

# The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

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

August 2024

## Meetings

**September 3** – Long-time member Joseph Pumford, who joined Todd Bird Club at the age of 10, will present the evening’s program. An accomplished birder and photographer, he will show his best bird photos and talk about some of his most recent sightings, including his first county record of Lark Sparrow this past spring.

**October 1** – “Costa Rica Revisited” presented by Roger Higbee. Five Todd Bird Club members – Carol Guba, Gloria Lamer, Linda Wagner, and Roger and Margaret Higbee traveled with Hillstar Nature to Costa Rica this past March.

At this meeting we’ll see some of the birds of Costa Rica, ranging from the Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant to the Jabiru and the Fiery-throated Hummingbird to the Great Potoo, as well as one of the most sought after species, the Resplendent Quetzal.

**November 5** – We will travel with Dave Brooke to the Yucatan Peninsula for our November meeting. The title of Dave’s program is “Yucatan Birds.” Details will follow in the October “Nuthatch.”

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## Outings

**Saturday, September 7** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Matt St Clair (724-464-9112). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Dragonfly Pond, just 0.25 miles past the park office on the left. We’ll be searching for migrant warblers, shorebirds, terns, etc.

**Saturday, September 14** – John Taylor’s annual fall warbler walk will take place at Blue Spruce Co. Park this year. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the large parking lot just past the park office. We’ll hike Getty Run Trail searching for flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, warblers, and other species. For further information contact John (724-397-2040).

**Saturday, September 21** – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Sue Dickson (724-388-5000). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office located on PA 259, just off US 422.

**Tuesday, September 24** – Moraine State Park, led by Mike Shaffer. Meet at the Pleasant Valley parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Call the Higbees at 724-354-3493 if you wish to carpool.

**Saturday, September 28** – 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.

# Summer Adventures

By Matthew St. Clair

My summer adventures began at Magee Marsh in Ohio. This was my first time traveling to Magee Marsh, and I was very excited to find some new birds. I have always heard of Magee Marsh's famous warbler boardwalk. I started at nearby Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, where I got to see a few Marsh Wrens. I have heard a Marsh Wren call in Georgia, but this was my first time seeing and getting a photo of one. I then moved to the Magee Marsh Boardwalk, where I saw Green Heron nests. I had great views of a Warbling Vireo; however I observed very few warblers. I did manage to find a lifer Blanding's Turtle and Eastern Fox Snake. I then moved to Metzger Marsh where I had great views and took photos of Common Gallinules and Common Terns.

The next morning at Howard Marsh Metropark, I found more lifers – Soras, Least Sandpipers, Black-necked Stilts, Black-crowned Night-Herons, and Wilson's Phalaropes. When I saw the phalaropes, I thought it was unusual to see a species where the female is more colorful than the male. I also saw Dunlin in breeding plumage which look very different from their nonbreeding plumage. Before I left Ohio, I wanted to check the boardwalk one last time. I finally spotted a few life warblers! My lifers were Prothonotary Warblers, Tennessee Warblers, and one Canada Warbler. I also saw other warblers including Cape May Warblers, Chestnut-sided Warblers, Blackburnian Warblers, Yellow Warblers, American Redstarts, and Common Yellow-throats. When I left the area, I saw my life American White Pelicans landing on the water.



Matt photographed this Marsh Wren at Ottawa NWR in Ohio on May 18.



May 19 yielded a Prothonotary Warbler for Matt at the Magee Boardwalk.



What a great surprise for Matt when he observed this Clapper Rail foraging in the wetland grasses at Blackwater NWR!

After returning to Pennsylvania, I noticed on eBird that a Swainson's Warbler had returned to the Conemaugh Dam area. I went to the dam, and right as I got out of the car, I heard the Swainson's Warbler sing and saw a male perched on a branch. It stayed perched for three whole minutes!

A week later, I went to the PSO Annual Festival as this year's scholarship winner! I signed up for the Hillman State Park night outing to listen for whip-poor-wills. A few minutes after parking the car at the park, I began to hear my life Eastern Whip-poor-wills, and I saw one fly overhead along with a Common Nighthawk. The next day at Cross Creek County Park, I heard my life Yellow-breasted Chat, but unfortunately I did not see it. Two weeks later, in the creek by my grandmother's house, I heard my life Worm-eating Warbler, but again I did not see one.

I wanted to go to Maryland to look for other life birds, so I traveled to Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. When I arrived, I found lots of lifers. I first saw a life Clapper Rail hiding in the wetland grasses. I then heard Blue Grosbeaks, yet another lifer, and had great views, and I was happy to get good photos. Later while walking a trail, I saw my first Brown-headed Nuthatches high up in pine trees. On the same trail, I added another lifer, Summer Tanager. While viewing the first one, a second one flew over! Other life animals I found were Diamondback Terrapin, Common Five-lined Skink, Southern Leopard Frog, Needham's Skimmer, Seaside Dragonlet, and Delmarva Fox Squirrel. Before leaving Maryland, I

decided to listen for a Chuck-will's-widow, and I heard my three life Chuck-will's-widows.

A few weeks later, I wanted to take two last trips for the summer. The first trip was to the Piney Tract, State Game Lands No. 330, in Clarion County.

I had two lifers which were Clay-colored Sparrows and Henslow's Sparrows.

My last trip this summer was to Spruce Flats Bog. I did not add any life birds, but I finally got to hear a Hermit Thrush sing. I also saw a few



Matt not only heard Blue Grosbeaks but was able to get this great picture, too!

Canada Warblers which I had never seen in Pennsylvania. Before leaving, I finally got a photo of an American Woodcock. I had three life insects and one life snake – Painted Skimmers, Sphagnum Sprites, and Canada Darners. I finally found my first Timber Rattlesnake which I had wanted to see for a very long time. It was a black morph.

