	Red-headed Woodpecker (1)		Savannah Sparrow (2)	
Ring-necked Duck (41)	CW	Red-bellied Woodpecker (81)	22	Fox Sparrow (3)	1
Greater Scaup (5)		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (8)	CW	Song Sparrow (152)	62
Lesser Scaup (32)	CW	Downy Woodpecker (177)	38	Lincoln's Sparrow (1)	
Surf Scoter (CW)		Hairy Woodpecker (58)	17	Swamp Sparrow (14)	11
White-winged Scoter (1)		Northern Flicker (40)	1	White-throated Sparrow (214)	74
Black Scoter (1)		Pileated Woodpecker (36)	7	White-crowned Sparrow (36)	1
Long-tailed Duck (3)		Am. Kestrel (26)	7	Dark-eyed Junco (2272)	187
Bufflehead (52)	8	Merlin (2)	1	Eastern Meadowlark (10)	
Common Goldeneye (7)	1	Peregrine Falcon (1)		Red-winged Blackbird (3570)	
*Hooded Merganser (35)	68	Eastern Phoebe (1)		Brown-headed Cowbird (46)	
Common Merganser (29)	18	Northern Shrike (1)		Rusty Blackbird (13)	CW
Red-breasted Merganser (6)		Blue Jay (566)	152	Brewer's Blackbird (CW)	
Ruddy Duck (223)	3	American Crow (3275)	302	Common Grackle (503)	
N. Bobwhite (1)		Fish Crow (8)		Pine Warbler (1)	
Ring-necked Pheasant (21)	1	Common Raven (9)		Orange-crowned Warbler (CW)	
Ruffed Grouse (22)		Horned Lark (225)		**Common Yellowthroat	CW
Wild Turkey (345)	82	Black-capped Chickadee (808)	156	Yellow-rumped Warbler (18)	4
Pied-billed Grebe (29)	3	Tufted Titmouse (394)	90	Northern Cardinal (584)	133
Horned Grebe (7)		Red-breasted Nuthatch (51)	1		
Red-necked Grebe (1)		White-breasted Nuthatch (201)	57	<b>Total Individuals (18,838)</b>	<b>4579</b>
Rock Pigeon (392)	74	Brown Creeper (25)	5	63 Species on 12/27/21 + 8 for CW	
Mourning Dove (1117)	370	Winter Wren (4)	1	CW = Birds Seen During Count	
Virginia Rail (1)		Carolina Wren (61)	16	Week but Not Count Day	
Am. Coot (811)	4	Golden-crowned Kinglet (106)	11	CW = December 24-30	
Sandhill Crane (2)		Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4)		*Record-breaking or Equal High	
Killdeer (20)		Eastern Bluebird (152)	44	Tally (1)	
Am. Woodcock (2)		Townsend's Solitaire (1)		**Species New to the Count (1)	
Wilson's Snipe (3)		Hermit Thrush (6)	1	( ) Highest No. Seen on Any	
Bonaparte's Gull (6)	CW	Wood Thrush (CW)		Previous Indiana CBC, 1983-2020	
Ring-billed Gull (50)	8	American Robin (1626)	281	138 Species on Count since 1983	
Herring Gull (1)		Gray Catbird (2)		including 6 CW only species)	
Red-throated Loon (1)		Brown Thrasher (1)			
Common Loon (9)		Northern Mockingbird (22)	7		
Double-crested Cormorant (1)		European Starling (8656)	1337		
Great Blue Heron (8)	1	Cedar Waxwing (212)	16		
Black Vulture (3)		House Sparrow (809)	157		

## 2021 Christmas Bird Count Observers

Pat Andrascik	Gary Ferrence	Paul Johner	Bob Simms
Alice Beatty	Betsy Fetterman	Linda Jones	Scott Simms
Buck Beatty	Tom Fetterman	Seth Jordan	John Somonick
Tom Betts	Barb Fletcher	Tom Lace	Linda Stormer
Sid Blair	Sue Gatti	Gloria Lamer	Rodger Stormer
Lee Carnahan	Robert Gordon	Dennis Lauffer	Mark Strittmatter
Dan Cunkelman	Sally Gordon	Mary A. Little	John Taylor
Sue Dickson	Carol Guba	Donna Meyer	Mary Lu Tucker
John Dudash	Court Harding	Kathy Phillips	Chris Williams
Judy Gallo Emigh	Margaret Higbee	Joseph Pumford	Paula Williams
Bob Fairman	Roger Higbee	Bob Ramsey	Dawn Winstead
Emmy Fairman	Dory Jacobs	Cindy Rogers	Ray Winstead
	Pat Johner	Tom Simmons	

