

PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS



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IN FOCUS PART 1



Pennsylvania's first **Gray-crowned Rosy Finch** proved cooperative, as hundreds of birders traveled to Meadville, *Crawford* to see this western stray at a private feeder, where it visited faithfully 1-24 (here 3) February. (*Geoff Malosh*)



Short-eared Owls were found in 34 counties, above average; 29 were reported on CBCs, highest since 2003. This owl was one of up to 4 at West Lebanon. *Indiana* 6 (here 29) December – 24 February. (*Anthony Bruno*)



This **Peregrine Falcon** at Lock Haven, *Clinton* was found to have a minor wing injury and taken to rehab 8 February; it is likely to recover but had not yet been released as of this printing. (*Wayne Laubscher*)



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Cover Photo: Sandhill Crane at Lake Duffy, Lebanon 29 November, 2009. (Tom Johnson)

Sandhill Cranes

One of the great birding developments in Pennsylvania in recent decades has been the establishment and expansion of a thriving **Sandhill Crane** population. From initially gaining a solid foothold in northwestern Pennsylvania, they have spread to several other counties as a nesting species. Granted still rare, but it is exciting for a Pennsylvania birder to think it at least realistic to hope that a pair of cranes might decide to take up house-keeping at a location nearby.

We are pleased to offer Gene Wilhelm's detailed account, replete with personal observations, of the history of this colonization. Most PSO members are familiar with Gene, at least by name. For decades, among the state's most prominent birders and ornithologists, readers of this journal will know that he is a frequent contributor of book reviews that, in addition to introducing new books, usually also serve as a biology lesson on some aspect of whatever species are featured in the subject of his review.

As for the cranes themselves, note we have included the Sandhill Crane map from the second Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas. There was no corresponding map from the first atlas – there were no nesting cranes in the 1980s. However, in the nearly two-decade interim between the two atlas projects, cranes became a firmly established component of the list of nesting birds in Pennsylvania.

Thanks also to the photographers who contributed to Gene's wonderful article.

The Official List of the Birds of Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Ornithological Committee ("PORC") is tasked, among other duties, with keeping the official list of birds for the state and periodically updating that list, a duty fulfilled in this issue by PORC chair Holly Merker and members Devich Farbotnik and Billy Weber. The maintenance of this list, now with 439 species, is thanks to the efforts of the committee that votes on records of rarities, but even more important, of birders who submit documentation of their findings. A submission form is available at the PORC link on the PSO website (<http://pabirds.org/records/>). These days, given the relative ease of taking photos of sufficient quality to allow identification, documentation is simpler

than ever (not to mention evaluation by the committee of submitted records).

Eleven new species have been added since the last compilation, the most celebrated of which is the **Black-backed Oriole** of *Berks* fame from 2017. With the oriole having been voting acceptance as a wild bird here, we await with interest the decision on acceptance of the American Birding Association rarity committee.

County summaries

County compilers log many hours in preparation of the seasonal reports. I urge readers to look at these summaries – there are lots of interesting stories. For example, one **Snowy Owl** in particular was reported in several counties – but never actually seen in most or any of those counties; yet we know it was present in those counties. Read about the journey of that owl in both the *Union* and *Berks* reports.

From *Lancaster*, read about the record-setting year for **Snow Geese** at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. Continuing with geese, a species of which we may see more in the future years is **Greater White-fronted Goose**, a welcome trend to birders, but also to another bird-loving group – see *Somerset*. When thinking of gull hotspots in Pennsylvania, we list Presque Isle in the northwest, the lower Susquehanna and Delaware Rivers, and the landfills of the southeastern counties – but see *Butler* for an addition to the list of locations to which larid-lovers may flock. On a more sobering note, read in *Bucks* about present-day **American Kestrel** counts from the three CBCs conducted largely within that county and the contrast with averages from just 15 years ago – the drop can be described as precipitous.

New feature

In this issue, we begin a new short feature - **25 Years Ago in Pa Birds**. This look back will be done by Frank Haas – who better to go back into the early history of *Pennsylvania Birds* than the man who, along with wife Barb, started it all over 30 years ago.

The 2018 PSO meeting.

Barring a major disruption in our publishing process or the operations of the U.S. Postal Service, as you read this there is still time to register for the annual PSO meeting, held again this year in early fall.

The host location is Meadville, *Crawford*, where members will convene September 14-16. Registration deadline, which includes field trip sign-up, is 26 August. See the PSO website link for more details and to complete the registration process. (<https://pabirds.org/index.php/annual-meeting>)

Compiler news

One county compiler makes his debut in this issue. Robert Snyder, of *Howard*, *Centre* is taking on reporting for *Potter*, which has been uncovered for quite a while.

The following counties have no compiler: *Bradford*, *Carbon*, *Lackawanna*, *Luzerne*, and *Tioga*. Please contact the editor if interested.

County compilers: Phil Keener (Adams, York), Mike Fialkovich (Allegheny, Fayette), Marjorie Van Tassel (Armstrong), Geoff Malosh (Beaver, Lawrence, Washington), Tom Dick (Bedford), Rudy Keller and Matt Wlasniewski (Berks), John Carter (Blair), August Mirabella (Bucks), Oscar Miller (Butler), Dave Gobert (Cambria), Mark Johnson (Cameron), Nan Butkovich (Centre), Holly Merker (Chester), Carole Winslow (Clarion), Diane Bierly (Clearfield), Wayne Laubscher (Clinton), Andy Kiester (Columbia, Northumberland), Rob Hodgson (Crawford), Vern Gauthier (Cumberland), Sandy Lockerman (Dauphin), Sheryl Johnson (Delaware), Brendyn Baptiste (Elk), Jerry McWilliams (Erie), Flo McGuire (Forest), Bill Oyler (Franklin), Joshua Markel (Fulton), Marjorie Howard (Greene), Greg Grove (Huntingdon, Juniata), Margaret Higbee (Indiana), Thomas Glover (Jefferson), Chad Kauffman (Juniata), Zack Millen (Lancaster), Tim Becker (Lebanon), Bill Etter (Lehigh), Bobby Brown (Lycoming), Gigi Gerben (McKean), Glenn Koppel (Mercer), Jon Kauffman (Mifflin), Brian Hardiman (Monroe), Brian Henderson (Montgomery), Evan Houston (Montour), Michael Schall (Northampton, Pike), Holger Pflicke (Philadelphia), Dan Hinnebusch (Perry), Robert Snyder (Potter), Dave Rieger (Schuylkill), Jeff Payne (Somerset), Rob Megraw (Sullivan), Evan Mann (Susquehanna), Joe Gyekis (Snyder, Union), Gary Edwards and Russ States (Venango), Scott Stoleson (Warren), Josh Jones (Wayne), Tom Kuehl (Westmoreland), Joe DeMarco (Wyoming).

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THE GREATER SANDHILL CRANE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Gene Wilhelm

Prologue

When we hear his call, we hear no mere bird. We hear the trumpet in the orchestra of evolution. He is the symbol of our untamable past, of that incredible sweep of millennia which underlies and conditions the daily affairs of birds and men.

Aldo Leopold

On a calm but cold pre-dawn in late winter years ago, my wife and I strolled to a knoll overlooking a landscape of cattail marshes and freshwater ponds in Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico. Our objective was simply to get an unobstructed view of Sandhill Cranes, tall, heavy bodied, long-necked, and long-legged birds notorious for their distinctive, penetrating, bugling calls and for their elaborate courtship dancing. Although the dark-moon period of January hampered an ideal clear perspective of the birds, the brilliant starlight above us sufficiently illuminated the many standing life-forms just 50 meters away. It was less than 30 minutes before sunrise, but already the birds were growing restless, probably in part because of us, and becoming vocal with trills, purrs, loud and non-loud calls. Vocalizing intensified until eventually thousands of cranes around us were completely awake and alert. Suddenly, like pulling a magical switch in nature, sunlight appeared behind the far-distant eastern mountains, and hundreds per minute of noisy cranes took wing for their daily routine of gleaning grain fields in the fertile Rio Grande valley. They would not return to the safety of the refuge until late afternoon or early evening. Although our goal of experiencing wintering Sandhill Cranes for the first time in our lives had been most satisfying, we were so intrigued by the creatures that we were determined to learn more about other migrating, wintering, and breeding cranes elsewhere in North America. Alaska, Florida, Indiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ontario, and Texas sites have been visited over the years, but the most recent field ornithological intrigue has been the story of the eastern Greater Sandhill Crane in our home of Pennsylvania

It should be noted that the following manuscript is not intended to be a life history of the bird (readers are urgently advised to consult *The Birds of North America* (BNA) for concise details), nor a scientific paper, but only a field up-to-date report of a relatively recent avian breeder in the Commonwealth. Emphases include history, description, migration, breeding highlights, behavior, conservation, and management as interpreted by one local resident of the community who is wholly responsible for any errors or exclusions in the article.

History

The Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*) is among the oldest living avian species on Earth. The earliest fossil record is 2.5 million years before the present (mybp) from a shell pit in Sarasota County, Florida (Emslie 1992:263) but may be as old as 3.0 mybp (see Bickart 1990:43). Pleistocene (1.8 mybp) and other prehistoric records are numerous with broad geographic distribution from Alaska to Mexico and California to Florida (Brodkorb 1967: 152 et al.). Archaeological crane remains were discovered in Fulton Co., New York (NY) in proximity to Pennsylvania (Steadman 1988). Eaton (1910) reported that the crane occurred in colonial New York but probably only as a migrant. Earlier, Barton's 1799 report of large crane flocks flying over New Jersey, New York, and

Pennsylvania northern nesting areas supports this idea. Otherwise the bird became rare in New York, with only 15 records of which 11 occurred after 1965 (Bull 1974).

The American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) recognized three subspecies of Sandhill Cranes in 1957: *G. c. canadensis* (Lesser Sandhill Crane), *G. c. pratensis* (Florida Sandhill Crane), and *G. c. tabida* (Greater Sandhill Crane). Later Walkinshaw 1973 and Lewis 1977 recognized three more subspecies: *G. c. nesiotis* (Cuban Sandhill Crane), *G. c. pulla* (Mississippi Sandhill Crane), and *G. c. rowani* (Canadian Sandhill Crane). Advanced DNA hybridization comparisons suggested that this is an ancient species without close relatives, one that perhaps should be split into a distinct species group (Krajewski 1989). Currently the species nests in Siberia, Alaska, northern, central, and eastern (Quebec) Canada, around the Great Lakes, westward across Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and in the southeastern United States to Cuba. Breeding range in North America was formerly more extensive, extending south to Arizona, Baja California in Mexico, northwest and center Mexico, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. In general, the distribution of the Sandhill Crane in North America is currently divided into three recognized migratory crane populations representing three subspecies across North America: The Rocky Mountain Population, the Mid-Continental Population, and the Eastern or Great Lakes Population (Tucker 2014). The latter distribution category is the eastern Greater Sandhill Crane subspecies of Pennsylvania that, based on current field evidence, is rapidly becoming more sedentary. This article will deal only with the eastern Greater Sandhill Crane, henceforth using Sandhill Crane or crane for brevity purposes.

Description

Adult Sandhill Crane sexes are similar in plumage but males are usually slightly larger than females (3.75 vs. 3.34 kg). Height is a nearly identical 1.2 m with wing spans of 2 m. The birds have 10 primary and 16 secondary feathers; innermost secondary coverts and tertials are elongate, drooping ornamentally like a mop over the tail. The foot has 3 toes forward and one back, the latter elevated and functionally vestigial. Bill is elongated and stout. Bare head skin is sparsely covered with black and red hair-like bristles, extending from base of bill above the eyes to back of head, encompassing forehead, lores, and crown. White cheeks contrast with a gray neck (A. Poole, P. Stettenheim, and F. Gill 1992:2). The plumage of adult parents is often quite rusty brown and gray save for duller reddish foreheads and crowns, light cheeks, chins, and upper throats, with gray front and hind necks. The rust is caused by the habit of cranes digging into moist soil with their sharp bills and getting them discolored from mud and water containing ferric oxide (iron). Such a color is then transferred to their feathers when the birds preen or dress their plumage. Even juvenile cranes possess a deep chestnut crown, hind neck, back, and wings. However, by early September the juvenile's plumage no longer has most of the rust except for crown, neck, and wings. On the other hand, parents' bare foreheads and crowns turn brilliant crimson and most of their plumage slate gray (Wilhelm 1993:92). Although some adult cranes have a complete molt between August and December, with flight feathers molting in August, 60 percent of the species has an interrupted molt cycle in which 2-3 years are required to replace all flight feathers. Birds experiencing this interrupted molt cycle lose only some of their flight feathers each summer and do not become flightless (Littlefield 1970). This reporter never saw any flightless adult cranes, in fact, nor found any free flight feathers on dry fields. Perhaps this is because most preening and overnight roosting is accomplished in wetlands, making feathers difficult to find. With a snapping upstroke and slower down-stroke flight pattern, cranes are



Flock of 26 at Snyder Road, Lancaster 14 January 2016. (Alex Lamoreaux)

easily differentiated from other long-legged, long-necked birds in the air.

The crane is omnivorous, thus foods vary widely depending on what is available in various seasons and locations (Walkinshaw 1949, 1973). This reporter has witnessed, while in challenging habitats, crane families switch from eating a variety of aquatic vegetation (mostly tubers) and animals (amphibians like frogs and toads, water snakes and turtles, and crayfish) in spring and early summer to more terrestrial plants (cultivated grains like barley, wheat, and corn), berries, and animal foods like insects, lizards, even baby field birds, chipmunks, and cotton-tail rabbits in late summer and autumn. Wintering cranes depend mostly on gleaning corn fields for food which is probably the greatest determining factor whether crane flocks remain locally and how long before moving elsewhere (Wilhelm 1993:92). Such flocks can withstand severe winters of prolonged ice, snow, and bitter temperatures as attested by the 2017-2018 Pennsylvania winter. Members of crane flocks work in unison at the very start of snow falling onto corn fields by moving their feet and bills, thereby keeping parts of the ground open. Seemingly, if the flocks sense that the snowfall is going to be extremely long or heavy ice prevails, the flocks will vacate and in the process seek other fields to their liking.

Sandhill Cranes do not breed until they are two or more years old, depending on the subspecies and population. They are perennially monogamous, but 'divorces' have been observed, typically in pairs that have had an unsuccessfully fledged colt (Williams 2018 pers. comm.). Cranes provide extended parental care of their young. In fact, families usually stay together for nearly a year, even during migration and over-wintering. The species is normally long-lived (20 years or more). Nests are constructed of the dominant surrounding vegetation, tossed over adult shoulders, forming a foundation and mound with larger material, and a distinguishable eggcup formed and lined with smaller twigs. Both sexes participate in constructing the nest that may take longer than a week to complete. Usually the female stands on the mound and arranges the material to her liking. The female lays one or two egg clutches once a year, but rarely raises more than one young to fledging, especially for the first clutch experience. Males and females share incubation duties equally during daylight but females primarily at night. Nests are usually attended constantly (Nesbitt 1988). In a two-egg clutch, the eggs hatch at one day intervals with incubation averaging 30 days. The young are brooded intensively

after hatching, most often by the female, for two weeks or so (Walkinshaw 1973). The first flight for youngsters occurs 67 to 75 days after hatching and they remain with their parents until 9 to 10 months of age (Tacha 1988). Juveniles begin associating with sub-adult/nonbreeding flocks soon after leaving their parents and remain in these flocks until pairing begins. Crane primary social units are pairs and family units that combine into large, socially unstable flocks during wintering and migration periods as personally experienced at Jasper-Pulaski State Fish & Wildlife Area (JPSFWA) and Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR), IN.

Senses

The Sandhill Crane possesses keen sight and sound sensory systems, highly developed in an extraordinary visual signal of dancing and an auditory channel of calls. Like all birds, the crane communicates because the species is social and needs to transmit information to others of its kind, epitomized in twosome pair bonding. Getting and staying together, after all, has only one purpose: the production of healthy offspring. Eight courtship displays include pre-copulatory bill up, and unison calls, are limited to paired adults that facilitate pair bond maintenance, synchrony of reproductive development, and egg fertilization. Five other body movements (upright wing stretch, horizontal head pump, bow, vertical leap, and vertical toss) are exhibited by all social classes, serve to attract attention, and are important components of dancing – the primary mechanism in pair formation. Courtship activities are stimulated by changes in day length that trigger hormonal release. Dancing reaches its peak, therefore, in spring before nesting occurs, so most humans see little of it (refer to BNA). However, in a narrow window of spring time, field observers may be fortunate enough to witness a crane couple or two doing what I call the "final dance." Partner couples rush each other, face to face, often in a tight circle, at the same time stretching their wings, pumping their heads, bowing, then leaping vertical meters into the air, while calling profusely, all within two minutes or so. The couples repeat the dance process for several minutes and seem to sense that it is their last dance for awhile because serious nesting responsibilities are approaching.