My summer was awesome with so many lifers! I can't wait to see what next year will bring.



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## Atlas Update

Year 1 of the Third Pennsylvania Bird Atlas, the breeding section, is now coming to a close. A few species are still countable after August 15, but the list is short. The last species to go out of breeding will be the Carolina Wren which will no longer be countable unless confirmed after September 8.

Every block in Indiana County – all 88 of them – now has some data. We sincerely thank everyone who has participated. Special thanks to those who have signed up to be principal atlasers, taking responsibility for completing a block.

Our principal atlasers in Indiana County are:

Sue Dickson	John Keener
Joe Saxfield	John Taylor
Greg Tomb	Mike Weible

The breeding season may be ending, but the Winter Atlas will just be starting. Winter surveys will be required in the priority blocks; these are the blocks in the southeast corner of each quadrangle. (In Atlas 1 and Atlas 2 nomenclature, that would be all Block 6's.) Indiana County has 15 priority blocks, and we have five years to complete them, so we need to do only three of the priority blocks per year.

One important component of the winter atlas will be timed one-hour (traveling) surveys. It's important to keep

these surveys at exactly one hour, so please use a timer if the birding hours fly by for you...as they often do for us! (Again, these will be prioritized for priority blocks, but we encourage birders to do them in non-priority blocks, too). These surveys are more standardized than regular eBird checklists and therefore can be used for additional analyses and are helpful for making comparisons across blocks. Please let Roger or me know if you are planning to do winter surveys.

These timed surveys, just one component of the Atlas, are important. The National Audubon Society has declared a "bird emergency" after a study found that the United States and Canada have lost a combined total of 2.9 billion birds since 1970 — a 29 percent decrease in the bird population over a 50-year period.

Across the state more than 1,900 people have submitted Atlas checklists, and 90 percent of the blocks in the state contain some data. So far 175 species have been confirmed in PA. We're off to a good start! Let's keep the momentum going by doing a winter survey or two!

Thanks to everyone who has contributed sightings to the Atlas portal!!!

– Roger & Margaret Higbee

# Excuse me, how did we go from 3 babies in our nest to 4?

By Ron Alsop

[*Background:* Ron Alsop is a Purple Martin landlord in Penn Run, Indiana County, PA. He totally enjoys martins and likes to lecture/write about his 8-year pursuit of becoming a landlord. According to his family, he will talk about martins ad naseum if you provide him with an audience! In 2015, he wrote a humorous landlord story entitled: *It's All About the Hat*. The article and pictures landed on the cover of "Purple Martin Update," a national publication of the Purple Martin Conservation Association. Ron began his quest to become a martin landlord in 2010, at a time when there were no martin colonies nearby.]

The statistics for the Purple Martin colony located on the Alsop farm for 2024 include:

First arrival date—March 22, 2024

Martin pairs—56

Total eggs and/or babies—257

Of special interest—one nest had 7 eggs and all hatched

## And now the story, from 3 babies to 4!

One of the many amazing aspects of Purple Martins is how quickly the new baby learns to fly once it exits/fledges from the nest. They seem to be able to accomplish this feat much more quickly than other species. They do this so well that it becomes difficult to distinguish the baby from the adults once in flight.

Nevertheless, there are some occasions when landlords discover a baby martin on the ground, struggling to get airborne. I've been successful in assisting the newborn in some instances by placing it on an elevated location, such as my shed roof. This provides some needed altitude for them to take off, gain altitude, and begin to fly. It also helps the parent birds to locate the baby and assist it.

However, there are also instances when, for a variety of reasons, the baby has "pre-fledged." This means it finds itself out of the nest but not old enough or otherwise ready to fly on its own. In an ideal sense, it would be great if the baby could simply be returned to the nest to re-join its siblings. While this can be accomplished in rare instances, it usually does not happen. It's difficult to determine which nest it came from and lowering the units can cause other babies to pre-fledge causing additional problems.

I had such a situation occur this year. It became obvious that the baby I found on the ground was too

young and not yet ready to fly. As I stood there, very perplexed and realizing that I could not take a chance of causing more to pre-fledge, an **unusual thought** occurred to me.

A few years ago, (to keep the bluebirds and Tree Swallows from trying to overtake the martin housing), I erected a somewhat temporary martin pole closer to my house and placed only 4 gourds on it. I purposely placed them only 5-6 feet off the ground to entice these other birds.

It worked as intended for a couple years and then slowed down as the bluebirds and Tree Swallows started using other housing. Ironically, as I was about to take it down, a pair of sub-adult martins moved in! I decided to leave them alone, and for the past few years it has become common practice for these later arriving subbies, to occupy two or three of those gourds.

Because the sub-adults arrive later than the adults, everything from nest building to producing babies, is noticeably behind the older birds. While holding the referenced baby martin in my hand, my mind began racing with some thought-provoking questions.

What if there are some younger babies in one of those four gourds that are similar in age to this little guy?

What are my odds of not causing a pre-fledge since there are only four gourds on the unit?

Well, as you probably suspect by now, I did lower it down and found a gourd with only 3 babies that appeared close in age to the baby I was now holding. I carefully placed the baby in that gourd, and it quickly snuggled against the other three in the nest. I raised the gourds back up and began watching to see which parent would show up first and what reaction it would have to finding a stranger in the nest.

Within a few minutes, the female showed up with a bug in her mouth and entered the gourd. Soon she came out and then the male also arrived and delivered a bug for the hungry babies. Now my mind was

racing with even more questions. Will they accept the new baby? Will they feed it or just ignore it?

Later the next day, my curiosity was getting the best of me. I lowered it down and much to my surprise, the new addition looked very healthy and appeared to be just another member of the family!

