The Todd Nuthatch

Indiana, PA | The Quarterly Newsletter of the Todd Bird Club | October 2026
www.toddbirdclub.org

Meetings

Todd Bird Club meetings are held at 6:00 p.m. the first Tuesday of the month, September through April, at Blue Spruce Lodge in Blue Spruce County Park, located just off Route 110 east of the town of Ernest. The meeting room set-up begins at 5:45; help is truly appreciated. Arrive by 6:00 to socialize and snack. Refreshments are provided at each of our meetings. The actual meeting begins at 6:30.

Tuesday, October 6 – Anthony Frazier, wildlife photographer and community volunteer, will be our October speaker. Anthony, who has presented to Todd Bird Club in the past, is well known for his amazing photography and his popular acoustic hour radio show. Don't miss this presentation!

Photo by Anthony Frazier

Anthony writes: "There are so many awesome and interesting things to be found in Nature. One for example is wildlife. Simply observing, listening, capturing life can be a learning experience. Depending on what you are photographing, camera settings, equipment, timing, and location are all key factors.

"I've learned to expect the unexpected. While viewing elk, you might see eagles. While watching deer, you might see a fox. While watching birds in a tree you might see something emerge from the waters.

"Oftentimes birdwatchers are pigeonholed and stereotyped into groups of very serious and strange people who stare at small birds and document their movements.

"But if you actually spent time, you'd find them to be more than just knowledgeable and quirky. You'd find that they are able to tap into something special, unique, and harmonic. Whether it is animals on the ground, flying through the air, or objects in the sky, the outside awaits and doesn't rush us.

"The colors, the sounds, the interactions, and the seasons are all rolled into one event after another. The captures shown here and on Tuesday night will reflect more than just observations. They reflect life in the wild, separate from us. They show much more about consistency, determination, commitment, and persistence. On top of all that, they show us beauty and balance.

A famous Birder quote – 'To be a birder is to fall in love. Obsessively, irrevocably and, perhaps, foolishly.'

'And what better way is there to spend your time with them, each other, and nature?'

Carpe Diem

"I could spend hours talking about the amazing things I've witnessed. I could share countless images of life in wildlife. But nothing comes close to actually being there. AI cannot create authentic moments in nature. AI cannot create authentic life with wildlife. Our presence is critical and in many ways encouraged by something much deeper.

"The photo on the first page is a capture of an adult nesting Bald Eagle with a young eaglet. You see three items in the capture. An eaglet, an eagle, and a nest in a tree. That's the capture. And the big question has been asked, 'Does a tree falling in a forest make a sound if no one is there to hear it?'

"There is a simple answer to this. I believe birders know it and believe it."

– Anthony Frazier

Tuesday, November 3 – In November we will welcome Laura Jackson from Bedford as our speaker. Laura Jackson is a retired science teacher who enjoys nature photography, birding, native plant gardening, and woods rambles. Laura currently serves as president of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology, president of the Save Our Allegheny Ridges, and president of the Woodland Owners of the Southern Alleghenies. She is also active in her local Audubon chapter as the conservation chair. She has volunteered as a Pennsylvania Forest Steward since 2000. She and her husband manage their 120-acre mostly wooded property in Bedford County for wildlife and have a conservation easement on it through the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

"Native Wildflower Meadows for Birds, Bees, and Butterflies" is the title of Laura's presentation. Learn how to turn part of your yard into a beautiful meadow that will nurture insects and birds. Native bees, butterflies, and birds depend on native plants. A native wildflower meadow looks peaceful and beautiful, but danger and intrigue abound for the insects that live there. This program will introduce you to the fascinating world of native wildflowers and their pollinators. Handouts will be available.

Tuesday, December 1 – Tom and Jan Kuehl participated in Wildside Nature Tours' "Alaska Birding" trip in June 2025. Tom, the Regional Coordinator of the Southwest Region of the Pennsylvania Bird Atlas Project, will present a photographic tour of the flora and fauna of the rugged Alaska coastline and the colorful summer tundra of Nome and the surrounding area. The tour tallied 91 bird and nine mammal species. Tom will share his photographic highlights, including the Musk Ox to the right.

Laura Jackson photographed this American Goldfinch feeding on the flower petals of oxeye sunflowers in the summer; goldfinches also benefit from its seeds in the winter.

Tom Kuehl photographed this Musk Ox just outside Nome.

Tuesday, January 5 – Members' Night. Please bring stories to share, photographs, digital images, memorabilia, or anything else you'd like to share with our members. You are the presenters! See you in 2027!!!

Outings

Tuesday Morning Outings – These will continue until regular deer season which starts November 28 and runs through December 13. For all Tuesday field trips, except Oct. 13, meet at the beach in the Yellow Creek State Park Day Use Area at sunrise to look for shorebirds and waterfowl before other park visitors arrive to disturb the birds. From there, we will explore other areas of the park. We have no leaders for these outings. Everyone is welcome.

Saturday, October 3 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Sue Dickson (724-388-5000). Meet at the park office at 8:00 a.m., located on PA 259 just off US 422 east of Indiana.

Saturday, October 10 – Ed Donley will lead an outing on his property near Shelocta. Meet at Ed's home, 1243 Five Points Road, Indiana, PA 15701, at 8:00 a.m. Three driveways meet Five Points Road at the same location. The center one has a yellow iron gate. Ed's driveway is the paved one with the sharp left. If you get lost, call Ed's cell (724-599-5886).

Tuesday, October 13 – Allegheny Front Hawk Watch near Central City. Meet at the Yellow Creek State Park Office at 8:00 a.m. if you wish to carpool. Wear warm clothes and bring your lunch and something to sit on. We should arrive at the Front by 9:30. Please contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493 or Roger's cell 412-309-3538) if you plan to go. For driving directions, see https://www.alleghenyplateauaudubon.org/allegheny-front-hawk-watch.

Saturday, October 17 – Allegheny Front Hawk Watch near Central City. Meet at the Yellow Creek State Park Office at 8:00 a.m. if you wish to carpool. Wear warm clothes and bring your lunch and something to sit on. We should arrive at the Front by 9:30. Please contact Roger or Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493 or Roger's cell (412-309-3538) if you plan to go. For driving directions, see address above.

