

The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

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

January 2024

Meetings

Tuesday, February 6 – Tyler Hodges is a second year Biology Master's student in Dr. Jeff Larkin's lab at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and an Associate Wildlife Biologist with The Wildlife Society. He graduated from the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry in 2019 with a Bachelor's in Wildlife Sciences and a minor in Environmental Writing. After completing his Bachelor's, Tyler went on to work multiple field jobs across the northeast, often on projects with an avian ecology and conservation focus. Tyler has a diverse array of interests within the realm of avian ecology, including bird-habitat relationships, movement ecology, and full-annual-cycle ecology. After finishing his Master's, Tyler intends to continue his avian ecology work by pursuing a PhD in the field.

The title of his presentation is "Examining the Responses of Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) Space Use, Abundance, and Habitat Selection to Forest Management



Don Henly, an after second-year (ASY) male Scarlet Tanager with a VHF tag visible on its back, was tagged and tracked in an unmanaged forest to learn more about Scarlet Tanager habitat selection and space use.

in the Poconos Region of Pennsylvania."

Tuesday, March 5 – Dr. Brian Wargo will present "Raptor Identification: Techniques and Applications" at this meeting.

Hawkwatching is an esoteric subset of birding that utilizes unique skills and techniques for identification. Hawks are usually far out in the sky, often appearing black, and nearly devoid of any plumage patterns. Making matters worse, these birds rarely vocalize, are moving fast, and do not return for a second glance. All of these

problems conspire against the hawk counter who must quickly identify the raptor and move on to the next bird. So, how do they do it?

Your guide, Dr. Brian M. Wargo, author of "*Bird!*": *An Exploration of Hawkwatching*, takes you into the mind of the hawk counter and shares the techniques that hawk-watchers practice to make the identification. In addition, Wargo is the Eastern Flyway Editor for Hawk Migration Studies, taking countless hours to analyze the data

collected from the nearly 90 hawk sites in the eastern part of the United States. This information helps reveal the state of the raptors for the east coast. This workshop provides tips and tricks for hawk identification, all while integrating population trends for each raptor species.

Dr. Brian M. Wargo is a physicist by training, a decorated science educator, and a hawk counter at the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch. He serves as the President of the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society and is on the board of directors for the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) where he chairs the Data Committee as well as the Education and Conservation Committee. In addition, he is the Eastern Flyway editor for Hawk Migration Studies, the official journal of HMANA. When not counting raptors, analyzing data, teaching students, or writing books, Wargo enjoys birding and has done so in all 49 contiguous states in North America.



Tuesday, April 2 – Laura Jackson will present “Birds In My Garden” at our April meeting.

Laura is a retired science teacher who enjoys nature photography, birding, native plant gardening, hiking, and kayaking. She and her husband manage their 120-acre wooded property in Bedford County for wildlife and have a conservation easement on it through the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Laura currently serves as President of Save Our Allegheny Ridges, and Vice-President of Juniata Valley Audubon Society. She has volunteered as a Pennsylvania Forest Steward since 2000 and is part of the Steering Committee. She also serves on the Council for the James C. Finley Center for Private Forests at Penn State and is the chairperson of PSO’s Conservation Committee.



Outings

Tuesday morning outings will continue, weather permitting. For all Yellow Creek Tuesday outings, meet shortly after dawn at the North Shore gazebo, located off South Harmony Road 1.4 miles from Route 422 east of Indiana. Follow South Harmony, continuing right at the “Stop - Right Turn Keep Moving” sign. Go past McFeaters Cove and turn left at the North Shore sign. Everyone is welcome. If you have any questions or weather concerns, please contact Roger Higbee (412-309-3538) or Court Harding (352-586-4851).

Saturday, February 10– The Ghost Town Trail, led by Court Harding (chardinglou@gmail.com). Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot for the Vic Miller access.

Saturday, February 17 – A trip north, weather permitting. We’ll watch the eBird sightings and decide closer to the date where to go. Possibilities include Mosquito Lake, Pymatuning, Presque Isle, Conneaut Harbor, the Ohio lakeshore, etc. For more information, contact Roger

or Margaret Higbee (Roger’s cell - 412-309-3538 or our home phone 724-354-3493). Please let us know if you plan to attend.

Saturday, March 9 – Blue Spruce County Park, led by Ray Winstead (rw@raywinstead.com). In addition to walking to find other bird species, come prepared to feed chickadees, titmice, and even a White-breasted Nuthatch from your hands on The Chickadee Pathway. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the large parking lot just past the park office.

Saturday, March 16 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by John Taylor (724-397-2040). Meet on the north shore by the gazebo at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, March 23 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Trent Millum (tmillum361@gmail.com). Meet at 8:00 a.m. on the north shore by the gazebo at 8:00 a.m.



First Bird of 2024?

What was the first bird you saw in 2024? The following Todd members submitted their first sightings:

Dan Cunkelman – Blue Jay
Marcy Cunkelman – Tufted Titmouse
Sheree Daugherty – Downy Woodpecker
Sue Dickson – Dark-eyed Junco
Ed Donley – Eastern Screech-Owl
Patience Fisher – Carolina Chickadee
Margaret Higbee – Blue Jay
Roger Higbee – Blue Jay
Debbie Kalbfleisch – American Goldfinch
Jan Kuehl – Mourning Dove
Tom Kuehl – Mourning Dove
Avi Marshall – Red-throated Loon

Jim McGuire – Cedar Waxwing
Richard Nugent – Mourning Dove
Cindy Rogers – Tufted Titmouse
Henry Rummel – Red-throated Loon
Matt St Clair – Black-capped Chickadee
Jack Solomon – Tufted Titmouse
Vicki Stelma – European Starling
Alice Stitt – Canada Goose
Bob Stitt – Canada Goose
John Taylor – House Finch
Greg Tomb – White-throated Sparrow

Fifteen different species were listed by 23 participants!
Thanks to everyone who participated!

Well, it seems like Avi and Henry got the “best” first bird with the Red-throated Loon at Yellow Creek; they must have left home in the dark or else it was a very quiet morning! Second “best” was Ed with his screech-owl peering from his owl box. For third, I’d pick Jim with his Cedar Waxwing because it seems like that’s the first time

waxwing has appeared on this list! Goldfinch isn’t bad either, Deb! But Sheree gets special mention for her Downy as she lives in urban Pittsburgh, and she was thankful it wasn’t a Rock Pigeon. Alice and Bob had the largest first bird. Patience in Westmoreland Co. had a rare bird for *Indiana*, but a Carolina Chickadee isn’t rare for “her neck of the woods.” Roger and I (and I suspect Dan, too) didn’t have a chance as the Blue Jays were screaming outside our window before we were even out of bed!

Birding Phoenix, Sedona, and the Grand Canyon

*By Sue Dickson

Early in November my husband Jim and I took a long overdue trip to see my brother and sister-in-law at their home in Goodyear, Arizona. They live in an over-55 gated community, Pebble Creek, just west of Phoenix. The golf course is just steps away from their back patio. A large pond on the course is within sight of their patio, but the rest, except for the grassy greens, is dry desert soil and plants.

The first morning I was up at sunrise to see what birds I could find. I was told that the **Gambel’s Quail** would greet me, and I was not disappointed. The HOA association prohibits feeding of wildlife except for hummingbird feeders, but my brother will sneak a bit of cracked corn for them now and then. As soon as I walked out onto the patio, they started coming toward me making cute “quail” noises. Large noisy **Great-tailed Grackles**, Mourning Doves, White-crowned Sparrows, and Eurasian Collared-Doves soon joined them. In the distant trees I spotted two

Gila Woodpeckers chasing one another around a tree trunk. The pond soon came alive with a Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Mallards, and Double-crested Cormorants. At one point more than 30 cormorants lined the edge of the pond! I spotted a Northern Mockingbird in a tree nearby. But wait, another bird had a bright yellow eye and a curved bill. A look at my Arizona bird book showed that this was a **Curve-billed Thrasher**. Although this thrasher did not mimic in twos, some mannerisms seemed similar to our Brown Thrasher. We heard them often from the patio. A hummingbird buzzed past, stopped at a red flowering vine, and then went to the feeder. It was a **Costa’s Hummingbird**. At times I could make out the purple head and what I called, a purple “scarf” sticking out at its neck. Merlin picked up Anna’s Hummingbird sounds, but I could never ID one for sure. An **Abert’s Towhee** landed on the low patio wall. This was an all gray bird with a dark face, pale bill, and rusty undertail. I saw more than one in the area.

