

# The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

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

January 2023

## Meetings

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

**February 7** – JT Larkin, the son of IUP's Dr. Jeffery Larkin, will be our February presenter. JT is a student at the University of Massachusetts - Amherst. He has been studying Eastern Whip-poor-wills in regard to the ongoing forest management in the Appalachians under David King with the use of Autonomous Recording Units. Dr. Larkin is collaborating with them on this project.

**March 7** – We welcome Steve Gosser back, looking forward once again to his outstanding photography. It's been far too many years since Steve has awed us with his great bird photographs and more. Steve will present his favorite photos from the last several years. His photos are from the tristate area as well as



Steve Gosser  
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Steve Gosser photographed this striking Indigo Bunting on a sunflower in Oct. 2022.

California and the Atlantic coast states. Don't miss this great presentation!

**April 4** – Randy Koleck and Jacob Goldman, two of Dr. Jeff Larkin's grad students, are using emerging technologies to examine factors affecting the Ruffed Grouse occupancy across Pennsylvania. They will present a joint program explaining their project and some of their results.

**May 2 – 6:00 p.m.** This is our annual banquet meeting. Please bring a dish to share and your own place settings. Annie Lindsay from Powdermill Avian Research Center will be our presenter.

Details will follow in the April issue of "The Todd Nuthatch," as well as on our website.

# Outings

Tuesday morning outings will continue, weather permitting. For all Tuesday Yellow Creek outings, meet at the pavilion on the north shore shortly after dawn. To reach the pavilion from Indiana, take US 422 to South Harmony Road; turn right onto South Harmony. Follow the road to the right at the "Right turn keep moving" stop sign. Go past McFeaters Cove then turn left into the North Shore. Everyone is welcome. If you have any questions or weather concerns, please contact Roger (412-309-3538) or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493).

**February 17 - 20** – The Great Backyard Bird Count. Spend time in your favorite places watching birds—then enter them on eBird. In as little as 15 minutes notice the birds around you. Identify them, count them, and submit them on eBird to help scientists better understand and protect birds around the world.

**Saturday, February 18** – A trip north. We'll watch eBird sightings and decide closer to the date where to go. Possibilities include Mosquito Lake, Pymatuning, Conneaut Harbor, the Ohio lakeshore, etc. For more information, contact Roger Higbee (cell 412-309-3538; home 724-354-3493).

**Saturday, February 25** – Birding the Allegheny River for waterfowl, led by Carol Guba (724-840-5700). This can be productive as long as area lakes remain frozen. Should the lake waters be open, we may abort and go elsewhere. Check with Carol for directions or any changes. Meet at the Higbees at 8:00 a.m.

**Saturday, March 4** – Winter birding at Yellow Creek, led by Trent Millum (tmillum361@gmail.com). Meet at the parking lot of the Boy Scout Camp Seph Mack on the north shore of Yellow Creek State Park at 8:00 a.m. We will explore the camp for foraging birds. Take US 422

east from Indiana for about 8 miles. Look for signs for the North Shore and the Boy Scout Camp. Turn right onto S. Harmony Rd. for about 2 miles then turn right into the camp.

**Saturday, March 18** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Gloria Lamer (724-349-1159). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office located on PA 259, just off US 422. We'll target early waterfowl and other migrants.

**Saturday, March 25** – Joint outing with Friends of the Parks, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Yellow Creek State Park office. We'll target waterfowl, wintering and resident birds, as well as other migrants.

**Saturday, April 22** – Blue Spruce County Park, led by Mike Weible ([feather\\_ridge@yahoo.com](mailto:feather_ridge@yahoo.com)). Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the first large parking lot just past the park office.



## In Memoriam

### Ken Truitt

It is with great sadness that we report the recent deaths of two of our members. Ken Truitt joined Todd Bird Club in 2012 and Tuesday and Saturday morning field trips at Yellow Creek State Park. He often attended our meetings, too. He passed away on September 3. We extend our sympathy to his family.

### Vernon Blystone

Vernon Blystone, a long-time Todd member, joined Todd Bird Club in 1996. He seldom missed our monthly meetings. He attended our October meeting with his wife Jeanne on October 4 and passed on October 12. He will be greatly missed. We remember him as always having a kind word for everyone with a smile on his face. Jeanne, you have our sympathy.

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

President - Linda Jones 724-463-0651 [joneslinda@hotmail.com](mailto:joneslinda@hotmail.com)  
Vice President - Sue Dickson [jscm130@yahoo.com](mailto:jscm130@yahoo.com)  
Secretary - Roger Higbee 724-354-3493 [rvhigbee@windstream.net](mailto:rvhigbee@windstream.net)  
Treasurer - Gloria Lamer 724-349-1159 [michny9@gmail.com](mailto:michny9@gmail.com)

Webmaster - Ed Donley [hedonley@iup.edu](mailto:hedonley@iup.edu)  
Scrapbook - Donna Meyer 724-349-2787 [donna.meyer36@gmail.com](mailto:donna.meyer36@gmail.com)  
Facebook - Doug Wise [dmdoug66@gmail.com](mailto:dmdoug66@gmail.com)  
Sonya Stewart [sonya\\_stewart@yahoo.com](mailto:sonya_stewart@yahoo.com)  
Newsletter - Marg Higbee 724-354-3493 [bcorirole@windstream.net](mailto:bcorirole@windstream.net)

# 2022 Fall Migration Round-Up

Another Migration Round-Up has come and gone.

This year's Fall Migration Round-Up was held from September 24 to October 2. What started in the fall of 2020 with just two parks asking birders to come out to tally as many species as possible over a weekend, has grown to 21 state parks taking part over a nine-day stretch. The parks, and their final species tallies were: Bald Eagle (72), Black Moshannon (32), Canoe Creek (75), Codorus (93), French Creek (41), Kettle Creek (61), Lackawanna (82), Little Buffalo (80), Little Pine (29), Locust Lake (65), Mt. Pisgah (46), Nescopeck (74), Nolde Forest (19), Poe Valley (29), Prince Gallitzin (80), Ricketts Glen (46), Ridley Creek (64), Sinnemahoning (43), and White Clay Creek (31). Yellow Creek (*Indiana*) put in an awesome effort and finished out in front with 99 species, with some great birds observed including a Red-throated Loon, a White-winged Scoter, and a Ruffed Grouse, the latter notably absent from the park for several years.