Saturday, October 24 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Noah Jones (878-844-4386). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office on the South Shore located on PA 259 just off US 422 east of Indiana.

Saturday, October 31 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Trent Millum (860-921-7234). Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the North Shore Gazebo. Yellow Creek is usually good for migrating waterfowl. Maybe we can even scare up some scoters! Costumes optional.

Saturday, November 7 – Yellow Creek State Park, led by Roger and Margaret Higbee (724-354-3493 or Roger's cell 412-309-3538). This is the traditional joint fall outing with the Three Rivers Birding Club. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park office, located on PA 259 just off US 422 east of Indiana.

Saturday, November 14 – We will explore Crooked Creek Lake with leader Theo Rickert. Meet at the Visitor Center parking lot at 8:00 a.m. There are restrooms next to the parking lot.

Directions: From Indiana, take US 422 west to the Ford City exit and PA 66 South. The road ends up in the Crooked Creek Valley (roughly 6 miles). Less than a mile after crossing Crooked Creek, make a left onto Crooked Creek Dam Road. Continue less than 2 miles, and turn left into the parking lot right after crossing the dam.

Saturday, November 21 – Blue Spruce County Park, led by Tiffany Chan (724-388-9568). Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the large parking lot near the park office. We'll bring peanuts and sunflower seeds to feed the chickadees from our hands as we search for winter residents!

November 28 is the start of regular deer season and runs through December 13, 2026. (You must wear orange from November 15 to December 15 if you are walking in Pennsylvania State Game Lands.)

Saturday, December 26 – Indiana Christmas Bird Count. This count is conducted in a 15-mile-diameter circle centered at the intersection of Second and Grandview in Indiana. If you live within 7.5 miles of this intersection, you are welcome to do a feeder and/or yard count. If you are farther away, you are welcome to join one of our field parties or take responsibility for a section of the circle. Please contact Roger (412-309-3538) or Margaret Higbee (724-717-5661) or their home phone (724-354-3493) if you plan to participate.

Reminder: Don't forget to let us know what you consider "your first bird of 2027." We will print the list in "The Nuthatch." Please send your complete January 1, 2027, list to marghigbee6@gmail.com.

Follow the Zoom

By Tiffany Chan

This female hummingbird is sitting on her eggs.
Photo by Tiffany Chan

I was very happy to see two Ruby-throated Hummingbird nests this year.

Both Greg Tomb and Sarah Metzler told me they found the nests the same way. They heard a little zoom around their heads and carefully followed the tiny bird with their eyes until she landed on her nest fairly close by. Both were surprisingly small, camouflaged with lichen bits and so beautiful!

Greg was visiting an atlas block in Elderton, PA, on June 15, 2026, when he first found his nest. It was pretty close to the road, so it was easy to visit a few times. The first time I was there, the wind was so strong that the mother and her nest were getting tossed around like a boat on the waves! She seemed completely unfazed. We came back a few more times and caught glimpses of the mother feeding her young.

Sarah's nest was found in late July on her property. At first, we thought it was a mother sitting on eggs, but when I got a spotting scope on it, we could clearly see two beaks! These were two nestlings! Good thing the nest was made with spider silk, giving it the strength and flexibility to stretch as these babies were getting big. We could see them dozing in the summer heat, probably waiting for their mother to bring them their next meal.

The arrows on this photo are pointing to the bills of the two birds in the nest.
Photo by Tiffany Chan

Did You Know?

According to "10,001 Titillating Tidbits of Avian Trivia" by Frank S. Todd, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird's wings beat at the rate of 75 times per second when the bird is in direct flight, 65 times per second when the hummer is backing up, and at 55 times per second when the Ruby-throat is hovering.

In 1810 Alexander Wilson discovered a torpid Ruby-throated Hummingbird and found that torpid hummers can lower their temperatures by 30°to 50◦F below their active levels.

Armstrong, Indiana, and Cambria Counties – Summer 2026

Please enter your data on eBird or email it to Margaret Higbee at marghigbee6@gmail.com. Please note the change of email address.

Abbreviations: Armstrong Trail (AT), Birding Blitz for Conservation (B4C), Brush Valley (BV), Brush Valley Township (BVT), Charles Lewis Natural Area (CLNA), Conemaugh Dam (CD), Conemaugh Floodlands (CF), Crooked Creek (CC), Gallitzin State Forest (GSF), Ghost Town Trail (GTT), Johnstown (JT), Kelly Station (KS), L&D (Lock & Dam), Keystone Reservoir (KR), North Point (NP), Plumville (PV), Prince Gallitzin S.P. (PG), Redbank Valley Trail (RVT), Robbs Fording (RF), St. Francis University (SFU), Shelocta (SH), Strongstown (ST), Templeton (TT), Waterworks Conservation Area (WCA), West Valley (WV), Worthington (WT), Yellow Creek State Park (YC)

The two **Mute Swans** that first appeared at YC on 4/20 were still present 6/1 (JT) through 7/28 (ED, MH, RH) and beyond. A **Trumpeter Swan** was noted along the Redbank Valley Trail 6/19 (SWe).

Wood Ducks were confirmed breeding at RF on 6/4 (JB) when six hens with a total of seven ducklings swam by; along the AT north of L&D 8 on 6/8 (TR) when three adults were accompanied by 14 small ducklings and one large duckling; and s.w. of Yatesboro on 6/23 (GT) with the sighting of eight Wood Ducks including fledglings. The first Wood Duck breeding confirmation at YC finally occurred 7/28 (ED, MH, RH) when a raft of 10 Wood Ducks included several young fledglings. In *Cambria* a group of five Woodies included fledglings on 7/9 (TrK). A hen **Mallard** with eight of her own young at WCA had a fledgling **Hooded Merganser** following its adopted family around the WCA pond on 6/5 (CG, MH, RH, GL). A young Hooded Merg was found in SGL 334 obviously by itself on 6/26 (JK, AR). A hen **Common Merganser** was observed flying to a tree cavity along the roadside 6/1 (GB) on Fulton Run. A pair of Common Mergansers, plus one farther downstream, were present 6/4 (GT) at Wehrum; a hen and nine fledglings were spotted during the B4C on 6/5 (CG, MH, RH, GL) along Mahoning Creek. A single young Common Merg was present 6/28 (MSC) at YC. A single male **Ruddy Duck,** photographed at PG 7/5 (AMi) was a summer surprise.