After several days passed, I saw there were babies fledging from that nest. When the fledging appeared to have finished, I lowered the gourds again and all the young were gone. I would like to believe that those amazing birds offered a much-needed assist. I also must believe that at least one of those parents probably asked the other, "Excuse me, how did we go from 3 babies in our nest to 4?"

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## Indiana - Armstrong - Cambria Spring 2024 Bird Report

Please send your bird reports at the end of each month to Margaret Higbee at bcoriole@windstream.net or mail to 3119 Creekside Road, Indiana, PA 15701-7934.

Abbreviations: Allegheny River (AR), Armstrong Trail (AT), Brush Valley (BV), Crooked Creek (CC), Duman Lake (DL), Hemlock Lake (HL), Indiana (IN), Indiana University of PA (IUP), Keystone Reservoir (KR), Kittanning (KT), Lock & Dam (L&D), Logansport (LP), Manorville (MV), Margus Lake (ML), Penn Run (PR), Prince Gallitzin State Park (PG), Rosston (RT), West Lebanon (WL), White's Woods Nature Center (WWNC), Worthington (WT), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

Highlights of the season included a first *Indiana* record **Lark Sparrow** found by Joseph and James Pumford 4/21 near Yellow Creek; a second *Indiana* record **Swainson's Warbler** first heard and seen by John Taylor and Mark Strittmatter; a fourth *Indiana* record for **Ross's Goose** noted by Michael David, and probably a first *Armstrong* record for **White-winged Dove**, photographed by Roxanne Stubbs near Rural Valley.

A blue-morph **Snow Goose** appeared at HL 4/10 (AK, JKe), *Indiana's* lone report. A **Greater White-fronted Goose** continued 3/1 at IUP (JT) and later that day at the old VFW pond (SD, CH). A **Ross's Goose**, originally sighted across the Redbank Creek in *Clarion* 3/3 (CY, DY) was relocated upstream in *Armstrong* later that day (MD) then farther upstream in a cornfield with Canada Geese, also 3/3 (ES). Fifty-two



Court Harding photographed this elegant Greater White-fronted Goose at the old VFW pond on 3/1.

**Tundra Swans** continued at PG 3/1 (SB, JG, MK, CS) with last report of 3 on 3/16 (PI); 4 also lingered at HL 4/9 (AK, JKe).

Twenty-one duck species were reported this spring in the region. Arrival dates occurred in Feb. for most of the puddle ducks as well as the diving ducks. (See *The Todd Nuthatch*, April 2024, for the exact dates of arrival for each species).

### First **Blue-winged Teal**

arrived 3/16 at both YC (KL) and at PG (PI) and 3/24 (TR) along the AT n. of L&D 8; lingering birds included 2 near WT 4/25 (DBr) and 6 along the AT near LP 4/26 (TR).

### First arriving **Northern**

**Shovelers** on 3/15 included 2 at a private pond near Marion Center (SN) and 15 at YC (MS, JT); last noted were 4 at YC 4/23 (ED, DK, TR, JT). A flock of 30 **Gadwalls** that appeared 3/15 (MS, JT) at YC was the high tally, but 9 lingered there through 3/31 (GT). Three were at PG on 3/1 (SB, JG, MK, CS) while last counted there were 6 on 3/28 (JD, SDo). March 1 marked the arrival of 17

**American Wigeons** along the AT n. of L&D 8 (TR) while 13 were at PG (SB, JG, MK, CS) the same day; last noted were 3 on 4/13 (MH, RH) at YC but the top count was 50 at PG 3/28 (JD, SDo). Top tallies of

### **American Black Ducks**

included 21 along the AT n. of L&D 3/1 (TR), 8 at PG 3/2 (TA), and 4 at YC 3/15 (MS, JT). Top counts of 5

**Northern Pintails** occurred along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 3/1 (TR); at PG on both 3/3 (TA) and 3/28 (JD, SDo); and at YC 3/29 (AM, LR, HR).

### Best **Green-winged Teal**

tallies included 10 at YC 3/23 (MH, RH, ML, TM, SVD), 5 along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 3/24 (TR), and 5 at PG on both 3/23 (JL) and 3/28 (JD, SDo). Two very late Green-winged Teal were listed on a pond near YC 5/5 (AM).

Six **Canvasbacks** were sighted at PG 3/2 (TA) and 3/16 (PI); YC hosted 2 on 3/19 (PC, PF, TR); these were the lone reports. **Redhead reports** included highs of 31 at PG on 3/1 (JG), 19 at YC n 3/24 (TC,



Roger Higbee photographed this pair of Blue-winged Teal near the Lake Pavilion at Yellow Creek when the area was flooded on April 9.



This is just one of the 17 American Wigeons along the Armstrong Trail on March 1.

Photograph by Theo Rickert



The Armstrong Trail also yielded Northern Pintails on March 1.

Photo by Theo Rickert

were still present 3/3 (JG); 2 also stopped at YC 3/4 (DR); these were the only reports.

On 3/24 (TA) PG harbored 20 **Hooded Mergansers** that remained through 3/30 (JD, SDo). Thirteen was the best count at YC 3/29 (AM, LR, HR); last lingerer observed at YC occurred 4/20 (KO). Highlight of the

VS, GT), and 14 on a private pond near BV on 3/5 (MSC). Late Redheads included 5 at PG 5/3 (PI, WI). Top tallies of **Ring-necked Ducks** included 119 at PG 3/1 (SB, JG, MK, CS), 40 at YC on 3/15 (MS, JT), 13 at HL on 3/5 (AK, JKe), 13 near Marion Center on 3/9 (SN), and 11 near BV on 3/5 (MSC); a singleton (TR) plus smaller flocks of 5 (DJ) to 6 (JB) were noted at several *Armstrong* locations. Twenty on 3/3 (JG) at PG and 25 on 3/12 (ED, CH, DK) at YC were nice inland counts of **Greater Scaup**. **Lesser Scaup** totals included 110 at PG 3/1 (SB, JG, MK, CS), 35 at YC on 3/15 (MS, JT), 25 near BV on 3/24 (MSC), and 3 at L&D 7 on 3/31 (TR); a singleton lingered along the Allegheny near LP 5/2 (TR).