Other highlights observed include a trio of Sandhill Cranes flying over Lackawanna (*Lackawanna*), a thrush-packed day at Nescopeck (*Luzerne*), with Swainson's, Gray-cheeked, Hermit, and a lingering Wood picked up, and Lincoln's Sparrows recorded in the forested park of King's Gap (*Cumberland*) and over in Sinnemahoning (*Potter & Cameron*).

These Migration Round-Ups, advertised as competitions between the parks, have goals that reach much more deeply for park staff, specifically our park educators. (Granted, we do enjoy those bragging rights!). Since each park differs in ecological composition, from the mudflats found at Yellow Creek (*Indiana*) to the 1,275-acre Lake Marburg at Codorus (*York*) to the primarily forested environment of Poe Valley (*Centre*), there is no level playing field since some parks have an ecological advantage for bird diversity over others. We realize this and is why we view the competition aspect of the event as superficial.

So, if it's not about winning, what are we hoping for?

For starters, we hope to showcase how valuable PA State Parks are for conservation, in this case for birds. Whether



This White-winged Scoter, photographed by Roger Higbee, was a great find on the last day of the Fall Migration Round-up at Yellow Creek.

certain species are finding their preferred breeding or wintering habitats, or transient individuals are dropping in to build up fat reserves before continuing, park staff are interested in learning more about what is happening within each respective park. Of course, we want the event to go toward something bigger, so we encourage the use of eBird to share sightings.

The other goal of this event is to take advantage of birds being a readily viewable taxon of wildlife, allowing park educators to better connect people with nature. The simple promotion of

the event with photographs and updated checklists on social media may allow someone to realize we have Yellow Warblers with their vivid plumage or American Woodcocks that look *all* around with their large, buggy eyes. Of course, to truly pique the interest of the public and spark a new passion for birds in someone, park educators present interpretive programs that tie in with the Round-Up. Little Pine (*Lycoming*) and Poe Valley (*Centre*) offered bird walks to help introduce people to birds. An evening bird walk at Ricketts Glen (*Columbia, Luzerne, & Sullivan*) treated attendees to the calls of a Barred Owl before they caught sight of a SpaceX rocket flying over!

By taking full advantage of a nine-day stretch focused on birds and offering related educational programs, park educators can introduce non-birders to the beauty, roles, and importance of birds. We can even take it a step further and use avian examples to help drive home environmental issues such as: climate change, habitat lost, invasive species, and biodiversity. By introducing young people to birds, we hope to develop the next generation of birders, naturalists, and biologists and increase the appreciation of the natural world in all people.

So, we thank all of you who made it out to our parks and helped to add to our tallies, knowledge base, and experiences. Moving forward, we look to include additional parks and continue the event's growth.

Tony DeSantis  
Environmental Education Specialist  
PA DCNR, Lackawanna State Park

# Yellow Creek Participants in the State Park Round-up

Josh Buterbaugh  
Sue Dickson  
Ed Donley  
Carol Guba  
Court Harding

Margaret Higbee  
Roger Higbee  
Debbie Kalbfleisch  
Gloria Lamer

Lisa Meadows  
Trent Millum  
Patrick Nielsen  
Henry Rummel

Sherry Shank  
Mark Strittmatter  
John Taylor  
Shannon Thompson

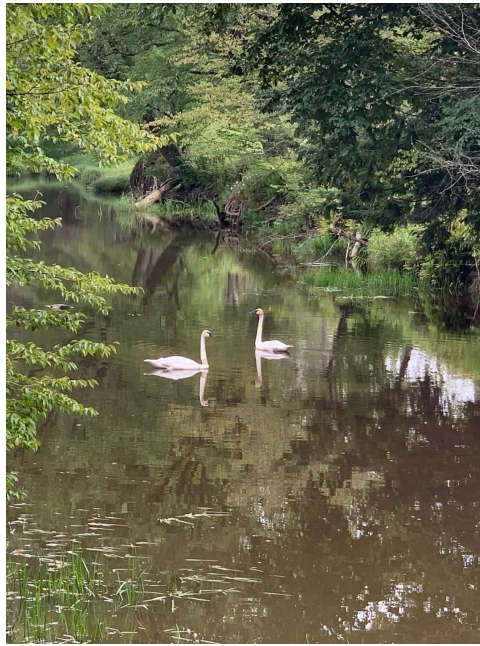
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## Trumpeter Swan Family Update

By Lisa Catarouche & Tom Glover

We have sad news to report – male Z675 is now missing. The last sighting of Z675 and the 2018 female offspring was reported mid-November 2022, in the area outside of Richardsville, Jefferson County, PA. A single swan was reported on eBird on November 29, 2022, on a private pond south of Sperryville, VA. The pond is one of the sites where the swan family has spent time while wintering in Virginia. The same Trumpeter Swan was reported on eBird on the same pond December 17, 2022. We believe this swan is the 2018 female offspring. It appears that something happened to Z675 while making the migration from PA to VA this past November. No sightings were reported on eBird of the pair between PA and VA.



Paul Silvis photographed Z675 and the 2018 offspring on August 24, 2022, on North Fork Creek near Richardsville.

The success of Z603 and Z675 was recorded as the first pair of Trumpeter Swans to nest, hatch, and raise a swan in Pennsylvania. In years after 2018 other pairs of Trumpeter Swans successfully nested in eastern Pennsylvania. On May 21, 2022, a pair in Cumberland County, PA, established a nest with eggs, according to eBird. The eggs hatched and an observation of two adults and seven cygnets was posted on June 13, 2022. By June 15, 2022, only three cygnets were noted. The fate of those three cygnets is unknown. The loss of the four cygnets points out how hard it is to successfully raise swans. Young swans have a 40% chance of survival to adulthood (Reference Wikipedia).

Male Z675 would have turned 11 during 2023. The mate of Z675, female Z603, came up missing in early 2020; she would have turned 15 in 2020.

The story of Z603 and Z675 has come to an end. It will be interesting to see the fate of their 2018 offspring.

