

The Todd Nuthatch



Indiana, PA

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

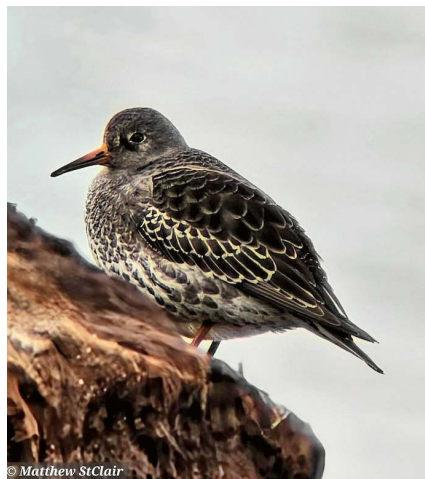
February 2025

Meetings

Tuesday, February 4 – Todd Bird Club member Matt St Clair will present the evening's program entitled "A Year of Birding in 2024." Matt will show photos that he has taken in Pennsylvania, including Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, Presque Isle State Park, and Yellow Creek. A little farther afield, he'll include shots he's taken at Magee Marsh and Killdeer Plains in Ohio and Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in Maryland.

Matt became interested in birding about three years ago. His spark bird was an Evening Grosbeak when a flock of them showed up in his backyard. With much study he has gradually learned a lot about birds. Matt is also familiar with numerous insects, plants, and other animals. This past year he purchased a new camera with a better zoom lens after investigating optical and camera equipment.

He plans to continue his education to become a Wildlife Biologist and would eventually like to work for the Pennsylvania State Game Commission or the



© Matthew StClair

This Purple Sandpiper and the Orange-crowned Warbler below are just two of Matt's great photos that he will share.



© Matthew StClair

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the PA Natural Heritage Program.

Matt is no stranger to the Todd Bird Club as he attends almost every meeting and helps to set up the room at Blue Spruce Lodge and clean up after the meetings as well. We warmly welcome Matt as our speaker at our February meeting.

Tuesday, March 4 – Deb Beisel will be our presenter at our March meeting. "Gardening for Birds and More," her presentation, will cover the habitat requirements of some of our native species. She will talk about the plants that will best support birds, including those that provide insects for birds in the spring and summer. She also hopes to compile a list of plants and where they may be purchased locally.

Deb is a native of Pennsylvania, having grown up in the northeastern corner of the state near the Susquehanna River. She planted her first garden when she was 10 years old and, except for about five years, has had some sort of garden ever since. An avid 4Her, she took projects in horti-

culture, forestry, and environmental science. For the last 25 years she has taught 4Hers Forestry and Wildlife Habitat Management. She has coached Envirothon teams for several years. These experiences have helped her understand the importance of creating habitat to support insects, birds, and animals.

Tuesday, April 1 – Cheri Widzowski, an accomplished photographer, will be the speaker at our April meeting. She will discuss her many experiences photographing birds at Blue Spruce Park and describe some of the challenges of photographing birds, especially small songbirds. She will also share some tips for those in our group who are interested in photography. We are all looking forward to seeing some of her favorite photos, and she will challenge us to identify some of her “butt shots.”

Cheri’s background is in environmental and biomedical sciences. With her photography, she attempts to capture



In April we will welcome birder photographer Cheri Widzowski as our speaker.

the beauty she sees in the world around her, whether her subjects are people, places, or things. She enjoys documenting everything that she finds interesting! She inherited her love of photography from her mother and her father who were avid about family and travel photography. She also enjoys these, but she is most passionate about photographing nature, especially birds.

Cheri’s interest in birds began with an ornithology course in graduate school, and now she’s been an avid birder and naturalist for many years. Digital photography, with lighter weight cameras and telephoto lenses, has allowed her to combine her love of hiking and birding with photography. She especially enjoys the challenges and rewards of photographing small songbirds. Her favorite spot to pursue this activity is Blue Spruce Park.

Cheri’s professional photography work can be viewed at www.cheriphoto.com.

Outings

Saturday, February 1 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Matt St Clair. Meet at the Dragonfly Pond parking lot, just past the park office on PA 259, near the maintenance building on the left at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, February 15 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Sue Dickson (724-388-5000). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office on the south shore.

Saturday, March 8 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office located on PA 259 just off US 422. This is a joint outing with Friends of the Parks.

Saturday, March 15 – Blue Spruce County Park, led by Ray Winstead (734-840-2123) and Ed Donley. Meet in the large parking lot just past the park office at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, April 5 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493; 412-309-

3538). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office located on PA 259 just off US 422. This is a joint outing with Three Rivers Birding Club and Todd Bird Club.

Saturday, April 12 – Alice Stitt will lead an outing on the Stitt property near Elderton. For more information, please contact Alice (717-781-6306). Directions: Take US 422 toward Elderton. At the eastern most traffic light at the Log Cabin Restaurant, turn left onto PA 210 south. Follow 210 for less than 0.25 miles and watch for the driveway on the left (not Kimmel Plan Lane). Across the road from the Stitt driveway is a white farmhouse and a silo with a blue roof. Proceed up the driveway, past the first white and black house. Continue on the driveway past a green gas well, being careful of the dip in the road. Follow the driveway to the end of the road. Please park in front of the large green and white building.. (GPS coordinates: 40.681327 W, -79.341915)



Birding in the Netherlands

By Trent Millum

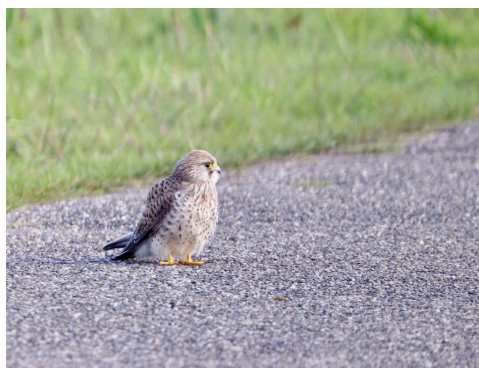
This past spring, at the end of April to the beginning of May, my family took a vacation to Europe, specifically the Faroe Islands and the Netherlands. The impetus for this trip was a close relationship with an au pair who stayed with my family when I was young, over 20 years ago when we lived in Connecticut. Her name is Marielle, and she is from the Netherlands. My parents have remained in touch with her and have talked about traveling to Holland to visit her and her family for many years now, and it was finally the right time to go.