**Long-tailed Ducks** put in a strong appearance this spring with multiple sightings at YC – 14 on 3/23 (MD), 41 on 3/31 (GT), and last 2 on 4/2 (MH, RH). **Buffleheads** moved through our region with high counts of 90 at YC 3/31 (AM); 30 on both 3/2 (TA) and 3/30 (JD, SDo) at PG; 15 near BV 3/29 (MSC), and 11 along the AT n. of L&D 8 (TR). In addition, HL hosted 9 on 3/31 (AK, JKe). Last 2 *Armstrong* Buffs were sighted between LP and Rosston on 4/6 (JB) while PG still harbored *Cambria's* last 2 on 5/3 (PI, WI). Seven **Common Goldeneyes** stopped at PG 3/1 (SB, JG, MK, CS) and

were still present 3/3 (JG); 2 also stopped at YC 3/4 (DR); these were the only reports.

Hooded Merganser reports was the spotting of a hen with 8 young on a private pond near Marion Center on 5/12 (SN). A flock of 100 **Common Mergansers** was tallied at PG 3/1 (SB, JG, MK, CS); 6 remained at PG 5/3 (PI, WI), but only 2 were present 10 days later (PI, WI). *Armstrong's* high of 30 occurred at CC 3/2 (JB). Nesting was confirmed near Shelocta on 5/29 (MH, RH) when a hen Common Merganser was sighted on Crooked Creek with a single small youngster that she herded to shore while she remained nearby in the water. The current was pretty strong, so she may have stashed the rest of them elsewhere or possibly lost the rest of the brood to the current. **Red-breasted Merganser** numbers peaked at YC at 63 on 3/31 (GT); last noted were 6 on 5/7 (ED, MH, RH, TR) and 2 on 5/16 (AM); PG hosted 6 on 3/1 (SB, JG, MK, CS) while last report mentioned 4 on 4/14 (TA).

Top **Ruddy Duck** counts included 243 at YC 3/31 (GT), 7 near BV 3/29 (MSC), 7 at HL 3/31 (AK, JKe) and 5 north of L&D 8 on 3/1 (TR). PG hosted 20 on 3/24 (TA).

More **Ruffed Grouse** were sighted or heard drumming this season than in recent past years. Reports included 2 from *Cambria* and 7 from *Indiana*.

Single **Pied-billed Grebes** were found along the AR on 3/1 (JB) and 4/1 (JB) and at CC 4/15 (JB); singletons were also noted at PG 3/16 (PI), 3/24 (TA), and 4/14 (TA). YC's high was 7 on 3/23 (MH, RH, ML, TM, SVD). HL hosted single grebes on 3/17, 4/5 (AK, JKe) and 3 on 4/10 (AK, JKe). A raft of 6 **Horned Grebes** along the AR was *Armstrong's* top tally on 4/1 (JB). YC harbored 5 on 3/24 (TC, VS, GT) and 3/30 (SR).

A **White-winged Dove** was an amazing find near Rural Valley 4/18 (RS); the observer was able to obtain a good photo.

Cuckoos seemed to be in short supply this spring. First **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** noted in *Indiana* was one at WCA 5/4 (JP) while *Armstrong's* first appeared 5/5 (MCa) at Kelly Station. *Cambria's* only Yellow-billed Cuckoos were single birds found near Red Mill 5/26 (MS) and on an Atlas point count 5/29 (CC). First **Black-billed Cuckoos** appeared 5/5 (GT) in Newtown, 5/6 (MC) near Lewisville, 5/11 (TA) at PG, and 5/16 (GL) at Nolo. None were listed in *Armstrong*.

**Common Nighthawks** were noted at 8 locations in the region this spring. First 2 were noted near Dilltown 5/7 (NM); 3 were spotted 5/13 (AM) at YC where 2 were sighted the following evening (AM). On 5/16 (MSC) a single nighthawk flew over an area near BV while 4 headed east over a yard near LV 5/18 (MC). A singleton passed over North Point 5/19 (MH, RH). Two *Cambria* Atlas point counts each yielded single nighthawks 5/31 (CC). The region's lone **Eastern Whip-poor-will** was heard 5/20 (MH, RH) near Jacksonville.

The WCA hosted a **Virginia Rail** 4/15 (TH, CLy) through 4/21 (JaP). **Soras** were noted at three regional locations; the first to appear was on 4/21 (JP) at WCA where it was last heard 5/14 (SD); another Sora was heard at SGL 79 in *Cambria* on 5/8 (MS). A **Common Gallinule**, the ninth *Indiana* record, first spotted on 5/8 (TR), was also enjoyed by five other observers that day; the previously eBirded YC sighting occurred 5/2/2007 (DH, MH).

Two **Sandhill Cranes**, calling constantly and flying overhead from the east between LP and Rosston, turned east again when they reached the AR 4/6 (JB); this was a first *Armstrong* sighting for the observer, but the fifth eBirded record.