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## Birding in Louisiana

By Debbie Kalbfleisch

As birders know, Yellow Rails can be notoriously hard to get as a life bird. However, it is a bit easier to see them in Louisiana in the fall, on their wintering grounds. In October, I flew to Lafayette and joined a weekend Field Guides Tour billed as Yellow Rails and Crawfish Tails. It was led by Eric Hynes and Owen Hilchey, with 14 participants from across the country. Eric Hynes has a Pennsylvania connection — he worked both at Hawk Mountain and at Powdermill in his younger days. The

plan was to bird the southwestern portion of the state, as well as attend the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival sometime during the next three days.

On the evening of Thursday, October 27, we met for the first time as a group in the lobby of our hotel, the Holiday Inn Express in Scott, and went to dinner at a nearby restaurant called Fezzo's, where we had our first taste of Cajun food. Eric told us that the festival was weather

dependent – the farmers won't harvest the rice if it gets too wet as wet grain clogs up the combines, and rain was expected the next day. He had already been informed that we would not be scheduled until at least Saturday. Sunday actually looked to be the best day of the weekend with no rain.

We had an early start on Friday, boarding the vans at 5 a.m. so that we could drive north to the longleaf pine woods and be there early enough to catch Red-cockaded Woodpeckers as they left their roosting holes. Several of us dozed along the way, waking up as we pulled into a McDonald's for breakfast. We arrived at the edge of the Kisatchie National Forest shortly before 8 a.m. and walked quietly into the woods. Brown-headed Nuthatches were already up and calling, and we caught a glimpse of an American Kestrel flying off. It was not long before we heard the high squeaky calls of a Red-cockaded Woodpecker and spotted a pair leaving their roost and moving from tree to tree. We also got good looks at a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and a Pileated Woodpecker. We could hear Bachman's Sparrows talking to each other in the underbrush, but they stayed hidden.

We drove farther into Kisatchie, hoping for a look at the elusive Bachman's Sparrow. We got excellent views of several Brown-headed Nuthatches and Golden-crowned Kinglets, but the Bachman's was not at all cooperative. Only a few people had quick glimpses as one darted between bushes. After driving a few miles west on Rt. 10, we walked a lovely trail in the Vernon Unit of the Calcasieu Ranger District. This is hardwood bottomland forest, and it was wonderful to hear and see a Barred Owl. Three Red-cockaded Woodpeckers kept us company as they foraged close to the trail. We spent some time at an awesome bridge over a small creek where numerous small birds were bouncing around in the trees. It was one of those wonderful times when it is hard to know where to look next! Hermit Thrush, Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Pine Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Black-throated Green Warblers were mixed in with numerous Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Ruby- and Golden-crowned Kinglets, more Brown-headed Nuthatches, and a House Wren. We tried one more spot for the Bachman's Sparrow near the Fort Polk Military Reservation, but after hearing gunfire close by, and with rain beginning, we abandoned the search and headed south.

After lunch at a Subway, the sun came out, and we arrived at the swimming beach on the north shore of Lake Charles. Three Brown Boobies, possibly a family group, had been hanging out on the opposite shore for the past week, and we could clearly make them out with our

binoculars. With the help of Eric and Owen, we all got good scope views of them, too! A Loggerhead Shrike peered at us from a tall light pole, and a couple of Eurasian Collared- Doves flew past. A Black-bellied Plover and a pair of Semipalmated Plovers sauntered on the beach, past Caspian, Forster's, and Royal Terns in winter plumage. A large group of Laughing Gulls kept their distance farther up the beach, and we noticed several Ring-billed Gulls on the outskirts of the flock, as well. Brown Pelicans, Great Blue Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets flew past, occasionally landing on the sand in front of us. We noted our first White Ibises, Osprey, Bald Eagle, and Barn Swallows.

Dinner that night was at Prejean's in Lafayette, another Cajun establishment. I ordered the barbecued jumbo Gulf shrimp. The ramekin that was placed in front of me was filled with a thick brown sauce, and I assumed the shrimp were under it. To the amusement of my neighbors at the table, I felt around with my fork and stabbed a shrimp, and brought it up to find beady black eyes staring at me, with waving antenna and tiny feet! The woman next to me insisted that the feet were still moving, but I wasn't going to let a little thing like that bother me. After this dinner, however, I decided that I had experimented enough with Cajun cuisine.

We had a later start on Saturday, and were able to grab a quick breakfast downstairs before setting off at 6:30. There was a possibility that the Festival people would give us the go-ahead to come that day, so we needed to stay within half an hour of the rice fields. We headed south toward the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area, driving through a downpour on the way. As we went through a rural residential area, we slowed down to view our first Wilson's Snipe in one of the front yards. Roughly 5,000 Greater White-fronted Geese were flying in the distance, as well as smaller flocks of Glossy and White-faced Ibis. When the rain let up, we got out and walked for a bit and were entertained by a pair of very noisy Great Kiskadees. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher added his opinion while an Eastern Phoebe flitted quietly in the background.

At the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area, we stretched our legs on the Birding and Nature Trail. We had seen Canada Geese the day before at Lake Charles, but now we saw our first ducks — a few Northern Shovelers, Wood Ducks, and Northern Pintails. A Northern Harrier glided by, and more snipe were spotted. A Northern Mockingbird kept an eye on us as we walked past, and a few Tree Swallows were darting about. Swamp Sparrows were calling, and a Downy Woodpecker ignored us as it investigated a tree. Common Yellow-

throats and a Palm Warbler were also calling, and some of us got nice looks at them when they popped up. Red-winged Blackbirds and Yellow-rumped Warblers seemed to be everywhere. The highlight here were three lovely Vermilion Flycatchers, a lifer for me and several others in the group.

Moving on along the rural roads, we got out to scope Cattle Egrets in a field and then noticed three extremely large cranes flying in. Whooping Cranes! The two adults and an immature towered over the nearby White Ibis and their young. Both adult cranes were banded, and one had a transmitter on its right leg. There is an active program to re-introduce Whooping Cranes to Louisiana, but they are still a hit-or-miss species, so we were thrilled that they were so close. We also added Belted Kingfisher and Savannah Sparrow to our list at this spot. Farther on, we stopped again and snagged Blue-winged Teal, Dunlin, Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, and American Pipit. This last location was at the side of a busy highway, so we did not linger long.