While my parents spent the entirety of their vacation in the Netherlands, my brother and I decided to visit the Faroe Islands for four days. They are a remote set of islands north of England and west of Denmark. Given their location in the middle of the ocean, the weather is unpredictable, but often cold, rainy, and windy, and the landscape is harsh. Few trees grow there. The mountains are barren with nothing but grass surrounding them. It was an incredibly unique and beautiful landscape to see.

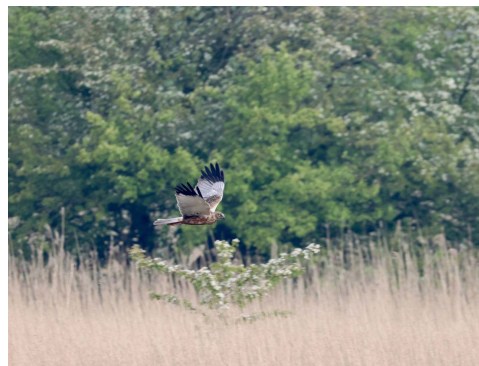
Due to its nature as an island without a high variety of habitats or food resources, the bird life on the Faroe Islands is not very diverse either. Their highest diversity comes during the nesting season in the middle of Summer when many oceanic birds are nesting on the islands. We were too early to see many of the nesting species. Many tourists travel there to see the Atlantic Puffin which breeds on the islands. They return to their breeding grounds in early May, but typically spend several more weeks on the water feeding. As a result, we were too early to see the nesting colonies, but we did see one puffin in flight which was a cool experience.



Trent's tour guide captured this Black-tailed Godwit photo as well as the Eurasian Kestrel shot below.



Even Trent's guide was excited to find this Eurasian Kestrel posing so nicely on the roadway.



One of Trent's highlights was watching a Western Marsh Harrier working a field.



Trent enjoyed watching this migrant Black-winged Stilt feeding in the water.

Since this was my first time in Europe, most all the birds I saw were new to me and therefore exciting to see and add to my life list. In fact, this was my first time birding outside of the eastern part of North America. In the Faroe Islands I added 15 birds to my life list with some of my favorites being Northern Fulmar, Black Guillemot, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Redwing, Northern Gannet, and Manx Shearwater.

After our time on the Faroe Islands, we joined my parents in the Netherlands. I made it a point to schedule a birding tour with a local guide at Lauwersmeer National Park, which is located at the northern edge of the country just south of the Wadden Sea. It was mostly wetland habitat given the extensive canals in the country as well as the nearby sea. I landed in Amsterdam and my parents and I drove the two hours north to the national park to do the bird watching tour the following day. It was my favorite day of vacation!

The morning of our tour I was greeted by a Great Tit on the porch of our cabin. Then, our tour guide Rein met us early in the morning and drove us around in his car the whole day to various spots in and around the national park. The goal for the day was to see as many species as we could. Everything was new and exciting to us, given we had never birded in Europe before. It took us quite a while just to make it to the park as we were stopping along the way to look at many birds that were in the surrounding farm fields. The Netherlands outside of the cities and parks is mainly just farmland. There is not a lot of forest or trees in general. There were massive groups of Barnacle Geese feeding in the farm fields. Rein told us that they were

migrating through. It was great to be birding there in early May when migration was occurring. Along the edge of one of the farm fields we saw a Black-tailed Godwit up close, and Rein captured a photo. The fields also yielded Whimbrels, Northern Lapwings, plenty of Eurasian Jackdaws, and a Eurasian Sparrowhawk which our guide was very excited about.

In the park, we had extensive looks at waterfowl and shorebirds given the wet habitats we were in. Driving to our first stop we were greeted by a guest on the road. It certainly looks a lot like its American Kestrel counterpart, but this was the Eurasian version. There were Sedge Warblers who were doing their song displays almost all day, flying up from their reeds and chittering and chattering while slowly descending back to the tall grasses. We caught a glimpse of a Bluethroat which was also a target for our guide, so we knew that was a special find. We also had great looks at several shorebirds including Black-winged Stilts (migrants), Ruffs, Common Greenshank, Common Redshank, Red Knot, Wood Sandpiper, and Common Ringed Plover. Waterfowl were plentiful as well, including Common Shelduck, Eurasian Coot, Eurasian Wigeon, Garganey, and Tufted Duck. One of the highlights of our first stop was a Western Marsh Harrier hunting in the nearby field. We got to watch it for several minutes while it put on a show.

We picked up most of our species in the first couple hours and were driving around to other spots the rest of the day

trying to find different birds. Some of the highlights were seeing the colorful Eurasian Goldfinch, Eurasian Greenfinch, and Eurasian Blue Tit near a town village surrounding Lauwersmeer park. We spotted Garden Warbler and Song Thrush a bit later in the day, and the White and Yellow Wagtails were also quite adorable to watch. Their names are certainly applicable to their behavior. One of my targets for the day was the Pied Avocet, and we finally saw three of them from a waterfowl blind late in the afternoon which was quite exciting! In total, we saw 79 species of birds that day, and I added a few more later in my vacation in the city of Amsterdam including the Greater Spotted Woodpecker and the Rosy-ringed Parakeet (an exotic bird that was historically kept as a pet and has now formed large feral colonies in Amsterdam).

For my first time birding outside of North America, I was very happy with what I got to see. Our tour guide Rein was awesome and drove two hours from his home just to guide us around that day. In talking with him, we found out that he spent a week in the United States several years ago, and one of his stops was Magee Marsh, which I would be traveling to the following weekend! The rest of the vacation included some museums, windmills, and other sightseeing, but nothing would compare to the day I spent birding in the countryside of the Netherlands. I look forward to my next birding opportunity outside of North America!

Visiting a Martin Roost--An Unbelievable Experience

By Ron Alsop

(Ron Alsop, a Purple Martin landlord in Penn Run, Indiana County, PA, has contributed several other articles to "The Todd Nuthatch" in the past. He totally enjoys martins and likes to lecture and write about his eight-year pursuit of becoming a landlord. Ron began his quest to become a martin landlord in 2010, at a time when there were no martin colonies nearby. He now fledges more than 200 babies per year.)

For a martin enthusiast, the opportunity to visit a martin roost is often just a passing thought. It sounds like something fun to do but it just never happens. However, with a little creative thinking and a desire to make it happen, you may find yourself attending one and being totally awe struck.

I've now had the pleasure to do it twice, and in different states. One was under very spontaneous circumstances while the second involved a trip to Texas.

Above in the next column are my stories.