## CBCs Past and Present

Year	Total Species	Count Week	Individuals	Year	Total Species	Count Week	Individuals
1983	56	3	4188	2003	72	4	9687
1984	57	5	9540	2004	72	5	8788
1985	51	2	4468	2005	62	7	12130
1986	54	2	7453	2006	64	5	8762
1987	60	3	5676	2007	82	3	14344
1988	48	3	6670	2008	71	8	14329
1989	52	4	4309	2009	56	5	8472
1990	65	6	8502	2010	55	2	7174
1991	60	5	6004	2011	71	4	9029
1992	67	8	6435	2012	80	3	9094
1993	70	9	13490	2013	68	6	8843
1994	67	4	10759	2014	74	7	5693
1995	71	5	8637	2015	70	4	8835
1996	65	7	9994	2016	70	5	7665
1997	74	3	10180	2017	67	4	6243
1998	82	7	10873	2018	66	6	5295
1999	73	2	18833	2019	62	4	5726
2000	64	2	12397	2020	69	4	6511
2001	77	2	14365	2021	63	7	4579
2002	62	2	9739				

## CBC 2021: Better than Expected *(continued from page 10)*

contending with a *thunderstorm* on the CBC. Maybe we'll get her next year.

In fading light, we drove through Oakland Cemetery, scanning the trees in hope of spotting a Merlin sitting atop one of them, although I wasn't optimistic because I hadn't seen one since Ed and I spotted one in flight on the Global Big Day on October 9. We struck out on all the usual perches, but I noticed that one of the tall conifers appeared to have a double top of sorts, and binocs confirmed that the stocky one on the left had a hooked beak! As he has on so many counts, Merlin showed up at

the very last minute. If only we could convince him to train the sapsucker and screech-owl to do the same!

So we called it quits thinking that we'd seen 31 species; but, as it turned out, we'd forgotten to record Dark-eyed Junco, so we actually saw 32. A darn sight better than I was expecting after the way the day started. My nephew Scott Simms, who arrived earlier than expected on Sunday, spent a few hours in the morning birding in Indiana with his brother Bob. They had similar "luck" during those lovely morning hours, with a grand total of ... two Mallards and a couple White-breasted Nuthatches. But, hey...we all survived.

# Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria County

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

**Abbreviations:** Armstrong Trail (AT), Blue Spruce (BS), Crooked Creek Park (CC), Ghost Town Trail (GTT), Keystone Reservoir (KR), Kittanning (KT), Lock & Dam (L&D), Prince Gallitzin State Park (PG), Two Lick Reservoir (TR), West Penn Trail (WPT), White's Woods (WW), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

A total of 178 species were sighted in *Indiana County* this fall as well as 14 other taxa; this is about normal with the previous ten-year average of 177.2 *Armstrong* yielded 144 species plus four other taxa while *Cambria* birders tallied 147 species and nine additional taxa. Overall, the species count in our three-county region was 193 with 17 other taxa.