We had more room at our next stop on Compton Road, where we saw huge numbers of birds in the flooded rice fields. Elegant Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets foraged next to Black-bellied Plovers, Stilt Sandpipers, Dunlin, Least and Western Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers, and Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. Gadwall, Mottled Duck, and Green-winged Teal were added to our growing list. How many birds? We had high counts of 550 Blue-winged Teal; 1,200 Northern Shovelers; 3,000 Northern Pintails; and 1,500 Green-winged Teal. A Franklin's Gull caused a stir when it flew in, and two humpbacked Marbled Godwits were easy to pick out as they probed the shallow water with their long bills. I was particularly pleased to finally get decent looks at several White-faced Ibises, a life bird for me as the previous ones had been mixed in with distant flocks of Glossy Ibis. We

spent several hours at this location as birds continued to fly in, and Eric and Owen patiently schooled us on sandpipers, pointing out field marks and what to look for on confusing shorebirds.

As the day was winding down, we drove on, working our way back to the motel. We were passing a large flock of Red-winged Blackbirds in a field when someone called out Yellow-headed Blackbird! Both vans screeched to a halt, and we all piled out. Sorting through 8,000 to 10,000 blackbirds, looking for the one with the yellow head, might not appeal to a lot of folks, but for me this was yet another highlight of the trip. The flock was constantly shifting, and occasionally someone would spot the odd blackbird and call it out. I never did get it, but it was huge fun.

On Potter Road, we stopped at a large farm pond where we added nine Gull-billed Terns that were delicately plucking food from the water as well as a Roseate Spoonbill which were both new to our list. We had our high count of Long-billed Dowitchers here, with at least 1,000 individuals, a couple hundred fewer than at Compton Road. Back in Scott, Eric led the way into a McDonald's parking lot, just down the road from our motel, where Fish Crows were holding a late afternoon conference.

We dined that evening at the Bon Temps Grill in Lafayette. I opted for a nice salad. We had been told earlier in the afternoon that we would finally get our chance at the Festival the following day. Yellow Rail would be a life bird for all the participants, and optimism was running high. Would we get good looks at this shy rail? Stay tuned for the next installment of Birding in Louisiana!

*(To be continued in the April issue)*

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## CBC Observers 2022

Pat Andrascik	John Dudash	Pat Johner	Donna Meyer	Robert Stitt
Tom Betts	Judy Emigh	Paul Johner	Trent Millum	Linda Stormer
Michele Carlson	Gary Ferrence	Linda Jones	Bob Ramsey	Rodger Stormer
Rich Carlson	Linda Ferrence	Noah Jones	Cindy Rogers	Mark Strittmatter
Lee Carnahan	Barb Fletcher	Warren Jones	Dane St George	John Taylor
Dan Cunkelman	Marie Frew	Pat Keating	Joe Saxfield	Sally Thierstein
Marcy Cunkelman	Robert Gordon	Clayton Lamer	Tom Simmons	Mary Lu Tucker
Jim Dickson	Sally Gordon	Gloria Lamer	John Somonick	Mike Weible
Susan Dickson	Margaret Higbee	Dennis Lauffer	Vicki Stelma	Ray Winstead
Ed Donley	Roger Higbee	Annie Lindsay	Alice Stitt	

# Indiana Christmas Bird Count Results

40th Annual CBC – December 26, 2022

Snow Goose (CW)		Northern Harrier (9)	3	Purple Finch (89)	10
Greater White-fronted Goose (2)		Sharp-shinned Hawk (14)	4	Common Redpoll (63)	
Canada Goose (2081)	1096	Cooper's Hawk (15)	11	White-winged Crossbill (62)	
Mute Swan (4)		N. Goshawk (1)		Pine Siskin (375)	
Trumpeter Swan (2)		Accipiter sp?	1	American Goldfinch (637)	126
Tundra Swan (533)	113	Red-shouldered Hawk (5)	3	Lapland Longspur (6)	
Wood Duck (5)	2	Red-tailed Hawk (71)	58	Snow Bunting (225)	
N. Shoveler (2)		Rough-legged Hawk (3)		Eastern Towhee (3)	1
Gadwall (30)		Eastern Screech-Owl (13)	1	American Tree Sparrow (483)	47
American Wigeon (14)		Great Horned Owl (10)	CW	Chipping Sparrow (4)	1
Mallard (670)	63	Barred Owl (5)	1	Clay-colored Sparrow (1)	
American Black Duck (190)	13	Long-eared Owl (1)		*Field Sparrow (13)	23
N. Pintail (10)		Short-eared Owl (2)		*Savannah Sparrow (2)	3
Green-winged Teal (4)		Belted Kingfisher (9)	2	Fox Sparrow (3)	1
Canvasback (15)	2	*Red-headed Woodpecker (1)	1	Song Sparrow (152)	141
Redhead (14)	1	Red-bellied Woodpecker (81)	65	Lincoln's Sparrow (1)	
Ring-necked Duck (41)	CW	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (8)	5	Swamp Sparrow (14)	11
Greater Scaup (5)		Downy Woodpecker (177)	106	*White-throated Sparrow (214)	225
Lesser Scaup (32)	8	Hairy Woodpecker (58)	30	White-crowned Sparrow (36)	5
Surf Scoter (CW)		Northern Flicker (40)	9	Dark-eyed Junco (2272)	1422
White-winged Scoter (1)		Pileated Woodpecker (36)	19	Eastern Meadowlark (10)	
Black Scoter (1)		Am. Kestrel (26)	5	Red-winged Blackbird (3570)	20
Long-tailed Duck (3)		Merlin (2)	1	Brown-headed Cowbird (46)	2
Bufflehead (52)	2	Peregrine Falcon (1)		Rusty Blackbird (13)	
Common Goldeneye (7)		Eastern Phoebe (1)		Brewer's Blackbird (CW)	
Hooded Merganser (68)	18	Northern Shrike (1)		Common Grackle (503)	
Common Merganser (29)	14	Blue Jay (566)	267	Pine Warbler (1)	
Red-breasted Merganser (6)		American Crow (3275)	405	Orange-crowned Warbler (CW)	
Ruddy Duck (223)	CW	Fish Crow (8)		Common Yellowthroat (CW)	
N. Bobwhite (1)		*Common Raven (9)	10	Yellow-rumped Warbler (18)	1
Ring-necked Pheasant (21)	15	Horned Lark (225)	35	Northern Cardinal (584)	385
Ruffed Grouse (22)		Black-capped Chickadee (808)	283		
Wild Turkey (345)	262	Tufted Titmouse (394)	202	<b>Total Individuals (18,838)</b>	<b>6991</b>
Pied-billed Grebe (29)	4	Red-breasted Nuthatch (51)	2		
Horned Grebe (7)		White-breasted Nuthatch (201)	109	75 Species on 12/26/22 + 5 for CW	
Red-necked Grebe (1)		Brown Creeper (25)	7		
Rock Pigeon (392)	102	Winter Wren (4)	2	CW = Birds Seen During Count	
Mourning Dove (1117)	305	Carolina Wren (61)	17	Week but Not Count Day	
Virginia Rail (1)		Golden-crowned Kinglet (106)	17	CW = December 23-29	
Am. Coot (811)		Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4)	1		
Sandhill Crane (2)	CW	Eastern Bluebird (152)	21	*Record-breaking or Equally High	
Killdeer (20)		Townsend's Solitaire (1)		Tally (6)	
Am. Woodcock (2)		Hermit Thrush (6)	CW		
Wilson's Snipe (3)	1	Wood Thrush (CW)		**Species New to the Count (0)	
Bonaparte's Gull (6)		American Robin (1626)	17	( ) Highest No. Seen on Any	
Ring-billed Gull (50)	3	Gray Catbird (2)		Previous Indiana CBC, 1983-2021	
Herring Gull (1)		Brown Thrasher (1)			
Red-throated Loon (1)		Northern Mockingbird (22)	7		
Common Loon (9)	2	European Starling (8656)	370		
Double-crested Cormorant (1)		Cedar Waxwing (212)			
Great Blue Heron (8)	3	House Sparrow (809)	275	138 Species on Count since 1983	
Black Vulture (3)		Evening Grosbeak (566)		including 6 CW only species	
Turkey Vulture (4)	1	Pine Grosbeak (1)			
*Bald Eagle (5)	6	House Finch (1563)	159		