I wanted to find a Verdin, and even though Merlin was picking it up frequently, I could not spot one. Soon a very small bird, a **Verdin**, landed on the Desert Milkweed plant at the edge of the patio. It was very busy pulling the seeds from the fluffy seed pods. I could see the Verdin's yellowish head, and even a bit of its rusty shoulder patch. OK, I counted **7 new life birds**, all before lunch!

We included a trip to the Grand Canyon on this visit, so that afternoon we drove north three hours to Williams, Arizona. The scenery changed from desert with tall saguaro cacti, to brush and small trees, to tall Ponderosa pines as we neared Flagstaff, Arizona (7,334 ft). We reached the Grand Canyon Railway & Hotel in Williams in time for dinner. It was colder in the mountains and already down to 35 degrees. The next morning we left our car at the hotel and took a fun "old-times train" for a two-hour train trip to the Grand Canyon and South Rim. A fun "shoot out" re-enactment entertained the passengers before we boarded the train, complete with a town sheriff, cowboys, and train robbers and some "volunteers" from the crowd. We were even serenaded on the train by a guitar-playing cowboy. "Home, Home on the Range!"

I find it hard to describe my first views of the Grand Canyon. I had visited as a child (I don't think you can appreciate the magnitude of this place at age 10), but this was my husband's first visit. The view of the canyon was just magnificent, breathtaking, and awesome! I carried my binoculars everywhere, and the first new bird I saw was a dark blue **Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay**. The lodge where we stayed was surrounded by lots of pines where we saw and heard many Red-breasted Nuthatches, Dark-eyed Juncos, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays, Evening Grosbeaks, and Common Ravens. Lots of ravens! Noisy! The juncos I saw looked a bit different with gray heads, and a round rusty back, but I was not sure what to call them. Possibly the "Gray-headed" subspecies?

We stayed overnight at the Maswik Lodge at Canyon Village. After dinner we were able to enjoy some stargazing, and because it gets so dark there, we could easily see the Milky Way. The night sky was beautiful. The next day while walking back from breakfast we heard and saw large flocks of bluish birds flying over and calling all the time. Merlin identified them as **Pinion Jays**. Blue color, lighter underneath. There were at least 60 in the flocks flying over. When I reviewed the calls on Merlin for Pinion Jays, they definitely sounded the same. We went along the Rim Trail to Mather Point which afforded beautiful views of the canyon. Along the trail I saw movement in a scrub bush, with sounds like a titmouse. "Oh, a gray bird, looks a bit like a Tufted Titmouse," I thought. But when I tried to record it in

eBird, the only titmouse listed for the area was a **Juniper Titmouse**. Just a few feet away another bird caught my eye, a **Spotted Towhee**. It even scratched around on the ground like our Eastern Towhee. I also saw and heard **Mountain Chickadees**, and I could see the distinct white eyebrow line. So many ravens were flying around at the Grand Canyon. It was nice to watch them soar and dive so deeply into the canyon. Unfortunately we did not see any California Condors.

The next day we caught the train back to Williams, Arizona. It was a quiet ride as those who did the trip in one day were tired from their day at the Grand Canyon. The "Gang" put on a show and entertained the passengers and kids with a "Train Robbery." It was nice to sit back to watch the scenery go by. I highly recommend a trip to the Grand Canyon by train from Williams. You can spend just the day there or stay overnight like we did.

We stayed over in Flagstaff and started out the next morning (cold 32 degrees!) on our trip back to Phoenix. We headed south along Route 89A through the Coconino National Forest, past many beautiful tall Ponderosa pines. The winding road took us down, down, through Oak Creek Canyon. Oh, the many hairpin turns!

At the bottom of the canyon we stopped at a pull-off at Cave Creek Campground to see the scenic views of the canyon walls above. It was a wooded area with beautiful views of the canyon walls and the deep blue skies. As we walked along a trail, I spotted a group of people with binoculars! Oh boy, my type of people!!! (My husband is so patient!) A group of local birders were trying to find a reported Black-throated Blue Warbler seen in the area. I went over, said hello, and said I was from Pennsylvania. They told me what they were looking for, but I was soon so busy looking at all the other birds that were flying around in the trees overhead. They helped to point out the **Steller's Jays**, **Acorn Woodpeckers** (saw 3!), and a **Red-naped Sapsucker**. Looking at some of the many nuthatches, I spotted a gray headed **Pygmy Nuthatch**. New birds were flying about so fast that I had to force myself to take time to really look at these new ones. One birder told me about an American Dipper that had been seen at the nearby stream, so we took a short walk down to the COLD mountain stream. There seemed to be a lot of ruckus from groups of birds nearby. I heard juncos, and a bunch of kinglets were flying about in the trees across the stream. In a pine I spotted a small brown, streaked bird sitting on a branch. Its face looked funny to me, almost flat with a short beak. I could not tell what it was, but when I turned, I saw one birder remaining (with a big camera too), so I asked him to come to see if he could identify this bird. One look and he was "high-fiving" me,

saying it was a **Northern Pygmy-Owl**! I got to look at the owl for a while as the birder took some nice pictures that he later sent to me.

I reluctantly left this spot, and we continued to drive towards Sedona. As we drove out of the canyon, we soon started seeing all the red rock formations – Bell Rock, Chapel Rock. The town of Sedona itself seemed very busy and “touristy” with lots of traffic. I’d rather see the beautiful scenery.

It was getting much warmer when we headed to our next stop, Montezuma’s Castle. After purchasing our tickets, we were soon following the walkway leading to the area of the “castle.” A lone Ruby-crowned Kinglet hopped around in a shrub right at our eye level and seemed to be checking us out. At one spot some movement on the ground along the trail caught my eye. A **Green-tailed Towhee** was rustling around. I noticed its rusty cap, olive-green back with some yellow on the wings, and white under its chin. After scanning my Arizona bird book, and checking with Merlin, I finally figured it out. OK, Jim was way ahead of me by now looking at what we came to see. The Montezuma’s Castle National Monument is a set of stone dwellings built into the walls of the canyon approximately 800 years ago. It stood out against the beautiful blue sky. The sky is so blue in Arizona!



Sue found this Northern Pygmy-Owl that was photographed by birder Ron Reed mentioned in her article, and this photo was shared with her by Ron.



Sue photographed this Cactus Wren at the Phoenix Botanical Garden.

We arrived back in Goodyear at my brother’s to much warmer temperatures. We were back in the desert!

We had a visitor at our breakfast on the patio the next morning. A coyote took a stroll past just on the other side of the wall. He was not too concerned to see us, and even yawned as he went by. Even though Pebble Creek is a gated community, the local wildlife are able to get in. Coyotes have come onto their patio, so they need to watch their tiny dog.

At the Phoenix Botanical Garden I finally found the two life birds that I was searching for all week. It was enjoyable to see the many types of desert cacti and plants, but it was a hot 90-degree day. A **Cactus Wren** hung out in one of the trees long enough for me to get a great view. It was larger than what I had expected. On the way to the car, I finally spotted a **Greater Roadrunner** in a dry brushy area. OK, I can go home now, I saw a roadrunner! But then two **Black-tailed Gnatcatchers** were hopping around in the brush. They did not cooperate and hold still for a picture, but I could see the tiny gray bird’s white eye ring and white outer tail feathers just like our Blue-gray Gnatcatchers here.

Back to the cool Pittsburgh weather, but we were thankful for a nice visit with my brother, lots of new birds, and beautiful sights.