In *Armstrong* by 6/5 at least eight tiny **Wild Turkey** fledglings were noted s. of Cowansville (TR) and another six s. of Putneyville (GT); by 7/8 (KB) farther north s.w. of Adams, four tiny poults were observed with a hen; by 7/21 (KB) half-grown poults were being seen s.e. of Chicora. In *Indiana* 6/1 (JoS) yielded a hen with four young while 7/12 (GT) produced another hen with two four-week-old poults w. of L&M Campground near YC. The Gipsy Strips yielded a hen with 14 poults on 6/29 (JM). In *Cambria*, a hen with five young was found 6/29 (TrK) on Twenty Mine Road while another hen was listed on Pineton Road 7/24 (MH, RH) with two young.

No **Ruffed Grouse** were noted in *Armstrong*; the B4C yielded only one grouse on 6/8 (CG, MH, RH, GL) even though the four participants birded *Indiana* nine of the ten-day period; and none were found in *Cambria* this summer.

Yellow-billed Cuckoos were widespread as they were noted on 17 *Armstrong* checklists between 6/2 (SDu) and 7/30 (ED, JT); 21 *Indiana* checklists between 6/1 (JS) and 7/31 (ED); and 14 *Cambria* checklists between 6/5 (RK) and 7/30 (MS). **Black-billed Cuckoos** were not nearly as widespread as the Yellow-billed with the only *Armstrong* reports including one on 6/2 (TR) s.e. of Adrian, one but possibly two on 6/5 (TR) n.e. of Cadogan, and one on 7/27 (SDu) along the Roaring Run Trail. *Indiana* yielded only four reports – one at SGL 332 on 6/1 (MS), another w. of SGL 262 on 6/11 (ED, JT), two on 7/2 (MS) along Blacklegs Creek, and one n.e. of SH 7/31 (ED); *Cambria's* sightings included single birds 6/11 (ED, JT) near SGL 262, again 6/11 (CS) at a point count along 20 Mine Road, and 6/26 (JK, AR) at SGL 334. Two, one following the other, were a nice find at SGL 108, Blandburg Grassland Area, on 6/21 (BC, JC, CH, CS).

No **Common Nighthawks** were noted in the region. Two **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were listed at SGL 332 on 6/1, 5 (MS, JT) and 7/20 (MS); a tad farther n. along Aultmans Run four were calling on 6/13 (CG, MH, RH, GL) for the B4C. Though widespread throughout the region, the "high" **Chimney Swift** tallies were 14 in *Armstrong* at West Hills 7/5 (JB), 10 in *Indiana* near YC 7/1 (AM), and eight in *Cambria* on 7/2 (AW) at a point count s. of SGL 120.

A female **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was on nest in *Armstrong* near KR 6/18 (TC, GT); by 6/26 (TC, GT, MSC) the nest yielded a count of three as the female was spotted feeding one of the two young in the nest. By 7/4 (TC, GT) both young's bills were visible above in the nest cup. Best feeder count in *Armstrong* was eight on 7/26 (LW) s.e. of Dayton. Three adult hummers were also present near Elderton 6/12 (AS). Eight was also the count at a Rossiter feeder 7/30 (NC).

An **American Woodcock** with one young was sighted and photographed near WV 6/1 (AB). Single woodcocks were noted in *Indiana* at the Gipsy Strips (JM) and at WCA, both 6/27 (AL, JS). In *Cambria* single woodcocks were found 6/21 (BC, JC, CH, CS, *et al*) at SGL 108 at the wetlands area and 6/23 (CGa, StM) at SGL 108 – Bellwood. On 7/16 (JT) a **Wilson's Snipe** flushed from the pond at IUP South Campus; this was the lone regional report. **Spotted Sandpipers** in *Armstrong* included single birds 6/9 (JB) along CC's Laurel Trail, 6/16 (JB) at "The Tracks," and 6/18 (JB) at CC's peninsula. *Indiana's* Spotties included three in BVT on 6/3 (MSC), one at YC 6/28 (MSC), two at CD 7/7 (JT), one at BS 7/8 (CW), and one on 7/29 (GT) along the GTT near Dilltown. *Cambria* yielded three near Windber 6/28 (BS).

YC hosted one **Ring-billed Gull** 6/1 (JT), three on 6/2 (TC, AC, ED, SM, VS, JT), then three again on 7/1 (DrB). By 6/17 (TR) the pair of **American Herring Gulls** was present at KT with one sitting on the nest; by 7/20 (TR) three were present with one still on the nest. Two **Caspian Terns** appeared at YC 6/28 (MSC), flew over the lake, and landed in the distant marsh area.

In *Armstrong* June 1-2 (JB) yielded two **Double-crested Cormorants** at KS while L&D 7 hosted one 6/17 (TR) and two on 7/20 (TR). Five was the top count at CC 6/18 (JB) while last noted there was one on 7/25 (JB). In *Indiana* single corms were noted along the GTT at Wehrum 6/12 (TC, SM, VS) and on the South Branch of Plum Creek 7/23 (ED, JT). YC also hosted singletons 6/9 (ED, HR, MR, JT), 6/10 (CG, MH, RH, GL), and 7/28 (ED, MH, RH); two were present 7/1 (AM). Top count was four at PG 7/11 (BF).