Since the crane's booming appearance in the 1980s in western Pennsylvania, the bird has caused many interesting stories from

initial breeding proof (Rodgers 1993:90, 1994:137) to avian curiosity about humans and our ways. In August 1999, a phone caller said that this Sunday morning a pair of adult cranes was feeding in a corn field just 50 m from the Plain Grove Presbyterian Church when simultaneously members were filing into the church through a side glass door. Suddenly, one crane leisurely walked out of the corn field directly to the glass door and without any hesitation started pecking on the glass door, causing great disturbance among the congregation inside the church. Finally, a church member opened the door and chased the “running crane” away (pers. comm. George Rogers). Probably the bird saw its own reflected image in the glass door but such avian behavior raises many questions. Was this incident the bird’s first attempt to visit the church or one of many? Or had the bird recognized George from seeing him many times recently plowing his nearby farm fields and followed his tractor exposing insects for food? A similar experience also happened to me.

The stature of the Sandhill Crane gives it a tremendously accurate visual range as attested by the author’s futile attempts to photograph adults or juveniles. Standing 1.2 m tall with eyes high on their heads (see cover), a human on foot cannot easily approach cranes, especially in open terrain. I repeatedly was thwarted at approximately 300 m, although on two rare occasions I did get as close as 200 m (Wilhelm 1993:92). Thanks to farmer Dwight Kind, who lives 4 kilometers west of Slippery Rock, and who drove his tractor while I sat in his connected trailing wagon, 15 cranes (probably an extended family) allowed me to get within 10 m for photographs. Of course, the birds were accustomed to Dwight and his machinery working the fields daily and in that process exposing many grasshoppers, crickets, and other insects as easy food for the birds. Dwight commented that the cranes uncannily knew his daily work routine so accurately that the kin flock would be awaiting him in his next planned field rotation.

Two other personal experiences illustrate keen vision and fearlessness of humans, at least once juveniles can fly. As a trio family (parents and a juvenile) fed in a field on the border of Butler-Mercer counties on 24 September 1992, the juvenile suddenly cocked its head at a 45-degree angle to the horizontal. Immediately the parents did the same. With a 9X35 Busch & Lomb binocular, I quickly detected what they were watching: a kettle of 12 Broad-winged Hawks (*Buteo platypterus*) circling in the blue sky perhaps 1000 m above my head. The cranes watched the hawks until they wheeled far to the southwest but I could not, even with my binocular, do the same. How they could see those tiny specks in the clear, blue sky was literally incredible. Then the trio casually returned to eating grasshoppers and crickets identified via a Bushnell 22X wide-angle spotting scope (Wilhelm 1993 7:92). A second example of superb crane vision and human fearlessness occurred in Pymatuning State Park in late November 2017 when Brendyn Baptiste, Martin Carlin, and I were standing on a well-used gravel road watching a family of two adult and two juvenile cranes 300 m away. The slightly smaller adult, presumably the female, left the family and gradually walked toward the gravel road and us. The bird finally reached the road just 10 meters from us and started pecking at the gravel on the road. Binoculars identified scores of dead insects, including grasshoppers, damsel flies, crickets, horse flies, butterflies, dragon flies, and moths. The bird systematically walked slowly north on the right side of the road perhaps for 75 m devouring the insects, then turned back south on the road and used the same emphatic gesture on the left side of the road, stopped 10 meters from us, left the road to join its family and us with perplexing questions. How did the bird know those dead insects were there? Did the bird spot them beforehand from the air or the ground? Why didn’t the other members of the family join the feast? What convinced the bird that three humans were not going to harm it? Do cranes differentiate between hunters carrying weapons and birders using binoculars and spotting scopes?

The voice of an adult Sandhill Crane is most remarkable. Calls described as trumpeting, bugling, rattling, or croaking fail to convey

the volume or quality of the sound produced, thanks to its long trachea or windpipe. Air passing through the convolutions of the trachea modifies the voice of the bird and accounts for its deep resonant notes that may carry for a great distance. Readers should consult sonograms of a Sandhill Crane guard call, often given together by a pair or family group as an aggressive display, and a unison call, a duet given by a male-female pair. The male’s first note is lower-pitched and longer than the female’s second and third notes (Poole, Stettenheim, & Gill 1992:8). The cranes also have an early morning invitational or arrival call of “A-rook-crook-crook” (my interpretation) before landing in a field for breakfast. However, more often heard are cranes uttering an alarm “Kit-er-roo-oo-oo” call when encroaching humans are identified and an all clear “Gar-oo-oo-oo-oo” call when flying between local destinations in western Pennsylvania. Complete adult crane vocal repertoire may exceed a dozen calls and are grouped into three categories: trills-purrs, loud rattles, and non-rattle calls. Territorial calling increases with onset



Crane display on Old Ash Road, Lawrence 22 January 2017. (Jeff McDonald)

of breeding season and lessens during incubation. As cranes become more gregarious during late summer and fall, social calling increases and is sustained through the winter until migration and nesting begin. As already mentioned under Prologue, cranes are most vocal from about 30 minutes before sunrise through mid-morning, during late afternoon feeding periods, pre-roost gatherings, and arrival at roosts. The pre-dawn crane crescendo of music is one of the most stirring expressions of nature. Duet unison and guard calls advertise territorial occupancy and boundaries and avoid conflict among other territorial adults (consult BNA). Only on two field occasions over the decades have I experienced crane guard calls, once when a nesting pair in Lawrence detected a red fox nearby, took flight, and used a spread-wing posture with bill oriented toward the animal, followed by high, long “hisses” that scared the predator away. The other time was when a flock of 99 migrating cranes at JPSFWA, Indiana spotted a coyote at dawn 300 m away when the loud group vocal commotion alone was sufficient to force the predator to retreat (see Poole, Stettenheim, & Gill 1992: 8-9 for more vocal details).

The absolute protection the parents extend to their offspring is noteworthy. In observing two parents and a juvenile in the summer of 1993 near Plain Grove, Lawrence, for a total of 30 hrs. over 3 consecutive days, never once did either one of the parents leave the family unit for any reason. Most time (18 hrs.) was spent feeding together in pastures or mowed fields. The juvenile was most often situated in-between the feeding parents; in fact, rarely did I see either adult forage more than 5 m away from the juvenile. About 8 hrs. were spent preening as a family, always while standing, and never did I observe the birds preening each other. Finally, four hrs. were used for resting, most often because of the juvenile suddenly

lying down and “sunbathing” while the adults stood next to it. One parent always would be on guard while the other rested (Wilhelm 1993:92).

Migration & Breeding

Sandhill Cranes breeding in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Ontario have migrated through Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia to winter in southern Georgia (Okefenokee Swamp) and central Florida for decades (Walkinshaw 1949 et al.). Fall migrants of this particular population stop at JPSFWA and MNWR, Indiana from mid-September to early December with peak numbers in late October. First arrivals on Florida wintering grounds is in late October with most arrivals by mid-November to mid-December. The same flocks depart Florida late February to early April with most departures the first two weeks in March, arriving at JPSFWA and MNWR in early March to mid-April, staying for roughly 12 days, arriving on nesting areas by early to mid-April (see BNA for details).

Yet, Sandhill Crane migration and wintering are much more complicated as recently discovered by field researchers of the International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, Wisconsin in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Two crane chicks, determined to be between 7.5 to 8 weeks old, were captured 26 June 2011 north of Cambridge Springs, Crawford. The birds received different colored plastic leg bands in unique combinations so that they more easily could be identified at a distance. The chicks each received a 3-inch white band with red engraved letters and numbers (B1 and B2) for their right leg. Blood samples proved that crane B1 was a female and crane B2 a male, then released. Nothing was heard about B1 but three positive field events chronologically followed each other for B2. First, 13 April 2013, a crane pair including B2 was observed near the Seneca Division of Erie National Wildlife Refuge (ENWR), Crawford. Since only a two-year-old male, B2 was not breeding yet but he had found a mate and the pair was seriously investigating potential breeding sites. Second, on 9 January 2014, B2 was identified in a flock of 42 cranes near Saint Cloud, Florida. B2 became the first confirmation of a crane from western Pennsylvania utilizing a Florida wintering site. (Query: Were other cranes in that 42 flock also from western PA?) Third, photographer Larry Slomski took photos 23 August 2015 of a crane family including B2, a non-banded mate, and a colt in the same area of ENWR where B2 was captured and tagged four years previously (Hayes 2015).

About this same time, other more detailed crane field research data were being collected, analyzed, and synthesized in Ohio. In 2104, Jason Todd Tucker wrote a master’s degree thesis at Ohio State University titled “Movements, habitat selection, and home ranges of Greater Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis tabida*) in Ohio.” His fine abstract emphasizes several important facts: The Greater Sandhill Crane inhabited Ohio until its extirpation in the 1930s due to habitat loss and unregulated hunting; 50 years later, in the 1980s, the first breeding pair of cranes was discovered in Wayne Co; since then the breeding population continues to grow and expand. Two crane pairs bred in 2011 in Killbuck Marsh and Funk Bottoms Wildlife Areas (KMFBWA) in Holmes and Wayne Cos., followed by 11 breeding pairs in 2012 and 11 pairs again in the same two counties in 2013. Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II (OBBII) data were evaluated to investigate statewide distributions of crane population in 2006-2011: 170 atlas records included GPS locations, 30 records of which were of breeding crane pairs and 56 were of crane family units. Forty of the total records were concentrated within 50 km of KMFBWA. Specifically, 31 atlas sightings were concentrated in northeastern Geauga and Trumbull Cos., and 20 others concentrated near marsh refuges of western Lake Erie (Tucker 2014:iii). In the years 2011-2012 -2013, 23 cranes were captured and equipped with VHF transmitters by Tucker in Holmes and Wayne Cos. to track local movements, seasonal habitat

selection, and migration behavior. Indeed, the birds followed the Mississippi and Atlantic flyways using stopover locations at MNWR Indiana, Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge (HWR), Tennessee, and private north-central and northeastern Florida landscapes.



Haaf Road, Lehigh 10 January 2015. (Scott Godshall)

However, not all cranes migrated each year, some choosing to remain in northeastern Ohio through the winter. Those juveniles returning with their parents after the first winter in the south, eventually settled with summering non-breeding adults at FBWA (Tucker 2014:iii). During the second atlas, various non-breeders included 35 or more individuals at FBWA alone six years ago (Caldwell 2012). In sum, the 2006-2014 nesting seasons produced the highest numbers of crane nests and colts since the mid-1800s with a peak in 2013 of at least 50 nests and 40 fledglings in Ohio (Slager 2016:166-167). Most recently, David Hanni, part of the fine Ohio wildlife outreach team, sent this email: “We recently had a band return in South Central Tennessee a week ago (1/18) from a bird that was banded in Marquette Co, Wisconsin as a nestling. I am also attaching a histogram that shows arrival times at Hiwassee and Hop-In refuges in Tennessee. It shows that cranes are arriving round mid-October and departing the end of March for both Hop-In refuge and Hiwassee” (Hanni personal email 1/25/18).

Ohio was not alone with its exponential growth of cranes in the Great Lakes region from 2000-2012. Michigan and Ontario had annual population increases of 12 percent and 21 percent, respectively (Sauer et al. 2014), and New York recorded 9 blocks in its second atlas effort with breeding confirmed in 2 blocks. The first New York breeding record was 5 June 2003 in the North Montezuma Wildlife Management Area northeast of Savannah, Wayne County. The Savannah crane pair produced chicks each year through 2007. Another pair built a nest in central Yates Co. in 2004, being the only other confirmation record (McGowan 2008:228).

Like New York, historically, there is no record that the Sandhill Crane ever nested in Pennsylvania. As G.M. Sutton stated (1928:34): “Reports concerning Sandhill Cranes in Pennsylvania usually refer to the Great Blue Heron, as cranes do not occur here.” In fact, according to Wood (1979), the Sandhill Crane was seldom observed in the early 20th century in western Pennsylvania. However, the population expanded dramatically elsewhere between 1955 and 1975 as evidenced by an exponential increase in numbers staging in JPSFWA in northwestern Indiana (Peterj Ohio: 1989: 64), producing greater numbers of sightings in Ohio and western Pennsylvania. Erie listed 4 records prior to 1983: 14 June 1955, 12-13 May 1972, 20 September 1975, all single birds at Presque Isle, and 13 May 1982 at Edinboro Lake (Stull et al. 1985:80). A single adult was observed flying southeast to southwest over Slippery Rock Borough, Butler, 10 April 1985, one of a few reports for southwestern Pennsylvania (Wilhelm 1992:105). Frank and Barb Haas had one bird flying over Gulf Point, Presque Isle 22 May 1986 (pers. comm.). Between 1987 and 1992, however, the species was

observed in 6 counties: Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Lawrence, Venango, and Warren. Margaret Buckwalter recorded a crane at Kahle Lake, Venango 3/9/92 for the first county record (Edwards 2018) and a crane pair lingered from 9 May-15 September 1992 in Lawrence (see Wilhelm 1992:105 for details). Nevertheless, the Sandhill Crane was never mentioned in the first *Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania* (Brauning, Ed. 1992a).

Bruce Hazen, on 2 January 1993, identified a flock of 25-30 cranes flying 150 meters above McConnell’s Mill State Park, Lawrence. The next day James A. Locke watched apparently the same crane flock for 30 minutes feeding on left-over corn in Plain Grove area, Lawrence before the birds flew west. These observations, as far as is known, are the first contemporary record of a large flock of Sandhill Cranes in the Commonwealth. Undoubtedly the great amount of stubble corn in the fields and a mild winter persuaded the flock to linger in the area until late March (Wilhelm et al. 1993 7:8). Interestingly, in the crane publication *The Birds of North America*, No. 31, 1992, population estimates and trends came from direct field counts of wintering or migrating cranes and estimated a total population of 652,500 to 715,300 birds at that time (see Table 1:16). The eastern sub-species of that total was 24,000-26,000 birds with an increasing 20-year trend (L.E. Schumann, unpublished data). The single most important factor regulating Sandhill Crane populations always has been proper habitat availability. Nesting effort and success, as well as survival



Five cranes wintered near State College, Centre, seen here March 2014 with one displaying. (Robert Snyder)

of young, correlate directly with the amount and quality of nesting habitat. Fortunately, the western Pennsylvania counties of Crawford, Mercer, Lawrence, and to a lesser degree Butler, support an ideal environment for the crane’s annual breeding cycle. Diverse wetland types, such as emergent cattail and skunk cabbage marshes, shallow pools, and frequent beaver ponds of seasonally static water levels produce a varied composition and structural diversity of aquatic vegetation for food and cover, primarily in nesting time in early spring and summer (see Poole, Stettenheim and Gill 1992:12-14 for annual breeding cycle). Adjacent open grasslands, agricultural fields of alfalfa, barley, wheat, soybean, and corn, low shrubs, and forest edges are utilized by the cranes in a rotational suite system.

In Ohio, Tucker discovered that breeding cranes used forested wetlands (FW) habitat (29.6%), and emergent and other palustrine vegetation (EWO) habitat (27.6%) most often, whereas pairs and family units utilized agricultural fields and grassland/herbaceous (AgGH) types (34.0%) and FW (33.0%) more during the post-nesting season. Non-breeder cranes, on the other hand, used EWO (46.1%) and AgGH (25.1%) during the nesting season and EWO (41.8%) and FW (26.1%) during the post-nesting season. Overall, however, cranes strongly prefer EWO and FW more than other habitat types during both nesting and post-nesting seasons each year (Tucker 2014:iv). By extrapolating these data to western Pennsylvania, most habitat types are similar with minimum scientific backup for proof.

Perhaps Tucker’s conclusion of Ohio cranes preferring EWO and FW habitats differs slightly with western Pennsylvania and far western U.S. cranes that seem to thrive on varied AgGH foods, especially corn stubbles that consistently determine the length of stay during post-nesting and bitter winter seasons like 2017-2018. As current agricultural actions delete such fields everywhere, the result will be far greater crane population stress and danger.