***All of my life birds are in bold font**



Help Needed

Todd Bird Club needs several members to work on the Outings Committee. This just involves figuring out where our members want to bird and finding someone to lead our outings. When Tom Glover moved to New York, we lost the chair of the committee, and no one else on the commit-tee wanted to chair it. We will help you by

providing lists of possible good birding locations and people to contact as leaders.

Please volunteer!!! Thanks for considering this. For further information, contact me.

Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493)

Christmas Bird Count 2023 Revisited

December 26, 2023, dawned 41 degrees warmer than our 5-degree start in 2022! It was overcast, and we experienced intermittent sprinkles with a light breeze from the southeast at roughly 3 mph. Unlike 2022, we had no snow cover. By 1:00 p.m. the temperature had risen to 56, and the winds were mostly calm.

We welcomed 10 new participants this year to the Indiana CBC, including Avi Marshall (Count Week only), Shamir Massih, Henry Rummel (Count Week only), Matt St Clair, Sherry Shank, Dick and Linda Staffen, Blair Stormer, Greg Tomb, and Karen Valyo,

Forty-four field birders in 19 parties spent 26.9 party hours hiking 30.07 party miles and 51.90 party hours driving 538.43 party miles. Most of the field birders combined some hiking with driving. Feederwatchers contributed 32.58 hours watching their feeders and yards. Our owling party, Court Harding and Warren Hancock, spent 1.75 hours driving 7.91 miles owling. They heard a Great Horned Owl at Two Lick Reservoir, our only owl species on the count.

Special thanks to Lee Carnahan who made trips to Two Lick every day and several trips to Yellow Creek looking for count week (CW) birds. Other count week birds included Wood Duck seen by Avi Marshall and Henry Rummel at White's Woods and a Rusty Blackbird at Waterworks Conservation Area found by Sue Dickson. We can't forget John Taylor who had seen the Snow Goose at the old VFW pond prior to the count but not on count day. His persistence paid off on December 28 when he finally sighted it again, adding it as a CW bird.

In the northern part of the circle, Joseph, James, and Dominic Pumford added 118 individuals to our count. Their highlights included two of the count's Bald Eagles, three Golden-crowned Kinglets, and one Brown Creeper.

On the northeastern edge of the circle Tom Betts took several hikes, drove some of the roads, and birded Musser's Pond. Among species on his list were 180 Canada Geese, 48 Mallards, and 12 Hooded Mergansers, along with a nice list of passerines and other species.

Just south of Tom, Pat and Paul Johner birded her area, bordered on the north by PA 286 and on the west by US



Court Harding photographed this gorgeous House Finch, one of 263 seen on the CBC.

119, including the northern section of SGL 248. Highlight for Pat was watching a Northern Harrier slowly flying low over a large open farm field with corn stalk stubble along Geesey Road. Pat and Paul also spotted two adult Bald Eagles at Two Lick.

The area north of US 422 and bordered along the south side of Two Lick Reservoir was covered this year by Tom Simmons. A large farm pond yielded Mallards and 15

American Black Ducks while Allen Bridge produced 10 Common Mergansers. In addition, Tom birded the old VFW pond, Seasonal, and various areas around Indiana.

Five separate parties birded Yellow Creek State Park. On the north shore, John Taylor, Ed Donley, Trent Millum, Garrett Strittmatter, Ian Strittmatter, and Mark Strittmatter walked 4.5 miles, listing nine Pied-billed Grebes, one Common Loon, their usual Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a Hermit Thrush, two Purple Finches, and three Yellow-rumped Warblers; the loon and warblers were the only ones found on the count. Great job, North Shore Crew!!! On the south shore Gloria and Clayton Lamer added additional waterfowl, including two Gadwalls, one Canvasback, 80 Hooded Mergansers, the only Red-breasted Merganser, two Redheads, and 84 Cedar Waxwings. Also on the south shore were Rich and Michele Carlson who hiked from Grandma's Cove to the dam, adding four Buffleheads, a Pied-billed Grebe, one Winter Wren, and six Swamp Sparrows among others. Joseph, James, and Dominic Pumford also birded the south shore where they added a second Canvasback, two Common Goldeneyes, and eight Brown-headed Cowbirds. Hiking Ridgetop Trail and environs on the south shore with Roger and me were Noah Jones and Shamir Massih. Our highlight was a flock of sparrows including eight American Tree Sparrows.

Birding SGL 273 was Greg Tomb, who on his 3.38 mile hike through mostly homogenous woods, found the count's lone Fox Sparrow as well as an assortment of other birds including 4 Wild Turkeys.

Covering the southern section of the county east of US 119 once again this year were Annie Lindsay and Joe Saxfield who noted one of the three Northern Harriers, the only Red-shouldered Hawk (besides the one Sue

Dickson had tallied for CW), the only Brown Thrasher, and all of the White-crowned Sparrows.

In the southern portion of southwestern section west of US 119 were county residents Dick and Linda Staffen, encouraged by their visiting birder son and daughter-in-law, Rich and Amy Staffen from Madison, Wisconsin. Highlights of the two couples' endeavors were 25 Horned Larks, the only ones noted on the count, and four of our American Kestrels. It's always great to have accomplished birders from out of state.

Just north of the Staffen's area, New Jersey birders, Chris and Paula Williams, returned again this year to help us out with the count. Their highlights included a Great Blue Heron, four Common Mergansers, and a Belted Kingfisher, all at the VFW pond. In addition, they found two Sharp-shinned Hawks, the only ones on the count; a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; and five Common Ravens.

Marcy and Dan Cunkelman, birding the western section south of US 422, listed 32 species including 19 Wild Turkeys, a Cooper's Hawk, and four Pileated Woodpeckers. Marcy also commented on the low counts of juncos and cardinals.

At the western edge of the circle while hiking near Anthony Run, Bob Ramsey flushed two well-studied late Chipping Sparrows, the only ones on the count. Bob commented on the lack of large flocks like he usually tallies on this count as most of his birds were individuals or pairs.

Also in the Cunkelmans' section of the circle one of our youngest participants, five-year-old Blair Stormer, hiked with her granddad Rodger and pointed out birds for him to identify.

Just north of Marcy and Dan's section and north of US 422 was Court Harding's territory where she found the count's only two American Wigeons, two of the Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, half of the Hermit Thrushes, and the only Pine Siskin.

North of Court's section, Roger and I, accompanied by Noah and Shamir, drove the roads between our home and PA 954. Our highlights were a total of 31 Wild Turkeys and seeing the excitement generated by Shamir when we saw five Red-tailed Hawks.

Hiking at Blue Spruce in the early morning hours were Daniel and Ray Winstead who added a Belted Kingfisher, a Common Raven, and another Hermit Thrush.

Finally in the northernmost section that included Chambersville and Grove Chapel, Carol Guba, after covering her area, stopped at Musser's Lake just outside her territory late in the day. Knowing that waterfowl move around toward evening, she kept a separate list as this was Tom Betts' area. As she suspected, she added five American Black Ducks, one Northern Pintail – the only one listed for the CBC – and nine Ruddy Ducks that hadn't been present earlier in the day when Tom had been there; and many of the waterfowl Tom had observed had left. This was the count's lone pintail.