An **American Bittern** was a nice *Indiana* yard list addition when one flew overhead 6/13 (MW). **Green Herons**, all individuals were noted at only three *Armstrong* locations this summer – 6/1 (JB) at RF, 7/2 (TR) along the AT n. of L&D 8, and 7/16 (ClW) just s.e. of Porter Cemetery. Single Green Herons were found on 11 YC checklists this summer between 6/2 (TC, AC, ED, SM, VS, SW) and 7/28 (ED, MH, RH) in addition to another six checklists around *Indiana*. Green Herons also showed up on five PG checklists between 6/14 (RL) and 7/10 (BF), all of which mentioned single birds except for two Green Herons on 6/17 (BF). Four other *Cambria* checklists between 6/13 (DG, GG) and 7/10 (PM) mentioned single Green Herons. Two **Great Egrets** appeared at YC 6/3 (JCr) where they remained through 6/6 (CG, MH, RH, GL); one egret continued between 6/9 (ED, JT) and 7/22 (JMo). PG hosted a "one-day wonder" Great Egret on 6/17 (BF). High counts of **Great Blue Herons** included five at RF 6/1 (JB), four at Allen Flats 6/6 (CG, MH, RH, GL), and six observed from YC's North Shore gazebo 7/21 (ED, MH, RH). Several attempts to view the heronry near Elderton yielded only three herons on 6/7 (CDP, JDP) as the sycamore leaves blocked views of the nests, but young were observed once again confirming nest with young. The numerous *Cambria* reports all mentioned single birds.

One **Black Vulture** was sighted in *Armstrong* near Avonmore 6/14 (MaG); in *Indiana* single Black Vultures were reported 6/1 (MW) near ST; 6/3, 18 (MSC) in BVT; and 6/7 (RL) at PG. On 6/12 (PI, WI) two were listed at PG. **Turkey Vultures** were widespread across the region.

In *Armstrong* **Osprey** sightings included individuals along the AR between Clinton and Schenley 6/5 (J&TK) and at CC 6/7 (JB) and 7/25 (JB). *Indiana* reports included two at CF 6/8 (MS, JT), one at the old VFW Pond 7/13 (JT) and 7/17 (MS). At Lake Rowena in *Cambria* an Osprey was digitally recorded carrying a fish 6/16 (BF); another was spotted and photographed in Patton 6/21 (RL); one was noted at PG between 6/6 (PI, WI) and 7/26 (RL). Only one **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was listed in *Armstrong* at CC where it was photographed 6/11 (JB). Six reports were eBirded in *Indiana* between 6/2 (GT) near Wehrum and 7/25 (MH, RH) near SH where one was hunting the feeders. None were eBirded in *Cambria*. In *Armstrong* the above-mentioned Sharpy was being chased by a **Cooper's Hawk** on 6/11 (JB) while another Cooper's was in the same yard near KR with the hummingbird nest. In *Indiana* seven Cooper's Hawks were reported between 6/4 (GT) near Wehrum and 7/30 (MS) at SGL 185. Two areas in *Cambria* hosted a Cooper's Hawk – SGL 108 Bellwood on 6/18 (JeB, StM) and SGL 108 Grasslands 6/21 (CH). A **Northern Harrier** s.e. of IN and w. of YC at SGL 273 7/20 (RS) was our region's lone report. *Armstrong's* **Bald Eagle** reports included one at "The Tracks" 6/7 (JB), an adult with a juvenile at RF 6/8 (JB), two young in the nest at CC 6/9 (TR), one at the AT's Redbank access on 6/11 (CaW), a singleton at St. Francis DePaul Cemetery 6/14 (JB), one at RF 6/15 (JB), one near KR 6/15 (AN, JN), and one at KS 6/18 (JB), as well as seven other sightings.

The 21 Bald Eagle sightings in *Indiana* included two young still in the nest at YC with one parent in attendance 6/2 (TC, AC, ED, SM, VS, JT, SW); two juveniles beside the nest at YC with one adult present 7/7 (AM), plus five other YC reports. Of note was the juvenile at North Point that was flapping its wings outside the nest then jumped back into the nest when the adult arrived with prey on 6/29 (MH, RH). The remaining 13 sightings ranged from 6/2 (JCr) to 7/28 (ED, MH, RH) in various parts of the county. *Cambria's* sightings included nine reports at PG between 6/1 (PI, WI) and 7/25 (GY) as well as reports from six other areas between 6/8 (GT) along the Rexis Branch of the GTT and 7/26 (RL) at Patton.

A **Mississippi Kite** was a great find flying over Elderton on 6/23 (JT, MW).

Only one **Broad-winged Hawk** was eBirded in *Armstrong* this summer on 7/1 (JB) at "The Tracks." Broad-wings were widely reported in both *Indiana* and *Cambria*. A pair was noted near Beyer 6/2 (MH, RH) while one was confirmed carrying food at Glasgow on 7/6 (StM). **Red-shouldered Hawks** were noted at four *Armstrong* locations – one was listed at CC on 6/7 (JB), another near Stitt Hill 6/8 (J&TK), one s.sw. of CC 6/15 (J&TK), and another e. of Orchard Hills 6/24 (GF). In *Indiana* Red-shoulders were calling repeatedly from the woods near SH 6/4 (MH, RH) and e. of Graceton 6/8, 6/30 (SD). Single Red-shoulders were spotted in the YC area on 6/2 (AC, ED, SM, JT), 6/3 (JCr), 6/4 (AM); the next sighting in that locale occurred 7/23 (BB). Another was listed 6/8 (CG, MH, RH, GL) at SGL 262. The Blacklick Creek area also yielded reports on 6/5 (GT) near Wehrum, 6/10 (GT) when a pair was observed near Rummel Run, 6/12 (TC, SM, VS) near the Wehrum GTT trailhead, and 6/13 (RL) at Dilltown. In *Cambia* two hawks were present s.w. of Chest Springs, where at least one was observed carrying food 6/25 (TrK). PG yielded five Red-shouldered Hawk sightings between 6/1 (PI, WI) when two were noted and 6/23 (JeB, StM) when two were also observed.

Eastern Screech-Owls were listed at three *Armstrong* locations – 6/22, 29 (JB) at KS, 6/23 (JB) at LP, and 7/31 (BR) s. of Mayport. In *Indiana* Screech Owls were listed 6/18 (MSC) in BVT, 6/23 (MS) n.e. of Chambersville, and 7/23 (SM) at Ambrose. *Cambria's* report mentioned one at Glasgow 6/21, 22 (StM). Only two **Great Horned Owls** were reported this summer; one hooted repeatedly near YC 6/4 (JCr) on a nocturnal trip while a six-minute 5:49 a.m. point count yielded another Great Horned Owl 6/11 (CS) n.e. of Loretto. **Barred Owls** were widely noted in *Armstrong* at the CC boat ramp 6/11 (JB) when a pair began calling at 6:18 a.m.; two were at SGL 105 s.e. of E. Brady 6/12 (CaW); one was reported near KR 6/15 (AN, JN); others were found at Buttermilk Falls 6/20 (TR), s.e. of WV 6/4 (JorS), near TT 6/29 (JCr), on a 5:46 a.m. point count; and another s.e. of TT 7/1 (JCr); one was heard giving contact calls w. of CC between 6/15 and 7/10 (JB) until finally on 7/11 (JB) a Barred Owl called for at least seven minutes. *Indiana* yielded Barred Owls at nine locations between 6/1 (MS, JT) and 7/1 (MS, JT). *Cambria* reports included Barred Owls at seven locations including two at Belsano 6/1 (RG, SG) and a pair 6/20 (MG, RG) near Elton.