The Sandhill Crane was an exciting addition to the list of Pennsylvania breeding birds shortly after the first atlas was published (see Wilhelm 1993b, 1993c for details) at approximately the same time that breeding was confirmed in New York, during the second atlas period in Ohio, and between Ontario’s first (1981-1985) and second atlases (2001-2005), as their range rapidly expanded. First seen by many in Plain Grove Twp., Lawrence, June 1991, a crane pair reappeared 27 March 1992 in the same area, roamed northeastern Lawrence and southeastern Mercer, left 18 October but again returned 28 March 1993 to the same locality. On 3 August, however, the pair was in the company of a juvenile crane. This marked the first documented breeding record of the sub-species for the Commonwealth (Wilhelm 1993b). A second juvenile was confirmed in the same area 15 August 1994 with its parents and another adult pair of cranes (Rodgers 1994). Concurrent with the first breeding in 1993, a flock of 30+ cranes over-wintered in northwestern Butler, northeastern Lawrence, and southeastern Mercer for the first time. The flock has wintered and grown in number every year since 1992-1993: 66 birds in 2009 (Malosh 2009) and 88 individuals in December 2017 (Wilhelm et al. 2017).

Crane nesting expanded into Crawford by 1997 with breeding confirmed near ENWR with the presence of juveniles (McWilliams and Brauning 2000). A summering pair was found in Sullivan as early as 2001 (Kerlin 2001) and Will Faux reported the first nest in Bradford in 2004 (Brauning 2004). The first photographed nest of a recently hatched chick and an unhatched egg was taken by Bonnie Dersham on 5 May 2009 in SGL 294, Mercer while conducting a Massasauga rattlesnake survey. Most observers reported that cranes were active each year at established county sites including:

Table 1 1991-1992 to 2017-2018 PENNSYLVANIA SANDHILL CRANE RECORDS

o Adams	o Delaware	o Monroe
o Allegheny	Elk	o Montgomery
o Armstrong	b Erie	b Montour
o Beaver	Fayette	o Northampton
o Bedford	o Forest	o Northumberland
o Berks	b Franklin	o Perry
o Blair	o Fulton	o Philadelphia
b Bradford	Greene	Pike
o Bucks	o Huntingdon	o Potter
b Butler	o Indiana	o Schuylkill
o Cambria	Jefferson	o Snyder
o Cameron	o Juniata	o Somerset
Carbon	o Lackawanna	b Sullivan
o Centre	o Lancaster	o Susquehanna
o Chester	b Lawrence	o Tioga
o Clarion	o Lebanon	o Union
o Clearfield	o Lehigh	b Venango
o Clinton	o Luzerne	b Warren
b Columbia	o Lycoming	o Washington
b Crawford	o McKean	Wayne
o Cumberland	b Mercer	o Westmoreland
o Dauphin	o Mifflin	b Wyoming
		o York

b confirmed breeder: 13 o observed only: 47 ___ no report: 7

Bradford (since 2004), Butler (since 2002), Columbia (in 2007), Crawford (since 1997), Lawrence (since 1993), and Sullivan (since 2001) (Wilhelm 2012:172). The second Pennsylvania BBA survey had a total 26 blocks of distribution: 11 possible, 6 probable, and 9 confirmed in 6 counties (Bradford, Mercer, Columbia, Crawford, Lawrence, and Sullivan). Five other counties reported only observing cranes during the survey period: Allegheny, Lebanon, Butler, Somerset, and Warren (see Distribution Map Figure 1.)

Epilogue

What is the crane population trend in PA? Examination of 5 available data bases can help in answering that question. For example, PSO Notable Records started in 1992 with four crane reports from four counties (Berks, Delaware, Erie, and Lancaster) but by 2008-2009 had received 53 reports from 11 counties (Adams, Bucks, Butler, Chester, Crawford, Lawrence, Lebanon, Mercer, Mifflin, Somerset, and Sullivan). The PGC commenced monitoring autumn staging crane populations annually since 2013. Field data clearly showed expanding numbers of cranes and counties during the October-November pre-migratory staging period (Williams 2018). Finally, 30 reports occurred in the 2012-2014 period representing 19 counties across Pennsylvania (Adams, Berks, Bradford, Butler, Centre, Chester, Clarion, Crawford, Dauphin, Delaware, Erie, Lancaster, Lawrence, Lebanon, Mercer,

2013, 2016, Lycoming: 2013, 2014, 2017, McKean: one bird 5/2-30/17, Monroe: in 2011, 2015, and Northumberland: 2 birds 3/11/16 in Dewart area (Williams 2018). The most recent confirmed breeding record is a crane family of 2 adults, 2 juveniles discovered and photographed 9/5/17 by Jeff Hall north of Kahle Lake, Venango (see Figure 2). Finally, close examination of *Pennsylvania Birds'* sections: Summary of the Season, Birds of Note, Local Notes (counties), In Focus (photographs), and 59 county compilers resulted in a grand total of 60 or 89.5% of all Commonwealth counties have recorded Sandhill Cranes since 1991-1992 of which 13 counties were confirmed breeders (see Table 1).

Jason Tucker discerned in Ohio that the Sandhill Crane is a perplexing avian organism. The same is true for the crane in Pennsylvania. For example, in PSO's *Birds of Pennsylvania: an Annotated List* on line, the crane is identified as follows: Abundance: Unknown (up to 5 per day, up to 25 per season). Occurrence: Regular (recorded every year). Seasonal Status: Migrant and Breeder (species that breed in the state but leave the state for winter). Official List Status: Accepted on the list with either an identifiable photograph, recording, or specimen. PORC Review Species: No. Species of Special Concern Classification: None. Notes: First nested in the state in 1993.

Certainly these characteristics of the crane need an upgraded revision, perhaps to Common in summer and Abundant status in spring/fall migration and wintering. Seasonal Status, however, is much more complicated than simply Migrant and Breeder (see above). Much more likely is the Seasonal Status of Year-round Resident and Migrant which refers to species that breed in the state, some of which migrate but whose northern and southern populations overlap (or western and eastern populations overlapping, I might add), creating an appearance of permanent status, but individuals in the summer are often different than the winter birds. Also, the Seasonal Status of Migrant and Winter Resident is possible for birds that do not breed in the state but arrive in the fall and spend the winter in Pennsylvania. Finally, the PSO Sandhill Crane color map and Seasonal Abundance Graph on line need upgrading. Certainly, the Sandhill Crane's seasonal abundance is not rare.

If these seasonal status suggestions have any scientific value, perhaps the most recent (2014 – 2018) inclusive field data can support the trend. In short, Pennsylvania has exploded with cranes throughout the entire calendar and breeding years and almost all of the state's geography. The following occurrences represent only the outstanding happenings and are presented in chronological order. Because more than 750 valid records were examined, space unfortunately cannot be open to them here.

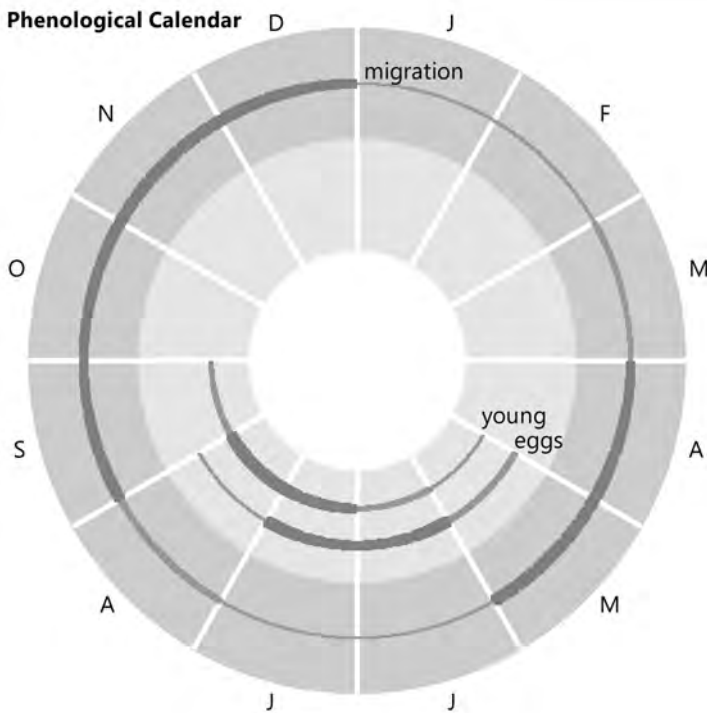


Figure 3 PENNSYLVANIA SANDHILL CRANE PHENOLOGICAL CALENDAR

- Note thick lines equal peak crane activity.
- Note thin lines equal off peak activity.
- Note no lines mean no activity whatsoever

Data extrapolated from 750 crane records & Breeding Phenology, second ABBP, p. 52

Northampton, Somerset, Sullivan, and Venango). A total 275 PSO Notable Records resulted in 42 counties experiencing cranes of which 34 were observations only and eight confirmed breeders. The PGC discovered two adult cranes and a colt on game land 6/24/15 as the first confirmed breeding record for Erie (Williams 2018) and flyover cranes above Forest: 2 birds 4/2/15, Lackawanna: 2012, **PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS**

- Summary of the Season: Pennsylvania Birds (PB), Vol. 28 #3, 2014, p.163: Sullivan, Dushore area, breeding for 15 yrs; photo of crane ad.+ juv 7-15-14 by Holly Merker; p.165 2nd photo crane parents + juv. at Crane Swamp, Bradford. Photo by Kevin Raymond. Comment: early eastern Pennsylvania crane breeding stronghold.
- Summary of the Season: PB, Vol. 28 #3, 2014, p. 175: Crawford, PB, Vol. 28 #3, 2014, p. 175: 10 cranes Pymatuning area 7/26 (Robert Leberman and Isaac Field). Lawrence, PB, Vol. 28 #3, 2014, p. 181: 2 families (4+3) in Plain Grove Twp. 6/21 (Matt Vass). Comment: early western Pennsylvania crane breeding stronghold.
- Summary of the Season: BP, Vol. 28 #4, 2014, p. 218: 16 counties reported cranes in season: Bedford 9/14, Berks 9/12, Bradford (resident near New Era), Clinton 11/22, Crawford (several records), Cumberland 10/25, 11/22, Dauphin 11/30, Lancaster 9/13-15, Lawrence (resident, 35+Cranes by season's end), Lebanon 8/19, Lehigh (eBird data), Montour 11/20 (eBird data), Mercer (all Oct. & Nov.), Philadelphia (flock of 29 cranes 11/29 (see below), Sullivan, and Wyoming (Geoff Malosh).

- A remarkable report was made in Philadelphia of 29 cranes in a flock flying low over the Schuylkill 11/29, remarkable because this was presumably the same flock that was noted at three separate locations in New England states in the days just before the flock had departed their summering grounds in Maine around 11/20 (Geoff Malosh, PB, Vol. 28 #4, 2014: 218). Comment: Is this by chance the same flock of 20-30 cranes that is reported every spring migrating west to east along Lake Erie and beyond (Jerry McWilliams 1-16-18 email)?

- Summary of the Season: PB, Vol. 29 #3, 2015:153-154: The nesting population of cranes continue to expand across the state, reaching south to Franklin this year. Bradford p.163 also contributed young this season when 2 adults and 2 colts were recorded 7/9 (Daniel Brauning).

- Summary of the Season: PB, Vol. 29 #4, 2015:201: Cranes are frequently noted in Lawrence and Bradford and on the increase in Crawford and Butler as mostly a year-round resident (my emphasis) though a mid-fall aggregation of 67+ birds in the Miller Ponds area is very impressive anywhere in Pennsylvania (Mike Fialkovich). Also, Crawford p. 229 found cranes in higher than normal numbers in the Pymatuning area: 67+ birds 10/30, a conservative count of 124 10/31, 45 Shadeland Rd. 11/1 (Claire Necolli), and 44 birds at Miller Ponds 11/5. Cranes are certainly expected all summer in the Pymatuning/Conneaut Marsh area with a high count of 17 adults plus young (Geoff Malosh).

- Summary of the Season: PB, Vol. 30 #3, 2016:151: Cranes continued to nest in scattered wetlands across northern Pennsylvania counties, notably for the first time in Wyoming this year when two adults with two colts were discovered at Sharpe's Lake 6/23 and 7/2 by Kay Simons and Bob Gallagher, and reported to Joe De Marco, compiler. Once again, Sullivan p. 183 confirmed cranes producing 2 colts at Dushore (Rob Megrav, compiler).

- Summary of the Season: PB, Vol. 30 #4, 2016:223: In Lawrence, the *wintering* flock (my emphasis) reached 81+ by 1/31, a record-setting triple digit flock heading into the winter season.

- Summary of the Season: PB, Vol. 31 #1, 2017:17: eBird data show that many cranes winter in a corridor from the western Great Lakes to Florida with spillover into Pennsylvania. Crane observations have been increasing in Pennsylvania; the 246 cranes in the CBC nearly tripled from the previous high total, yet the Grove City, Mercer, CBC 12/26 had another record 205+ birds departing SGL 284 for the day (Wilhelm, Baptiste, Carlin 2017). A day later (12/27) local farmers reported "about 300 cranes" roosting overnight in SGL 284, then flying high southwest early 12/28 morning (m.ob.). Cranes were observed in 10 counties in the winter season with flocks of 50+ or more in Butler, Crawford, Lawrence, and Mercer. Unusual were 32 cranes counted on the Emporium CBC in Cameron 12/18 (Baptiste 2017).

It is clear, after examining over 750 data, that the Sandhill Crane is a marvelous, individualistic, always moving, ever-changing iconoclast of the avian world. If it's a crane, expect the unexpected. This truth is best illustrated perhaps in its migration and breeding activities or lack of same. Approximately one-fifth or 20% of the examined records dealt with a single bugling flyover crane coming from and going to somewhere in PA, but many were first county observations. Are these cranes scouts for future endeavors, decision-makers for choosing potential breeding sites? For the remaining four-fifths of the reports, a scenario is included here dealing with Pennsylvania migration and breeding. Please remember, however, that field data are always changing crane status, so the figures only represent the here and now in 2018. In general, expect more new observations and confirmed breeding sites but possibly no new counties because of lack of habitat. It is obvious that there are at least two migration avenues in Pennsylvania: west-east-west along Lake Erie and our northeastern counties; north-southwest-north close to Ohio and possibly extending to Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee for late wintering. Watch for crane populations to increase in summer and winter

flocks, especially in northwestern and northeastern breeding strongholds, and more cranes becoming permanent year-round residents. The key to growth, of course, is dependent upon a varied and sufficient suite of habitats through-out the breeding year: emergent wetlands like cattail, skunk cabbage, muskrat, and beaver pools, forest (palustrine) wetlands, scrub or shrub lands, grasslands, farm fields of grains like barley, wheat, rye, soybeans, and corn, and open water often in proximity to each other. Hopefully, farmers will be encouraged to not use clear-cutting, vacuum-like field procedures but instead stress corn stubbles. Cranes will migrate for the simple reason that there is not enough food to get through the winter. This is the single most important factor in the future crane breeding cycle in my estimation. It is invigorating to realize that a wild, large bird, the Sandhill Crane, has adapted so well to humans when other avian species are facing extirpation and need our immediate help (Wilhelm 2014:148-150). Figure 3 titled "Pennsylvania Sandhill Crane Phenological Calendar" depicts the dynamic annual cycle of crane breeding in Pennsylvania and should be watched annually for expected changes.

In conclusion, this report clearly indicates that the breeding population of cranes in Pennsylvania continues to grow steadily, and assuming continued breeding success, the population may keep expanding within and without the northwestern (Butler, Crawford, Erie, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren) and northeastern (Bradford, Columbia, Montour, Sullivan, and Wyoming) breeding strongholds. Already in March 2018 a new third confirmed breeding site has been recorded in Butler (Carlin, Baptiste, Wilhelm).