My first roost visit was an unplanned trip that required a three-hour ride to Erie, PA. It began in the afternoon when I saw the PMCA's invitation to attend their special roost event later that same day. I called my wife at work and said don't plan anything tonight because we are going on a little trip. Don't even come home, I will pick you up there!

She couldn't believe we would be driving three hours each way, just to attend something that we didn't know how to find or whether it would even be worth our effort! Fortunately, she is a very adventurous individual and enjoys martins. It also helped when I agreed to have the

car packed with snacks, lawn chairs, drinks, and the promise that she would enjoy this unscheduled event. We managed to find the South Pier in Erie, PA and discovered many people gathering with the hopes of seeing the estimated 10 to 12,000 martins roosting there. A local TV station was also on site. I recall my wife being quite amused as I introduced myself to various landlords. She really got a chuckle when I recognized (and literally chased down) Joe Siegrist, President/CEO of the PMCA. I really wanted to thank him for hosting the event. He smiled and said, “Ron you won’t be disappointed; in a few minutes the sky will be filled with martins.” My wife and I just continued to sit there waiting and looking at an empty sky. Soon the crowd began pointing and yelling, here they come! Suddenly the sky looked almost black with martins, and they were flying lower and lower. It was truly an amazing site that words can just not describe. We talked and laughed the entire trip home while agreeing it was well worth attending.

My second roost visit occurred in July 2022, near the town of Round Rock, Texas. Unlike the first roost visit, this one was not spontaneous but does have a unique twist.

Back when I was attempting to establish a martin colony, my son was reviewing details of different roosting sites and indicated at one point—“Wow, Dad! How cool would it be to visit a huge roost like the one in Round Rock, Texas. They get upwards of 300,000 martins!”

In July of 2019, he moved to Austin, Texas, and was so excited when he learned that Round Rock was just a few minutes away. We planned a family vacation to Austin in

July 2022 and visited the roost on 2 different nights. My entire family was totally awe struck.

The roosting site had moved slightly from the previous year to a shopping area known as Capital Plaza. Martins typically avoid spending much time in trees. However, in this scenario, they were totally loading up the trees that were around the plaza parking lot.

When they arrived, it looked like a huge black cloud and gave the appearance of “swarming.” I found myself wondering, how do that many birds fly so close to each other, while constantly turning, but not running into each other? When they passed overhead, you could literally feel the wind from the beating of their wings. I was so amazed that I started walking towards and under them to get a closer look.

Suddenly, I heard my daughter yelling to me— “Dad, I know you are in your glory right now, but please quit standing there with your head tilted back and your mouth wide open! These birds are creating lots of “splats” hitting the ground and I’ve already got hit twice!” Jokingly, I said I’m not worried because they like me! (while coming to my senses and closing my mouth). I never did get hit but was glad for the warning.

I couldn’t believe they were landing in the trees and sitting almost on top of each other. There had to be thousands in each tree. We took some still photos and a couple of videos, but they just don’t capture the thrill of being there while it’s happening. We kept talking about it as we were driving home and everyone agreed—visiting a Purple Martin roost is an unbelievable experience!

Christmas Bird Count Participants

Pat Andrascik
Tom Betts
Michele Carlson
Rich Carlson
Lee Carnahan
Tiffany Chan
Sue Dickson
Colleen Donovan
John Dudash
Judy Emigh
Gary Ferrence
Barb Fletcher

Don Frew
Carol Guba
Margaret Higbee
Roger Higbee
Pat Johner
Paul Johner
Noah Jones
Warren Jones
Gloria Lamer
Wimp Lamer
Jason Lee

Avi Marshall
Donna Meyer
James Pumford
Joseph Pumford
Bob Ramsey
Cindy Rogers
Matt St Clair
Bob Simms
Scott Simms
Dick Staffen
Linda Staffen

Rich Staffen
Vicki Stelma
Blair Stormer
Linda Stormer
Roger Stormer
Mark Strittmatter
John Taylor
Wil Taylor
Greg Tomb
Ray Winstead
Karen Valyo