In *Indiana* a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was found near Wehrum 6/2 (GT) while the species was confirmed nesting when a pair was noted feeding young n. of Glen Campbell 7/1 (MS, JT). *Cambria's* eight sapsucker sightings included a male excavating a cavity s.w. of Belsano 6/7 (GT) then "singing" on 6/14 (GT); two each were present near GSF at two areas on 6/21 (MG, RG); another pair was exhibiting territorial defense near Dunlo 6/21 (MG, RG). Two **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were noted on 6/7 (CG, MH, RH, GL) "visiting probable nest site" near Pine Flats; by 7/1 (JT) the pair was observed feeding a youngster.

Out of nine *Armstrong* sightings of **American Kestrels**, only one was confirmed with fledged young 7/17 (AS) near Elderton and a second marked probable with the sighting of a pair 6/30 (JCr) n. of TT. Of the 20 Indiana kestrel reports, two were probably on territory as pairs, with one pair near Smicksburg 6/29 (GT) and the other on the same date along Parkwood Road (JCr). Of the ten *Cambria* locations with kestrels, only three were confirmed breeding. On 6/7 (GG), both near Hastings and at PG a kestrel was seen on nest. Near Flinton the observer found an entire family of five hanging out on power lines 7/2 (AW). **Merlins** were sighted at six *Indiana* locations between 6/13 (RLo) and 7/30 (MW). Merlins were confirmed in *Cambria* at SFU with the find of a family group of four and possibly five on 7/7 (AH *fide* JMe).

Both **Eastern Wood-Pewees** and **Acadian Flycatchers** were widespread across our region. **Alder Flycatchers** were a tad harder to find in *Armstrong* with only one report near KR 6/15 (AN, JN), six in *Indiana* between 6/2 (MH, RH) and 7/21 (MS, JT), and five in *Cambria* between 6/11 (RL, CS) on two different sections of Laurel Lick Run and 7/26 (RL) at PG. Previously much more numerous in *Armstrong* and *Indiana* before their range contraction northward, a **Least Flycatcher** was singing near WT 6/3 (LH), *Armstrong's* lone report. Only two were noted in *Indiana*, one on 6/3 (AM) near YC and one

6/5 (JorS) near PV. In *Cambria* three wetland areas of SGL 184 harbored two Least Flycatchers 6/11 (CS) at one area and one at another spot 7/9 (PM). PG's Cottage Road produced a single bird 6/14, 28 (RL). Not far away at Dugan's Marsh another Least was singing 6/19 (StM). Farther east on Marina Road in PG a Least was singing on 6/13 (JeB, StM).

White-eyed Vireos were noted at 11 locations in *Armstrong*, 18 in *Indiana*, and only two in *Cambria*, both at PG. **Yellow-throated Vireos** were listed at 35 *Armstrong* locations, at least 42 *Indiana* locations, and at only two *Cambria* locales**. Blue-headed Vireos** were found on 16 checklists in *Armstrong*, 34 in *Indiana*, and 23 in *Cambria*. **Eastern Warbling Vireos** were most numerous in *Armstrong* along the AR between 6/2 (JB) and 7/2 (TR), but others were found along most of the water courses in the county. The checklists mentioning E. Warbling Vireos were less numerous in *Indiana,* but they were found along many of the bodies of water and streams in the county between 6/2 (JorS) and 7/26 (SM) while in *Cambria* only three checklists included this species between 6/21 (JS) and 7/14 (DG). **Red-eyed Vireos** were widely reported across the region.

Fish Crow reports were absent from *Armstrong* and mostly clustered around downtown Indiana. *Cambria* yielded a few reports with one at SFU 6/4 (JMe), another at Stackhouse Park 7/4 (CGa), and three Fish Crows present near Gallitzin 7/28 (CE). PG hosted one to two Fish Crows between 6/7 and 7/5 (both, RL).

Unlike the winter season, **Horned Larks** were absent from *Armstrong* with only two reports in *Indiana*, both s.w. of BV on 6/3 (JCr) when three were listed and 6/7 (CG, MH, RH, GL) when one was both seen and heard.

Two **Bank Swallows** were photographed 7/28 (JB) at "The Tracks" in *Armstrong*, the lone regional report. *Armstrong* also hosted 10 **Cliff Swallows** on Racetrack Road on 6/15 (AN, JN); closer to Elderton on 6/15 (AN, JN) were two which had increased to four by 6/21 (AN, JN). In *Indiana* Allen Bridge harbored three on 6/26 (MS), but by 6/28 (GT) eight was the tally. On 6/11 (TrK) Gooderham Road harbored two Cliff Swallows while not far away on Ott Road the observer found two more on the same day. Ten Cliffs were spotted at PG 6/23 (JeB, StM); by 7/24 (PI, WI) only four were present at PG. On 6/19 (CB) near Fallentimber six was the tally while five nests were counted and these Cliffs were coded on nest. N. of Flinton on 7/1 (BF) six Cliff Swallows were also counted with multiple nests.

A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** was noted only at PG 6/21, 28 (RL). Near Cherry Run Hill in *Armstrong* on 6/21 (AN, JN) a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was sighted. Near SH in a yard where several years ago they'd previously nested, on 6/1 (MH, RH) a female Red-breasted Nuthatch appeared at the feeders; there were no other sightings until 7/25 (MH, RH). In *Cambria* near Flinton a family group of three or four was listed 7/2 (AW). *Indiana* yielded three sighting of **Brown Creepers** 6/3 (GT) near Wehrum where a pair was spotted 6/11 (GT) along Blacklick Creek, and one 6/21 (AM) at YC, the latter two single birds. Three was the tally near Elton 6/20 (MG, RG), and this was the lone *Cambria* sighting.