In flight over South Avis, *Clinton* 16 March 2011. (Wayne Laubscher)

Perhaps a continuing regional crane population increase (Michigan, Ontario, Ohio, and New York) would help balance the situation but ultimately breeding population size within Pennsylvania will be closely tied to quality and availability of wetland suites. This ecological fact calls for continued management and endorsement of emergent wetlands at known occupied (mostly State Game Lands) and potentially suitable unoccupied habitat areas (mostly private lands). Further, conserving wetland suites in wintering and important stopover areas will be essential for maintaining viable breeding populations in and out of Pennsylvania. Birdwatchers and citizen scientists are encouraged to increase awareness of conservation among local farmers and rural families, stressing the ecological importance of why and how to preserve cranes and other wildlife, the benefits of which extend beyond the wellbeing of birds. The Avian Conservation Plan of the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed is adding the crane to its list of avian species of special concern not because it is rare but because it represents a positive human-oriented rallying model for private landowners to get involved with conserving wetland suites (Wilhelm 2014:148-150)

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Figure 1

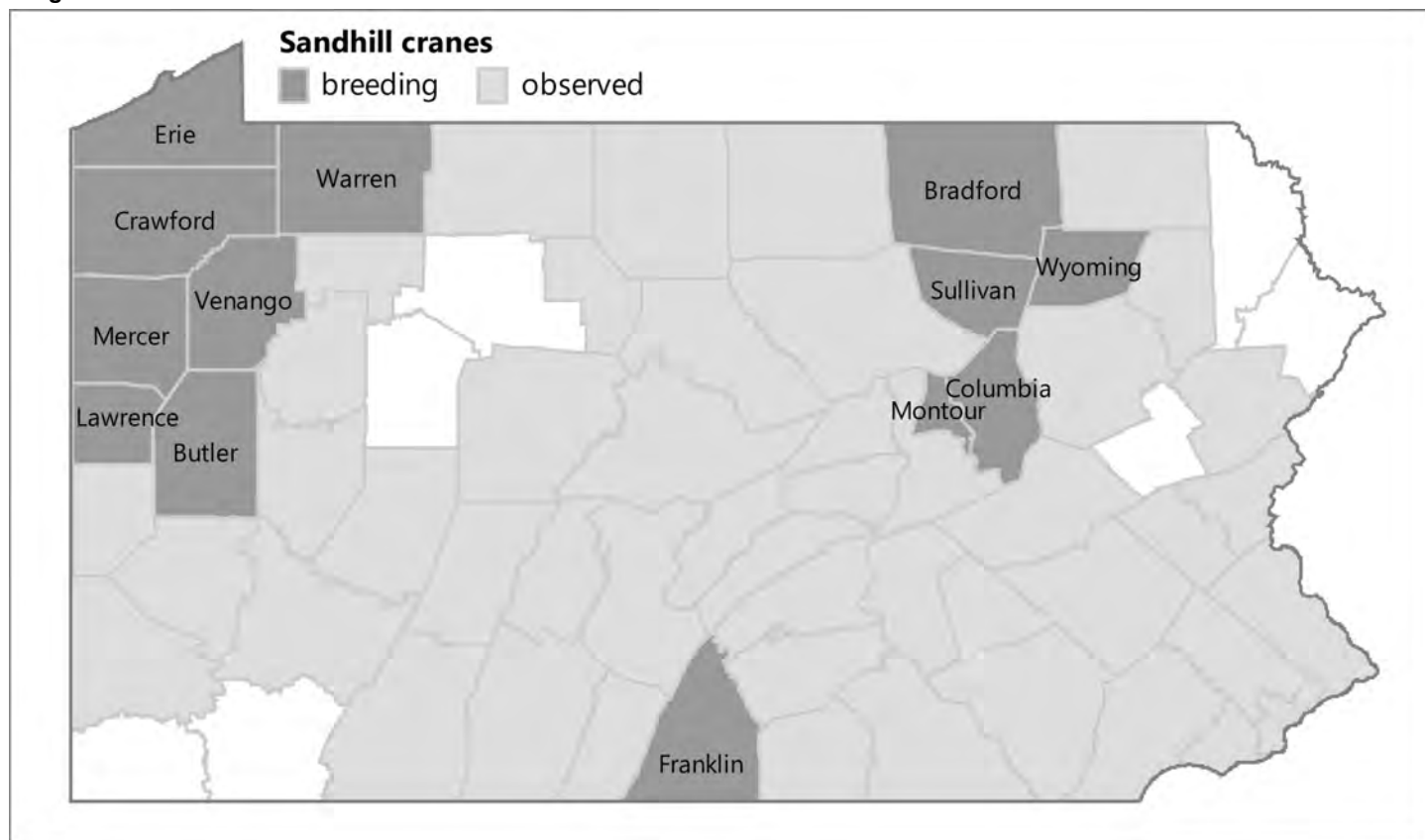
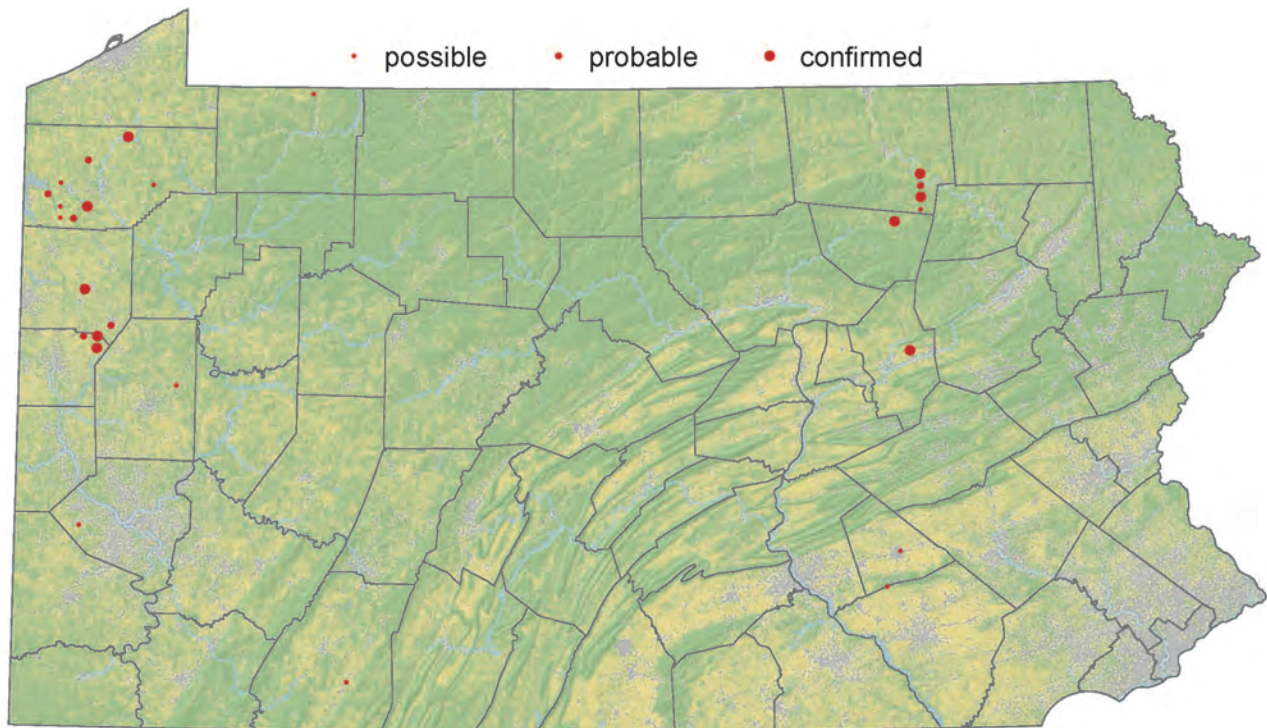


Figure 2: Breeding Bird Atlas map for Sandhill Cranes (2004-2008)



Map_9.43.1



Elegance in SGL 145, *Lebanon* New Year's Day 2010 (Patricia and Richard Williams)



Family in Richland Twp., *Venango* 5 September 2017 (Jeffrey Hall)

THE 2017-2018 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT IN PENNSYLVANIA

Nick Bolgiano

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held for the 118th time during December 14, 2017 to January 5, 2018. (I refer to a year as the one in which Christmas occurred; the 118th count is referred to as occurring in 2017.)

Seventy-four sites reported, including all usual sites except Harrisburg. The 5311 statewide party-hours were slightly below average.

Temperatures during the first part of the count period were seasonal, when more than half of counts were conducted. A cold snap began on Christmas Day and lasted past Jan 5, with some counts starting in subzero temperatures. Heavy rain occurred during the Audubon and Elverson counts on Dec 23, while Northern Lycoming County experienced heavy snow on Dec 30. At Erie, five ft of lake-effect snow around Christmas and more on Dec 29-30 had little effect on northwest region counts.

A total of 159 count-day species, plus three count-week species, were found statewide, which is near the average. Highlights included **Caspian Tern**, a new species for the Pennsylvania CBC and statewide individual bird highs for seven species: **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Bald Eagle**, **Golden Eagle**, **Sandhill Crane**, **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, **Merlin**, and **White-throated Sparrow**.

A report feature is that all mapped species in Figure 2 except Yellow-bellied Sapsucker are species of concern in the 2015 Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan (shown are sites with 20 or more party-hr).

Species Numbers

Southern Lancaster County's total of 107 count-day species was the statewide high. Southern Bucks County was second with 101 and Upper Bucks County was third with 96. The below table shows the top 10 list and Figure 1 shows a map of site species totals. Species totals for individual counts are available at the PSO website - pabirds.org .

Top 10 Sites for Species Number	
1 Southern Lancaster County	107
2 Southern Bucks County	101
3 Upper Bucks County	96
4 Delaware County	87
T5. Bethlehem-Easton	84
T5. Elverson	84
7 Lehigh Valley	83
T8. Lancaster	82
T8. Pennypack Valley	82
T8. Reading	82
T8. York Springs	82

Hits and Misses

A "hit" is an unlikely species found in 2017, while a "miss" is an expected species

not found ("unlikely" means recorded in less than 40% of the previous 25 years, while "expected" means recorded in more than 60% of those years). There were ten hits and five misses (both historically moderate).

Hits

Black-headed Gull
Caspian Tern
Eurasian Collared-dove
Snowy Owl
Ash-throated Flycatcher
Nashville Warbler
Harris's Sparrow
Western Tanager
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Bullock's Oriole

Misses

Black Scoter
Greater Egret
Vesper Sparrow
Brewer's Blackbird
Evening Grosbeak

The 25 **Greater white-fronted Geese** were a new Pennsylvania CBC high, with 14 at Reading, 8 at Lancaster, two at Indiana, and one at Lehigh Valley. The 52,000 **Snow Geese** at 22 sites included 37,000 at Bethlehem-Easton and nearly 11,000 at Lehigh Valley, the usual hot spots. Single **Ross's Geese** were at Bethlehem-Easton, Gettysburg, Grove City, and Lancaster. The 24 **Cackling Geese** at seven southeastern sites, Buffalo Creek and Erie, were typical of recent years. The two **Brant** at Lehigh Valley were the first CBC reports in six years.

Mute Swans increased over the period 1990-2013, but a slow decline has been observed over the last several years. The 655 **Tundra Swans** were the fewest since 2009, with most being found either in the southeast or along a trajectory from Lake Erie to the Chesapeake region (Figure 2). **Trumpeter Swan** at Western Chester County was a count-week species.

Mallard, the most common puddle duck, has been in slow decline during this century; their numbers are half the level seen during 1991-1999. The decline in **American Black Duck** began earlier, around 1970; numbers now are half of what they were a decade ago. Their distribution is shown in Figure 2; most were found in the northwest, southeast, or along the Susquehanna River. **Gadwall** numbers dropped back after six years of higher counts.

Among diving ducks, the 8600 **Common Mergansers** were the most since 2002. The numbers of **Scaup**, **Ring-necked Ducks**, **Buffleheads**, **Common Goldeneyes**, and **Hooded** and **Red-breasted Mergansers** were consistent with previous years.

Scoters were scarce; one **Surf Scoter** was at Erie, and single **White-winged Scoters** were at Erie and Warren. **Black Scoter** was missed for just the sixth time in 20 years, although it was a count-week bird at Erie.

Black-crowned Night-Heron, at Southern Bucks County, was present for only the second year of the last six. **Great Egret** went unreported for the second consecutive year. **Great Blue Heron** tallies continued lower than during 1991-2014. **Ruffed Grouse** continued a steady decline; 38 grouse were the fewest since 1959.

Red-throated Loon was at Erie. **Red-necked Grebe** was a count-week species at Southern Bucks County. **Great Cormorant** was at Pennypack Valley and Southern Bucks County.

Osprey was at Pocono Mountain. The 804 **Bald Eagles** were slightly more than the previous Pennsylvania high of 793 set in 2015, and included 103 at Southern Lancaster County, 65 at Southern Bucks County, 57 at Linesville, and 46 at Lancaster. The 173 **Northern Harriers** were slightly fewer than 2016's 180, but equally widespread, reported by 75% of sites. The 470 **Cooper's Hawks** were slightly below the previous year's record high of 484. **Northern Goshawk** was at Clarion, Dingman's Ferry, and Johnstown.

The 192 **Red-shouldered Hawks** were just short of 2016's record high of 197. The 2906 **Red-tailed Hawks** were the fewest since 2000, likely explained by migrants that once wintered in the Susquehanna Valley and southeast now wintering farther north (Bolgiano and Grove 2018). The 25 **Rough-legged Hawks** matched the same relatively low number as in 2016. The 12 **Golden Eagles** set a new Pennsylvania CBC high, one more than the previous high attained in both 2001 and 2016, and included three each at Benezette and Lebanon County and two at Hamburg.

Sandhill Crane numbers took a further jump upward, from 246 in 2016 to 374 in 2017, with 205 at Grove City, 164 at Linesville, three at Upper Bucks County, and two at Butler County. While the 2016 addition of the Grove City count boosted the Pennsylvania crane count, Linesville numbers illustrate how cranes have steadily increased in recent years; the first crane reported there was just twelve years ago. **Virginia Rail** was at Erie. **American Woodcock** was at Delaware County and Johnstown.

In recent years, increasingly more **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** have been reported away from their original core area at Southern Bucks County and this trend continued in 2017. While the 183 Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Southern Bucks County led statewide counts, the total number was higher to the north: 148 at

Upper Bucks County, 103 at Bethlehem-Easton, and 17 at Lehigh Valley, the latter two tallies being the historical site highs. There were also seven at Central Bucks County, and singles at Pittsburgh, Reading, and Southern Lancaster County. Southern Bucks County and Upper Bucks County ranked third and fourth, respectively in North American totals for Lesser Black-backed Gull. The Central Bucks County total was appreciably lower than the 285 in 2016, but not unprecedented - only 11 were found in 2012.

The 53,500 **Herring Gulls** at Southern Bucks County was again a continent-wide CBC high by a large margin, and representative of counts there in the last decade. Of the 936 statewide **Great Black-backed Gulls**, 796 were at Southern Bucks County. Twenty-two of the 27 **Iceland Gulls** and all three **Glaucous Gulls** were at Southern Bucks County. **Black-headed Gull** was at Delaware County. There were only 17 **Bonaparte's Gulls**, at four sites.

Caspian Tern at Pocono Mountain was a Pennsylvania CBC first. **Eurasian Collared-Dove** at Chambersburg was the fourth Pennsylvania CBC report.

The 229 **Eastern Screech-Owls** at Upper Bucks County was just shy of their North American record 237 set in 2010. According to compiler Bill Etter, observers weren't trying for a record, but conditions were ideal, with a high population of owls and an enthusiastic group of owlers. On the strength of their screech-owl tally, Upper Bucks was the state's top owling site (see below table).

Top 10 Sites for Owls

	Barn	EScr	GH	Snowy	Barr	LE	SE	NSW	Sum
1. Upper Bucks County	0	229	7	0	2	1	0	2	241
2. Southern Lancaster County	0	54	29	0	5	1	0	6	95
3. Lewistown	1	54	9	0	3	0	0	0	67
4. Huntingdon	0	22	26	0	5	7	0	3	63
5. West Chester	0	42	9	0	3	0	0	0	54
6. Clarion	0	17	7	0	5	0	11	1	41
7. Central Bucks County	0	33	3	0	0	0	0	2	38
8. Pittsburgh	0	18	13	0	2	0	0	0	33
9. State College	0	18	11	1	2	0	0	0	32
10. Lititz	0	16	8	0	0	2	3	0	29

Among the less common owls, **Barn Owl** was at Lewistown and Penns Creek, the same sites as the previous year. Four **Snowy Owls** were reported at Erie and singles were at Linesville and State College; the total of six was the second highest number on a Pennsylvania CBC, after seven in 2013. The 12 **Long-eared Owls** at five sites, including seven at Huntingdon, was typical of recent years. A 2017 highlight was the 29 **Shorted-eared Owls** at nine sites, the highest tally in the Pennsylvania CBC since 2003. This included 11 at Clarion and six at Gettysburg. Their distribution is shown in Figure 2.

For the first time in eight years, there were no reports of **Rufous Hummingbird**, although an unidentified hummingbird was seen at Warren.