Indiana Christmas Bird Count Results

42nd Annual CBC – December 26, 2024

Snow Goose (CW)		Northern Harrier (9)	3	House Finch (1563)	110
Greater White-fronted Goose (2)		Sharp-shinned Hawk (14)	3	Purple Finch (89)	12
Canada Goose (2081)	1214	Cooper's Hawk (15)	1	Common Redpoll (63)	
Mute Swan (4)		N. Goshawk (1)		White-winged Crossbill (62)	
Trumpeter Swan (2)		Accipiter sp? (1)		Pine Siskin (375)	
Tundra Swan (533)		Bald Eagle (6)	1	American Goldfinch (637)	104
Wood Duck (5)	1	Red-shouldered Hawk (5)	4	Lapland Longspur (6)	
N. Shoveler (2)		Red-tailed Hawk (71)	42	Snow Bunting (225)	
Gadwall (30)		Rough-legged Hawk (3)		Chipping Sparrow (4)	1
American Wigeon (14)		Eastern Screech-Owl (13)	3	Clay-colored Sparrow (1)	
Mallard (670)	148	Great Horned Owl (10)		Field Sparrow (23)	2
American Black Duck (190)	9	Barred Owl (5)	1	American Tree Sparrow (483)	37
*Mallard/Black Hybrid	1	Long-eared Owl (1)		Fox Sparrow (3)	
N. Pintail (10)		Short-eared Owl (2)		Dark-eyed Junco (2272)	368
Green-winged Teal (4)		Belted Kingfisher (9)	6	White-crowned Sparrow (36)	1
Canvasback (15)		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (8)	1	White-throated Sparrow (225)	88
Redhead (14)		Red-headed Woodpecker (1)		Savannah Sparrow (3)	
Ring-necked Duck (41)	7	Red-bellied Woodpecker (91)	54	Song Sparrow (152)	92
Greater Scaup (5)		Downy Woodpecker (177)	53	Lincoln's Sparrow (1)	
Lesser Scaup (32)		Hairy Woodpecker (58)	29	Swamp Sparrow (14)	3
Surf Scoter (CW)		Pileated Woodpecker (36)	25	Eastern Towhee (3)	CW
White-winged Scoter (1)		Northern Flicker (40)	10	Eastern Meadowlark (10)	
Black Scoter (1)		Am. Kestrel (26)	4	Red-winged Blackbird (3570)	CW
Long-tailed Duck (3)		*Merlin (2)	3	Brown-headed Cowbird (46)	
Bufflehead (52)	4	Peregrine Falcon (1)		Rusty Blackbird (13)	
Common Goldeneye (7)		Eastern Phoebe (1)		Brewer's Blackbird (CW)	
Hooded Merganser (110)	12	Northern Shrike (1)		Common Grackle (503)	3
Common Merganser (29)	12	Blue Jay (566)	278	*Orange-crowned Warbler (CW)	1
Red-breasted Merganser (6)		American Crow (3275)	419	Common Yellowthroat (CW)	
Ruddy Duck (223)	1	Fish Crow (8)		Pine Warbler (1)	
N. Bobwhite (1)		Common Raven (14)	4	Yellow-rumped Warbler (18)	
Wild Turkey (345)	8	Black-capped Chickadee (808)	201	Northern Cardinal (584)	127
Ruffed Grouse (22)		Tufted Titmouse (394)	138		
Ring-necked Pheasant (21)	2	Horned Lark (225)	35		
Pied-billed Grebe (29)		Golden-crowned Kinglet (106)	53	Total Individuals (18,838)	5620
Horned Grebe (7)		Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4)	1	66 Species on 12/26/24 + 4 for CW	
Red-necked Grebe (1)		Red-breasted Nuthatch (51)	5		
Rock Pigeon (392)	77	White-breasted Nuthatch (201)	91		
Mourning Dove (1117)	192	Brown Creeper (25)	8	CW = Birds Seen During Count	
Virginia Rail (1)		*Winter Wren (4)	5	Week but Not Count Day	
Am. Coot (811)	1	Carolina Wren (63)	44		
Sandhill Crane (2)		European Starling (8656)	1148	CW = December 23-29	
Killdeer (20)		Gray Catbird (2)			
Am. Woodcock (2)		Brown Thrasher (1)		1 Hybrid (Mallard/Am. Black Duck)	
Wilson's Snipe (3)	CW	Northern Mockingbird (22)	6	*Record-breaking or Equally High	
Bonaparte's Gull (6)		Eastern Bluebird (152)	53	Tally (3)	
Ring-billed Gull (50)		Townsend's Solitaire (1)		**Species New to the Count (1)	
Herring Gull (1)		Hermit Thrush (6)	3		
Red-throated Loon (1)		Wood Thrush (CW)		() Highest No. Seen on Any	
Common Loon (9)	1	American Robin (1626)	78	Previous Indiana CBC, 1983-2023	
Double-crested Cormorant (1)		Cedar Waxwing (212)			
Great Blue Heron (8)	CW	House Sparrow (809)	162	139 Species on Count since 1983	
Black Vulture (3)		Evening Grosbeak (566)		including 6 CW only	
*Turkey Vulture (4)	7	Pine Grosbeak (1)			

Christmas Bird Count 2024

The Christmas Bird Count was once again held on December 26 with 44 birders participating. Our youngest was five-year-old Blair Stormer, soon to be six, while our oldest...we won't tell! We also welcomed Rich Staffen from Madison, Wisconsin, and Jason Lee from Virginia to our count. We fielded 23 field parties in groups of one to four and had 21 birders manning feeders and/or yards. In all we tallied 5,620 individuals of 66 species plus one hybrid Mallard/American Black Duck, found by Joseph and James Pumford. This wasn't one of our best counts because Yellow Creek Lake was 90 percent frozen, and high tallies depend upon rafts of waterfowl at Yellow Creek. It also wasn't one of our worst as the weather was not terrible. Wind was an issue during the day, but the snow cover was light and there was no precipitation.

Fortunately Two Lick Reservoir was open. In the morning Lee Carnahan birded Two Lick where, among numerous other species, he counted 442 Canada Geese and four Hooded and seven Common Mergansers as well as a Common Loon. Later that day Carol Guba checked Two Lick and added seven Ring-necked Ducks and four additional Hooded Mergansers, bringing the total to eight. John Taylor and Mark Strittmatter found the only Wood Duck at the old VFW pond. On a miniscule bit of open water at Yellow Creek, Gloria Lamer spotted one Bufflehead, four Hooded Mergansers, one Ruddy Duck, and an American Coot. At the other end of the park on yet again a small section of open water, Rich and Michele Carlson found an additional three Buffs. Farther north Musser's Pond, which was mostly frozen, yielded only 240 Canada Geese and 28 Mallards for Tom Betts.

For the first time in 42 years of the CBC, three parties spotted a total of seven Turkey Vultures with Pat Johner leading with a count of four, the Higbee - Jones group spotting two (Thanks, Noah!), and the Pumfords finding the final individual. The previous high had been four. The only other species that hit an all-time high this year was Winter Wren. The previous high was four individuals. This year the Carlsons while birding Yellow Creek encountered two Winter Wrens while Joseph and James also found two, one near the Yellow Creek observatory and the other on Groft Road. Sue Dickson, covering the Waterworks Conservation Area, also observed one, bringing this year's total to five, an all-time CBC high.

Birding Blue Spruce pre-dawn, Ray Winstead added our only Barred Owl this year. John Taylor and Mark Strittmatter also snagged a look at the count's lone Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Sue Dickson spotted and heard a bird that we don't find in Indiana County every winter – a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Several “good” sparrows were also tallied – a Chipping Sparrow at Gary Ferrence's feeder and a White-crowned Sparrow at Windy Ridge Industrial Park, seen by Mark Strittmatter and John Taylor. Unusual were the reports of only one Cooper's Hawk noted at IUP by the Strittmatter-Taylor party and only one Bald Eagle listed by the Carlsons at Yellow Creek. In past years we've had as many as 15 Cooper's Hawks and six Bald Eagles. Every year is different!

Count week birds include one Wilson's Snipe seen by Mark and John at the Windy Ridge Industrial Park on the 28th, a Great Blue Heron observed by Avi Marshall at Yellow Creek on the 28th, an Eastern Towhee last seen at Donna Meyer's feeder on the 23rd, and over 100 Red-winged Blackbirds found at Windy Ridge on the 27th by the Higbees.

“The Bird of the Count Award” goes to Rich Love who spotted the Orange-crowned Warbler on December 26. On November 24 Greg Tomb was the first to find and photograph the Orange-crowned Warbler at Yellow Creek in a flock of mixed sparrows. On December 21, five days before the CBC, Joseph Pumford relocated the warbler and photographed it again. Matt St Clair then found it and photographed it on December 23, just in time for the warbler to be a “Count Week” bird. Fortunately on December 26, the day of the count, John Taylor encountered Rich Love who had just birded the north shore of Yellow Creek. Rich told John that he'd just spotted the Orange-crowned Warbler. Rich had already birded a section of Yellow Creek State Park, submitted his bird list, and became a CBC participant after the fact.