# Christmas Bird Count 2022 Revisited

December 26 dawned cold and windy with the thermometer reading only 5 degrees. The snow cover was roughly two inches; the sky was completely overcast, but during the day we received 0.02 additional inches of snow. The high for the day was 20 degrees.

We welcomed ten new participants this year – Linda Ferrence, Noah Jones, Warren Jones, Annie Lindsay, Dane St. George, Joe Saxfield, Alice and Robert Stitt, Sally Thierstein, and Mike Weible – and two of those were probably unwitting eBird participants.

Thirty field birders spent 39.2 hours hiking 25.31 miles while road birders drove for 40 hours logging 399 miles. Our owling team drove 21 miles. Twenty-one feeder watchers at 18 locations spent 49.75 hours counting birds. This year we tallied the highest number of species since 2012 and the highest number of individuals since 2016.

Special thanks to Lee Carnahan who took three trips to Two Lick Reservoir on count day to count the water birds; he listed the two loons and all the diving ducks as well as the four Pied-billed Grebes. Prior to the count, he stopped at Yellow Creek which sported two strips of open water adding our count-week Ring-necked Duck and Ruddy Ducks.

Covering Lee's old territory, which he always called "the boot," south of Indiana were Annie Lindsay and Joe Saxfield who added our only Turkey Vulture, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

In the southwestern sector of the count Dan and Marcy Cunkelman spotted the only Eastern Towhee as well as one of our three Northern Harriers while the other harriers were found by Tom Simmons working Tom Glover's old area in the northeastern corner of the circle and Mike Weible at SGL 276 where he also found yet another sapsucker. Mike also noted another really good bird, a Wilson's Snipe, at the Windy Ridge Industrial Site.

One of the highlights for Pat Johner was both hearing and seeing one of the Common Loons at Two Lick Reservoir as well as finding a White-crowned Sparrow.

At the Waterworks Conservation Area, Sue Dickson came through spotting the Winter Wren, even managing to record it on Merlin; she also sighted two of our Great Blue Herons.

Bob Ramsey added to our sparrow counts with the additions of Field, American Tree, White-throated, Savannah, and Song Sparrows as well as Dark-eyed Juncos. Alice and Robert Stitt, too, added more Juncos and Field Sparrows.

On the north shore of Yellow Creek Mark Strittmatter spotted a Ruby-crowned Kinglet with its crown exposed. Also part of the north shore crew, John Taylor writes, "...one American Black Duck that flushed from the open water downstream from the dam, and two Woodies that we saw in flight over the woods downstream from the dam were a long overdue reward to the crew for the many miserable hikes to the dam in previous CBCs that yielded exactly zero birds." The Wood Ducks were the only ones noted on the count. John also thanked Trent Millum for pointing him in the right direction for the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker that Trent identified by sound. John was pleased to see it as "it was a beauty, too!" Two days later John returned to the park in the late afternoon to attempt to locate an unidentified wren the group had seen on count day. He had no luck with that but added a count week bird when he spotted six Sandhill Cranes passing overhead.

On the south shore of Yellow Creek Lake, hiking from Grandpa's Cove to the dam, Michele and Rich Carlson also added a sapsucker, three Brown Creepers, and a Winter Wren. Along the trails, also on the south shore, Roger and I spent the morning avoiding hunters and listing the usual winter birds including two creepers and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. In the afternoon, we picked up 12-year-old Noah and his dad Warren in Indiana who wanted to accompany us as we covered our territory from our home at the edge of the circle to the edge of our territory along Two Mile Run. Our first bit of excitement occurred just before 3:30 when we spotted a Red-headed Woodpecker in a large hickory. We don't often see Red-headed Woodpeckers; in fact it was an Indiana County year bird for us. The time was getting late and it was getting harder to see, so we retraced our route along Dark Hollow when suddenly from the backseat, Noah exclaimed, "I see a big bird! It's an owl!!!" He was very excited, but the rest of us couldn't see the bird he was looking at as we had stopped slightly past it. Roger cautiously backed up, and perched no more than ten feet from the road was yet another life bird for Noah – a gorgeous Barred Owl peering down at us! Great find, Noah!!!

Everyone who participated added to the success of our count. Sincere thanks to all of our participants. We hope to see you all next year. As many of you know, our custom, pre-Covid, had been to meet at Hoss's in the back room to compile our count. I'm hoping that next year we will be able to continue that tradition.