CBC Observers 2023

Pat Andrascik	Carol Guba	Amy Little	Joe Saxfield	Garrett Strittmatter
Tom Betts	Warren Hancock	Avi Marshall	Sherry Shank	Ian Strittmatter
Michele Carlson	Court Harding	Shamir Massih	Scott Sims	Mark Strittmatter
Rich Carlson	Margaret Higbee	Donna Meyer	Tom Simmons	John Taylor
Lee Carnahan	Roger Higbee	Trent Millum	John Somonick	Wil Taylor
Dan Cunkelman	Pat Johner	Dominic Pumford	Amy Staffen	Greg Tomb
Marcy Cunkelman	Paul Johner	James Pumford	Dick Staffen	Mary Lu Tucker
Susan Dickson	Linda Jones	Joseph Pumford	Linda Staffen	Karen Valyo
Ed Donley	Noah Jones	Bob Ramsey	Rich Staffen	Chris Williams
John Dudash	Clayton Lamer	Cindy Rogers	Blair Stormer	Paula Williams
Judy Emigh	Gloria Lamer	Henry Rummel	Linda Stormer	Daniel Winstead
Gary Ferrence	Dennis Lauffer	Matt St Clair	Rodger Stormer	Ray Winstead
Barb Fletcher	Annie Lindsay			

Indiana Christmas Bird Count Results

41st Annual CBC – December 26, 2023

Snow Goose (CW)	CW	Turkey Vulture (4)		House Sparrow (809)	268
Greater White-fronted Goose (2)		Northern Harrier (9)	3	Evening Grosbeak (566)	
Canada Goose (2081)	966	Sharp-shinned Hawk (14)	2	Pine Grosbeak (1)	
Mute Swan (4)		Cooper's Hawk (15)	7	House Finch (1563)	263
Trumpeter Swan (2)		N. Goshawk (1)		Purple Finch (89)	8
Tundra Swan (533)		Accipiter sp? (1)		Common Redpoll (63)	
Wood Duck (5)	CW	*Bald Eagle (6)	6	White-winged Crossbill (62)	
N. Shoveler (2)		Red-shouldered Hawk (5)	1	Pine Siskin (375)	1
Gadwall (30)	2	Red-tailed Hawk (71)	37	American Goldfinch (637)	189
American Wigeon (14)	2	Rough-legged Hawk (3)		Lapland Longspur (6)	
Mallard (670)	328	Eastern Screech-Owl (13)		Snow Bunting (225)	
American Black Duck (190)	64	Great Horned Owl (10)	1	Chipping Sparrow (4)	2
N. Pintail (10)	1	Barred Owl (5)		Clay-colored Sparrow (1)	
Green-winged Teal (4)		Long-eared Owl (1)		Field Sparrow (23)	
Canvasback (15)	2	Short-eared Owl (2)		American Tree Sparrow (483)	23
Redhead (14)	2	Belted Kingfisher (9)	5	Fox Sparrow (3)	1
Ring-necked Duck (41)	2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (8)	5	Dark-eyed Junco (2272)	414
Greater Scaup (5)		Red-headed Woodpecker (1)		White-crowned Sparrow (36)	4
Lesser Scaup (32)		*Red-bellied Woodpecker (81)	91	White-throated Sparrow (225)	149
Surf Scoter (CW)		Downy Woodpecker (177)	86	Savannah Sparrow (3)	
White-winged Scoter (1)		Hairy Woodpecker (58)	33	Song Sparrow (152)	126
Black Scoter (1)		Pileated Woodpecker (36)	26	Lincoln's Sparrow (1)	
Long-tailed Duck (3)		Northern Flicker (40)	28	Swamp Sparrow (14)	9
Bufflehead (52)	17	Am. Kestrel (26)	17	Eastern Towhee (3)	
Common Goldeneye (7)	2	Merlin (2)	1	Eastern Meadowlark (10)	
*Hooded Merganser (68)	110	Peregrine Falcon (1)		Red-winged Blackbird (3570)	1
Common Merganser (29)	23	Eastern Phoebe (1)		Brown-headed Cowbird (46)	15
Red-breasted Merganser (6)	1	Northern Shrike (1)		Rusty Blackbird (13)	CW
Ruddy Duck (223)	23	Blue Jay (566)	430	Brewer's Blackbird (CW)	
N. Bobwhite (1)		American Crow (3275)	792	Common Grackle (503)	3
Wild Turkey (345)	106	Fish Crow (8)		Orange-crowned Warbler (CW)	
Ruffed Grouse (22)		*Common Raven (10)	14	Common Yellowthroat (CW)	
Ring-necked Pheasant (21)	7	Black-capped Chickadee (808)	253	Pine Warbler (1)	
Pied-billed Grebe (29)	9	Tufted Titmouse (394)	176	Yellow-rumped Warbler (18)	3
Horned Grebe (7)	3	Horned Lark (225)	25	Northern Cardinal (584)	170
Red-necked Grebe (1)		Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4)			
Rock Pigeon (392)	93	Golden-crowned Kinglet (106)	78	Total Individuals (18,838)	8122
Mourning Dove (1117)	330	White-breasted Nuthatch (201)	121		
Virginia Rail (1)		Red-breasted Nuthatch (51)		75 Species on 12/26/23 + 3 for CW	
Am. Coot (811)		Brown Creeper (25)	11		
Sandhill Crane (2)		Winter Wren (4)	2	CW = Birds Seen During Count	
Killdeer (20)		*Carolina Wren (61)	63	Week but Not Count Day	
Am. Woodcock (2)		European Starling (8656)	1512		
Wilson's Snipe (3)		Gray Catbird (2)	1	CW = December 23-29	
Bonaparte's Gull (6)		*Brown Thrasher (1)	1	*Record-breaking or Equally High	
Ring-billed Gull (50)		Northern Mockingbird (22)	13	Tally (5)	
Herring Gull (1)		Eastern Bluebird (152)	122	**Species New to the Count (0)	
Red-throated Loon (1)		Townsend's Solitaire (1)			
Common Loon (9)	1	Hermit Thrush (6)	4	() Highest No. Seen on Any	
Double-crested Cormorant (1)		Wood Thrush (CW)		Previous Indiana CBC, 1983-2022	
Great Blue Heron (8)	2	American Robin (1626)	303		
Black Vulture (3)		Cedar Waxwing (212)	107	138 Species on Count since 1983	
				including 6 CW only	

Birding by Train – Vancouver to Pittsburgh

By Debbie Kalbfleisch

I've always wanted to travel by train across the Rocky Mountains and northern tier states, and this past spring, I finally got a chance to do it after a trip up the west coast to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. I started my journey on Saturday, April 29, shortly after sunrise. The trees were just starting to leaf out and cherry trees were blooming as Amtrak's Cascades train pulled out of the Pacific Central Station in Vancouver. For the short trip to Seattle, Washington, I traveled by coach. The first birds were the usual suspects: Rock Pigeons, American Crows, European Starlings, and House Sparrows. I listed the white-winged gulls loafing about simply as Western/Glaucous-winged Gulls. As we got to the edge of the Metro Vancouver area, things got more interesting with Canada Geese, Mallards, Vaux's Swifts, a Great Blue Heron, and an American Kestrel. I had gotten my life Vaux's Swifts only a few days earlier in Victoria, British Columbia.

Around 8:00 that morning, we stopped for a quick border check in Blaine, Washington, as we entered the United States. When I first made my travel plans, I debated the option of taking a bus from Vancouver to Seattle but learned that bus passengers have to lug their suitcases off the bus and into the border station and back again while Amtrak passengers had their luggage checked just before we boarded, and only had to show papers to the border guard as he went down the aisle. While we were stopped, I added several Bonaparte's Gulls to my list. A little later as we were underway, I spotted some Buffleheads in an inlet near Bellingham, as well as a distant cormorant. The train was hugging the shoreline of the bays along the coast, the sun was shining, and the views were absolutely stunning. I had good luck with the weather for the entire trip, mostly clear or overcast and no rain. When I boarded the Cascades train in Vancouver, it was at the very start of its trip so I had my choice of window seats. We picked up more people as we traveled south, and at one point I chatted with a young student on her way back to college. I had turned off my phone in Canada to avoid paying international rates, and it had been slow to turn back on. I emitted a happy cheer when I saw it had come back to life, and my seat mate was horrified when I told her I had gone several days without cell service! I briefly considered telling her about the party line my family shared with the neighbors when I was a teenager in Virginia but decided an explanation about phones in the last century would probably take too long.