Thanks to everyone who participated! Everyone's data is important because negative data is just as important as positive data. Some birders had slow days at feeders with few birds. It may be a tad boring for the observers, but the low numbers at feeders may indicate the presence of a predator (maybe a well hidden accipiter?) or even an abundance of natural food.

Did you know that the Tree Swallow is the only swallow that regularly consumes a substantial amount of plant food?

Indiana, Armstrong, Cambria County Sightings, Fall 2024

If you do not eBird, 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.

Locations: Allegheny River (AR), Armstrong Trail (AT), Blue Spruce Co. Park (BS), Brush Valley (BV), Colver Reservoir (CR), Crooked Creek (CC), Indiana (IN), Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), Keystone Reservoir (KR), L&D (Lock & Dam), Prince Gallitzin (PG), Rosston (RT), Shelocta (SH), Two Lick Reservoir (TLR), Waterworks Conservation Area (WCA), Yellow Creek SP (YC).

A **Snow Goose** was found along the AR n. of Parker on 10/15 (KB).

Armstrong's first **Tundra Swan** arrived n. of L&D 8 on 11/9 (TR); high tally in *Armstrong* was 90 on 11/24 (TR). In *Indiana* the first two Tundra Swans did not arrive at YC until 11/12 (SD, ED, MH, RH, GL, TR); we normally see our first Tundras the first week of Nov. In addition, we had only one day with a high count over 71; on 11/23 (MH, RH) 262 were tallied at YC. Top tallies in *Cambria* included 180 at CR (SG) and 150 at PG (TA), both on 11/24.

Only 19 duck species were observed this fall in the region. Last two **Wood Ducks** were listed n. of L&D 8 (TR) and at Duman Lake (SG), both 11/24. Two **Blue-winged Teal**, usually our earliest dabblers, were first spotted 8/24 (GY) at PG and 9/3 (MH, RH, DK, TR) at YC where four were tallied 9/29 (GT). By 11/17 (TC, VS) the last six were noted. Single **Northern Shovelers** were found 9/21 (CJ, AM, HR) at YC and 11/21 (TR) at RT while a singleton appeared on a private pond near Marion Center 11/5 (SN). Best shoveler count at YC was a mere four on 11/12 (SD, ED, MH, RH, GL, TR). First **Gadwalls** arrived 10/1 (ED, MH, RH, TR) at YC where 21 was the top Gadwall tally on 11/23 (MH, RH) and 10/21 (TR) at Schenley with the best *Armstrong* tally of 10 at RT. **American Wigeons** moved through YC between 10/2 (JS, MT) and 11/27 (GT) with a high of 14 individuals on 11/24 (GT); *Armstrong's* first 16 and only wigeons arrived at RT 11/21 (TR) while PG's first and only 2 appeared 11/24 (TA). One to two **Northern Pintails** were noted at YC 11/19 (ED, MH, RH, DK) through 11/27 (GT); RT yielded 7 pintails on 11/21 (TR). First five **Green-winged Teal** began appearing on 10/14 (CLu, MO) at YC with counts as high as 19 on 11/5 (AM, HR) and 18 on 11/11 (MS, JT, GT).

Canvasbacks began arriving 11/24 (JM, GT) when six to eight were tallied at YC. Nov. 2 marked the arrival of the first migrating **Redheads** at YC (3RBC, TBC); two also stopped at the old VFW pond in IN on 11/23 (JT); five visited PG 11/17 (GY). First **Ring-necked Duck** was noted 10/10 (GT) at YC, but numbers began to peak by

early morning on 11/24 (LC) when 142 were counted; by mid-afternoon only 45 remained on the water (BB, TH, NL). *Armstrong* hosted four on 11/21 (TR) at RT and three on 11/24 (TR) n. of L&D 8. At PG 21 arrived 11/17 (GY). YC harbored only one **Lesser Scaup** 11/2 (3RBC, TBC), but TLR hosted at least 50 on 11/24 (LC). CR yielded 2 on 11/24 (SG). These were the only scaup reports. No **Greater Scaup** were reported. After the first arrival on 11/2 of 2 **Buffleheads** at YC (3RBC, TBC) and one at CC (JB), top Bufflehead tallies, all 11/24, included 6 along the AT n. of L&D 8 (TR), 27 at TLR (LC), more than 250 at YC (GT), and 120 at PG (TA). Two **Common Goldeneyes** appeared at YC 11/12 (SD, ED, MH, RH, GL, TR), the lone fall report.

A single **Hooded Merganser** at YC 10/27 (GT) was the first arrival, and after a mostly small but constant presence during Nov., numbers peaked at 50 on 11/24 (BB, TH, NL). Away from YC four was the top count at IUP south campus 11/16 (JT); seven was the high at the old VFW pond 11/18 (JT); and 27, the best count near Marion Center 11/11 (SN). In *Armstrong* the first 3 Hooded Mergansers appeared 11/9 (TR) while 9 was the top tally at the Pine Hollow fishing spot along the AR on 11/12 (JB). **Common Mergansers**, now nesting species in both *Armstrong* and *Indiana*, were observed at YC 8/6 (ED, MH, RH, DK) while seven were reported at WCA 9/20 (SD) flying upstream along Two Lick Creek. Two were next noted at YC 10/22 (JT) with sporadic reports through Nov. Common Mergs peaked at 300 at CC on 11/29 (DB). YC hosted single **Red-breasted Mergansers** on both 11/19 (ED, MH, RH, DK) and 11/29 (GT). Top count occurred 11/24 (LC) when 13 were listed. First two **Ruddy Ducks** arrived 10/2 (AM) at YC with top counts of 130 on 11/23 (MH, RH) and 78 on 11/24 (LC). At PG 128 were counted on 11/17 (GY) and 90 on 11/24 (TA).

A single **Ruffed Grouse** was reported this fall near Rossiter 10/15 (BB).

Three **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** and two **Black-billed Cuckoos** were at BS 9/14 (JT, TC) while two of the former were also found at YC 9/17 (ED, DK, JT); two

Black-bills were spotted 9/29 (RL) at PG; these were the season's last reports.