Windy Ridge Industrial Park yielded the first **Wilson's Snipe** 3/3 (MS); by 4/7 (MS), the tally there was 12. PG hosted a single snipe 4/14 (TA). First **Spotted Sandpipers** in *Cambria*, all single birds, were found 4/28 (GT) along the Raxis branch of the GTT, 5/3 (PI, WI) at PG, and 5/11 (PI, WI) at Bakerton Reservoir; last noted in *Cambria* was another at PG 5/21 (CS). In *Armstrong* first 2 Spotted Sandpipers were found at Parks Bend Farm 4/29 (MVT); another was spotted n. of L&D 6 on 4/30 (JB) while 5/3 (TR) produced yet another at L&D 8. Seemingly more widespread in *Indiana* as breeders, Spotties were listed between 4/21 (IA) and 5/30 (JT). First 2 **Solitary Sandpipers** popped up at BS 4/24 (JP) and at YC the following day (MSC); Solitaries were noted at 10 *Indiana* locations this spring. In *Armstrong* one was noted just n. of L&D 6 on 4/30 (JB) while one to 2 showed up n. of L&D 8 between 4/30 (SG) and 5/3 (TR).

One to 2 **Lesser Yellowlegs**, the only ones in the region, were noted at YC 5/5 (JaP, JP, MSC). An early **Greater Yellowlegs** was observed near YC 3/23 (MH, RH) while another was seen the following day (MH, RH) along the WPT; the other 3 *Indiana*

sightings occurred between 4/9 (TB, ED, MH, RH) and 4/26 (JP) when 4 was the high tally. In *Cambria* one singleton was noted along Colver Road 4/16 (MK). Eight **Least Sandpipers** stopped at CC 5/17 (JB) while one visited YC 5/29 (AM, HR), the only reports this spring. Three reports of single **Semipalmated Sandpiper** were eBirded – the first at CC 5/17 (JB), near Shelocta 5/18 (MS), and at YC 5/25 (AM).

First 3 **Bonaparte's Gulls** arrived at YC 3/23 (MH, RH, ML, TM, SVD); high count of 123 occurred a month later 4/23 (ED, MH, RH, DK, TR) while last 4 were noted 5/4 (JT). The three *Armstrong* reports included 2 on 4/5 (SG), 3 on 4/8 (SG), both at KT, and one n. of L&D 8 on 4/14 (TR). Three at PG 3/24 (TA) were the only ones noted in *Cambria*. Top count of **Herring Gulls** was 11 at KT 4/8 (SG); on 5/31 (TR) nesting was confirmed at KT when 4 adults were present with one on nest. Herring Gull reports at YC included one on 3/31 (AM) and 6 on 5/2 (AM). Three **Caspian Terns** appeared at YC 5/22 (AM). Three **Black Terns** were an exciting find at YC 5/10 (JT). First 5 **Forster's Terns** were listed 5/2 (AM) at YC where the high tally was 16 on 5/10 (JT).

Single **Common Loons** were found along the AR with reports on 3/31 (TR) n. of L&D 8, one yodeling 4/2 (JB) near RT, and another 5/5 (MCa) near Kelly Station. First at YC was one on 3/23 (MH, RH, ML, TM, SVD); 6 was the high count on both 3/30 (SR) and 4/14 (BB, TH, CLy). HL yielded single loons 3/31, 5/6 (AK, JeK). Three had landed at PG 3/24 (TA) while last one lingered 5/26 (RK).

**Great Egrets**, all single birds, were noted at three locations this spring – at DL 4/7 (SGo), at the old VFW pond 4/18 (JT), and at Lake Margus 4/23 (TR, ED, MH, RH).

Two **Black Vultures** were observed in *Cambria* at SGL108 - Bellwood on 3/3 (GY); 2 were also sighted in *Armstrong* both near LP 4/18 (TR) and near the *Indiana* line at Lawton Road 4/26 (MS); *Indiana* boasted 5 sightings between 3/1 (MH, RH) near Dilltown through 5/25 (AR) near Pine Ridge Park. **Ospreys** moved through the region between 3/29 (SD), when one was sighted at YC and 5/28 (SD) when the last was reported at WCA. An adult **Golden Eagle** was sighted near PR 4/17 (GL), the same location where one was sighted several years ago (GL).

**Northern Harrier** sightings included all singletons in *Armstrong*, both near WT, first on 3/11 (DBr) and the other 4/22 (TR); four sightings in *Indiana* between 4/21 (GT) and 5/30 (HR); and two in *Cambria* on 3/8 (GY) and 4/21 (GT).

Nolo is still the most consistent location to find Barred Owls (DB). A late **Short-eared Owl** was sighted near West Lebanon 4/10 (MH, RH) suggesting possible nesting.

The only **Red-headed Woodpecker** noted was one found n. of L&D 8 on 3/8, 16 & 4/7 (TR).

An **Alder Flycatcher** n. of Home near Mead Bridge on 5/18 (BY) was the only one reported this spring. **Least Flycatchers**, which have become scarce breeders in the region, were sighted at 3 *Armstrong*, 2 *Cambria*, and 7 *Indiana* locations this spring. First arrivals occurred 5/3 n. of L&D 8 (TR) and at IUP (BB, PE, TH) while last sighting was 5/26 (PI, WI) at DL.

**Bank Swallow** sightings were few; PG hosted one on 4/27 (TA), *Cambria's* lone report. *Armstrong* yielded single birds 4/25 (TR) at RT and 4/30 (SG) n. of L&D 8. May 11 yielded one Bank Swallow (JP) at WPT and 10 at YC (HR); last were 2 at Dilltown 5/27 (AM). **Cliff Swallows**, too, appeared to be in reduced numbers. Only 2 were noted at PG on 4/27 (TA); in *Indiana* 4 reports were received between 5/3 (JT) when only one was listed at YC and 5/26 (MH, RH) near Rossiter where one was sighted; the high count of 8 occurred near Mead Bridge 5/18 (BY). *Armstrong* yielded only four reports; first was on 4/25 (TR) when one appeared at RT and 5/24 (AK, JKe) when 2 were observed at the Hawthorn Bridge.