The 63 **Red-headed Woodpeckers** was the second-highest statewide tally in the last decade, after a low year in 2016. There were 13 at Gettysburg, 12 at York Springs, eight at York, seven at Newville, six at Linesville, five at Central Bucks County, and 12 at nine other sites. Their distribution is shown in Figure 2, with the highest concentrations in the south-central region. The 5600 **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** and 923 **Pileated Woodpeckers** were the highest statewide tallies in the Pennsylvania CBC when adjusted for effort. The 850 **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** was considerably higher than the previous statewide high of 681 in 2015 and even more noteworthy when adjusted for effort. Their distribution is shown in Figure 2, with the highest concentrations at lower elevations.

The 672 **American Kestrels** maintained the status quo of the previous four years. The 62 **Merlins** were ten more than the previous season's high. A year after Pittsburgh set the individual site record with seven Merlins, Upper Bucks County tied that number in 2017. The 40 **Peregrine Falcons** was second-most to last year's 45.

Ash-throated Flycatcher at Upper Bucks County was the fourth Pennsylvania CBC report. A flycatcher thought to be other than **Eastern Phoebe** was at Bloomsburg. For the fourth consecutive year, **Northern Shrikes** were few in number, with two at Gordon Glen Belsano and singles at Grove City and Huntingdon. The 541 **Common**

Ravens were just shy of the 2015 statewide high of 557, but the highest tally when adjusted for effort. Once again, **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** were numerous at Pennypack Valley, where 60 were tallied.

Since West Nile Virus (WNV) first appeared in Pennsylvania during 2000, four species have shown similar downward trends in the Pennsylvania CBC: Ruffed Grouse, **Great Horned Owl**, **Black-capped Chickadee**, and **Tufted Titmouse**. WNV has been implicated in the declines of Ruffed Grouse (Stauffer 2017) and Great Horned Owl (Bolgiano 2012). Details will appear in a future article.

This was a non-irruption winter for **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, after a modest-

sized irruption the previous winter. While **Brown Creeper** numbers tend to vary from year to year, the 387 Brown Creepers were the fewest since 2000. There was also much variability in Brown Creeper numbers among sites (Figure 2). **House Wren** was at Pocono Mountain and Southern Lancaster County, while **Marsh Wren** was at Delaware County.

As in 2016, only six warbler species were reported, including just two not reported annually or nearly so. Four **Orange-crowned Warblers** were reported, including two at Pennypack Valley and singles at Audubon and Southern Bucks County. **Nashville Warbler** at Western Chester County was the ninth report in the Pennsylvania CBC and the second consecutive year for one.

The 32,000 **White-throated Sparrows** was the highest statewide total on a Pennsylvania CBC, led by Hamburg's 3000, the third highest North American count in 2017. **Harris's Sparrow** at Central Bucks County was the seventh historical report in a Pennsylvania CBC. **Lincoln's Sparrow** was at Curtin, Lebanon County, Lehigh Valley, and Southern Bucks County. **Oregon Junco** was at Erie. **Vesper Sparrow** was missed for the fifth time in the last ten years.

Western Tanager at Lititz was the 6th PA report, while **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at Washington was the 10th report.

The 30 **Eastern Meadowlarks** continued their low numbers. There were nine at York Springs and eight at Huntingdon, with most being found in the south-central (Figure 2). The 299 **Rusty Blackbirds** were the most reported since 2011; they were concentrated in the southeast, Mansfield-Wellsboro, and Butler County (Figure 2).

As happens periodically, no large blackbird flocks were reported. Just two years after the largest Pennsylvania CBC count of 1.2 million **Red-winged Blackbirds**, the 6500 were the fewest since 1995. The 10,700 **Common Grackles** were the fewest since 1992. The 7100 **Brown-headed Cowbirds** were relatively few, but similar to levels of other recent years. **Brewer's and Yellow-headed Blackbirds** went unreported. **Bullock's Oriole** was at Pittsburgh, the fourth report in a Pennsylvania CBC and the second consecutive year for one. **Baltimore Oriole** was at New Bloomfield.

No winter finch irruptions were detected. The 178 **Pine Siskins** at 19 sites were typical of a non-irruption winter, and included 57 at Pleasantville, 32 at Beaver, and 30 at Bethlehem-Easton. Two **White-winged Crossbills** were at Chambersburg and a single **Common Redpoll** was at Pennypack Valley. **Purple Finches** were relatively scarce, with 168 in 2017 compared to a 10-year average of 463. No

Evening Grosbeaks were reported; they are now reported about every other year.

Distribution Changes of Red-tailed Hawks in Pennsylvania and Regionally. *Pennsylvania Birds* 31:193-203.

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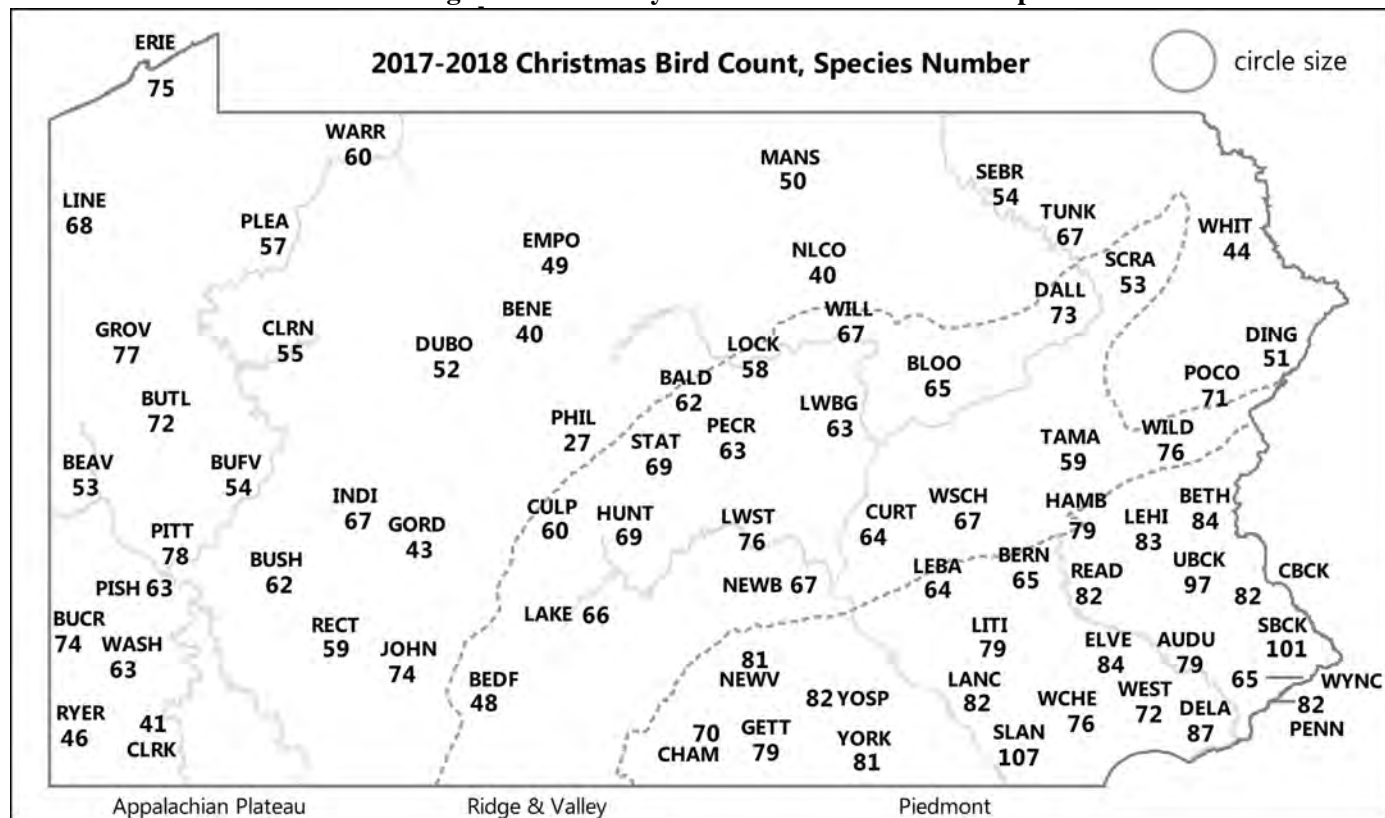
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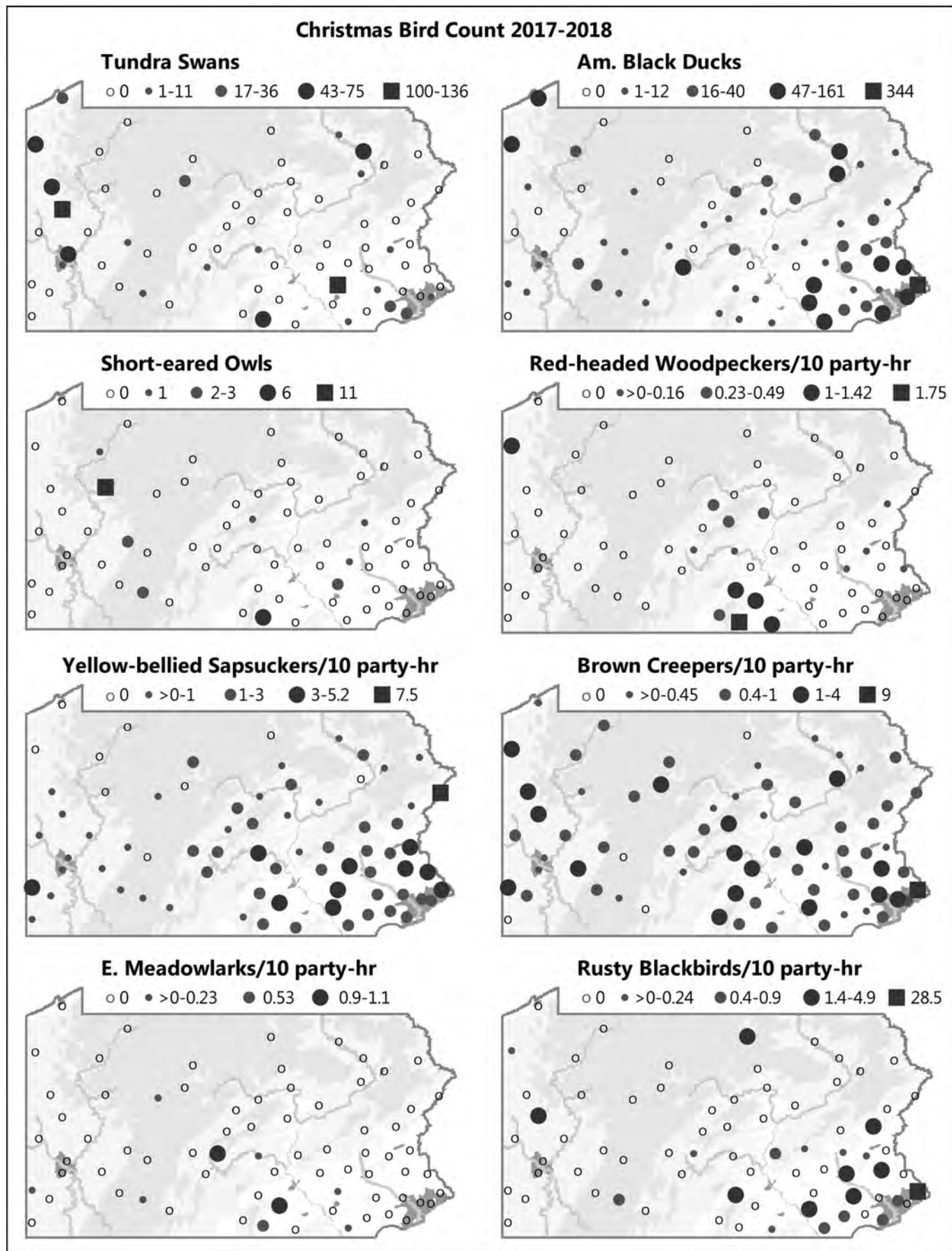
Figure 1. Pennsylvania CBC sites and species



SITE ABBREVIATIONS

AUDU	Audubon	DALL	Dallas Area	LWBG	Lewisburg	SBCK	Southern Bucks Co.
BALD	Bald Eagle S.P.	DELA	Delaware County	LWST	Lewistown	SLAN	Southern Lancaster Co.
BEAV	Beaver	DING	Dingman's Ferry	LINE	Linesville	SEBR	Se. Bradford Co.
BEDF	Bedford County	DUBO	Dubois	LITI	Lititz	STAT	State College
BENE	Benezette	ELVE	Elverson	LOCK	Lock Haven-Jersey Shore	TAMA	Tamaqua
BERN	Bernville	EMPO	Emporium	MANS	Mansfield-Wellsboro	TUNK	Tunkhannock
BETH	Bethlehem-Easton	ERIE	Erie	NEWB	New Bloomfield	UBCK	Upper Bucks County
BLOO	Bloomsburg	GETT	Gettysburg	NEWV	Newville	WARR	Warren
BUCR	Buffalo Creek	GORD	Gordon Glen	NLCO	Northern Lycoming Co.	WASH	Washington
BUFV	Buffalo Creek Valley	GROV	Grove City	PECR	Penns Creek	WCHE	Western Chester Co.
BUSH	Bushy Run S.P.	HAMB	Hamburg	PENN	Pennypack Valley	WEST	West Chester
BUTL	Butler County	HUNT	Huntingdon	PISH	Pittsburgh South Hills	WHIT	White Mills
CBCK	Central Bucks Co.	INDI	Indiana	PITT	Pittsburgh	WILD	Wild Creek-Little Gap
CHAM	Chambersburg	JOHN	Johnstown	PLEA	Pleasantville	WILL	Williamsport
CLRN	Clarion	LAKE	Lake Raystown	POCO	Pocono Mountain	WSCH	Western Schuylkill Co.
CLRK	Clarksville	LANC	Lancaster	READ	Reading	WYNC	Wyncote
CULP	Culp	LEBA	Lebanon County	RECT	Rector	YORK	York
CURT	Curtin	LEHI	Lehigh Valley	RYER	Ryerson	YOSP	York Springs

Figure 2. Individual species density maps. Background shows elevations (<1000, 1000-2000, >2000 ft) and main cities.