One to two **Purple Finches** were found at six *Indiana* locations, and 12 *Cambria* locales sported checklists listing one to three individuals.

Seven single **Grasshopper Sparrows** were found at seven separate *Armstrong* locations between 6/5 (AnB) and 6/18 (DB); two were also noted just e. of West Valley 7/5 (GT). Grasshopper Sparrows were widespread in *Indiana* which harbored single Grasshoppers at nine locations between 6/3 (MSC) and 7/11 (JT) while Fry Cemetery Road yielded four on 6/11 (RLo) and five on 6/14 (RLo); Fire Tower Road yielded seven on 6/23 (MS) and six on 7/1 (MS, JT). Six other checklists mentioned two or three Grasshoppers at various locations throughout *Indiana*. *Cambria* yielded 23 checklists mentioning Grasshoppers including one in GSF with the count of 25 on 6/20 (MG, RG) and another with 10 near Dunlo 6/21 (MG, RG). One **White-throated Sparrow** was listed near JT 6/1 (LM-R). A **Vesper Sparrow** was a nice find slightly s.e. of Goheenville 7/4 (GT) in *Armstrong*; single Vespers were found in *Cambria* s.e. of CT 6/5 (TrK), at SGL 108 near PG 6/12 (PI, WI), near CT Rod & Gun Club 6/29 (TrK), and two farther s.e. on Feighner Rd. 7/9 (TrK). At SGL 108 - Bellwood single Vespers were present 6/16 (StM) and 6/25 (CGa). **Savannah Sparrows** were found in *Armstrong* 6/5 (AnB) n.e. of Slabtown, 6/18 (DB) along Ruffener Rd., while three were found a bit north on Green Acres Road 7/9 (TR) plus another three on Fox Hollow, also 7/9 (TR); one was also noted s. of Mayport 7/31 (BR). The Smicksburg area on 6/6 yielded five from point counts (AnB) and two from B4C (CG, MH, RH, GL) birding; a point count on 6/29 (GT) in the same area added one more Savannah; Fire Tower Road, n. of Glen Campbell, produced yet another 6/23 (MS). The BV area also yielded Savannahs – singles on 6/3 (JCr), 6/7 (CG, MH, RH, GL), and 6/17 (CW) while three were noted on 6/14 (RLo) while a total of 17 were tallied in *Cambria* on 13 checklists, all noting one or two. Four **Henslow's Sparrows** were found at SGL273 on 6/1 (JCr) and again

6/5 (CG, MH, RH, GL); by 6/13 (DK, SM, TM, MSC, JT, BW) 12 were tallied; one was listed at the Gipsy Strips 6/29 (JM). In *Cambria* three were spotted at SGL108, the rear grasslands, on 6/21 (CH). A PSO field trip with 11 participants yielded nine checklists on 6/21 (CH, CK, CS, et al) with Henslow's Sparrows totaling 24 in the Blandburg and SGL 108 area.

Armstrong hosted single **Yellow-breasted Chats** at ten locations between 6/2 (TR) and 7/5 (TR) while seven chats were noted in *Indiana* at six locations, including two at SGL 332 on 6/22 (MS, JT). Single chats were eBirded at six locations in *Cambria* between 6/1 (CS) and 6/21 (CK, RL).

Bobolinks were listed at six *Armstrong* locations with best counts of four s. of WT 7/9 (TR) and three near RF 6/8 (JB). *Indiana* birders found Bobolinks at six locations, but most exciting occurred on Grange Road on 6/19 (GT) where at least five birds were observed with a male repeatedly carrying food into the same area of the field and another pair dropping into yet another section of the same field, indicating multiple nests. In BVT five were tallied on 6/11 (RL) and four on 6/17 (CW) along the same stretch of Frye Cemetery Road. *Cambria* **Bobolink** sightings include 14 at SGL 108 on 6/21 (CH, CS *et al*), 10 at Beldon Hollow 6/26 (BF), seven at Link Road 6/13 (DG, GG), six on 6/24 (StM) at SGL 108 - Bellwood, and six near PT 6/12 (PI, WI). Most *Armstrong* **Eastern Meadowlark** reports mentioned one or two birds, but seven were tallied on Glynn Road 7/8, 21 (KB) and five were listed 7/15 (JB) at RF field; the best *Indiana* tally was six on 7/1 (MS, JT) near Urey Cemetery. *Cambria*'s best counts were four near Blandburg 6/21 (JoB, CH, CS, et al).

Worm-eating Warblers were reported at four *Armstrong* locations between 6/11 (CW) along the AR, just s. of Redbank Creek; 6/16, 7/1, and 7/4 (JB) at "The Tracks"; 6/15 (J&TK) near Leechburg;; and 7/1 (JB) at KS. None were noted in *Indiana*. The only *Cambria* reports of Worm-eating Warblers were single singing birds 6/13 (DG, GG) at two separate locations n.e. of Loretto and on 6/29 (CS) on a point count near Colver. Unusual was the late report of a singing **Northern Waterthrush** n.e. of Loretto 6/13 (DG, GG). Four **Blue-winged** and two **Golden-winged Warblers** were noted at SGL 108, Dugan's Marsh, in *Cambria*, during a GWWA survey on seven point counts 6/5 (LS) using GWWA, BWAA, and mobbing audio tracks; no other Goldens were noted in the region this summer. Twelve **Blue-winged Warblers** were found in *Armstrong* between 6/2 (TR) and 6/24 (GF) on three point counts, eight checklists, and one incidental report. *Indiana* reports included one each on two point counts 6/5 (JorS) and 6/7 (AnB), 12 Blue-wings found on the B4C 6/5-14 (CG, MH, RH, GL) in various parts of the county; one at DT 6/13 (RL); one at YC 6/16 (AC, ED, MH, RH, SM, JT, BW). In addition to the Blue-wings mentioned above at SGL 108, *Cambria* hosted one near Patton 6/1 (PI, WI) and one at SGL 334 on 6/26 (JK, AR).