Top **Common Nighthawk** tallies included 14 near Dayton 8/24 (LW) and 15 near West Hills 8/27 (JB). Nine were counted at YC 8/22 (GS, MS, JT); four were observed over IN 8/23 (ED) while singletons flew over YC 9/8 (BB, TH, CLy, NL) and 9/10 (ED, DK).

Last **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** lingered 9/14 (JB) along the AR near "The Tracks," 9/29 (SD) near IN, and 9/25 (GT) n.e. of Seward; a migrant stopped at the latter location 10/2 (GT).

First four **American Coots** arrived 10/10 (GT) at YC where numbers peaked at 133 on 11/24 (GT).

Two **American Avocets** visited YC Lake and were ph. 8/17 (BM); a singleton stopped 9/29 (GT) and continued through 10/4 (JT, LNS) and was seen by many. Although a **Semipalmated Plover** had stopped in late July (SD) at YC, the first two Aug. migrants occurred 8/3 (TH); three were present 9/3 (MH, RH, DK, TR) through 9/7 (ED, TM); two were also noted at YC 9/8 (BB, TH, CLy) through 9/11 (AM, HR). It was theorized that Hurricane Debby was the reason for the fallout of shorebirds at KR 8/9. KR hosted five Semipalmated Plovers 8/9 (AF) but two were still present 8/11 (AP). Twenty **Short-billed Dowitchers** were sighted at KR 8/9 (AF). First two **Wilson's Snipe** were spotted 9/7 (DK, MSC, VS) at YC, but numbers peaked at 9 on 11/12 (SD, ED, MH, RH, GL,TR), which was also the last YC sighting for 2024. On 10/12 (ABu) an **American Woodcock** flushed from an old pasture area on the observer's farm near West Valley. A **Red-necked Phalarope** appeared at KR 8/9 (SGu) and was seen by many; another Red-necked Phalarope was an exciting find in Little Yellow Cove on 10/1 (ED, MH, RH, TR); this was the seventh county record for this species. Single **Spotted Sandpipers** were noted at three locations in *Armstrong* – on 8/9 (AF) at KR, on 8/20 (JB) at "The Tracks," and on 9/20 (ME, LS) at CC. In *Indiana* one was found along the West Penn Trail 8/24 (JP); YC yielded migrant Spotties on 10/1 (ED, MH, RH, TR) a MHnd 11/12 (SD, ED, MH, RH, GL,TR). PG hosted one on 8/24 (GY). Three **Solitary Sandpipers** were at KR 8/9 (AF) while another was at CC 8/16 (TR). One to 2 Solitary



Henry Rummel photographed this American Avocet on 10/2 at YC.



The cooperative Keystone Red-necked Phalarope was observed by many.

Photo by Roger Higbee

Photo by Roger Higbee

Sandpipers were listed at YC between 8/6 (ED, MH, RH, DK) and 11/1 (GT) while a single Solitary also stopped at Hemlock Lake 10/21 (AK, JK). Fifty was the estimate of **Lesser Yellowlegs** at KR 8/9 (AF). Single Lesser Yellow-legs were observed on four dates at YC bracketed by 8/6 (MH, RH) and 9/3 (MH, RH, DK, TR). Five **Greater Yellowlegs** were in the fallout at KR 8/9 (SGu). Greater Yellowlegs exhibited a greater presence at YC with sightings on 10 dates between and including 9/21 (KJ, AM, HR) and 11/15 (BB) with all counts of one to two except for the tally of six on 9/21 (KJ, AM, HR). Forty-six was the count of **Stilt Sandpipers** at KR 8/9 (DB, MH, RH). A **Sanderling** was first noted on the YC beach on 9/7 (DK, TM, VS) accompanied by a bird that flew "around the corner and looked suspiciously like another "Sanderling." That suspicion proved true the following day when two Sander-lings were noted in the park (BB, TH, CLy) and continued in the same location through 9/11 (AM, HR). **Dunlin** put in three YC appearances this fall – two birds on 10/10 (GT), three on 11/3 (GT), and five on 11/11 (GS, MS). One **White-rumped Sandpiper** was ph. 11/23 (MH, RH) in Little Yellow Cove. First four **Least Sandpipers** appeared 8/3 (TH) at YC where five were present 8/6 (ED, MH, RH). The KR fallout yielded only two Least Sandpipers 8/9 (AF). Last noted at YC were two on 9/21 (MH, RH). Three **Pectoral Sandpipers** were found 8/6 (ED, RH) at YC where the next sighting did not occur until 11/5 (AM). KR hosted 6 Pectorals and 2 **Semipalmated Sandpipers** on 8/9 (AF).

The season's first two **Bonaparte's Gulls** were listed at YC 11/2 (3RBC, TBC) while the high count there was 37 on 11/29 (JM). *Armstrong's* first six were ph. 11/21 (TR) at RT where numbers peaked at 50 on 11/29 (TR). A singleton at PG on 11/24 (TA) was *Cambria's* lone report. Two **Ring-billed Gulls** arrived at YC 9/27 (MH, RH), but amazingly no others were reported until 11/11 (GT) when two were again noted. Single Ring-bills were noted at RT 11/21 (TR) and at CC 11/29 (JB). The maximum count was 43 on 11/23 (MH, RH). Two **American Herring Gulls** were sighted at L&D 7 on 11/27 (JP). A single **Caspian Tern** was sighted at YC 9/28 (TC, DK, TM) then three were noted 10/2 (AM). PG also harbored four

on 9/18 (MD). Normally we are lucky to have one sighting of a **Common Tern** per year at YC. This fall we had sightings on four dates – one on 8/3 (TH), two on 8/27 (ED, MH), one on 9/17 (ED, DK, JT), and three on 9/27 (MH, RH).

Pied-billed Grebes appeared at YC 9/10 (ED, DK) and topped out at 14 on 11/25 (MH, RH); one was sighted near Ebensburg 9/25 (JH); two stopped at “The Tracks” in *Armstrong* 10/27 (JB). Single grebes were noted at PG 10/6 (JM) and 10/19 (KH) with last *Cambria* sighting 11/24 (SG). Two **Horned Grebes** were at PG 11/11 (PI, WI) while YC yielded 26 on 11/25 (MSC).