We pulled into the Seattle station on King Street around mid-day. I had several hours before my next train, so I checked my luggage, walked down the street, and had a nice lunch at a 13 Coins Restaurant. At 5 p.m., Amtrak's Empire Builder pulled out, heading north a bit before turning east. As the sun set, I got occasional glimpses of rosy snow-capped mountains. The last birds I added for the day were a pair of Belted Kingfishers along a stream. I was now in a roomette and asked the car attendant to make up my bed right after dinner. It had been a long day, and I wanted to be up with the sun the next morning.

That night, I slept through the rest of the Evergreen State and the skinny panhandle of Idaho, and woke as the sun was coming up in Whitefish, Montana, on the southern edge of Whitefish Lake. We were in the deep woods of Glacier National Park, about 60 miles south of Canada. I took a quick shower and had breakfast in my room, leisurely enjoying coffee while I took in what must be some of the most gorgeous scenery in the world. I was only marginally disappointed that repairs were being made to the sightseeing dome car that would have been part of the train as I was quite content in my own little compartment. It was mid-morning in East Glacier Park before I added a new species, a couple of Common Mergansers. As we traveled through the eastern edge of the Rockies and entered the Blackfoot Indian Reservation, I caught a glimpse of a Northern Harrier with its white rump flying away. We were leaving the mountains and entering the Great Plains. A Black-billed Magpie with its unmistakable silhouette and white wings flashing as it flew was the next treat. Three Trumpeter Swans were a nice surprise, and so was a coyote, not far from the tracks.

I soon added the first of several Killdeer, my only Red-tailed Hawk and only Barn Swallow of the trip, and four Horned Larks. I was thrilled to get a great look at my first pair of prong-horned antelope, quite close to the tracks and casually moving away as the train went past. Near Chester, halfway through Montana, I spotted a lone Northern Shoveler on a lake with Canada Geese, Mallards, and American Coots. Mourning Doves, Red-winged Black-birds, and Common Grackles were numerous along the route, and more antelopes appeared. I had been keeping my fingers crossed for a meadowlark, and I spotted the first one that morning, sitting on a fence. A meadowlark in Montana is a Western Meadowlark — lifer!

Later that afternoon, I was pleased to see three Ring-necked Pheasants. That count steadily grew until I realized at the end of the day that I had seen a total of 23 pheasants including a count of 13 near Williston, North Dakota. I'm pretty sure I've never before seen that many pheasants in one day! Just before leaving Montana, I sighed clear down to my toes when I spotted a family group of three Sandhill Cranes foraging in a field. I ended up with 27 species for the state. I only managed a dozen species for North Dakota, including Northern Shovelers, Redheads, Turkey Vultures, and a Western Meadowlark before it got too dark to see.

The following day found me waking up near St. Cloud, Minnesota. I had traveled to Minnesota twice before for their wonderful winter birds, and on this trip in early spring I managed to pick up a dozen new species for the state. My best birds were two more Sandhill Cranes, several American White Pelicans, and Rusty Blackbirds, all seen that morning. Wisconsin was another state I had

only previously visited in winter, and I added a half dozen new birds for my state list, among them Wood Duck and Pied-billed Grebe.

We entered Illinois late in the afternoon, and I happily added several new birds to my Prairie State list: Great Egret, Blue Jay, American Robin (the only one of the trip), and Rusty Blackbird.

We arrived in Chicago at 5:30 p.m., and I hustled through the station to transfer to the Capitol Limited, bound for Pittsburgh. In the hour before sunset, I listed my last birds of the trip – Canada Geese, European Starlings, and several mystery gulls. I went to bed early that night as we would pull into Pittsburgh's Union Station before dawn the following morning, May 2.

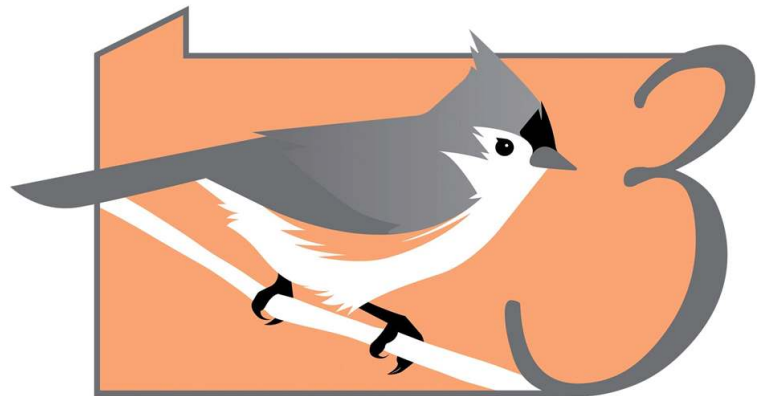
During my very relaxing three-day trip across the country, I tallied 41 species, including one lifer, a Western Meadowlark

3rd PA Bird Atlas Has Begun!

Many of you may have participated in the 2nd PA Breeding Bird Atlas (2004-2009), and probably a few of you helped with the very first PA Breeding Bird Atlas (1983-88); the first year of the first Atlas was a “test year.” This one is a little different as it is not just a breeding bird atlas but it has winter components, too. The collection of winter data, however, will not start until the winter of 2024-2025. Since state breeding bird atlas projects are usually held every twenty years, this third atlas will run from 2024 to 2029.

Hawk Mountain's Amber Wiewel is the State Coordinator for the third atlas. Birders of all calibers are needed to work the Atlas. Most Todd Bird Club members live in the Southwest Region of PA. Todd member Tom Kuehl is the Southwest Regional Coordinator. Under him are 12 counties including Armstrong and Indiana where the bulk of our members live. We also have members in Butler, Lawrence, Westmoreland, and Allegheny which are all part of that Southwest Region. County coordinators include Jim Kellam for Armstrong, Roger and Margaret Higbee for Indiana, Mike Fialkovich and Brian Shema for Allegheny, Oscar Miller and Glenn Koppel for Butler, and Janet Kuehl for Westmoreland.

An Advisory Group has guided the planning for this Third Atlas. Among the leaders of the group are Sean Murphy (Ornithologist at the PGC), Andy Wilson (Ornithologist at Gettysburg College), Laurie Goodrich (Ornithologist at Hawk Mountain), and Dan Brauning (Retired



PA BIRD ATLAS

Ornithologist at the PA Game Commission and current President of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology). Locally the Advisory Group includes Bob Mulvihill (Ornithologist at the National Aviary in Pittsburgh and the Atlas Coordinator for the 2nd Atlas) and Annie Lindsay (Banding Manager at the Powdermill Nature Reserve).

Birders may bird anywhere. You don't have to sign up. The Atlas website is <https://ebird.org/atlaspa/home>. There is also a PA Bird Atlas Discussion Group on Facebook.

Please take a few minutes to check these two sites. If you want to atlas but don't have a computer, we will find someone to enter your data for you.

Indiana, Armstrong, Cambria County Sightings Fall 2023

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: Armstrong Trail (AT), Blue Spruce Co. Park (BS), Hemlock Lake (HL), Indiana University of PA (IUP), Keystone Reservoir (KR), Kittanning (KT), Kovalchick Slough (KS), Lock and Dam (L&D), Prince Gallitzin (PG), Rosston (RT), Yellow Creek SP (YC).

Armstrong's rainfall for the month of August totaled 5.52". September's total rainfall was 2.64" while October finished with a total of 3.73". November was slightly drier than normal and received 2.23".

All temperatures in *Armstrong* are average temperatures for the entire month noted. Temperatures ranged from a low of 59° F to a high of 80° F for the month of August. The average temperature was 69.5° F. September's temperatures ranged from a low of 54.1° F to a high of 74.6° F with the average of 64.4° F. The temperatures in October averaged 54.1° F. The low temperature was 44.6° F while the high was 63.7° F. November's average temperature was 40.2° F. The high for the month was 51.1° F and the low, 29° F.