SPECIES	TOTAL	SITES	HIGH	HIGH COUNT	SPECIES	TOTAL	SITES	HIGH	HIGH COUNT	SPECIES	TOTAL	SITES	HIGH	HIGH COUNT
Gr. White-fronted Goose	25	4	14	READ	Killdeer	107	32	14	YORK	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1	1	1	SLAN
Snow Goose	52269	23	37450	BETH	Calidris sp	1	1	1	WVST	Eastern Bluebird	6025	71	355	UBCK
Ross's Goose	4	4	1	BETH,NEWB,GROVE,LANC	Wilson's Snipe	42	13	6	WCHE	Hermit Thrush	338	43	32	SLAN
Brant	2	1	2	LEHI	American Woodcock	2	2	1	DELA, JOHN	American Robin	21779	67	5624	CBCK
Cackling Goose	24	9	6	AUDU	Black-headed Gull	1	1	1	DELA	Gray Catbird	40	22	4	PENN
Canada Goose	175302	73	16481	SBCK	Bonaparte's Gull	17	4	7	INDI	Northern Mockingbird	1736	64	113	SLAN
Mute Swan	129	25	30	SBCK	Ring-billed Gull	42489	49	8437	SLAN	Brown Thrasher	16	12	3	WASH
Tundra Swan	655	22	136	LITI	Herring Gull	54936	26	53534	SBCK	European Starling	157285	74	19300	BUCR
Wood Duck	52	14	17	BETH	Iceland Gull	27	6	22	SBCK	American Pipit	317	20	85	YOSP
Gadwall	418	25	128	65	Lesser Black-backed Gull	461	8	183	SBCK	Cedar Waxwing	4383	59	422	UBCK
American Wigeon	65	12	31	YOSP	Glaucous Gull	3	1	3	SBCK	Lapland Longspur	10	9	2	GROV
American Black Duck	1767	58	344	SBCK	Great Black-backed Gull	937	13	796	SBCK	Snow Bunting	121	12	50	GROV
Mallard	18888	70	916	CHAM	gull sp.	132	5	75	SLAN	Orange-crowned Warbler	4	3	2	PENN
Northern Shoveler	135	5	76	YOSP	Rock Pigeon	23178	72	1150	CHAM	Nashville Warbler	1	1	1	WCHE
Northern Pintail	185	24	47	UBCK	Eurasian Collared-Dove	1	1	1	CHAM	Common Yellowthroat	3	2	2	DELA
Green-winged Teal	68	17	11	UBCK	Mourning Dove	26705	73	1660	LEHI	Palm Warbler	2	2	1	SBCK, SLAN
Canvasback	43	5	23	ERIE	Barn Owl	2	2	1	LWST, PEOR	Pine Warbler	3	3	1	AUDU, NEWV, SBCK
Redhead	45	12	11	ERIE	Eastern Screech-Owl	843	58	229	UBCK	Myrtle Warbler	633	43	142	UBCK
Ring-necked Duck	629	30	279	SBCK	Great Horned Owl	279	57	29	SLAN	Eastern Towhee	388	45	52	BUCR
Greater Scaup	210	6	202	ERIE	Snowy Owl	6	3	4	ERIE	American Tree Sparrow	2901	71	245	LINE
Lesser Scaup	221	13	193	ERIE	Barred Owl	70	34	5	CLRN, HUNT, SLAN	Chipping Sparrow	106	20	22	PENN
scaup sp.	1230	2	1229	ERIE	Long-eared Owl	12	5	7	HUNT	Field Sparrow	472	43	31	UBCK
Surf Scoter	1	1	1	ERIE	Short-eared Owl	29	9	11	CLRN	Savannah Sparrow	183	20	20	WYNC
White-winged Scoter	2	2	1	ERIE	Northern Saw-whet Owl	28	14	6	SLAN	Fox Sparrow	115	31	22	DELA
Long-tailed Duck	6	5	2	SLAN	hummingbird sp.	1	1	1	WARR	Song Sparrow	9571	73	536	PITT
Bufflehead	559	31	116	SBCK	Belted Kingfisher	519	61	31	UBCK	Lincoln's Sparrow	4	4	1	URT, LEBA, LEHI, SBCK
Common Goldeneye	604	18	342	ERIE	Red-headed Woodpecker	83	15	13	GETT	Swamp Sparrow	447	50	34	DELA
Hooded Merganser	923	42	123	WARR	Red-bellied Woodpecker	5609	74	268	UBCK	White-throated Sparrow	32268	73	3014	HAMB
Common Merganser	8714	57	2509	SLAN	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	850	63	57	UBCK	Harris's Sparrow	1	1	1	CBCK
Red-breasted Merganser	913	7	905	ERIE	Downy Woodpecker	5098	74	210	PITT	White-crowned Sparrow	1133	52	329	GETT
merganser sp.	7	1	7	WYNC	Hairy Woodpecker	1405	74	67	PITT	sparrow sp.	90	4	55	SLAN
Ruddy Duck	308	20	92	SBCK	Yellow-shafted Flicker	2002	66	135	UBCK	Slate-colored Junco	46128	74	3159	HAMB
duck sp.	7	1	7	WYNC	Pleated Woodpecker	923	73	43	BUCR	Oregon Junco	1	1	1	ERIE
Ring-necked Pheasant	140	34	36	RECT	American Kestrel	672	65	50	LWBG	Western Tanager	1	1	1	LITI
Ruffed Grouse	38	17	10	EMPO	Merlin	62	30	7	UBCK	Northern Cardinal	13514	74	803	PITT
Wild Turkey	3307	65	242	PITT	Peregrine Falcon	40	22	5	BLOO	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	1	1	WASH
Red-throated Loon	1	1	1	ERIE	falcon sp.	1	1	1	AUDU	Red-winged Blackbird	6547	50	892	UBCK
Common Loon	14	7	4	YORK	Eastern Phoebe	18	14	3	SLAN	Eastern Meadowlark	30	9	9	YOSP
Pied-billed Grebe	103	24	29	SBCK	Ash-throated Flycatcher	1	1	1	UBCK	Rusty Blackbird	299	21	87	UBCK
Horned Grebe	45	9	18	ERIE	Tyrannidae sp.	1	1	1	BLOO	Common Grackle	11798	39	4215	SLAN
Double-cr. Cormorant	126	9	52	DELA	Northern Shrike	4	3	2	GORD	Brown-headed Cowbird	7069	39	4281	CHAM
Great Cormorant	15	2	10	PENN	Blue Jay	15774	74	754	UBCK	blackbird sp.	1078	6	730	SLAN
Great Blue Heron	506	59	34	SBCK	American Crow	58479	74	15890	PITT	Bullock's Oriole	1	1	1	PITT
Black Vulture	2214	34	236	SLAN	Fish Crow	1460	25	748	SBCK	Baltimore Oriole	1	1	1	NEWB
Turkey Vulture	3581	40	375	UBCK	crow sp.	857	9	462	LANC	Purple Finch	168	18	12	CLUP, CURT, GORD, LANC
Osprey	1	1	1	POCO	Common Raven	541	65	40	BENE	House Finch	9594	72	483	CHAM
Bald Eagle	804	69	103	SLAN	Horned Lark	1821	46	2032	LITI	White-winged Crossbill	2	1	2	CHAM
Northern Harrier	173	56	9	UBCK	N. Rough-winged Swallow	60	1	60	PENN	Common Redpoll	178	19	57	PENN
Sharp-shinned Hawk	257	66	16	DELA	Carolina Chickadee	3879	31	328	BUCR	Pine Siskin	178	19	57	PLEA
Cooper's Hawk	470	71	19	PITT, UBCK	Black-capped Chickadee	6034	58	319	DUBO	American Goldfinch	7667	74	397	PITT
Northern Goshawk	3	3	1	CLRN, DING, JOHN	Chickadee species	1755	28	283	PITT	House Sparrow	16921	74	1056	CHAM
Accipiter sp	21	12	4	LEBA	Tufted Titmouse	7370	74	419	PITT	Individuals	931107		86613	SBCK
Red-shouldered Hawk	192	48	16	YOSP	Red-breasted Nuthatch	149	41	22	HUNT	Species	159	107	107	SLAN
Red-tailed Hawk	2906	73	102	UBCK	White-breasted Nuthatch	5487	74	211	BUCR	Party Hours	5091	278	278	PITT
Rough-legged Hawk	25	15	5	PECR	Brown Creeper	387	68	24	LWST					
Buteo sp	1	1	1	CBCK	House Wren	2	2	1	POCO, SLAN					
Golden Eagle	12	7	3	BENE, LEBA	Winter Wren	304	57	32	UBCK					
hawk sp.	6	4	2	BUFV, WYNC	Marsh Wren	1	1	1	DELA					
Virginia Rail	1	1	1	ERIE	Carolina Wren	4694	72	253	BUCR					
American Coot	967	20	565	ERIE	Golden-crowned Kinglet	2135	72	91	LWST					
Sandhill Crane	374	4	205	GROV	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	232	37	28	BETH					

The 2018 Winter Raptor Survey in Pennsylvania

Greg Grove

Introduction. The 18th Pennsylvania Winter Raptor Survey (WRS) was conducted from 13 January through 19 February 2018 with at least one route in 65 of 67 counties.

WRS is a roadside survey with simple but specific guidelines. All raptors and vultures are recorded and data are collected on sex/age/color form. Routes range in length, mostly between 25–90 miles. A map showing details of most routes is at the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology website (PSO website). Procedures and cumulative results were summarized previously (Grove 2010, Grove and Bolgiano 2012).

Effort and Weather. Over 235 routes were run, comprising 856 hours and 12,680 miles of observation, the highest level of effort ever (previous high - 835 hours in 2016). As usual, *Lancaster* observers led the state, logging 36 hours, followed by *Centre* and *Clarion*, both at 32.5 hours (Table 2). Weather during most of the survey period was fairly normal, with snowfall close to average or a bit below over much of the state with the usual caveat of lots of snow in the northwest. Possibly the biggest impact of weather on raptors was during the month leading up to the the survey period, when temperatures were well below normal from before Christmas through mid-January. Possibly this was a factor in decreased

the survey period, except that February saw enough snow and just enough cold to keep some snow on the ground in colder parts of the state.

2018 Results

Summary. Last year, the 2017 WRS saw several species set record high counts, likely because of high coverage and mild weather. This year, despite the highest effort ever, most species fell back somewhat from last years' numbers. All four of the major open-country raptors that have been the focus of WRS saw decreased hourly detection rates compared to 2017 (Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks, American Kestrel). Two species set record highs for statewide total count – Turkey Vulture and Red-shouldered Hawk and, of course, Bald Eagles continued strong. On the other hand, Rough-legged Hawks had their second lowest hourly rate ever, and Red-tailed Hawks third lowest. The results reported below are largely in agreement with those of this season's Christmas Bird Count results, reported elsewhere in this issue.

Results for individual counties are in the Appendix.

Red-tailed Hawk. The count of 3098 Red-tailed Hawks was the fifth highest ever, due largely to the high level of coverage; however, the hourly rate of 3.62 was the third lowest ever (Figure 1). The long-term trend for the hourly rate of WRS Red-tails appears to be slightly downward. This mirrors, though to a substantially lesser degree, the highly negative trend of the last decade in the counts of Red-tails at fall hawk watches. The Red-tail population in the eastern U.S. seems to be going through changes in the dynamics of seasonal movement - see the article in the fall 2017 issue of *Pennsylvania Birds* (Bolgiano and Grove 2018).

The distribution of Red-tails was normal, with highest densities in the Susquehanna and Juniata River valleys and in counties west of the Allegheny Plateau (Figure 2). *Lancaster* led again with 167 Red-tails, followed by *Huntingdon* with 123 (Table 2). Among counties with at least seven hours of coverage, *Adams*, *Northumberland*, *Snyder*, and *Westmoreland* averaged over 6.0 Red-tails per hour.

American Kestrel. During the very cold seasons in 2014 and 2015, the WRS hourly rates for American Kestrel were among the lowest ever (0.59 and 0.57, respectively). (The lowest ever was extremely cold, snowy 2004 at 0.52/hr). With milder temperatures and lack of snow, the rates rebounded significantly in 2016 and

especially 2017 (0.86/hr). This year, the rate fell 18% from last year (Figure 1). The factors that dictate winter population levels of kestrels are likely complex, but the severity of the season clearly plays a role (Bolgiano et al. 2015). This year, weeks of extreme cold preceded the survey season, and, predictably, kestrel numbers were lower than 2016 and 2017. Presumably, during severe winters kestrels either withdraw further south or suffer higher mortality. Following the extreme cold of the first half of January, milder conditions prevailed, perhaps preventing the overall hourly rate from dropping to the extreme levels of the coldest seasons of the past.

The kestrel total in 2018 was 600, fifth highest ever thanks primarily to record-high effort. However, the hourly rate of 0.70 /hr was fifth lowest ever (Figure 1). As usual, most Kestrels were in the central and lower Susquehanna and Juniata River valleys, with good numbers also in the far southwest (Figure 2). *Franklin*, *Adams*, and *Snyder* led with 43, 32, and 32, respectively (Table 2). In counties with at least seven hours of effort, *Adams*, *Franklin*, *Fulton*, *Juniata*, *Snyder*, and *Washington* averaged over 1.5 kestrels/hr. Numbers in the southeast, despite the milder winter climate there, stayed at the same low rate where they have been for many years, well below that of the south-central agricultural counties.

Of 525 Kestrels sexed, 343 (65%) were males, consistent with previous results (range: 59-66%).

Table 1. Pennsylvania WRS Species Counts for 2018 and High Counts.

Species	2018	High Count
Bald Eagle	427	487 (2016)
Northern Harrier	117	133 (2008)
Sharp-sh'ed Hawk	59	62 (2017)
Cooper's Hawk	119	132 (2017)
Northern Goshawk	1	5 (2004)
Red-shouldered Hawk	144	144 (2018)
Red-tailed Hawk	3098	3584 (2016)
Rough-legged Hawk	65	341 (2004)
Golden Eagle	3	10 (2015)
American Kestrel	600	711 (2017)
Merlin	15	16 (2017)
Peregrine Falcon	18	19 (2017)
Black Vulture	1320	1463 (2017)
Turkey Vulture	3173	3173 (2018)
Northern Shrike	3	10 (2012)
Hours	855.75	855.75 (2018)
Miles	12,680	12,680 (2018)

numbers of Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels. Early surveys saw some snow cover throughout the state. But with the moderate temperatures replacing extreme cold and the lack of big storms, snow cover was largely lacking for much of

Table 3. American Kestrel counts and hourly rates in SE Pennsylvania (*Bucks*, *Chester*, *Delaware*, *Lehigh*, *Montgomery*, *Northampton*).

Year	Hrs.	Kestrels	Kestrels/hr.
2001	23	28	1.24
2002	23	30	1.33
2003	44	35	0.80
2004	49	11	0.23
2005	45	18	0.40
2006	63	18	0.29
2007	63	18	0.29
2008	77	22	0.29
2009	74	25	0.34
2010	63	16	0.25
2011	64	12	0.19
2012	88	19	0.22
2013	100	35	0.36
2014	106	18	0.17
2015	103	23	0.22
2016	100	19	0.19
2017	102	23	0.23
2018	107	28	0.26

Rough-legged Hawk. This year's count of 65 Rough-legged Hawks was 29% lower than last year's count of 91. The 2018 total was the fourth lowest ever; two of the three lower years were in 2001 and 2002, when coverage was well under half of the 2018

Table 2. Top three counties for effort and selected species.

Rank	1	2	3
Hours	Lancaster (36)	Centre (32.5)	Clarion (32.5)
Bald Eagle	Lancaster (115)	Bucks (32)	Juniata (20)
N. Harrier	Mifflin (12)	Centre (8)	Hunt, Northumb (6)
Sharp-sh. Hawk	Bucks (6)	Centre (5)	Somerset (5)
Cooper's Hawk	Franklin (10)	Lancaster (10)	Montgomery (7)
Northern Goshawk	Centre (1)		
Red-sh. Hawk	Crawford (16)	Adams (13)	Huntingdon (11)
Red-tailed Hawk	Lancaster (167)	Huntingdon (123)	Centre, Cumb. (120)
Rough-lg. Hawk	Crawford (9)	Clarion (8)	Centre (7)
Golden Eagle	Fulton (1)	Lancaster (1)	Pike (1)
Am. Kestrel	Franklin (43)	Adams (32)	Snyder (32)
Merlin	Bucks (3)	Montgomery (2)	Snyder (2)
Peregrine Falcon	Lancaster (5)	Beaver, Cumb. (2)	Northumberland (2)
Turkey Vulture	Lancaster (1098)	Chester (366)	Adams (344)
Black Vulture	Chester (245)	Lancaster (214)	Berks (118)
Northern Shrike	Clarion (1)	Elk (1)	Warren (1)

hours. The hourly rate was 0.076, the second lowest ever, topping only 2002 (Figure 1). The state-wide total of Rough-legs on CBCs was also very low.

Rough-legs were found in 26 counties. The usual distribution pattern was evident; most Rough-legs were in northern counties with scattered southerly birds in south-central agricultural counties; somewhat surprising were one in *Bucks* and two in *Montgomery* (Figure 2). For the fifth consecutive year, *Crawford* led the way, tallying nine Rough-legs, followed *Clarion* (8), *Centre* (7), and *Lycoming* (6).

All Rough-legs were identified by color morph - 42 (65%) were light (2001-18 range = 60 -78%).

Northern Harrier. The Northern Harrier total of 117 and hourly rate of 0.14 were both down slightly from the past two years (Figure 1). Again this year, there were extended periods when snow cover was lacking, which may be an important factor for presence of wintering harriers.

The highest numbers of harriers came from central and south-central counties. *Mifflin* had 12 and *Centre* had 8; six more central counties had at least 5: *Columbia*, *Cumberland*, *Franklin*, *Huntingdon*, *Northumberland*, and *Perry* (Fig. 2).

Vultures. Both vultures posted strong numbers again, not fazed apparently by the early winter cold spell. The Turkey Vulture count of 3173 was the highest ever, resulting in the third highest hourly rate ever. The 1320 Black Vultures was second only to the record high 1463 of 2017, and the hourly rate was third highest ever (Figure 1).

As always, most vultures were in the southeast and, also as usual, *Lancaster* and *Chester* were tops for both; those two counties accounted for 43% of all vultures recorded (Figure 2, Table 2), thanks to good coverage and their location in the mild southeast. *Lancaster* counters accomplished a WRS first: with 1098 Turkey Vultures, it was the first time a single county reached 4 digits for a single species. *Chester*,

however, took the top position for Black Vulture away from *Lancaster*, with 245.

Despite the high numbers, both species were found in fewer counties this year than last (TV- 29; BV - 23), with perhaps fewer conspicuous outliers. (Figure 2). While obviously concentrated in the east, Turkey Vultures were recorded in all but two southern tier counties; primary outliers were singles in *Beaver* and *Indiana*. Black Vultures furthest from their southeastern base included 2 in *Centre* and 5 in *Lycoming*; small wintering populations may now be established in those counties.