Only 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were reported in the region – the first on 3/8 (SA) between Shelocta and IN and the other at Lake St. Francis on 5/31 (JM). **Winter Wrens** visited three *Armstrong* locations between 3/4 (TR) and 4/6 (JB), seven *Indiana* locales between 3/23 (JP) and 5/19 (GT), and PG in *Cambria* on 3/1 (SB, JG, MK, CS). A **Marsh Wren** at PG 5/11 (TA) was a nice find.

A flock of 24 **Eastern Bluebirds** was an interesting find near Cookport 3/4 (DB). **Veeries** were noted at four *Armstrong* locations between 5/13 (TR) and 5/30 (TR); *Indiana* yielded only two reports, one 5/8 (HR) near PR and one s. of Creekside 5/12 (CJ) while in *Cambria* Veeries were widespread with first



report 5/3 (PI,WI) at SGL 108, Sandy Run. Our region yielded only one **Gray-cheeked Thrush** this spring at YC 5/26 (ED, MH, RH, VS, JT).

**Swainson's Thrushes** moved through *Indiana* between 4/30 (AM) when one appeared at YC and 5/19 (GT) when last was spotted near Seward; the total number of reports in *Indiana* was 11. None were noted in *Cambria*. A possibly wintering **Hermit Thrush** remained at SGL 247 on 3/24 (TR) while the only other report came from Freeport 5/6 (SW, StW).

Among 13 reports, the earliest in *Indiana* occurred 4/13 (MCa) along the WPT and 4/17 (JP) in IN. PG also yielded a wintering bird 3/2 (TA) while migrants were noted as early as 4/28 (PI) at Beldin Hollow. A rather early **Wood Thrush** was listed near IN 4/12 (SA), but most dates of return occurred late April through early May.

First **American Pipit** arrived 4/22 (RG) near YC while 5/4 yielded 4 individuals, both near WT (TR) and at YC (JaP, JP), and 2 near Ebensburg; last sighted in the county was one near LV 5/21 (MC).

Continuing into the spring season in both *Indiana* and *Armstrong*, **Pine Siskins** were widespread with the high count of 59 near McVille Airport on 4/21 (SVD) while last sightings occurred 5/7 (SVD) near McVille and 5/9 (GT) near Armagh. The only occurrence recorded in *Cambria* involved 2 siskins on 3/28 (SDo, JD) at PG.

**Grasshopper Sparrows** were sparsely reported. In *Armstrong* one was noted on a private farm near West Valley; in *Indiana* individuals were listed at WL 5/11 (JP), at SGL 273, near BV 5/12 (JP), s.w. of BV 5/16 (MSC) and 5/19 (JP). In *Cambria* the only one was noted near St. Benedict 5/11 (PI, WI). A first county record **Lark Sparrow** was a great find near YC 4/21 (JaP, JP). **Fox Sparrows** moved through *Armstrong* between 3/22 (TR) and 4/8 (ABu) and through *Indiana* between 3/23 (JP) and 4/18 (MH, RH). First migrant **White-crowned Sparrows** were found in Carrolltown 4/8 (PI, WI), n. of Freeport 4/11 (SW), in IN on 4/28 (JP); last lingering White-crowned Sparrows included singletons 5/10 (JB) at LP, 5/11 at both Parkwood (JP) and at YC (HR).



Joseph and James Pumford found this first county record Lark Sparrow near Yellow Creek on April 21.  
Photo by Joseph Pumford

**Vesper Sparrows**, too, were difficult to find with only three reports – one at Seminole in northern *Armstrong* 4/18 (LM), 2 near YC 4/22 (RG), and one also near YC 5/5 (JaP, JP). *Armstrong* yielded three locations with **Savannah Sparrows**, two near WT where 2 were sighted on both 4/22 (TR) and 5/22 (TR) and the second where a single bird was found 4/22 (TR). The private farm near West Valley yielded sightings of one Savannah on three dates 4/15, 22 and 5/3 (ABu). Top *Indiana* count was 7 near YC 4/22 (RG); one was at the Mead Bridge near Ambrose 5/18 (BY). Two south of Carrolltown 5/14 (MK) comprised *Cambria's* entire report for Savannah Sparrow. **Lincoln's Sparrows** seem to have skipped over our region this spring as only two sightings were reported; the first was observed at Blacklick Cemetery 5/4 (GT) and the second near McIntyre the next day (AJL).

**Yellow-breasted Chat** reports included chats at 4 locations in *Armstrong* between 5/22 (TR) and 5/31 (TR), 2 locations in *Indiana* on 5/4 (CJ) and 5/8 (MH, RH), and one in *Cambria* on two dates, 5/8, 16 (MS).

First **Bobolink** appeared near West Valley on 4/30 (ABu) while 7 were noted near WT 5/22 (TR). In *Indiana* the BV area was the hotspot for Bobolinks with sightings of one or two on 5/13 (MS), 5/16 (MSC), and 5/19 (JP). *Cambria* reports included 3 near DL on 5/11 (PI, WI) and 2 s. of Carrolltown 5/14 (MK). **Rusty Blackbirds** continue to be in low numbers with just a handful of reports from all three counties; first 4 were found at YC 3/5 (AM, HR) with last sighting on 5/11 (PI, WI) near Carrolltown; high counts were 7 at YC 4/9 (HR) and 6 n. of L&D 6 on 4/25 (JB).