Rainfall in *Indiana* was scattered fairly evenly throughout the month of August and finished with 5.97" which was 1.71" above normal. September saw rainfall concentrated during two periods with a total of 2.45" falling during the month which was 1.73" below normal. During October, rainfall was distributed somewhat evenly throughout the month and finished with a slightly above normal total of 3.56". Eighty-five percent of November's precipitation was concentrated toward the third week of the month with the first half of the month only receiving 0.24". The month was drier than normal and received 2.40" of precipitation while the normal was 3.50".

Temperatures in *Indiana* ranged from a low of 47° F to a high of 87° F for the month of August. The average temperature was 68.0° F which was -1.4° F below normal. September's temperatures ranged from a low of 43° F to a high of 88° F. The average was 63.0° F which was normal. The temperatures in October averaged 1.4° F above normal with the average being 53.3° F. The low temperature was 29° F and the high was 82° F. November returned to below normal average temperatures by -1.3° F with the average being 39.2° F. The high for the month was 67° F and the low, 13° F.

Cambria's rainfall was scattered fairly evenly throughout the month of August and finished with

6.04" which was 2.02" above normal. A one-day maximum rainfall of 1.29" was observed on August 30. September saw rainfall concentrated during several days of the second and fourth weeks with a total of 2.55" falling during the month which was 1.66" below normal. During October, heaviest rainfall was at the end of the month and finished with a total of 4.02" which was 0.46" above normal. On October 29, 1.04" of precipitation fell. Eighty percent of November's precipitation was concentrated toward the third week of the month with the first half of the month only receiving 0.35". The month was slightly drier than normal and received 3.31" of precipitation out of a normal 3.63". Maximum daily rainfall occurred on November 22 and was 1.60" of precipitation. First measurable snowfall occurred on the 28th and was 2.6".

Temperatures in *Cambria* ranged from a low of 46° F to a high of 83° F for the month of August. The average temperature was 66.5° F which was 0.5° F above normal. September's temperatures ranged from a low of 38° F to a high of 86° F. The average was 60.1° F which was 0.4° F degrees above normal. The temperatures in October averaged 2.1° F above normal with the average being 50.8° F. The low temperature was 28° F and the high was 79° F. November's average temperatures were below normal by -1.1° F with the average being 37.0° F. The high for the month was 65° F and the low was 13° F.

This fall the total species count in *Indiana* was 183; in *Armstrong*, 144; and in *Cambria*, 118. Top count in *Indiana* was a flock of 80 Tundras noted overhead south of YC 11/24 (AM); 60 was *Armstrong's* high along the AT north of L&D 6 on 11/28 (JB) while PG's high of 36 occurred 11/26 (BF). Last **Blue-winged Teal** tallies included 3 at PG 9/21 (MD), 21 at KR 10/2 (MS), and one at YC 10/17 (CH). First 4 **Northern Shovelers** arrived at YC 9/13 (GL) while the next 2 weren't noted till 10/7 (MK) at PG; the only others reported were 2 on 10/17 (CH, JT) and 3 on 10/30 (MS, JT) all at YC, then last 2 on 11/15 (MS, JT) at PG. Most duck numbers remained in the single digits, but YC's **Gadwalls** peaked at 50 on 10/29 (DBo, TB), then 58 on 11/4 (DBo, ED, CH, MH,

RH, PH, MK, JK, TK, KL, AM, DM, MM, TM, HR, MSC, KSJ, VS); a singleton was sighted at PG 11/15 (MS, JT). **American Wigeons** topped at 45 at YC on 10/31 (ED, CH, MH, RH, DK, JM, JT) and at 25 at PG 11/15 (MS, JT). HL in the northern part of *Indiana* hosted 2 Gadwalls 11/7 (AK, JKe) and 3 American Wigeons 10/21 (AK, JKe). High **Mallard** counts reached 75 on 11/11 (PI, WI) at PG, 40 on 10/31 (CH) at YC, and 25 at RT 11/23 (TR). **American Black Ducks** noted included 9 at Templeton 11/20 (TR), 8 at YC 11/5 (ME, LS), and 6 at HL 11/1 (MS). The only **Northern Pintail** listed in the region was one at YC 10/7 (CH, MH, RH, NJ, DK, GL, JT, WJ). A raft of 100 **Green-winged Teal** was listed only at YC 10/29 (DBo, TB); this is the second highest fall count on record with the high of 144 counted on 10/9/2005 (LC). A single **Canvasback**, the only one in the region, was reported at YC between 10/23 (MS, JT) and 10/31 (ED, CH *et al*); 2 to 4 **Redheads** were listed only at YC between 10/23 (MS, JT) and 11/25 (RG, DMe). **Ring-necked Ducks** peaked at 5 at HL 11/1 (MS), at 75 at YC on 11/2 (MS, JT), and at 10 at PG 11/15 (MS, JT); 3 were observed at CC 11/19 (NM) and one at RT 11/24 (TR). Two **Greater Scaup** at YC 11/5 (EW) comprised the entire report for this species. **Lesser Scaup**, however, maxed at 54 on 11/4 (DBr, ED *et al*) while 8 were at PG 11/15 (MS, JT) and one at RT 11/24 (TR). Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were found at YC on the morning of 10/29 (CH, TH), and by the end of the day one to 2 were subsequently observed by seven other birders. High **Bufflehead** count of 325 was obtained at PG 11/18 (PI, WI); 38 were tallied 11/24 (GS, MS) at YC while HL hosted 15 on 11/5 (AK, JKe); Buffleheads were seen at five locations in the CC valley between 11/19 (NM) and 11/24 (TR) with top count of 21 at RT 11/23 (TR). The only **Common Goldeneyes** eBirded were 2 at PG 11/15 (MS, JT).



Mark Strittmatter photographed the Red-necked Grebe at Yellow Creek SP on Oct. 23.



Court Harding spotted this well concealed roosting Common Nighthawk at Blue Spruce Park on Sept. 2.



Yellow Creek yielded 2 Lesser Yellowlegs and a Greater Yellowlegs in the muddy cove on Oct. 19. Photo by Mark Strittmatter

Hooded Merganser numbers included 2 on 10/29 (AK, JKe) at HL, 13 on 11/7 (SN) near Marion Center, and 19 on 11/24 (JaP, JP) at YC; PG's largest flock included 18 on 11/15 (MS, JT) while one to 2 were listed at three *Armstrong* locations between 11/20 (JB) and 11/30 (TR). Seven was the peak **Common Merganser** count at PG 8/19 (GY) while the AT north of L&D 8 yielded 8 Common Mergansers 10/23 (TR). At CC 120 congregated 11/19 (NM). The former VFW Pond along Indian Springs Road on 11/2 (MS, JT) hosted 11, the highest tally in *Indiana* this fall. One to 2 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were the norm between 10/17 (CH) and 11/24 (HR) at YC; KR hosted 2 on 10/2 (MS). **Ruddy Ducks** were present at YC between 10/8 (GT) and 11/25 (RG, DMe) with top count of 45 on 10/30 (MS, JT); one visited KR 10/22 (MS) while the estimated tally at PG was 100 on 11/15 (MS, JT).

A single **Ruffed Grouse** noted 11/15 (JT) at the Gipsy strips comprised the entire report for this species in the region.

The first **Pied-billed Grebe** was sighted at YC 8/31 (TR), at KR 10/6 (MH, RH), and at PG 10/7 (MK, CS); but numbers began to peak by mid-October with YC counts of 12 on 10/17 (CH), 19 on 10/31 (ED, CH *et al*), and 21 by 11/7 (ED, PF, DK, MH, RH, JT); 11 were spotted at HL 11/5 (AK, JKe). Eight **Horned Grebes** 10/29 (DBo, TB) was a

high early count at YC; only one was noted in *Armstrong* 11/8 (TR) along the AT north of L&D 8; PG's top count was 5 on 11/11 (PI, WI). A **Red-necked Grebe**, found 10/23 (MW), was seen and photographed later that evening (SD, CH, MS, JT).