– Margaret Higbee



# 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	8	4579
2002	62	2	9739	2022	75	5	6991

## Indiana, Armstrong, Cambria County Sightings, Fall 2022

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

Abbreviations: Allegheny River (AR), Blue Spruce County Park (BS), Crooked Creek Park (CC), Keystone Reservoir (KR), Kittanning (KT), Lewisville (LV), Lock & Dam (L&D), Prince Gallitzin (PG), Two Lick Reservoir (TL), West Penn Trail (WPT), Worthington (WT), Yellow Creek SP (YC).

The highlight of the season was a first county record – the appearance of a **Swallow-tailed Kite** near LV 8/13 (MC).

Four **Greater White-fronted Geese** were first photographed 11/21 (TR) at CC where they remained through 11/25 (CC, MS, JT). A **Mute Swan** was observed and photographed at YC 11/26 (JP). First 6 **Tundra Swans** arrived 11/8 (SD, ED, CH, MH, RH, DK, GL, GT) at YC where they peaked at 67 on 11/15 (LC, BG, CH, DK); TL yielded 102 overhead and 63 on the water 11/12 (LC). First 4 in *Armstrong* appeared 11/11 (MVT) at CC while top count of 60 occurred two days later (TAr) n. of Brady's Bend along the AR. In *Cambria* the first 2 sighted appeared at PG 11/20 (PI) while the top count there was 27 on 11/22 (MK).

A surprisingly late pair of **Blue-winged Teal** was found at IUP 11/30 (JT). **Greater Scaup** reports included one at YC 11/15 (LC, CH, BG, DK) and 2 at PG 11/24 (JC). Two **Surf Scoters** were present at KR 10/27 (MH, RH). During the state park competition 10/2 (MH, RH), a **White-winged Scoter** arrived and landed on YC Lake. One **Black Scoter** appeared at KT 11/22 (SG) and remained

through 11/26 (DBr, TR). The only **Common Golden-eyes** noted were one at YC 11/20 (DJ) and 2 at PG 11/30 (JC).

Three reports of single **Ruffed Grouse** were welcomed, one at YC 10/2 (SS), another at Big Spring Gap - SGL 198 on 10/24 (PI), and the third along the Rexis Branch of the Ghost Town Trail near Vintondale 11/14 (GT).

YC boasted the **Pied-billed Grebe** highs of 15 on 11/30 (MH, RH) and 10 on 11/5 (ABO, TB, DBr, SD, KG, MH, RH, SHu, NJ, WJ, DK, DM, RM, TM, KSJ) while 1 to 2 were found at 4 *Armstrong* locations between 11/10 (JS) and 11/26 (TR). One to 4 were noted at PG between 10/31 (MH, RH) and 11/24 (JC). Duman Lake harbored 2 on 11/16 (GT). Four **Horned Grebes** at PG 11/20 (PI, WI) were the only ones reported.

The region's last **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** and **Black-billed Cuckoo** were respectively observed n. of L&D 8 on 9/14 (TR) and near LV 8/25 (MC). Amazingly, LV was the ONLY location in our tri-county region that was eBirded for Black-billed Cuckoo all fall.

Late **Common Nighthawks**, both singletons, were seen 10/12 (DL) along the WPT and the other at YC 10/15 (CH, DK, TM, JT); top count of 21 occurred along the WPT 9/3 (MCa).

An adult male **Rufous Hummingbird** appeared near Seward 9/25 (GT) and continued through the end of the quarter after which it was banded and documented by Sandy Lockerman 12/2 (GT *et al*).

After sparse **American Coot** counts at YC the past few years, it was good to see a peak of 178 on 11/19 (MH, RH); the following day (PI, WI) the count was 76 at PG.

Two **Semipalmated Plovers** 8/23 (ED, CH, MH, RH, DK, SVD) and one 8/30 (SD, CH, MH, RH) were the only YC reports; 3 showed up at KR 8/29 (MH, RH) and were still present 9/1 (MH, RH). Top **Killdeer** tallies included 62 at KR 11/3 (MS), 35 at CC 10/12 (TR), 24 at YC 11/5 (ABo, TB *et al*), and 15 at PG 11/6 (PI, WI).

KR hosted most of the region's shorebirds this fall including the only **Dunlin**; 6 were present 10/17 (MH, RH), but by 10/20 (MS, JT) the flock had dwindled to 2. A single **Baird's Sandpiper** was noted at KR 9/1 (MH, RH). After an 8/21 (MH, RH) arrival of 2 **Least Sandpipers**, the flock had built to 10 by 8/29 (MH, RH). First **Pectoral Sandpiper** was found 8/29 (MH, RH) at KR, but by 10/20 (MS, JT) 6 were foraging on the mud; one remained at KR 11/3 (MS); 3 arrived at YC 10/25 (SD, PF, CH, MH, RH) and remained through 10/30 (CH). First **Semipalmated Sandpiper** appeared at YC 8/23 (ED, CH, MH, RH, DK, SVD); KR harbored one on 8/29 (MH, RH) and 2 on 9/1 (MH, RH). A lone **Long-billed Dowitcher**, identified by call note by Merlin and photographed by SD, appeared at YC 11/8 (SD). Last **American Woodcock** was flushed 10/26 (DSy) at Nolo. Four **Wilson's Snipe** flew over the observers at the YC boat launch 10/25 (SD, PF, CH, MH, RH) and were photographed in flight (CH). Last **Spotted Sandpiper** lingered at BS 10/9 (TH) and at KR 10/27 (MH, RH). One to 3 **Solitary Sandpipers** continued into the fall with last reports of one 11/2 (MS) at KR, one 9/13 (MH, RH, DK) at YC, and 2 on 9/2 (AK, JK) at Hemlock Lake. First 2 **Greater Yellowlegs** appeared at YC 8/16 (ED, PF, CH, MH, RH) and at KR on 8/21 (MH, RH), with last sightings, both singletons, 10/19 (CH, MH, RH) at YC and 10/27 (MH, RH) at KR; one also was sighted at Hemlock Lake 9/2 (AK, JK). Single **Lesser Yellowlegs** arrived at CC 8/19 (TR) and at KR 10/11 (MS, JT); one with an apparently injured leg dropped into YC 10/25 (SD, PF, CH, MH, RH), the last report.