**Tundra Swans** normally arrive in *Indiana* the first week of Nov. if not earlier; the first noted this year occurred 11/15 at YC with counts of 66 on the south shore (SB, SS) and 15 on the north (MD); 66 was the season's best count. At PG 8 were early arrivals 10/24 (TA); the high count, as well as the only other *Cambria* report, was 18 near Ebensburg 11/27 (RW). A single **Blue-winged Teal** lingered at WW 11/12 (HR); this is the third latest fall date on record for *Indiana* with the latest being 11/13/2012 (TG, MH, RN) when 4 were noted at YC and 11/16/1990 (MH, GL) when one remained on YC Lake. YC hosted up to 6 **Northern Shovelers** 11/6 (3RBC, TBC) with first and last sightings of 2 on 11/1 (SDo) and 4 on 11/24 (CH). Twelve **Gadwalls** and 8 **American Wigeons** first appeared 10/23 (MH, RH) at YC; last fall sighting of 10 wigeons occurred at YC 11/15 (MD). **American Black Duck** numbers continue to be low with the best tally of 11 at TR 11/23 (MS, JT), 2 n. of L&D 8 on 11/4 (TR), and 2 at CC 11/20 (MVT). The only **Northern Pintails** sighted were 6 on 11/15 (SS) and 2 on 11/24 (CH), all at YC. The maximum **Green-winged Teal** count at YC was 21 on 10/23 (MH, RH); the only other report mentioned 3 n. of L&D 8 on 11/4 (TR).

First **Canvasback** appeared at YC 11/15 (SB, MD, SS) where one remained through 11/24 (CH); all reports were of single birds; YC was the only location with Canvasbacks and Redheads. Eight **Redheads** 11/6 (CH) was the high YC count. On 11/15 (MD) YC's top **Ring-necked Duck** count was 200, the highest tally since 11/13/2012 (TG, MH, RN); KR harbored a single Ring-necked Duck 10/28 (AM) while PG's top count reached 25 on 11/4 (TA). Six **Lesser Scaup** arrived 11/2 (PF, MH, RH, DK, TR) at YC



A Rufous Hummingbird visited a private location near Johnstown 8/2-12.

Photo by Tina Alianiello

and 5 appeared 11/4 (TA) at PG with the best tally of 10 on 11/15 (MD) at YC. PG hosted 9 **Buffleheads** on 11/7 (JC); Nov. 15 (SB, MD, SS) yielded the high of 50 Buffleheads at YC; in *Armstrong* 5, also on 11/15 (MVT), popped up at CC while 6 had been observed at KT 11/1 (TR). The season's first 2 **Common Goldeneyes** appeared 11/14 (MH, RH) during a rainstorm at YC.

Peak numbers of **Hooded Mergansers** included 28 at PG 11/7 (JC), 26 at TR 11/15 (MD), and 30 at YC 11/28 (CH); in *Armstrong* 6 were listed at KR 11/15 (MH, RH) and one at KT 11/19 (TR). **Common Mergansers** flooded *Armstrong* with counts of 51 on Creek Road 9/17 (MVT), 28 near Worthington 10/25 (TR), 28 at KR 10/28 (AM), and 112 at CC 11/20 (MVT); *Indiana* sightings included 5 at the old VFW pond 11/23 (SD) and 4 at YC 11/16 (IF); 7 were at PG 9/25 (SC). The AT north of L&D 8 was the only location for **Red-breasted Merganser** with best count of 10 on 10/27 (TR). Top **Ruddy Duck** counts were 9 at KR 10/16 (MH, RH), 11 at PG 10/24 (TA), and 88 at YC 11/2 (PF, MH, RH, DK, TR).

A drumming **Ruffed Grouse** 10/8 (JC) along the GTT was the lone eBirded report.

With only six other Oct. records since 1987, a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** 10/9 (MH, RH) near Shelocta was the third latest on record with the latest occurring 10/20/2001 (MAD) at Saltsburg.

Single **Common Nighthawks** eBirded at PG 9/5 (TA) and near Blairsville 9/10 (SR) were the lone reports.

An adult male **Rufous Hummingbird** was photographed at a private residence in Richland Twp., *Cambria*, 8/2 (DP) and 8/12 (TA); visitors were not welcomed.

Top **American Coot** counts included 55 on 11/17 (AK, JKe) and 45 on 11/28 (CH), both at YC.