There were no large fallouts of loons this fall. First **Common Loon** arrived 10/6 (JM) at PG while 4 was the PG high on 11/17 (GY); another loon was at “The Tracks” in *Armstrong* 11/18-20 (JB); last noted in *Armstrong* was one at KR 11/27 (JP). Twenty-one was a good Common Loon count at YC on 11/24 (HR). *Armstrong* yielded one to two **Double-crested Cormorants** on eight trips between 8/11 (AP) and 11/21 (TR); high tally was 11 at “The Tracks” on 11/21 (JB). One to two cormorants were present on most YC field trips from 8/6 (ED, DK) through 11/25 (MH, RH). Nov. 24 produced “high” cormorant counts of 4 at CR (SG) and 5 at PG (TA) on 11/24.

Last **Green Heron** was spotted 10/1 (GT) at YC. A **Great Egret** at YC 8/6 (ED, TR) was the first arrival, but by 9/28 (LNS) 3 were present with last sighting on 10/2 (AM) that mentioned 5. Another Great Egret visited PG 8/11 (PI).

The only **Black Vulture** mentioned this fall was one accompanied by six Turkey Vultures near IN on 11/11 (DR). **Ospreys** made brief lunch stops at YC between 8/6 (ED, MH, RH, DK) and 10/4 (RN). Last Osprey in *Armstrong* was seen 9/22 (NP) on CC along Iron Bridge Road. PG’s last was noted 10/6 (JM).

As has been the case over the past few years, **Cooper’s Hawks** have been reported more frequently this fall than **Sharp-shinned Hawks**. **Northern Harriers** were noted at one *Cambria* and three *Indiana* locations with three harriers seen at one of those locations near BV 11/18 (MSC). Most of the **Bald Eagle** reports were clustered around the AR, CC, YC, the Conemaugh River, PG, or other known nest sites. Last two **Broad-winged Hawks**, both sighted 9/12, were listed near Lewisville (MC) and at the Creekside Fire Hall (MH, RH). Two light morph **Rough-legged Hawks** were observed, one at the SGL 332 near Jacksonville 11/17 (MH, RH) and the other near Patton 11/30 (MK).

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers appeared first on 10/4 (TR) along the AT n. of L&D 8 and on 10/6 at both BS (NL, TM) and along the GTT near Vintondale (GT). Four

Red-headed Woodpeckers included one on 9/1 (ML) just north of Lilly, the second on 9/14 (TR) at CC, one on 10/5 (TM, JT) at YC, and one 11/2 (EW) just w. of IN.

A **Peregrine** was sighted at “The Tracks,” roughly 10 miles from the Kittanning nest site on 8/11 (JB).

Only one **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was noted in the region on 9/8 (BB, TH, CLy) at YC. **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were found at their two reliable locations – one at YC on 8/25 (AM) and the other singletons at BS on four dates including 8/31 (TH) through 10/1 (TR). **Philadelphia Vireos**, too, stuck to the tried and true locations – BS where one to two birds were sighted between 9/5 (JP) and 9/14 (ED, JT) and YC where one was found 9/17 (JP).

A **Fish Crow** was noted in Kittanning 8/28 (ABu); the last IUP Fish Crow departed sometime after 10/19 (MSC).

The high counts of **Horned Larks** were 15 s. of WT 8/28 (TR) and 69 in the agricultural fields near YC on 11/29 (JP).

A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** consistently visited a feeder near SH from 9/15 through the end of Nov. (MH, RH); a single Red-breasted Nuthatch was seen w. of IN 10/8 (SA) and one was spotted at YC 11/2 (PI, WI). Another stopped at a BV feeder 11/17, 20 (MSC). In *Armstrong* first Red-breasted Nuthatch appeared neat the N. Buffalo Sportsmen’s Club on 10/6 (TR) and at CC 10/10 (TR); by 11/7 (TR) 3 were being seen at CC. *Cambria*’s first was observed in Carrolltown 10/12 (WI), and the only other reported sighting was one at PG 11/11 (PI, WI).

Last **Northern House Wrens** were listed 8/31 (TR) at SGL 247 and 9/21 (BB, TH, NL, LR) at IUP Co-op Park. **Winter Wrens** were reported by seven observers this fall with the hotspots being BS and WCA with first three spotted at BS on 10/3 (MH, RH). In *Armstrong* Winter Wrens were listed between 10/23 (TR) and 11/24 (TR) when three were noted along the AT n. of L&D 8.

Gray Catbirds lingered along the AT n. of L&D 8 on 10/4 (TR), 10/5 (ER) at Mundys Corner, and 10/20 (GT) at BVNA, and. The last **Brown Thrashers** were observed n. of L&D 8 on 9/26 (TR) and at YC 11/2 (PI, WI). Late **Hermit Thrushes** include singletons 11/3 (TR) at SGL 247, 11/10 (GT) at BVNA, 11/16 (JT) at IUP South Campus, and 11/17 (NL) at YC.

Eleven **American Pipits** arrived at YC 10/6 (BB, TH, CLy, NL); by 11/2 (PI, WI) 25 were tallied; the number had decreased to 19 by 11/11 (GT).

On 11/17 (ABu) two **Pine Siskins** flew over a property s. of West Valley; on 11/20 (MSC) a Pine Siskin turned up at a feeder near BV; two days later (MC) two appeared at

a feeder near Lewisville. These were the only reports this fall.

A **Snow Bunting** flew over the observer and landed on the rocky hillside of the dam at PG on 11/7 (CS); another Snow Bunting circled the beach at YC then took off to the s.w. on 11/10 (TH).

First **American Tree Sparrows** were listed 11/2 (PI, WI) at YC, 11/17 (TR) at SGL 247, and 11/8 (JC) just n.w. of Johnstown. Two **Fox Sparrows** visited a feeder near Armagh on 10/14 (GT) where they continued through the end of the fall. One to three were found at ten other *Indiana* locations including five spots around YC, these were mostly one-day sightings. *Armstrong* yielded one sighting as SGL 247 On 11/2 (TR). Eleven **White-crowned Sparrows** were found at eight locations with top counts of eight near MC on 11/17 (MH, RH) and four at IUP on 10/22 (BB, TH). Observed near Lewisville were three **Vesper Sparrows** on 11/1 (MC) and a **Lincoln's Sparrow** on 9/3 (MC).

A **Bobolink** was last noted 9/1 (MSC) near BV. October 6 yielded two **Eastern Meadowlarks**, one early morning bird near Penn Run (HR) and a mid-afternoon bird at YC's Boy Scout camp (BB, TH, CLy, NL).