Four **Eurasian Collared-Doves** appeared in a yard near Mineral Point 8/24 (CT)

Single **Common Nighthawks** flew over IUP South Campus 8/20 (JT), over IUP's stadium 8/27 (HR),

and over a yard near SH 8/27, 28 (MH, RH); YC's top counts were 5 on 9/1 (JT) and 3 on 9/2 (MS, JT). In *Armstrong* single nighthawks were observed feeding over fields ENE of KT on 8/30, 9/8 (ABu), and near KR 9/2 (RS). On 9/2 (CH) at BS, thanks to CH's sharp eyes, nine other birders were also able to observe a well concealed roosting nighthawk.

First 37 **American Coots** were sighted at YC 10/8 (GT); top YC counts included 50 on 10/17 (CH), 64 on 10/29 (MCA), and 93 by 11/7 (ED, PF, MH, RH, DK, JT). High PG tallies included 50 on 11/18 (PI, WI) and 48 on 11/24 (PI, WI).

Twelve shorebird species were observed at YC even though water levels remained high. Startling the observers on the north shore, a single **Black-bellied Plover** flew from the nearby rocks directly at them calling once as it rose slightly over their heads on 9/19 (CH, ED, MH, RH, DK, JT). The largest flocks of migrant **Killdeer** included 8 on 8/12 (PI, WI) at Colver Reservoir, 21 at CC 10/13 (TR), 17 at KR 10/22 (MS), 19 at YC 10/26 (AM) - 10/27 (KL), 21 at CC again on 11/2 (DBr), and 16 at HL on 11/16 (AK, JKe). Three **Semipalmated Plovers** appeared at YC 8/17 (AM); these were the only ones in our region. An **American Woodcock** was observed and flushed from heavy brush along Observatory Trail at YC 10/19 (JT); this was the only one noted this season. Noted only in *Indiana*, **Wilson's Snipe** sightings included individuals at KS 9/19 (MS), 9/22 (JT), 10/6 (JT), and 10/7 (CH, MH, RH, DK, JT); YC's snipe, all individuals, were listed 10/25 (MSC) through 10/31 (ED, CH *et al*). **Spotted Sandpipers** were sighted at YC on only two dates, 8/15 (CH, MH, RH, GL, JM) and 10/24 (CJ, AM, HR); noted in *Armstrong*, were single birds at CC 8/4 (TR), NE of Clinton 8/6 (JB), and at Clinton 8/25 (TR). Spotties in *Cambria* included one at Ebenburg's Lake Rowena 9/3 (JKa) and 2 at PG 9/17 (RL). **Solitary Sandpipers** were a tad more widespread with sightings at four locations – single birds at YC 8/22 (AM) then 10/3 (CH, MH *et al*), 3 at the Conemaugh Floodlands 8/27 (MS), and singletons at HL 9/1 (AK, JKe), at KS 10/5 (MH, RH), and at IUP South Campus 10/6 (JT). One to 2 **Lesser Yellowlegs** were found at YC on seven dates, the first singleton on 9/30 (SD, CH, DK, MH, RH, TM, JT) then 2 individuals between 10/17 (CH) and 10/29 (CH, TH). First 2 **Greater Yellowlegs** arrived at YC 9/12 (SDa, CH, MH, RH, DK, JT); singletons appeared on the YC beach 9/30 (SD, CH *et al*) and 10/3 (CH, DK, JT). Two were listed 10/17 (CH) in Little Yellow Cove, where one remained 10/18 (JT) - 10/19 (MS, JT). One Greater Yellowlegs was found on the beach 10/24 (AM, HR, MS) and 10/25 (MSC); by 10/29 (CH, TH) 10 were present, but numbers tapered off till one remained 11/5 (PI, WI), the same day (AK, JKe) one was noted

at HL. In *Armstrong* single birds were found only on 10/22 (MS) at KR and 10/28 (JB) in the West Hills section of KT. **Dunlin** had a strong presence at YC after the first occurrence of one on 10/14 (JT); high tally was 41 on 10/29 (MS, JT); 22 were counted the following day (MS, JT). Last seen were 12 on 11/4 (DBr, ED *et al*). HL yielded 4 Dunlin on 11/5 (AK, JKe) and 5 on 11/6-7 (AK, JKe); 4 were last found on 11/16 (AK, JKe) at HL. **Least Sandpiper** sightings included one on 10/1 (JT) and 2 on 10/7 (CH, TH) at YC; a Todd Bird Club outing to CC yielded a single Least Sandpiper 9/9 (MH, RH, GL, TM, TR). YC produced the season's first **Pectoral Sandpiper** 9/24 (CH, AaM); no others were sighted until a full month later 10/24 (SD, CH, TH, DK, MS, JT) when 10 were counted. By the next day 10/25 (MSC, MS, JT) only one remained; 10/31 (ED, CH *et al*) yielded the last single bird at YC. At HL, however, one was still present 11/1 (MS) and 11/7 (AK, JKe).

Bonaparte's Gulls arrived at YC in single digits starting 10/17 (CH) when one was noted; 10/29 (DBo, TB) produced 5 while 10/30 (MS, JT), 7; the only other sighting on 11/7 (ED, PF, DK, MH, RH, JT) was of one bird. At KR one on 10/22 (MS) comprised the entire report as the reservoir is probably under-birded. **Ring-billed Gulls** finally began arriving 10/8 (GT) when 2 were present on YC Lake in the morning and 6 were circling high overhead in the evening (JaP, JP); the high tally was a mere 15 on 11/24 (JaP, JP, MS, JT). Top counts at both RT (TR) and PG (PI, WI) also occurred 11/24 with respective tallies of 11 and 30. Seven to 10 **Herring Gulls** were counted by five different parties on 10/29 (DBo, TB, MCA, CH, TH, MH, RH, GT), the only sighting this season at YC. At KT's L&D 7, one Herring was present 11/24 (TR) and 2 on 11/30 (TR).

One **Forster's Tern** was first noted at PG 9/9 (MKe); 3 were observed at YC 10/2 (MSC); a single **Common Tern** was photographed at YC 10/15 (CH).

A **Red-throated Loon** in a flock of 66 **Common Loons** was a great find at YC 10/29 (CH, TH) and was observed by three other parties that day and another 10/30 (MS, JT). The Common Loon count had risen to 94 by mid-afternoon on the 29th (MCA). Seven was the top Common Loon count at PG 10/21 (PI).

Double-crested Cormorants were sighted at CC 8/7 (JB) through 10/13 (TR); 2 were spotted there 11/23 (TR); the following day 11/24 (TR), RT yielded one. Cormorants stopped at YC on 16 dates between and including 8/22 (AM) and 11/5 (PI, WI); all reports mentioned one to 3 birds except for one report of 6 on 8/29 (CH, MH, RH, DK). Best count at PG was 8 on 9/9 (MKe).

After last fall's almost constant presence of **Great Egrets** at YC, only 3 were noted this fall, all in *Indiana* – one at HL 8/19 (KW), one at YC 8/26 (MS, JT), and one that stayed for quite a while on a pond near Brush Valley 10/21 (MSC) till it was chased by a Great Blue Heron.

Black Vulture sighting locations included three, all in the southern part of the county – 2 south of Brush Valley 9/12 (MSC), 2 just south of Homer City 10/7 (JP), and one near Lewisville 10/13 (MC). High **Turkey Vulture** tallies were 25 at BS on 9/2 (ED, CH, MH, RH, DK, TM, JT), 9 NE of Clinton 9/4 (JB) and 10 at Dilltown 10/8 (GT).

Ospreys began migrating through YC 8/12 (JW) with last sighting 10/16 (MS). **Northern Harriers** made appearances at YC between 9/29 (PF, CH, MH, RH, JM, JT) and 10/27 (AM, HR); at PG the last report occurred 10/28 (TA).

One to 2 **Barred Owls** were hooting regularly between 8/7 (AB, DB) and 10/18 (DB) at Nolo.