Thirty-two warbler species, including a Swainson's Warbler plus a hybrid Brewster's warbler, were found in our region this year. Misses included Mourning, Connecticut, and Orange-crowned. **Ovenbirds** were widespread in the region with first sighting 4/21 (GT) at SGL 79. Often difficult to find in parts of our region, **Worm-eating Warblers** appeared first n. of L&D 8 on 4/20 (TR); later records included one near

the Allegheny Portage RR on 5/16 (CS), along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 5/19 (TR), and along the AR 5/26 (JB). The AR provided a lot of habitat for this species with sightings at various places on 11 dates this spring (v.o). First dates for arriving **Louisiana**

**Waterthrushes** included 3/30 (SR) in Black Lick Twp., 4/5 (SeB) at South Fork, and 4/6 (JB) w. of CC Lake. Only four **Northern Waterthrush** reports were received, all single birds – one at YC (MSC) and another at Chestnut Ridge Golf Course (SGr), both on 5/3, at CC on 5/12 (JB), and the last at YC 5/29 (AM, HR). **Golden-winged Warblers** sighted included singletons at IUP Coop Park 4/28 (BB, TH, CLy), near Creekside 5/4 (CJ), and at Kelly Station 5/4 (JB). The region's first **Blue-winged Warblers** appeared 4/28, at both YC (EJ, DJ) and at SGL 79 D (GT), 5/1 (TR) s.e. of Adrian, and 5/3 (PI) at SGL 108 - Sandy Run. SGL 108 - Fallentimber yielded the season's lone **Brewster's warbler** on 4/28 (TA). An early **Black-and-white Warbler** arrived 4/9 (JB) w. of CC Lake; other dates of arrival included 4/27 (TA) at SGL - Fallentimber and 4/28 (JP) along the GTT between Saylor Park and Heshbon. A **Swainson's Warbler** was heard singing 5/11 (MS, JT) at Conemaugh Dam, confirmed visually 5/15 (MS, JT), and heard and/or seen through 5/27 (MS, JT, EW). **Tennessee Warblers**, which were widespread across the region, yielded first dates that included 4/28 (BB, TH, CLy) at IUP Coop Park, 4/30 (SG) n. of L&D 8, and 5/3 (PI) at SGL 108 - Fallentimber. Last reported Tennessee stopped at YC 5/22 (AM). **Nashville Warblers**, which were not as numerous as the Tennessees, first appeared 4/23 (ED, MH,



This Swainson's Warbler was singing at Conemaugh Dam on May 17.

Photo by Roger Higbee



This male Cerulean Warbler was observed with his mate at Conemaugh Dam on May 17.

Photo by Roger Higbee



This female Cerulean appeared to be mated with the male above when she was photographed by Roger Higbee on May 17.

RH, DK) at YC, 4/28 (TR) at SGL 247 S., and 5/3 (PI) at SGL 108 - Fallentimber.

First **Kentucky Warblers** arrived 5/6 (JK,TK) along the Dick Mayer section of the WPT, but were absent in *Cambria*.

**Common Yellowthroats** appeared early on 4/20 (BB, PE, TH, CLy) at the IUP Co-op Park while in *Cambria* and *Armstrong*, the first arrivals respectively occurred 4/27 (TA) and 4/28 (TR). **Hooded Warblers** were widespread after dates of return 4/27 at White's Woods Nature Center (TH) and at SGL 108 - Fallentimber (TA) and 4/28 (JB) w. of CC Lake. **American Redstarts**, too, experienced late April returns and were spread across the region. On the other hand, **Cape May Warblers**, non-breeders in our region, were in low numbers with sightings at only 2 *Armstrong* and 3 *Cambria* locations. *Indiana* fared a bit better with reports from 9 locations, but 7 of those mentioned only one to 2 birds. Four were noted 5/4 (RL) and 3 on 5/10, 12 (JP) in IN borough. The **Cerulean Warbler** hotspots in *Armstrong* included the AR at Clinton, the AT north of L&D 8, and the CC Valley. In *Indiana* Cerulean sightings were congregated along the WPT in the Conemaugh Valley. *Cambria* yielded only two reports of single birds – 5/20 (PI) at SGL 108 - Sandy Run and 5/21 (CS) at PG. **Northern Parula** hotspots paralleled those of the Cerulean to a degree in *Armstrong* and *Indiana* with the addition of the Yellow Creek area in *Indiana*. PG and SGL 108 added 11 Northern Parula locations in *Cambria* with multiple reports at two of those areas. **Magnolia Warblers**, at best a rare breeder in *Armstrong* and *Indiana*, moved through

between 5/6 (TR) and 5/17 (JK, TK), but the presence of a singing male at SGL 247 on 5/30 (TR) and the occurrence of Magnolias on three *Cambria* point counts 5/29 (CC) suggested possible breeding. **Bay-breasted Warblers** migrated through our region between 5/4 (RL) and 5/26 (DJ).

**Blackburnian Warblers**, local breeders in our region, arrived 4/28 (TA) at SGL 108 - Fallentimber, 5/5 (GT) s. of Armagh, and 5/13 (JB) near Clinton.

**Yellow Warblers** arrived on their breeding grounds 4/18 both at Parker (KB, SuB) and s. of Armagh (GT) and 4/27 (SeB) at South Fork. Dates of return for **Chestnut-sided Warblers** included 4/28 (DJ, EJ) at YC, 4/30 (ABu) near West Valley, and 5/3 (PI) at SGL 108 - Sandy Run.

**Blackpoll Warblers** moved northward through our region between 5/5 (TA) and 5/21 (ED, MH, RH, DK, JT). **Black-throated Blue Warblers**, local breeders in sections of *Indiana* and *Cambria*, began arriving 4/17 (SD) in *Indiana*, 4/28 (TA) in *Cambria*, and 4/30 (SG) in *Armstrong*.