A late **Tennessee Warbler** was noted on a point count 6/1 (EL) e. of Aultman. **Kentucky Warblers** were noted on six *Armstrong* point counts and four checklists which yielded 10 Kentucky Warblers between 6/3 (JoS) and 7/21 (KB). In *Indiana* 12 Kentuckies were reported at 11 locations between 6/6 (CG, MH, RH, GL) and 7/11 (MH, RH, IJ, DK, J&TK,, JP, TR). **Cerulean Warblers** were found at nine *Armstrong* locations totaling 14 birds with four along the AT and RVT on 6/11 (CW) and two along the AT near Sarah Furnace 6/14 (BS) with all the other sightings of singletons. *Indiana* yielded one singing at Tunnelview 6/3 (MH, RH), another near NP 6/6 (CG, MH, RH, GL), and one near Blairsville 6/9 (BrW). The only *Cambria* sighting was of two along Rogues Hollow Run 6/28 (JSt). **Northern Parulas** were observed at three *Armstrong* locations – a singing bird 6/7, 16, 18 (JB) near CC; another Parula 6/8 (TR) along the AT n. of L&D 8, and a second songster 6/23 (GT) at the Garretts Run Road Bridge over CC. *Indiana* yielded one at NP 6/6 (CG, MH, RH, GL) and another along the GTT at Wehrum 6/21 (TC, GT). In *Cambria* two Parulas were noted 6/1 (LM-R) and three on 6/2 (LM-R) s.w. of Westmont Hilltop H.S.; at PG's Troxell Beach and Muskrat Point during the Blair Co. PSO Festival, 20 observers noted one Northern Parula on a scheduled field trip 6/21 (CaW *et al*). PG also yielded single Parulas at three separate points on 6/27, 7/10, and 7/11 (all BF). Four was the best count at PG on 6/23 (JeB, StM). A **Magnolia Warbler** was a nice find on at point count 7/4 (GT) n. of Mahoning Creeek Lake, the lone *Armstrong* report. Ten locations were listed in *Indiana* where "Mags" were found, all single birds. *Cambria* harbored single Magnolias at eight locations between 6/1 (CS) and 6/27 (CW).

No **Blackburnian Warblers** were noted in *Armstrong*, but *Indiana* hosted one s.e. of Wehrum 6/20 (GT) and a singing Blackburnian was found on YC's south shore during the PSO Blair County Festival 6/21 (AF, BF, MH, RH); the Gipsy Strips also produced one 6/29 (JM). In *Cambria* two were listed 6/5 (DB) w. of PG. At PG two were found 6/14 (ER) on his first checklist and another four on the second checklist.. Two point counts each produced a single Blackburnian n.w. of PG on 6/17 (AW); two Blackburnians were also found n.w. of Flinton on 7/1 (BF).

Unusual were the reports of late migrant **Blackpoll Warblers** 6/1 (JCr) s.e. of Clymer and near Mundy's Corner, also 6/1 (CS), both observers doing point counts.

Four **Black-throated Blue Warblers** were nice finds along the GTT near Wehrum 6/12 (TC, SM, VS) as were two at the CLNA 6/16 (MS). In *Cambria* single Black-throated Blues were noted at Dugan's Marsh 6/5 (LS), n. of GSF 6/21 (MG, RG), at SGL 108 - Wetlands Area, also 6/21 (JoB, CH plus 9 others). At PG one was also listed 6/21, 28, and 7/19 (RL). In the *Cambria* section of SGL 120, four were tallied 6/17 (AW).

Since many of the pines in the main recreation area of YCSP have died, no one has been able to find where the **Pine Warblers** have moved; they had been nesting in the same area of the park for years. No Pine Warblers were noted in either *Armstrong* or *Indiana*. In *Cambria* one was found 6/6 (PI, WI) at PG. In Johnstown single Pine Warblers were found 6/1 (LM-R) s.e. of Westmont Hilltop H.S. and on the UPJ campus 7/9 (DY).

Unusual were the number of **Yellow-rumped Warbler** summer reports. Single birds were noted near TT 6/30 (JCr) in *Armstrong*; at two point counts in *Indiana*, one near Nolo 6/2 (JCr) and another near Malloy Hollow, also 6/2 (JCr); another was sighted near Ambrose 6/5 (TC, ED, SM, VS); and one in Cambria at PG 6/14 (RL).

Yellow-throated Warblers were found at 19 *Armstrong* locations and only one *Indiana* site in BVT 6/3 (MSC); none were noted in *Cambria*.

Four **Prairie Warblers** were observed in *Armstrong* near Widnoon 6/30 (JCr) while single Prairies were sighted s. of Frenchs Corner 6/2 (TR) and near Buttermilk Falls 6/6 (TR). In *Indiana* on 6/1 (CW) and 6/5 (CG, MH, RH, GL) one was listed on Snyder Road, but by 6/8 (CW) three were present. Aultmans Run Road yielded one on 6/5 and again 6/12 (both CG, MH, RH, GL). Two Prairies were observed near NP 6/20 (TC, SM). Farther south than Snyder Rd. at SGL 332 four were tallied 6/22 (MS, JT). Another five single Prairies were found in *Indiana* this summer. In *Cambria* SGL 108 harbored one to three Prairies on 17 checklists between 6/6 (B. & K. Bealer) and 6/25 (SJ). Other reports of singletons came from Loretto 6/11 (CS), SGL 79 - Plank Road on 6/15 (AM), and n.e. of Summerhill 6/19 (CS). **Black-throated Green Warblers** were widespread across our region this summer. Canada Warblers were listed at three locations this season – one on 6/3 (JorS) n. of Mill Run on Simpson Church Road in *Armstrong*, one along the Rexis GTT 6/8 (GT) in thick rhodendrons w. of Belsano, where the observer had seen them in previous years, and near Dunlo 6/21 (MG, RG); the latter two reports were both in *Cambria*. A late migrating **Wilson's Warbler** was first heard then seen by four observers 6/6 (CG, MH, RH, GL) near NP.

Scarlet Tanagers, **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks**, **Northern Cardinals**, **and Indigo Buntings** were well distributed across the region.