After last fall's extensive mudflats and the resulting plethora of shorebirds at YC, this year's migration was disappointing. Water levels remained high at Yellow Creek this season, so little mud was exposed for migrating shorebirds. One to 2 **Semipalmated Plovers** were present at YC between 8/6 (JP) and 9/25 (MB, SBo, ED, MH, RH, PH, JL, KL). On 9/7 (MH, RH, DK, DM, TR) as the observers were standing at the south shore YC boat launch, a single **Sanderling** flew by looking for a place to land, but it was not relocated that day; we later learned it was seen and photographed the following day by one of the maintenance men and subsequently identified for him by the park environmental ed. specialist, Lisa Meadows. **Least Sandpipers** stopped at YC between 8/3 (ED, PF, MH, RH, DK, TR) and 9/7 (MH, RH, DK, DM, TR) with high of 15 on 8/6 (JP). At CC between 8/2 (TR) and 9/17 (TR) Least Sandpipers visited with top count of 11 on 8/8 (TR). A **Pectoral Sandpiper** arrived at YC 8/6 (JP); 2 were present 8/11 (TA); and the only other Pectorals seen were 2 spotted 9/17 (TR) at CC and one 9/20 (HR) at YC. The only **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were noted 8/11 (TA, DK) at YC when 3 was the best count. A single **Wilson's Snipe** photographed 10/13 (MM) at YC was still present 10/15 (AK, JKe); CC yielded one 9/17 (TR). Highlight of the season was the discovery of a **Wilson's Phalarope** 8/8 (AH) at YC; the phalarope lingered through 8/12 (RH, SM) and was eBirded by 11 additional birders. Five was YC's high tally of **Spotted Sandpipers** 8/8 (JaP, JP) while the last noted at YC occurred 9/14 (MH, RH, DK, JT). CC hosted 2 Spotties 8/31, 9/17 (MVT). Most **Solitary Sandpipers** moved through between 8/6 (JP) and 8/19 (SD), but singletons along the WPT 9/14 (AA) and at PG 10/9 (TA) were the exceptions; best CC Solitary count was 5 on 8/8 (TR). **Greater Yellowlegs** visited YC between 8/6 (JP) and 11/8 (LS) with top count of 6 on 10/26 (ED, MH, RH); 2 stopped at CC 8/25 (TR) while one foraged at KR 10/25, 27 (AM), but by 10/28 (AM), 3 were present at KR; last noted was one at PG 11/4 (TA). At YC **Lesser Yellowlegs** were found between 8/6 (JP) and 8/13 (MF); CC boasted only one this season on 10/8 (TR).

**Bonaparte's Gulls** were found on only three dates, all at YC, with top count of 53 on 11/15 (SB, SS); the other two dates, 11/12 (JC) and 11/16 (SD, ED, MH, RH, DK, GL), yielded singletons. A windy, overcast, day 11/14 (MH, RH), which started with wind and rain that turned to sleet and snow, yielded a **Franklin's Gull** in a flock of 15 **Ring-billed Gulls** at YC. This was the seventh *Indiana* record for Franklin's Gull. The following day (MD) 60 Ring-bills were present, but the Franklin's was not relocated. A single **Caspian Tern** visited YC 8/10 (RB, BO); a report of



A Solitary Sandpiper and the Wilson's Phalarope were constant companions at Yellow Creek on 8/8.

Photo by Margaret Higbee

2, an adult and a juvenile, on 10/9 (SG) was the only other sighting. Two **Black Terns** at PG 8/18 (TA) were great finds. A well-studied **Common Tern** 10/5 (DK, JT) at YC was the only report. Amazingly the only **Forster's Terns** noted were 5 at PG on 8/18 (TA), the same day the Black Terns had been present. YC hosted a large flock of **Common Loons** 11/15 (SB, MD, SS) with counts of 67 to 70 individuals; PG's high was 3 on both 11/3 (TA) and 11/7 (JC).

An **American Bittern** was a great find at YC 8/11 (TA); this is the first eBirded YC sighting since 5/2/2007

(MH, DH) and the first fall report since 10/13/2013 (LC, MH, RH, DJ, GL). **Great Egrets** had a consistent presence in *Indiana* between 8/3 (ED, MH, RH, DK, TR) at YC and 11/1 (JP) when one still lingered at the old VFW pond; counts of 3, 4, and even 5 were not unusual this year (v.o.). This is only the second Nov. record with the previous occurring last year when 2 were present 11/1/20 (MH, RH) at YC. In *Armstrong* single Great Egrets were noted on two dates – 8/23 (ABu) near Worthington and 10/18 (TR) n. of L&D 8. A **Little Blue Heron**, discovered 8/11 (TA) at YC, was subsequently seen by many observers through 10/13 (MM).