Bald Eagle. Nothing new with Bald Eagles – the count was high again, with 427 tallied, second only to the 487 in 2016. The hourly rate of 0.50 was also second highest ever (Figure 1). Bald Eagles were recorded in 53 of the 65 reporting counties (Figure 2) with most in Susquehanna and Delaware River drainages and in northwestern counties. As usual, *Lancaster* led, tallying 115 Bald Eagles, a total that included 64 on a single count. *Bucks* and *Juniata* had 32 and 20, respectively. Thirteen counties reached double digits.

Of the 427 total Bald Eagles, 44% (190) were listed as immature, consistent with values of recent years.

Other Raptors Red-shouldered Hawks have been increasing on WRS routes (Grove and Bolgiano, 2014). They peaked in the especially cold years of 2014 and 2015, before falling off slightly in 2016 and 2017 (Figure 1). In 2018, they bounced back impressively - the count was 144, way above the previous high of 101 in 2014. As usual they were concentrated in the southeast and south-central counties and in the northwest (Figure 2). Leading counties were *Crawford*, *Adams*, and *Huntingdon*, with 16, 13, and 11, respectively. The Red-shoulder CBC count for the past season was also well above average.

Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Merlins, and Peregrine Falcons all were just slightly below the counts of 2017, when record highs were set for all four (Table 1,

2). Three Golden Eagles were found, about average. A Northern Goshawk in *Centre* was the first since 2015. Three Northern Shrikes were found, about average.

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Acknowledgements

I thank Nick Bolgiano for creation of the figures. Thanks to Frank Haas for generating the map showing WRS routes in each county (PSO website). And of course thanks go to the well over 100 birders and companions who gathered the data across the state.

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Hawkcount website: <http://www.hawkcount.org/>.

PSO website: <http://www.pabirds.org/>

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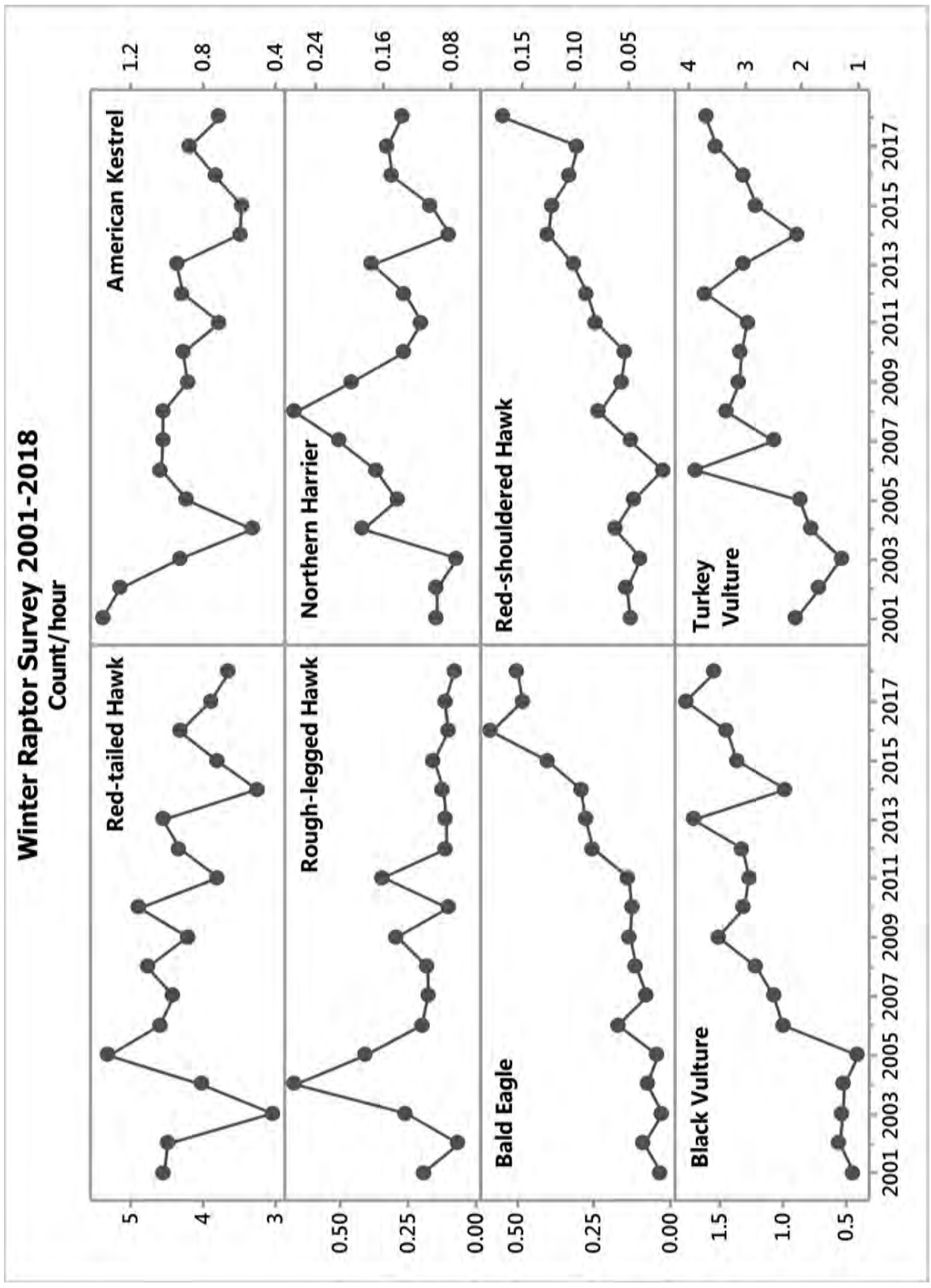
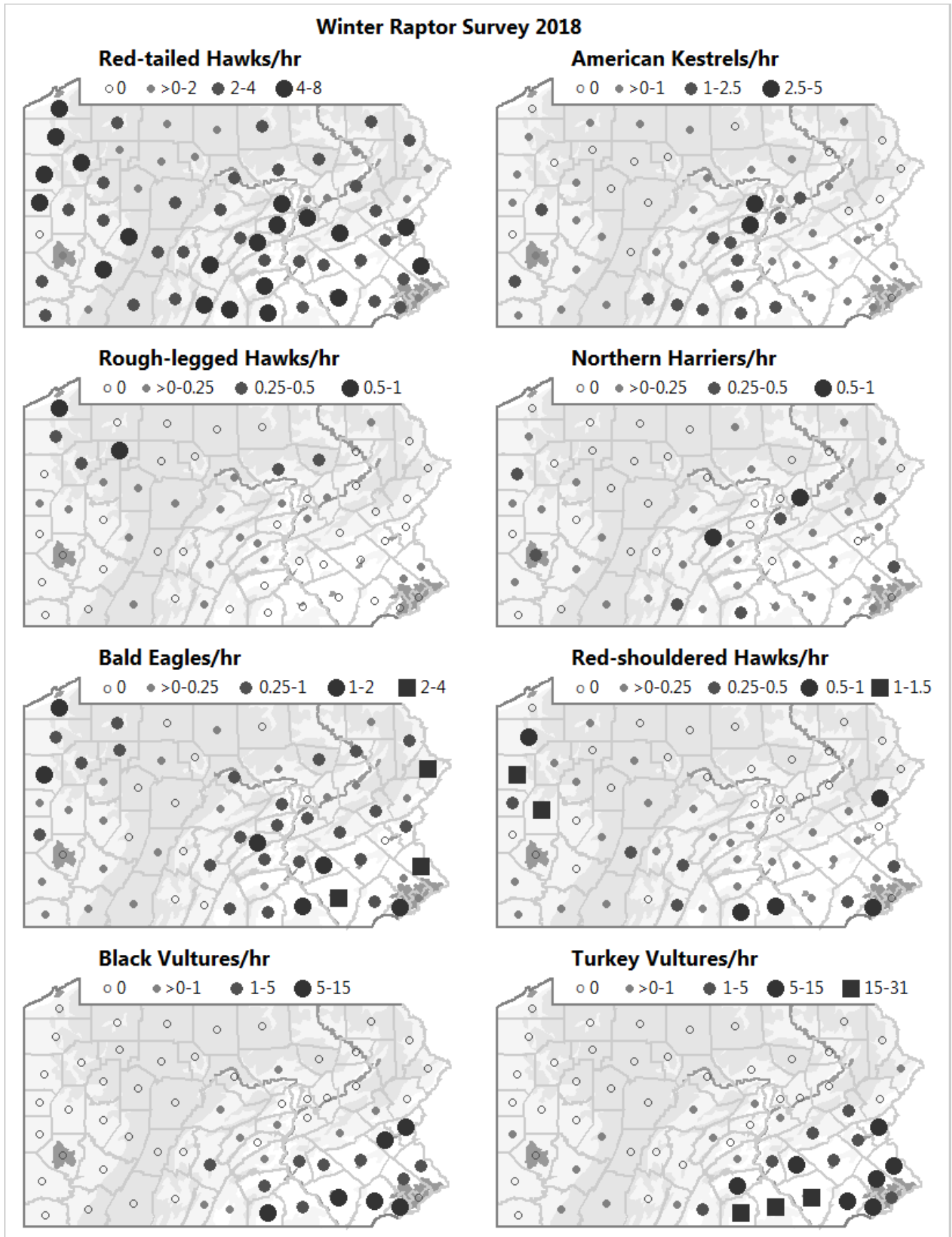


Figure 1. Pennsylvania WRS trends, 2001–2018. Data from all counties was combined and expressed as birds/hour.

Figure 2. Pennsylvania 2018 WRS results by county. Count and effort data from all routes in a given county were combined and results expressed as birds/hour.



Appendix: 2018 Winter Raptor Survey Results

County	Hours	Miles	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	TV	BV	NShr
Adams	15.75	55	6	4		4		13	112			32			344	106	
Allegheny	3.25	56		1					5			2		1			
Armstrong	11.5	164	2		1	1			42			4	1				
Beaver	2.25	24	2											2	1		
Bedford	7.5	184		1	1	1			21			8					
Berks	24.25	374	12	2	1	1		2	85			14			100	118	
Blair	11	153			1	1		1	29			10					
Bradford																	
Bucks	15.25	169	32	4	6	3		5	61	1		5	3	1	120	69	
Butler	9	159	1	1	1	1		9	19	1		9					
Cambria	4.5	101	1			2		2	11								
Cameron	2	62							1								
Carbon	7.75	125	4	1		2		1	22						8	3	
Centre	32.5	364	4	8	5	4	1	1	120	7		22			1	2	
Chester	25.25	433	11	3		2		10	82			3	1		366	245	
Clarion	32.5	482	4	4	2	3		3	83	8		5					1
Clearfield	10.75	238						2	26	2							
Clinton	8	126	2			4			20	1		3		1			
Columbia	9.5	172	1	5		4			16	1		13					
Crawford	19.5	276	14	1	1	2		16	84	9		10					
Cumberland	22.5	333	3	5	2	2		2	120			27		2	284	86	
Dauphin	12	227	6			2		2	27			8			53	12	
Delaware	10.75	156	13	1	2	1		8	39			1		1	75	58	
Elk	8.25	175	1					1	7								1
Erie	2.5	84	4						15	2							
Fayette	18.75	294	1		1	2		1	33			11			5		
Forest	2.75	60	2						1	2							
Franklin	25	412	7	5	2	10		4	114			43	1		29	20	
Fulton	10	138		4				3	48	1	1	15			8	9	
Greene	14.25	242	1					1	39			14					
Huntingdon	29.75	414	8	6		2		11	123	2		19				49	
Indiana	18.75	266		2		5		2	99	1		15			1		
Jefferson	17.25	225			1	1			18	1							
Juniata	14	209	20	1	3			2	68	1		26					
Lackawana																	
Lancaster	36	469	115	3	4	10		3	167		1	26	1	5	1098	214	
Lawrence	16.25	216	3	2		6		5	89	1		5	1				
Lebanon	9.5	160	13	1		2		1	32			3			60	17	
Lehigh	10.75	153			1	1		1	38			5			53	55	
Luzerne	8.75	165	2	1		1			25			1					
Lycoming	18.75	328	3	4		2			44	6		14				5	
McKean	5.5	93			1				8			1					
Mercer	6.75	85	10	2		1		8	36			1					
Mifflin	22	236	8	12	2	1		1	74	4		27			3	19	
Monroe	8.75	127	2	3		1		5	16				1				
Montgomery	27.5	276	4	3	2	7		3	91	2		10	2		160	88	
Montour	4.5	116							5			4					
Northampton	17	253	7	1	1	2			98			4			112	95	
Northumberland	16	203	14	6	1				102	2		19	1	2	7		
Perry	21	256	12	5	1	1		1	76	1		28			12	5	
Philadelphia	5.75	60	1		1	1			6						11		
Pike	6	23	13		1				10		1			1	2		
Potter	17.25	245	2		1	1			27			1					
Schuylkill	15	238	6	1	1	5		1	81			13			33	10	
Snyder	11.75	188	5		3	1		1	73			32	2			2	
Somerset	22	276	2	4	5	3		2	49	4		21			5		
Sullivan	2.75	60	1						10	1		1					
Susquehanna	8.25	88	1	2					22	1		2					
Tioga	9.5	119		2	1	1			19					1			
Union	6.25	158	4			1			27	1		19			2		
Venango	7.25	144	6					1	41	2							
Warren	6.75	110	2			1		1	22			2					1
Washington	16	241	1	1	2	3		1	56			26	1				
Wayne	5.25	83	4	1		1			14								
Westmoreland	14.75	255	3	3		3			112			4		1	3		
Wyoming	3.5	78	2						3								
York	10.25	226	19	1	1	3		7	35			12			217	33	
TOTAL	855.75	12680	427	117	59	119	1	144	3098	65	3	600	15	18	3173	1320	3

The Official List of the Birds of Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Holly Merker-Chair, Committee Members: Billy Weber, and Devich Farbotnik

The Official List of the Birds of Pennsylvania was last published in 2011 (Pennsylvania Birds V25, 152-156). The Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee (PORC) is tasked, per their bylaws, to review every species on the state list, and publish an Official State List every five years. In 2016, the State List was revised, and species status were updated in 2018. The list below reflects accepted records as of June 30, 2018.

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORDS

Each record is classified by the committee based on the voting record of all members, on each record. Classifications are as follows:

- Class I:** An accepted species documented by identifiable specimen, diagnostic photograph, or diagnostic recording.
Class II: An accepted sight record documented independently by two, or more, observers.
Class III: An accepted sight record documented independently by one observer.

Per the PORC Bylaws, the records must meet the Class I criteria to be included on the Official State List of the Birds of Pennsylvania. Species that are accepted as Class II and III are accepted on the **Provisional List** until they are promoted to Class I through supporting documentation of physical evidence (see Class I criteria).

STATUS DEFINITION

- Regular:** Recorded 8, 9, or 10 of the past 10 years
Casual: Recorded 4, 5, 6, or 7 of the past 10 years
Accidental: Recorded 3 or fewer of the past 10 years
Extirpated: A previously breeding species that has not been recorded in Pennsylvania 50, or more, years.
Extinct: Species which no longer exists.

Note on the above: The years “recorded” refers to the number of years in which the species has been recorded by PORC, and not the number of occurrences within one year. An example of this would be if 50 occurrences of a single species were recorded in one calendar year (example: hurricane birds), during the last ten years, it would still be classified as Accidental. Additionally, these occurrences only reflect PORC reviewed records. Records contributed to other reporting outlets (eBird), but not PORC, are not included in the Official State List.

NUMERICAL ABUNDANCE CODES

The committee has decided to add an abundance code to each species on the Official State List, which reflects the current distribution of the species, and its rarity status. Note the numerical designation in bold after each status.

- 1 - common**
2 - uncommon, local, or hard-to-find
3 - rare but annual, or highly restricted breeder
4 - rare but annual (review list)
5 - casual or increasing vagrant (review list)

- 6 – accidental, generally fewer than five modern records (review list)**
7 – extirpated or probably extinct (review list)
X - extinct

DOCUMENTATION

Bold-faced/Underlined species and any species not already on the list are classified as rarities, and sightings of these species therefore require a specimen, photograph, recording, or one or more written descriptions for considerations of acceptance by PORC.

NOMENCLATURE

The taxonomic treatment and species sequence follows the 17th supplement of the 7th edition of the *Check-list of North American Birds* (American Ornithologist’s Union (AOU) 1998), and represents the order of the 58th supplement to the American Ornithological Society’s *Check-list of North American Birds* (2017).