Twenty-seven species of warblers were noted in the region this fall. **Ovenbirds** lingered 9/26 (TR) along the AT n. of L&D 8 and 10/7 (CLy) at White's Woods. A **Louisiana Waterthrush** remained along the Kiski 8/4 (SDu). Three **Northern Waterthrushes** were observed – one at BS 8/31 (TH), one near PR 9/19 (HR), and one at YC 9/21 (MH, RH). Two reports of **Blue-winged Warblers** included two at BS 8/25 (TP) and one at YC 9/8 (BB, TH, CLy). An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was a great find at YC 11/24 (GT); this was within sight distance of the same area where one had been seen the day after the CBC last year. Only three **Nashville Warblers** were reported, one on 8/24 (TR) near the N. Buffalo Sportsmen's Club and two both on 9/26, one at BS (MH, RH) and one at WCA (TH). **Common Yellowthroat** reports included one near Cowansville 10/5 (SP), one at YC on 10/13 (GT), and the other at the northern end of the Hoodlebug Trail in IN 10/27 (TH). Last **Hooded Warblers** were sighted 10/2 (JB) at "The Tracks," 9/18 (MD) at PG, and 9/29 (BB, TH) at the IUP Co-op Park. Last **American Redstarts** appeared 10/1 (TR) at BS and the following day near SH (MH, RH). Last **Cape May Warblers** were listed 10/4 (TH) at White's Woods while 10/3 (GT) near Conemaugh Dam yielded a late Cape May and the last **Northern Parula**. **Magnolia Warblers** lingered on 10/4 (JM) at Loretto and 10/3 (GT) near Conemaugh Dam. **Bay-breasted Warblers** were found 10/9 (AM) on Ray Road near YC,

10/6 (TR) near the N. Buffalo Sportsmen's Club, and 10/5 (JB) at "The Tracks." Last **Blackburnian Warblers** were reported 9/23, both at White's Woods (TH) and in Cramer (NM).

A late **Yellow Warblers** appeared near SH 9/22 (MH, RH). **Chestnut-sided Warblers** lingered till 9/8 (TR) just s. of Templeton, 9/17 (JP) at YC, and 9/18 (MH, RH) along the GTT near Heshbon. **Blackpoll Warblers** were last listed along the Rexis Branch of the GTT 10/6 (GT), at YC 10/6 (BB, TH, NL, CLy), and along the Butler-Freeport Trail near Laneville, on 9/18 (TR). **Last Black-throated Blue Warblers** were found 10/1 (TR) and 10/6 (MCa) at Kelly Station. First two **Palm Warblers** were sighted at PG 9/18 (MD) and at WCA 9/26 (TH) while last noted were 2 in IN 10/22 (JT). Last **Pine Warblers** lingered at YC (BB, TH, NL, CLy) and near SH (MH, RH), both on 9/29.

The arrival dates for eight **Yellow-rumped Warblers** was 9/28 (TR) at CC; 2 first appeared near SH 9/25 (MH, RH) while 9/6 (JP) produced a single Yellow-rump at YC. High counts included 10 at YC 9/29 (BB, TH, NL, CLy) and 6 at CC 9/28 (TR). The only **Prairie Warbler** reported in the region this fall was a single bird at PG 9/18 (MD). Last **Black-throated Green Warblers** were reported at YC 10/6 (BB, TH, NL, CLy), at BS 10/3 (MH, RH), and near CC 9/30 (JB). BS yielded the only **Canada Warbler** on 8/28 (MH, RH). A **Wilson's Warbler** turned up in a yard near SH where it was ph. 9/21 (MH, RH).

<p>Observers: Tina Alianiello, Brady Blackburn, John Boback, Dave Brooke, Lee Carnahan, Tiffany Chan, Jessica Crumlasko, Marcy Cunkelman, Michael David, Sue Dickson, Ed Donley, Sarah Dunmire (SDu), Mary Eyman, Adrian Fenton, Sally Gordon, Sam Guthrie (SGu), Amanda Guercio, Kyle Hamrick, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Tyler Hodges, Jason Horn, Pam Illig, Winnie Illig, Caelie Jones, Avis Keener, John Keener, Michael Kensinger, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Nick Logan, Chris Lundberg (CLu), Colin Lynch (CLy), Avi Marshall, Steven McClellan, Trent Millum, Joel Moore, Nick Morgenweck, Brenda Mummert, Luis Navarro-Serment (LNS), Sandra Newell, Richard Nugent, Miriam Ohanjanyan, Amber Pertz, Nick Petrush, Tobias Petersheim, Joseph Pumford, Lucia Rakoci, Theo Rickert, Debra Rittelmann, Elaine Rodriguez, Henry Rummel, Matt St Clair (MSC), Liz Spence, Vicki Stelma, Jessica Sutton, Garrett Strittmatter, Mark Strittmatter, John Taylor, Madison Teerlizzi, Three Rivers Birding Club (3RBC), Greg Tomb, Todd Bird Club (TBC), George Young.</p>

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First Birds Seen in 2025

Tiffany Chan – American Crow
Sue Dickson – Downy Woodpecker
Mike Fowles – Great Horned Owl (from bed!)
Carol Guba – Downy Woodpecker
Margaret Higbee – Black-capped Chickadee
Roger Higbee – Downy Woodpecker
Pat Johner – White-breasted Nuthatch
Debbie Kalbfleisch – American Goldfinch
Gloria Lamer – Downy Woodpecker
Richard Nugent – Tufted Titmouse
Theo Rickert – Northern Cardinal
Jennifer St Clair – Red-bellied Woodpecker

Matt St Clair – Blue Jay
Mary Jane Seipler – American Crow
Scott Simms – Dark-eyed Junco
Jack Solomon – Curve-billed Thrasher
Susie Solomon – Great Horned Owl
Vicki Stelma – American Robin
John Taylor – Downy Woodpecker
Linda Wagner – Dark-eyed Junco

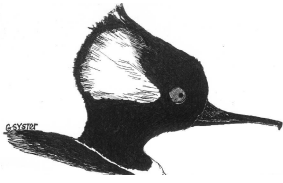
Well, it looks like Downy Woodpecker was the winner this year since it was observed by five Todd Bird Club members. American Crow and Dark-eyed Junco tied for second. Amazingly, no one reported House Sparrow as the first bird this January!

Dues Reminder

Todd Bird Club dues are due on January 1 each year. If you joined at or after our October meeting, you will be paid through December 31, 2025. Dues are \$5 student, \$10 individual, or \$15 family membership which you may either pay at the meeting or mail to :

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

Please indicate whether you would like a paper copy of the newsletter or the electronic version.



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