**Barred Owls** were noted at 8 locations in the region, with the only consistent area Nolo with reports on 8/27; 9/6, 28, 30; 11/2, 28 (DB); the other seven spots were one-time sightings/hearings.

A **Red-headed Woodpecker** at BS 9/9 (JT) was the lone report in the region. **Merlin** was a nice yard bird in IN 8/27, 10/3 (JP); **Merlins** were listed in *Armstrong* 9/11 (TR) at CC, 9/16 (TR) along the AT n. of L&D 8, and n. of Leechburg 10/28 (MVT); one was at SGL 279 in *Cambria* 9/12 (TA); they moved through YC between 10/8 (SL) and 10/12 (ED, PF, MH, RH, DK, GL, JT, KT). A **Peregrine**, perched on the electrical structure near the Graff Bridge 11/4 (MH, RH), was the lone report.

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at PG 9/26 (TA, PH, KL) was the only one eBirded in the region. **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were noted at six *Indiana* locations between 9/10 (MH, RH, JP) and 9/26 (CH, MH, RH, HR); birds were seen at multiple locations on both dates. Listed at four locations, **Philadelphia Vireos** moved through *Indiana* between 9/10 (MH, RH, JP) at both BS and near Shelocta and 9/21 (MH, RH, DK, JT) at YC; one along the AT n. of L&D 8 was well studied 9/25 (TR). **Fish Crows** were last noted 9/7 (MH, RH) in IN and 10/2 (TA) at PG. They seem to withdraw from our area during the winter. The only eBirded **Horned Larks** were one on 10/1 (MH, RH) and 4 on 11/14 (MH, RH), all near YC.

Four **Purple Martins** were last seen at YC, where they did not nest, on 8/3 (PF, MH, RH, DK, TR). Unusual was a flock of 6 late swallows at YC 9/25 (ED, MH, RH, PH, JL, KL) including at least one **Bank, Barn, and Cliff. Red-breasted Nuthatches** were widespread with reports from all three counties; most reports mentioned one to 2 birds except at PG when 3 were listed 9/26 (TA) and 4 were noted 10/2 (PH, KL). A late **House Wren** was found 11/5 (ED, MH, RH) in the cattails at the YC boat launch before they were bulldozed. **Winter Wrens** moved through our area between 10/2 (MH, RH, JT) at BS and 11/28 (SD) when 2 were still present at Waterworks Conservation Area which seems to be a fall/early winter hotspot for them; the WPT yielded 2 on 10/20 (JK, TK). *Armstrong* reports included one near Buttermilk Falls 10/27 (AM) and 2 the next day (AM) along the AT n. of L&D 8 (AM); the latter location yielded single Winter Wrens 11/4, 9, 21 (TR). One Winter Wren near PG 11/27 (BF) was *Cambria's* lone report. A late **Gray Catbird** lingered at WW 11/2 (HR). The only **Veery** found this fall was seen 8/29 (TA) at SGL 108 - Fallentimber. The fall's only **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** were observed at PG 9/25 (TA) and at YC 10/9 (SL). **Swainson's Thrushes** moved through the tri-county area between 9/8 (MH, RH, JT) and 10/25 (MH, RH). Last **Wood Thrushes** were sighted at BS 9/21 (DK) and at PG 9/24 (MH, RH, LW). Single **American Pipits** were found at WW 9/14 (HR), along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 10/7 (TR), and at YC 11/7 (EH) and 11/15 (MD).

**Purple Finches** were erratically reported through the season with all records of 1-3 birds (v.o.). A **Pine Siskin** was noted at WW 9/15 (HR); another flew overhead calling n.e. of KT on 11/4 (ABu). A **Snow Bunting** flew over the north shore of YC Lake 11/9 (SD, ED, PF, MH, RH, DK). The only **American Tree Sparrows** listed were 2 at PG 10/24 (TA) and one at YC 11/17 (AK, JKe). First **Fox Sparrows** were 2 at PG 10/24 (TA), 4 that arrived 10/25 (HR) at WW, and one 11/7 (EH) at YC. **Lincoln Sparrows** moved through our region between 9/27 (TGo) and 10/9 (TR) with all reports of single birds. At least 8 **Eastern Towhees** lingered into Nov. with last report 11/29 (HR) west of Clyde.