A **Red-headed Woodpecker** was present at PG 8/5 (GY). The observers were surprised when one flew overhead at YC 9/5 (CH, TR). Merlins migrated through the region, and reports were widespread (v.o.). Migrant **Peregrine Falcon(s?)** hunted at YC on 5 dates (v.o.) this fall between 10/7 (CH, MH, RH, DK, JT) and 11/7 (ED, PF, DK, MH, RH, JT). One of the nesting Graff Bridge Peregrines was photographed at Manorville 11/24 (TR). Unlike last year, **Olive-sided Flycatcher** reports were limited to YC where they were observed on only three days (v.o). First **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was photographed along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 8/17 (TR); BS did not disappoint this year with two reports of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher 9/2 (ED, CH, MH, RH, DK, TM, JT) and 9/16 (DK, JT); the only other one listed



Roger Higbee photographed this Winter Wren at Blue Spruce Park on Oct. 11.



Four American Pipits landed in the grass above the beach at Yellow Creek on Oct. 24.

Photo by Roger Higbee



Joseph Pumford photographed this Purple Finch at Yellow Creek on 11/24.

was at YC 9/21 (JT). Single **Philadelphia Vireos**, too, visited both YC and BS with first appearance at YC 8/31 (MH) and last sighting at BS 9/20 (MH, RH).

Fish Crows were last noted at IUP 9/13 (TH).

A flock of **Horned Larks** was listed only near YC 11/4 (MK); 7 was the count. Single **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were seen only at YC 10/1 (MS) and 10/4 (MM, KSJ) and at PG 10/28 (TG).

A late **House Wren** was discovered at YC 11/25 (RG, DMe). **Winter Wrens** exhibited a strong presence this fall, seen by 12 observers, with reports from 9 *Indiana* locations with as many as 4 at Blacklick Valley Natural Area 10/21 (MH, RH) and 3 at BS 10/11 (MH, RH). Winter Wrens were found at four *Armstrong* locations as well; 2 were noted both south of Worthington 10/16 (TR) and along the AT north of L&D 8 on 10/27 (TR); singletons were seen at the latter location on three other dates through 11/30 (TR). NE of L&D 6 another Winter Wren was spotted on 10/28 (JB) while one visited Freeport on 11/17, 18 (SW, StW).

A **Gray-cheeked Thrush** popped up NE of KT 10/2 (ABu). Single Gray-cheeked Thrushes (possibly the same bird) were observed on two consecutive days 10/10 (DK, JT) and 10/11 (MH, RH) at BS. **Swainson's Thrushes** were well distributed at 10 *Indiana* locations, seen by many, with most sightings of

singletons (v.o.); at three *Armstrong* locations, one to 2 were well seen (JB, TR).

First **American Pipit** arrived at on the beach at YC 9/19 (CH, ED, MH, RH, DK, JT); 4 on 9/30 (SD, CH, DK, MH, RH, TM, JT) was the high count; on 10/24 (SD, CH, TH, DK, JT) the beach yielded 3 while the following day (MS, JT) only one was present. HL

hosted 15 on 11/1 (MS). Freeport yielded a single **Purple Finch** 11/1 (SW, StW); Purples were found at three locations with YC the “hotspot” with sightings on seven days while top count was a mere 5 on 11/25 (RG, DMe); on that same date (BF) a single Purple Finch was found near PG. **Pine Siskins** arrived mostly in small numbers at five *Indiana* locations with YC being the exception as 25 were sighted 10/19 (JT), 24 on 10/22 (MC), and 10 on both 11/23 (CH) and 11/24 (JP); first siskin arrived at PG 10/24 (JuP); by 10/28 (TA) 3 were present, and 3 were located again 11/15 (MS, JT). Late **Chipping Sparrows** were single birds at Carrolltown 11/4 (WI), at YC 11/26 (CH), and near Shelocta 11/28 (MH, RH). First **American Tree Sparrow** finally arrived 11/19 (JT) at YC while **Fox Sparrow** first appeared 10/15 (GT) near Armagh and 11/1 (MH, RH) near Shelocta, where it remained through the end of Nov. SGL 247 harbored one 11/19 (TR). **Lincoln’s Sparrow** reports included only individuals near Lewisville 9/16 (MC), at PG 9/17 (RL), at IUP 9/18 - 10/2 (JT), south of Worthington 9/20 (TR), at SGL 247 on 10/1 (TR), and at Waterworks Conservation Area 10/1 (CH, TH). YC was the center of the **Rusty Blackbird** migration with only one other bird near Smicksburg reported 10/14 (TH); high YC counts were 36 on 10/25 (MS, JT) and 26 on 10/27 (AM, HR).

Twenty-five warbler species were noted in *Indiana* this fall, 30 in *Armstrong*, and 12 in *Cambria*. A **Prothonotary Warbler** 8/31 (TR) was the first fall record for *Indiana*, the second photographic record, and only the seventh county record and the fifth for YC. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** 8/28 (MH, RH) at BS seemed much too early, but it was well seen just above eye level but behind vegetation making a photo impossible to obtain; another was found at YC 10/24 (DBr, SD, CH, DK, JT); a third bird was well



Joseph Pumford added yet another great species to his yard list as he photographed this Orange-crowned Warbler.

photographed in the observer’s yard in Indiana 11/3 (JP). A very late **Cape May Warbler** was photographed at YC 11/25 (RG, DMe). Only one **Canada Warbler** was noted at BS 8/28 (MH, RH). After a spring where **Wilson’s Warblers** were difficult to find, 7 were listed this fall at six locations.

Special thanks to Roger Higbee for compiling all the weather information at the beginning of the tri-county fall report!



This Prothonotary Warbler, photographed by Theo Rickert at Yellow Creek SP 8/31 was the first fall record.

Observers: Tina Alianiello, Alice Beatty, Dave Beatty, John Boback, Dick Bondi (DBo), Trip Bondi, Dave Brooke (DBr), Alan Buriak (ABu), Michele Carlson (MCa), Lee Carnahan, Marcy Cunkelman, Sheree Daugherty (SDa), Melissa Delbiondo, Sue Dickson, Ed Donley, Mary Eyman, Brian Freiwald, Ross Gallardy, Tim Gunderson, Court Harding, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Tyler Hodges, Pam Hornick, Pam Illig, Winnie Illig, Caelie Jones, Noah Jones, Warren Jones, Debbie Kalbfleisch, Jon Kauffman (JKa), Avis Keener, John Keener (JKe), Michael Kensinger (MKe), Michele Kienholz, Janet Kuehl, Tom Kuehl, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Renee Lubert, Karen Lucas, Nicholas Main, Aaron Maizlish (AaM), Avi Marshall, Dan Martt, Mark McConaughy, Jim McGuire, David Medler (DMe), Trent Millum, Sandra Newell, Julia Plummer (JuP), James Pumford (JaP), Joseph Pumford, Theo Rickert, Henry Rummel, Matt St Clair (MSC), Kate St John (KSJ), Conner Schmitt, Russ Smiley, Liz Spence, Vicki Stelma, Garrett Strittmatter, Mark Strittmatter, John Taylor, Greg Tomb, Courtney Toth, Sierra Waltenbaugh, Stacy Waltenbaugh (StW), Mike Weible, Ezra White, Kelly Williams, Jonathan Woon, George Young.



Court Harding photographed this Swamp Sparrow on the Indiana CBC, but next June we will be trying to confirm this among many other species for the Third Bird Atlas Project. Go to our website for more information (www.toddbirdclub.org).

Don't forget to walk outside at night to listen for Great Horned or Barred Owls. Great Horned Owls have been countable for the Third PA Bird Atlas all month. By the time you receive this newsletter, Barred Owls will be considered breeding, too. Please enter them on the Atlas eBird portal at <https://ebird.org/atlaspa/submit>.

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

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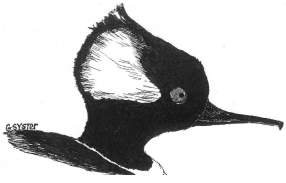
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Dues Reminder

Todd Bird Club dues are due January 1 unless you just joined in November or December.

Please remit your \$5 student, \$10 individual, or \$15 family membership dues to:

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



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