One to 2 **Bonaparte's Gulls** were listed only at YC between 10/2 (MH, RH) and 11/30 (MH, RH) and at PG where one was sighted 11/6 (PI, WI). **Ring-billed Gulls**,

too, remained in low numbers with the top YC count 14 on 11/20 (TB, DKw, RM). A **Herring Gull** stopped by YC 11/1 (HR) while one to 2 were at KT 11/24, 26 (TR).

Rain and wind 8/23 (CH, MH, RH, DK) dropped three

**Caspian Terns** onto the beach at YC and 2 at CC (JB); 3 were also present at YC 9/4 (CH) while one was again noted 9/6 (SD, ED, CH, MH, RH, DK, TR); 2 also stopped at PG 9/7 (TR). A single **Black Tern** was a nice find at YC 8/16 (ED, PF, CH, MH, RH); the rainy, windy weather 8/23 (CH, MH, RH, DK) brought 3 Black Terns onto YC Lake where, unlike the Caspians, they continued to feed over the water.

Single **Common Loons** were noted at YC between 9/20 (CH, MH, RH, DK, EK, TR) and 10/8 (JaP, JP) with the

exception of 10/5 (JT) when 2 were reported. PG yielded 1 to 2 between 10/1 (TA, PI, WI) and 11/27 (JC). A **Red-throated Loon** landed at YC 10/2 (MH, RH) while another was present 10/8 (MCa) and again on 10/15 (CH, DK, TM, JT).

**Great Egrets** put in great appearances this fall at YC with counts of one to 3 between 8/2 (PF, CH, MH, RH, DK) and 10/15 (CH, DK, TM, JT); however, the 9 on 10/16 (MS) was the highest *Indiana* count since the 27 tallied on 4/13/1989 (AB, DB, GL). Indicative of a major movement, *Armstrong* hosted 14 Great Egrets at Robbs Fording on the same day (DS) as the 9 at YC!

As **Black Vulture** continue to expand their range, local sightings have increased with counts of 12 near Armagh 9/4 (KP), 5 near Seward 10/8 (GT), 4 near Lewisville 10/25 (MC), and 3 in Indiana 11/1 (JP). In *Cambria* sightings included 2 on 9/14 (MKend) at the Johnstown Flood Memorial and one near Ebensburg 11/15 (MK). Dilltown won the prize for high tallies of **Turkey Vultures** this fall with counts of 29 on 11/6 (CL, GL) and 37 on 11/7 (GT).

Last **Ospreys** were noted at Murphy's Bottom 10/8 (ME, BP, CZ) and along the AT north of L&D 8 10/3 (TR). The season's highlight was a county record **Swallow-tailed Kite** near LV 8/13 (MC); the bird came from the northeast and headed southwest, but it was on a beeline and could not be relocated.

A **Golden Eagle** at PG 11/26 (JC) was a good find. A **Red-shouldered Hawk** perched atop a bluebird house was an interesting sight at Nolo 9/4 (GL). Last **Broad-winged Hawks** were spotted 10/1 (TA) at PG, 9/20 both near LV (MC) and at YC (CH, MH, RH, DK, TR), and 9/14 (GL) at Nolo.

**Eastern Screech-Owls** were noted at 3 *Armstrong*, 4 *Indiana*, and one *Cambria* location; **Great Horned Owls**, at one *Armstrong*, 4 *Indiana*, and 3 *Cambria* sites; and



Greg Tomb photographed this Rufous Hummingbird near Seward 9/25.

**Barred Owls** at one *Armstrong*, 7 *Indiana*, and 4 *Cambria* spots (v.o.). Nolo was the most consistent for both Great Horned and Barred Owls (DB).

A **Red-headed Woodpecker** was reported at YC 10/31 (DM).

Single **Merlins** moved through the region between 8/18 (MVT) and 11/18 (GT) with reports from CC, KR, YC, near Seward, and *Indiana*. A **Peregrine** was noted at the Homer City Generating Station 11/16, 17 (RS); another found near WT 11/16 (DBr) may have been the same one spotted at Manorville 11/23 (TR).

After only one *Indiana* spring report, **Olive-sided Flycatchers** made multiple appearances at various sites. IUP boasted the first sighting 8/29 (JT). YC hosted single birds between 8/30 (SD, CH, MH, RH) and 9/13 (MH, RH, DK) with 2 sighted in the same tree, one chasing the other, on 9/6 (ED, CH, MH, RH, DK). A yard near SH hosted a single bird 9/4, 7 (MH, RH). In *Armstrong* one was photographed along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 9/14 (TR).

Single **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were observed at KR 8/21 (MH, RH), near LV 8/30, 9/1 (MC) and at SGL 262 on 9/17 (TH). Both Yellow-bellied Flycatchers and **Philadelphia Vireos** were spotted at BS between 9/10 (ED, WH, CH, MH, RH, DK, TM, JT, MW, RW) and 9/25 (TH) with 5 flycatcher and 3 vireo reports. PG yielded a single Philadelphia Vireo 9/3 (MCR) while YC harbored one Philly 9/20 (CH, MH, RH, DK, TR).

A **Northern Shrike** at YC, an exciting find 10/30 (MCa, RC), was subsequently seen by 12 others through 11/5 (ABo, TB, SH).

**Horned Lark** sightings included as many as 20 near WT 11/22 (DBr) and 4 near YC 11/30 (MH, RH).

An amazing 68 **Purple Martins** were counted at YC 8/2 (PF, CH, MH, RH, DK, GL, KT); last noted were 4 on 8/16 (ED, PF, CH, MH, RH).

One to 5 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were listed at 22 locations this fall (v.o.). A late **House Wren** lingered at YC 10/31 (DM) while **Winter Wrens** were noted at four *Armstrong*, eight *Indiana*, and three *Cambria* locations (v.o.).

Last **Gray Catbirds** were listed 10/14 (TR) along the AT n. of L&D 8; 10/12 (TH) near Plumville; and 10/1 (PI, WI) at PG.