Five **Bobolinks** remained at St. Lawrence, *Cambria*, 8/25 (MD). A late **Eastern Meadowlark** was spotted at YC 11/15 (SB, SS). Late **Baltimore Orioles** were found 11/9 (SD, ED et al) and 11/16 (IF), both in the McFeaters Cove area of YC. Both birds were photographed and appear to be different individuals. At least 40 **Rusty Blackbirds** stopped at YC 11/9 (SD, ED et al); other top Rusty counts were 5 at Loretto 10/29 (SVH) and 4 at PG 11/7 (JC).

Thirty-one species of warblers were noted this fall in the region. **Worm-eating Warbler** was found only at PG 8/12 (TA). Last **Louisiana Waterthrushes** included 2 along the WPT 8/3 (DL), one at CC 8/6 (DBe), and one at YC 8/11 (TA). The region's only **Northern Waterthrush** appeared at Mahoning Creek Lake 8/8 (AK, JKe). The **Swainson's Warbler** along the WPT was last heard 8/3 (DL). An

**Orange-crowned Warbler** stopped at YC 10/9 (SG); this is only the second eBirded Oct. sighting on record. **Nashville Warbler** was sighted at BS 10/18 (MH, RH). A **Connecticut Warbler** was a nice find at YC 9/11 (CH). Last **Common Yellowthroat** was photographed 10/24 (TA) at PG. Last dates included 9/30 (CH) for **Hooded Warbler** along the GTT; 10/9 (ED, JT) for **American Redstart** at IUP; 10/9 (HR) for **Cape May Warbler** at WW; 9/11 (AM) for **Cerulean Warbler** at BS; 10/2 (PH, KL) for **Northern Parula** at PG; 10/10 (HR) for **Magnolia Warbler** at WW; 10/3 (JP) for **Bay-breasted Warbler** in IN; 9/25 for **Blackburnian Warbler**, both n. of L&D 8 (TR) and at PG (TA); 9/11 (AM) for **Yellow Warbler** at BS; 9/27 (TR) for **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at CC; and 10/13 for **Blackpoll Warbler** at both CC (TR) and at PG (JC). The best count for Blackpolls was 5 at YC 9/25 (MH, RH) in a mixed flock of warblers. Most reports of **Black-throated Blue Warblers** involved single birds, but 3 on 9/2 (TR) along the AT n. of L&D 8 and 4 on 9/17 (TR) at CC were the high counts. **Palm Warblers** arrived 9/11 both NW of KT (ABu) and at PG (TA); top counts were 6 on 9/18 (PI) and 7 on 9/26 (PH, KL), both at PG. PG yielded 3 **Pine Warblers** on 9/26 (PI, WI), and 4 was a good count at YC 10/12 (RH, DK, JT). First 2 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** arrived 8/31 (MVT) at CC. The season's only **Prairie Warbler** was at PG 9/4 (TA). Lingered at PG 10/13 (JC) was the last noted **Black-throated Green Warbler**. First arrival **Canada Warbler** 8/14 (CH) at YC was a lifer for the observer who also spotted the region's last migrant Canada 9/21 (CH) along the GTT. Last **Wilson's Warbler** was sighted near SGL 247 on 10/9 (TR). An **Indigo Bunting** 10/8 (MVT) was a little on the late side.

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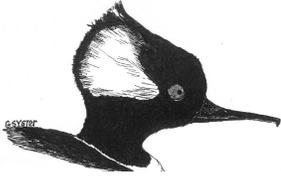


## Dues Reminder

Todd Bird Club dues are due on January 1 each year. If you haven't already paid, please submit your \$15 family, \$10 individual, or \$5 student membership to:

Gloria Lamer, Treasurer  
515 Laurel Run Road  
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And please indicate whether you prefer a hard copy or the electronic version. Thanks!



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