Observers: Drew Bailey (DrB), Jeffrey Barr (JeB), B. Bealer, K. Bealer, Andrew Bechdel (AnB), Kimberly Berry, Chuck Berthoud, Brady Blackburn, John Boback, Joel Bookhammer (JoB), Dave Brooke, Alan Buriak, Nancy Casper, Tiffany Chan, Brent Chippendale, Jan Chippendale, Angelique Conrad, Jack Cronin (JCr), Chris Della Penna (CDP), Joey Della Penna (JDP), Sue Dickson, Ed Donley, Sarah Dunmire (SDu), Caroline Eastman, Adrian Fenton, Brian Freiwald, Guy Foulks, Cameron Gallagher (CGa), Melissa Gallardy, Ross Gallardy, Christy Gatto (CGa), Robert Gordon, Sally Gordon, Maggie Griffith (MaG), Deb Grove, Greg Grove, Carol Guba, Court Harding, Luke Hebor, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Amy Hudkins, Stephen Jacobs, Isaac Juart, Debbie Kalbfleisch, Chad Kauffman, Jeff Kenney, Rachel Kester, Janet & Tom Kuehl (J&TK), Trudy Kyler (TrK), Emma Lake, Gloria Lamer, Annie Lindsay, Rich Love (RLo), Renee Lubert, Avi Marshall, Linda Martin-Rust (LM-R), Steven McClellan (StM), Joshua McCoy, Justin Merry (JMe), Sarah Metzler, Alexa Mignogna, (AMi), Trent Millum, Pedro Miranda, Joel Moore (JMo), Avery Nichols, Jeff Nichols, Joseph Pumford, Bill Reddinger, Eric Reitz, Theo Rickert, Angela Romanczuk, Henry Rummel, Mabel Rummel, Matt St Clair (MSC), Joe Saxfield, Barry Saylor, Conner Schmitt, Liam Shields, Jordan Spindel (JorS), Ryan Spiardi, Vicki Stelma, Judy Stepenaskie(JuS), Bob Stewart, John Stith (JSt), Alice Stitt, John Taylor, Greg Tomb, Lauren Walker, Cleveland Wall (ClW), Shaylee Walls, Mike Weible, Samantha Werksman (SWe), Cheri Widzowski, Amber Wiewel, Carole Winslow (CaW), Brian Wulker (BrW), David Youker, George Young.

Sincere thanks to our members who come early to help set up the room for our meetings at Blue Spruce! We appreciate all you do!!!

Sylvia Churgin, 1925-2026

An Appreciation by Debbie Kalbfleisch

I realize only a couple of Todd members knew Sylvia Churgin, but she was a dear birding friend and an amazing person. Sylvia was born in New York City on January 17, 1925. She was introduced to the Metropolitan Opera while still in her teens, and met her husband at a classical concert in Central Park. World War II was over, and the newlyweds enrolled at Syracuse University. She graduated in 1954 with a bachelor's degree in botany and later completed a master's in library science. Together, she and Charles discovered the joy of birds, a passion she held for the rest of her life. After her husband's too-early death from cancer, she became a research librarian at the Smithsonian's Natural History Museum. Our time in D.C. overlapped, and I am only sorry that our paths didn't cross sooner.

I met her in 2014, soon after I had moved to Zelienople. I had only been in my new place a couple of days, when people started telling me that I needed to call Sylvia, as she was a birder, too. So, I picked up the phone and found that she lived across the street from me! Birders always seem to connect easily to other birders. She had moved here from Reston, Virginia, the year before at the age of 88. She still missed her friends in Virginia and was delighted to meet a fellow birder. We went out several times, and one of my favorite memories is of driving slowly in the Volant grasslands one May, hearing a weird bird song we couldn't quite place, then rounding a corner and discovering that the Bobolinks were back and bouncing all over the fields! Her love of birds was palpable, and she could never understand why anyone was not a birder. She had many friends and interests (she took up watercolors after she retired and was a wonderful painter), but she was always mystified by non-birding friends. She would turn to me sadly and say "but they're not birders."

Sylvia had a talent for finding cheap trips, and she traveled everywhere. She visited the Antarctic on a Russian fishing trawler and booked many of her trips through Elderhostel (now Road Scholar). She was in her late 80s when she went to China and saw the Great Wall. Years ago, she took a job with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute so she could live in Panama and see more birds. She was there several years and only reluctantly returned to D.C. during the Noriego crisis. As age took its toll, she was forever miffed that she couldn't bird the way she had when she was 85. She passed away peacefully on September 19, at the age of 101.

What is This?

If you read last month's newsletter you already know. This object was noted in a tree at Yellow Creek on one of our Tuesday morning outings in June this year. Some said it was a plastic bag; some said it was a piece of paper; and upon closer inspection, others said it was a Baltimore Oriole's nest which was correct. It is always pretty cool when you find an oriole's nest, but in this case, all of us who were present had mixed feelings about it. Upon closer inspection we determined that the nest was made almost entirely of fishing line!

It is not uncommon to find discarded fishing line lying on the ground near the North Shore gazebo which is a favorite area for fishermen. Unfortunately, some fishermen simply throw unwanted fishing line on the ground rather than discarding it properly in a refuse container. The birds apparently find this easy material for nest construction and pick it up and use as much as they can find. This is not just a problem on the North Shore but anywhere that fisher-men access the lake.

The problem is that the birds can become entangled in the line and cannot extricate themselves from it. Another time we found a similar nest in the Grandma's Cove area where an Eastern Kingbird had built its nest from fishing line. We found the dead king-bird still at the nest, hanging by its leg tangled in fishing line.

So if you know fishermen, you might ask them to please dispose of unwanted fishing line properly. And for those who choose to disregard the "Do Not Litter" signs, take a moment to clean up after them and dispose of the fishing line as it should be. You may be saving a bird's life.

– Roger Higbee

P.S. Besides several Eastern Kingbirds, we have found dead Eastern Bluebirds and Baltimore Orioles hung by fishing line.

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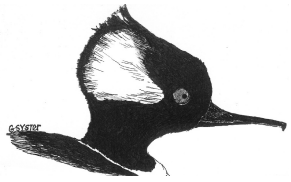

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