Only 2 **Veeries** were noted this fall, one along the WPT 9/24 (EH, SM) and the other at YC 10/8 (JT). **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** were also in short supply with single birds at BS 9/20 (JT) and 9/22 (MH, RH, JT) and one along the WPT 9/24 (EH, SM). SGL 247 produced one **Swainson's Thrush** 9/18 (TR) and 2 on 9/23 (TR); Swainson's Thrushes were present at BS on 12 dates between 9/10 (ED, WH, CH *et al*) and 10/9 (TH) while PG

yielded single birds 9/24 (PI, WI) and 10/1 (TA); Swainson's flight calls were heard at PG 10/15 (JC).

Four **American Pipits** flew over the YC south shore boat launch 10/16 (EW); one was photographed at KR 10/20 (MS, JT); 9 visited PG 11/20 (PI, WI).

**Evening Grosbeaks** appeared at four locations in *Indiana* this fall – 6 on 11/1 (GT) near Seward, one at YC on 11/14 (MCa), one near LV 11/15 (MC), and 2 near SH 11/21 (MH, RH); the Seward location had a second visit by one 11/7 (GT). A **Common Redpoll** was well described near Creekside 10/12 (JG, SGr). **Pine Siskin** reports included one at PG 9/1 (MS, JT) and one in *Armstrong* near Vandergrift 11/16 (RE).

**Fox Sparrows** were widespread in *Armstrong* and *Indiana* with best count of 4 along the Ghost Town Trail near Dilltown 11/12 (SD, ED, MH, RH, TM, GT); last dates listed were 11/20 (GL) at Nolo and 11/25 (MCa) s. of Jacksonville in Blacklick Twp. **White-crowned Sparrows**, too, were widespread with top counts of 2 near LV 10/5, 6 (MC), 5 at PG 10/15 (JC), and 4 at BS on 10/16 (JP). The only **Savannah Sparrows** reported were single birds at PG, 9/25 (TA) and 10/15 (JC), as well as 2 at YC 10/2 (MH, RH). **Lincoln Sparrow** reports included one at YC 9/30 (CH), one at PG 10/1 (TA) and 2 there 10/15 (JC), single birds at BS 10/10 (JT) and 10/16 (JP), and another near Plumville 10/16 (TH).

Thirty-one warblers were sighted in the region this fall. The breakdown by county was 18 species in *Armstrong*, 29 in *Indiana*, and 19 in *Cambria*. Last **Louisiana Waterthrushes** were observed 8/6 (BI) at Conemaugh Dam and 8/10 (TR) near Murphy's Bottom. YC hosted the only **Northern Waterthrush** 9/24 (ED, CG, CH, MH, RH, DK, GL, TM) as it was having an altercation with an American Goldfinch. Last **Blue-winged Warblers** appeared at YC 9/5 (MH, RH) and at SGL 247 on 9/13 (TR). BS hosted the last 2 **Black-and-white Warblers** 9/25 (TH). Last **Tennessee Warbler** dates included 10/11 (MS, JT) at KR and 10/8 (TR) along the AT n. of L&D 8. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** at SGL 108 - Bellwood on 10/10 (JC) was a great find. Last **Nashville Warblers** were noted at PG 10/1 (TA) and at KR 10/11 (MS, JT). The only **Connecticut Warbler** this season was found at YC 10/5 (JT). **Kentucky Warblers**, noted only in *Armstrong*, included single birds 9/2 (SK) along the AT n. of L&D 8 and 9/9 (MVT) along Creek Road. Last **Cape May Warbler** was listed near Shelocta 10/9 (MH, RH). Conemaugh Dam was the location of the only **Cerulean Warblers** with last report on 9/3 (MO). Last 2 **Northern Parulas** were spotted at SGL 273 on 10/8 (MS). A late **Yellow Warbler** stopped at PG 9/25 (TA). Two **Black-polls** lingered north of Distant in SGL 137 on 10/11 (MS, JT). Other last dates included 10/8 (TH) for **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at BS, 10/23 (GT) for **Palm Warbler** near Seward, 10/8 (JT) for **Pine Warbler** at YC, 8/11 (MC) for **Yellow-throated Warbler** near LV, 8/30

(SD, CH, MH, RH) for **Prairie Warbler** at YC, 10/14 (HR) for **Black-throated Green Warbler** near YC, 9/10 (ED, WH, CH *et al*) for **Canada Warbler** at BS, and 9/24 (ED, CG, CH *et al*) for **Wilson's Warbler** at YC.

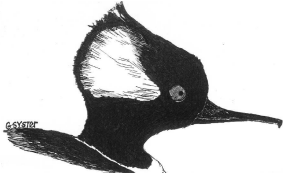
## Dues Reminder

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

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

Please indicate whether you prefer the electronic or the hard copy of the newsletter.

**Observers:** Tina Alianiello, Tammy Arnold (TAr), Alice Beatty, Dave Beatty, John Boback, Ann Bondi (ABo), Trip Bondi, Dave Brooke (DBr), Michele Carlson (MCa), Rich Carlson, Lee Carnahan, John Carter, Michael Croyle (MCr), Chapin Czarnecki, Marcy Cunkelman, Sue Dickson, Ed Donley, Mayelin Ebersole, Ryan Endlish, Patience Fisher, Kate Gaglio, John Greer, Sue Greer (SGr), Barb Griffith, Sam Gutherie, Eric Hall, Warren Hancock, Court Harding, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Tyler Hodges, Sue Hunter, Pam Illig, Winnie Illig, Becca Iwinski, David Janetski, Noah Jones, Warren Jones, Steve Kaiserman, Debbie Kalbfleisch, Emma Keele, Avis Keener, John Keener, Michael Kendrick (MKend), Michael Kensinger, David Kwasnick (DKw), Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Dennis Lauffer, Sandy Lockerman, Dan Martt (DMa), Ruth Martt, Jim McGuire, Donna Mohney, Susan Miller, Trent Millum, Robert Mulvihill, Mariam Ohanjanyan, Kevin Pero, Brady Porter, James Pumford (JaP), Joseph Pumford, Theo Rickert, Henry Rummel, Kate St John (KSJ), Rachel Saker, Joe Sebastian, Sherry Shank, David Sherbondy, Mark Strittmatter, Dan Syster (DSy), John Taylor, Greg Tomb, Ken Truitt, Shirley Van Dyke (SVD), Marge Van Tassel (MVT), Mike Weible, Ezra White, Ray Winstead, Cassandra Ziegler.



*Todd Bird Club*  
c/o Roger V. Higbee  
3119 Creekside Road  
Indiana, PA 15701-7934