**Palm Warblers** stopped in our region between 4/23 (TR) and 5/18 (SeB) on their northward migration. Eleven of the 12 locations hosting Palms listed single individuals; the twelfth at SGL 79 A included 3 on 4/28 (GT). First **Pine Warblers**, which seemed late this year, included one to 2 at YC 4/6 (m.ob), 2 at PG 4/14 (TA), one along the GTT in "heavy steady rain the entire hike" on 5/11 (GT), and another at Nolo 5/14 (GL). High tallies of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** included 9 at Rosston 3/2 (TR) and 10 at White's Woods Nature Center 4/21 (TH), but most reports mentioned one to 2 individuals elsewhere; first noted was one at YC 5/23 (AM). **Yellow-throated Warblers** included 2 at Kelly Station 4/18 (TR) and one at the Blairsville Riverfront Trail 5/2 (SGr); hotspots for Yellow-throated Warblers include the AT along the AR, the CC Valley, and the WPT along the Conemaugh. **Prairie Warblers** were listed 4/23 (GT) n. of Torrance, 4/28 (TH) at WCA, and 4/29 (GT) n. of Dilltown. The top counts of Prairies occurred at SGL 79 when 5 were noted on 5/8, 16 (MS) and 6 on 5/20 (PI). **Black-throated Green Warblers** were widespread across the region with first returnees at Lower Findley Run 4/14 (GT), at Seminole 4/18 (LM), and at SGL 108 - Gate 20 on 4/21 (PI), and at Nolo 4/19 (GL), and. Two **Canada Warblers**, both in *Indiana* were recorded – one heard at WCA 5/5 (MSC) and the other observed along the GTT, Vic Miller access, on 5/19 (GT). Four single **Wilson's Warblers** were noted in *Armstrong* between 5/1 (SW) and 5/26 (JB). *Indiana* yielded sightings of four, one at WCA 5/4 (JP) and the others at YC – one on 5/11 (HR) and 2 on 5/29

(AM, HR)

First **Scarlet Tanagers** appeared 4/28 at SGL 247 N (TR) and west of CC (JB); 4/29 n. of YC (AM) and at IUP Co-op Park (DRe); and 4/30 near Buttermilk Falls (GT), at YC (JT), and s. of West Valley (ABu).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** returned 4/19 (GT) s.e. of Armagh, 4/27 (TA) at SGL 208 - Fallentimber, and 4/28 at SGL 247 N (TR). **Indigo Buntings** arrived 4/28 (SP) at CC and 4/30 both near Buttermilk Falls (GT) in *Indiana* and at Stackhouse Park in *Cambria* (BS).



**Observers:** Tina Alianiello, Isabel Allerheiligen, Sue Appleby, Dave Beatty, Kimberly Berry, Brady Blackburn, John Boback, Susan Braun, Dave Brooke (DBr), Alan Buriak (ABu), Susan Burket (SuB), Seth Burnoski (SeB), Michele Carlson (MCA), Connor Carnahan, Tiffany Chan, Pat Comas, Marcy Cunkelman, Michael David, Sue Dickson, Josh Donaldson, Susan Donaldson (SDo), Ed Donley, Peyton Eckard, Patience Fisher, Ross Gallardy, Joseph Glass, Sally Gordon (SGo), S Grove (SGr), Sam Guthrie, Dorothy Haas, Court Harding, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Tyler Hodges, Pam Illig, Winnie Illig, David Janetski, Erin Janetski, Caelie Jones, Debbie Kalbfleisch, Avis Keener, John Keener (JKe), Michael Kensinger, Rachel Kester, Jan Kuehl, Tom Kuehl, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, AJ Lassick (AJL), Monica Lee, Jesse Logue, Richard Love, Karen Lucas, Colin Lynch (CLy), Avi Marshall, Justin Merry, Trent Millum, Nick Morganweck, Liam Murphy, Sandra Newell, Katelin Omecinski, Sebastian Picardi, James Pumford (JaP), Joseph Pumford, Derek Rezek (DRe), Scott Reynolds, Theo Rickert, Alden Ritchey, Debra Rittelmann, Logan Rode, Henry Rummel, Matt St Clair (MSC), Connor Schmitt, Eric Shill, Vicki Stelma, Bob Stewart, Mark Strittmatter, Roxanne Stubbs, John Taylor, Greg Tomb, Shirley Van Dyke (SVD), Marge Van Tassel, Sierra Waltenbaugh, Stacy Waltenbaugh (StW), Ezra White, Colleen Yeany, David Yeany, Becky Yoder, George Young.

## Volunteers Needed

Thanks to our members who come early to our monthly meetings to help setting up the room. This past year Warren and Noah Jones, Gloria Lamer, Jim McGuire, and Matt St Claire have helped! I apologize if I've forgotten anyone, so please let us know.

Todd Bird Club also needs suggestions for speakers, field trip destinations, field trip leaders, articles for "The Nuthatch," and someone to take over as Refreshment Chair. Please see any of our officers if you are interested.

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

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## Invite a Friend to Join Todd Bird Club

Dues: Student - \$5; Individual - \$10; Family - \$15

Please remit to our treasurer Gloria Lamer,  
515 Laurel Run Road, Penn Run, PA 15765.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

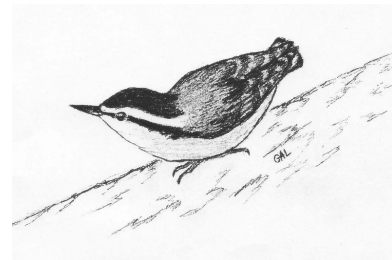
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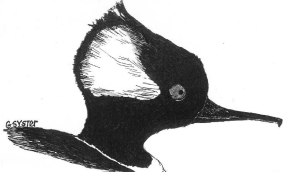
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