THE OFFICIAL PENNSYLVANIA LIST

This sixth edition of the Official List contains 438 species --- 429 accepted as Class I and 9 on the Provisional List. Since last published in 2011, there are 11 additions to the Official State List.

Class I Additions to the Pennsylvania List since 2011:

- Bahama Woodstar** – Photographed and measured (banded) 2013, Lancaster
Black-chinned Hummingbird – Photographed 2012, Bucks
Kelp Gull – Photographed 2015, Allegheny
White-winged Tern – Photographed 2017, Tioga
Trinidad Petrel – Photographed 2012, Blair
Brown Booby - Photographed 2015, Bucks
Crested Caracara - Photographed 2014, Washington
Tropical Kingbird - Photographed 2014, Philadelphia
European Robin - Photographed 2015, Bucks
Lesser Goldfinch - Photographed 2013, Franklin
Black-backed Oriole - Photographed 2017, Berks

Class I – 429 SPECIES

- Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) Accidental. **5**
Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) Regular. **1**
Ross’s Goose (*Chen rossii*) Regular. **3**
Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) Regular. **3**
Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) Casual. **5**
Brant (*Branta bernicla*) Regular. **2**
Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) Casual. **5**
Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*) Regular. **2**
Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) Regular. **1**
Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) Regular. **2**
Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) Regular. **3**
Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) Regular. **1**
Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) Regular. **1**
Blue-winged Teal (*Spatula discors*) Regular. **1**
Cinnamon Teal (*Spatula cyanoptera*) Accidental. **5**

Northern Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) Regular. 1
 Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) Regular. 1
 Eurasian Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) Regular. 3
 American Wigeon (*Mareca americana*) Regular. 1
 Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) Regular. 1
 American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*) Regular. 1
 Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*) Regular. 1
 Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*) Regular. 1
 Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*) Regular. 1
 Redhead (*Aythya americana*) Regular. 1
 Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*) Regular. 1
Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) Accidental. 6
 Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*) Regular. 1
 Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) Regular. 1
King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) Accidental. 5
Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) Casual. 5
 Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*) Regular. 2
 White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*) Regular. 2
 Black Scoter (*Melanitta americana*) Regular. 2
 Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) Regular. 2
 Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) Regular. 1
 Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) Regular. 1
Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) Accidental. 5
 Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) Regular. 1
 Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) Regular. 1
 Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) Regular. 1
Masked Duck (*Nomonyx dominicus*) Accidental. 6
 Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) Regular. 1
 Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) No self-sustaining populations, 7
 Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) Regular. 2
 Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) Regular. 2
Greater Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*) Extirpated. 7
 Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) Regular. 1
 Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) Regular. 1
 Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*) Regular. 1
 Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*) Regular. 2
Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) Regular. 4
Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) Accidental. 6
 Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) Regular. 1
 Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) Regular. 3
 Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) Extinct. X
Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*) Accidental. 6
White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) Casual. 5
 Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) Regular. 1
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) Regular. 1
 Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) Regular. 1
 Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) Regular. 1
Chuck-will's-widow (*Antrostomus carolinensis*) Casual. 5
 Eastern Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*) Regular. 1
 Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*) Regular. 1
Bahama Woodstar (*Calliphlox evelynae*) Accidental. 6
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) Regular. 1
Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*) Accidental. 6
Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) Accidental. 6
 Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) Regular. 3
Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*) Accidental. 6
Calliope Hummingbird (*Selasphorus calliope*) Accidental. 6
Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) Accidental. 5
Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) Accidental. 5
Clapper Rail (*Rallus crepitans*) Accidental. 6
King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) Regular. 4
 Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*) Regular. 2
 Sora (*Porzana carolina*) Regular. 2
Spotted Rail (*Pardirallus maculatus*) Accidental. 6
Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinicus*) Accidental. 5
 Common Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*) Regular. 2
 American Coot (*Fulica americana*) Regular. 1
 Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*) Regular. 3
Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) Casual. 5
 American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) Regular. 3

American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) Accidental. 5
 Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) Regular. 2
 American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*) Regular. 2
Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*) Accidental. 6
Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) Accidental. 6
 Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) Regular. 1
Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) Regular. 4
 Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) Regular. 1
 Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) Regular. 3
 Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) Regular. 3
Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*) Probably Extinct. 7
Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*) Accidental. 6
 Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*) Regular. 3
Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) Casual. 5
 Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) Regular. 2
 Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) Regular. 3
Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*) Casual. 5
 Stilt Sandpiper (*Calidris himantopus*) Regular. 2
Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) Accidental. 6
 Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) Regular. 2
 Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) Regular. 1
Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) Regular. 4
 Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*) Regular. 2
 Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*) Regular. 1
 White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*) Regular. 2
 Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Calidris subruficollis*) Regular. 3
 Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*) Regular. 1
 Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*) Regular. 1
 Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*) Regular. 3
 Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*) Regular. 2
 Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) Regular. 3
 American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) Regular. 1
 Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) Regular. 1
 Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) Regular. 1
 Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*) Regular. 1
 Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) Regular. 1
 Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*) Regular. 3
 Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*) Regular. 1
 Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) Regular. 3
 Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) Regular. 3
Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) Regular. 4
Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) Casual. 5
Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) Regular. 4
Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) Accidental 6
Dovekie (*Alle alle*) Accidental. 6
Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) Accidental. 6
Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) Accidental. 6
Long-billed Murrelet (*Brachyramphus perdix*) Accidental. 6
Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*) Accidental. 6
Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) Accidental. 5
Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) Casual. 5
 Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) Regular. 1
Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) Regular. 4
Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) Regular. 4
Ross's Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) Accidental. 6
 Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) Regular. 2
Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) Regular. 4
Mew Gull (*Larus canus*) Accidental. 6
 Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) Regular. 1
California Gull (*Larus californicus*) Accidental. 5
 Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) Regular. 1
 Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*) Regular. 2
 Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) Regular. 2
Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*) Accidental. 6
 Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) Regular. 3
 Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) Regular. 1
Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) Accidental. 6
Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) Accidental. 5
Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) Casual. 5
Gull-billed Tern (*Gelocheidon nilotica*) Casual. 6

Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) Regular. 2
 Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*) Regular. 2
White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) Accidental. 6
Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) Accidental. 6
 Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) Regular. 2
Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) Casual. 5
 Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*) Regular. 2
Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*) Casual. 5
Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*) Casual. 5
White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*) Accidental. 6
 Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*) Regular. 2
Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) Accidental. 5
 Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) Regular. 1
Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) Accidental. 6
Trinidad Petrel (*Pterodroma arminjoniana*) Accidental. 6
Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*) Accidental. 6
Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*) Accidental. 6
Great Shearwater (*Ardenna gravis*) Accidental. 6
Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) Accidental. 6
Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*) Accidental. 6
Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) Accidental. 5
Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) Accidental. 6
Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) Accidental. 6
Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*) Accidental. 5
 Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) Regular. 1
 Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) Regular. 2
Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) Accidental. 5
American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) Casual. 5
Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) Accidental. 6
 American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) Regular. 2
 Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) Regular. 2
 Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) Regular. 1
 Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) Regular. 1
 Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) Regular. 2
 Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) Regular. 3
Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) Casual. 5
Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) Regular. 4
 Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) Regular. 1
 Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) Regular. 2
 Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) Regular. 3
White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) Regular. 4
 Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) Regular. 3
White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) Accidental. 6
Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) Accidental. 6
 Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) Regular. 1
 Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) Regular. 1
 Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) Regular. 1
Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) Casual. 5
Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) Regular. 4
 Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) Regular. 1
 Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius*) Regular. 1
 Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) Regular. 1
 Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) Regular. 1
 Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) Regular. 2
 Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) Regular. 1
 Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) Regular. 1
Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo albonotatus*) Accidental. 5
 Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) Regular. 1
 Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*) Regular. 2
 Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) Regular. 2
 Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) Regular. 2
 Eastern Screech-Owl (*Megascops asio*) Regular. 1
 Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) Regular. 1
 Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiacus*) Regular. 3
Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*) Accidental. 6
 Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) Regular. 1
Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) Accidental. 6
 Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) Regular. 2
 Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) Regular. 2
Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) Accidental. 6
 Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) Regular. 2
 Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) Regular. 1
 Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) Regular. 1
 Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) Regular. 1
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) Regular. 1
 Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) Regular. 1
 Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*) Regular. 1
Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*) Accidental. 6
 Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) Regular. 1
 Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) Regular. 1
Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) Accidental. 6
 American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) Regular. 1
 Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) Regular. 1
Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*) Accidental. 5
 Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) Regular. 2
Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) Accidental. 6
 Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) Extinct. X
 Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) Regular. 2
 Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) Regular. 1
 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*) Regular. 2
 Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*) Regular. 1
 Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*) Regular. 1
 Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) Regular. 1
 Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*) Regular. 1
Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*) Accidental. 6
Pacific-slope Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*) Accidental. 6
 Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) Regular. 1
Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) Accidental. 5
Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) Accidental. 6
Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) Accidental. 6
 Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) Regular. 1
Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) Accidental. 6
Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) Casual. 5
 Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) Regular. 1
Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) Accidental. 6
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) Casual. 5
Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*) Accidental. 6
Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) Casual. 5
 Northern Shrike (*Lanius borealis*) Regular. 3
 White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) Regular. 1
 Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) Regular. 1
 Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) Regular. 1
 Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) Regular. 2
 Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*) Regular. 1
 Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) Regular. 1
 Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) Regular. 1
 American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) Regular. 1
 Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*) Regular. 1
 Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) Regular. 1
 Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) Regular. 1
 Purple Martin (*Progne subis*) Regular. 1
 Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) Regular. 1
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) Regular. 1
 Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) Regular. 1
 Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) Regular. 1
Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) Casual. 5
 Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) Regular. 1
 Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*) Regular. 1
 Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) Regular. 1
Boreal Chickadee (*Poecile hudsonicus*) Accidental. 6
 Tufted Titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*) Regular. 1
 Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) Regular. 1
 White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*) Regular. 1
Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*) Accidental. 6
 Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*) Regular. 1
 House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) Regular. 1
 Winter Wren (*Troglodytes hiemalis*) Regular. 1
 Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) Regular. 3
 Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris*) Regular. 2
 Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) Regular. 1

Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) Accidental. 7
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliptila caerulea*) Regular. 1
 Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*) Regular. 1
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) Regular. 1
European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) Accidental. 6
Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) Accidental. 6
 Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) Regular. 1
Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) Accidental. 5
Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) Accidental. 5
 Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*) Regular. 1
 Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) Regular. 2
Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*) Regular. 4
 Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) Regular. 1
 Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*) Regular. 1
 Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) Regular. 1
Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*) Accidental. 6
 American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) Regular. 1
Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) Casual. 5
 Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) Regular. 1
 Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) Regular. 1
 Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) Regular. 1
 European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) Regular. 1
Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*) Casual. 5
 Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) Regular. 1
 House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) Regular. 1
 American Pipit (*Anthus rubescens*) Regular. 1
Brambling (*Fringella montifringilla*) Accidental. 6
 Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*) Regular. 3
Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*) Accidental. 5
 House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) Regular. 1
 Purple Finch (*Haemorhous purpureus*) Regular. 1
 Common Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*) Regular. 2
Hoary Redpoll (*Acanthis hornemanni*) Casual. 5
 Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) Regular. 3
 White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*) Regular. 3
 Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*) Regular. 2
Lesser Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*) Accidental. 6
 American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*) Regular. 1
 Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*) Regular. 2
 Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) Regular. 2
Green-tailed Towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*) Accidental. 6
Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) Accidental. 6
 Eastern Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) Regular. 1
Bachman's Sparrow (*Peucaea aestivalis*) Extirpated. 7
 American Tree Sparrow (*Spizelloides arborea*) Regular. 1
 Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) Regular. 1
 Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*) Regular. 3
 Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*) Regular. 1
 Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*) Regular. 2
Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) Casual. 5
Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) Accidental. 5
 Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) Regular. 1
 Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) Regular. 1
 Henslow's Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*) Regular. 2
LeConte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*) Casual. 5
 Nelson's Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) Regular. 3
Saltmarsh Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacutus*) Accidental. 6
Seaside Sparrow (*Ammodramus maritimus*) Accidental. 5
 Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*) Regular. 1
 Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) Regular. 1
 Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolnii*) Regular. 1
 Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*) Regular. 1
 White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) Regular. 1
Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) Casual. 5
 White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) Regular. 1
Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) Accidental. 6
 Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) Regular. 1
 Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) Regular. 2
Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) Regular. 4
 Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) Regular. 1

Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) Regular. 1
Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) Casual. 5
 Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) Regular. 1
Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*) Casual. 5
 Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) Regular. 1
Black-backed Oriole (*Icterus abeilli*) Accidental. 6
Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) Accidental. 6
 Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) Regular. 1
Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) Accidental. 6
 Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) Regular. 1
 Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*) Regular. 2
Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) Casual. 5
 Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) Regular. 1
 Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) Regular. 1
 Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) Regular. 1
 Louisiana Waterthrush (*Parkesia motacilla*) Regular. 1
 Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) Regular. 1
 Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) Regular. 2
 Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) Regular. 1
 Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) Regular. 1
 Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) Regular. 2
Swainson's Warbler (*Limnithlypis swainsonii*) Casual. 5
 Tennessee Warbler (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) Regular. 1
 Orange-crowned Warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*) Regular. 2
 Nashville Warbler (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) Regular. 1
 Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*) Regular. 2
MacGillivray's Warbler (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) Accidental. 6
 Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*) Regular. 2
 Kentucky Warbler (*Geothlypis formosa*) Regular. 2
 Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) Regular. 1
 Hooded Warbler (*Setophaga citrina*) Regular. 1
 American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) Regular. 1
Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) Accidental. 5
 Cape May Warbler (*Setophaga tigrina*) Regular. 1
 Cerulean Warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*) Regular. 1
 Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*) Regular. 1
 Magnolia Warbler (*Setophaga magnolia*) Regular. 1
 Bay-breasted Warbler (*Setophaga castanea*) Regular. 1
 Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*) Regular. 1
 Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*) Regular. 1
 Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) Regular. 1
 Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*) Regular. 1
 Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Setophaga caerulescens*) Regular. 1
 Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum*) Regular. 1
 Pine Warbler (*Setophaga pinus*) Regular. 1
 Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*) Regular. 1
 Yellow-throated Warbler (*Setophaga dominica*) Regular. 2
 Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*) Regular. 1
Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*) Accidental. 5
Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*) Accidental. 6
 Black-throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*) Regular. 1
 Canada Warbler (*Cardellina canadensis*) Regular. 1
 Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*) Regular. 1
Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) Regular. 4
 Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) Regular. 1
Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) Casual. 5
 Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) Regular. 1
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) Regular. 1
Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) Casual. 5
 Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*) Regular. 2
Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) Accidental. 6
 Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) Regular. 1
Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) Casual. 5
 Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) Regular. 3

Provisional List

Records accepted by the committee as Class II or Class III (sight record with written description), but lacking documentation with

photograph, audio recording, or specimen, are held on the Provisional List until other documentation is provided for that species.

The official State List is a record of species documented with a photograph, audio recording, or as a specimen, but, the committee can accept a sight-record with written evidence only, and these remain on a Provisional State List:

Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) Accidental. **6**

Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*) **6**

apus sp. **6**

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) Accidental. **6**

Surfbird (*Calidris virgata*) **6**

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) Accidental. **6**

Northern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) Accidental. **6**

Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*) **6**

Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*) **6**

Recognizable forms and subspecies:

(Black) Brant (*Branta bernicula nigrens*) **6**

Green-winged (Eurasian) Teal (*Anas crecca crecca*) **5**

Iceland Gull (Thayer's) (*Larus glaucoideus thayeri*) **4**

Great Blue Heron (White form) (*Ardea herodias occidentalis*) **6**

Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) **5**

White-crowned Sparrow (Gambel's) (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*) **4**

Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco (*Junco hyemalis [oreganus group]*) **5**

Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco (*Junco hyemalis mearnsi*) **6**

(Sooty) Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca unalaschensis*) **6**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The PORC would like to give gratitude to the many birders who contributed records to our database over the years. Without these contributions, we would not be able to paint a more accurate picture of the birdlife across the Commonwealth.

Additionally, acknowledgement is given to Billy Weber and Devich Farbotnik, for their time in editing this essay, and especially for creating abundance codes for each species on the Official State List.

REQUESTS FOR CORRECTIONS AND RECORDS

The Official State List, and status and abundance listed in this essay, is not entirely conclusive for the avian occurrences in Pennsylvania. With other reporting outlets available, details are limited to what has been presented to this committee. Pending records may be accepted prior to the publishing of this essay.

It is possible that there will be errors in this list, whether typographical or technical, and potentially omissions. If you note these, please alert the committee by contacting the committee at: porcbirds@gmail.com

For current pending records, please see:

<https://pabirds.org/records/index.php/most-recent-additions-to-the-state-list/>

Current and former PORC members who have served on the committee since the 2011 report: Holly Merker, Ben Coulter, Drew Weber, Cameron Rutt, Mike Weible, Devich Farbotnik, Dave DeReamus, Greg Grove, Billy Weber, Andy McGann, Mike Fialkovich, Jan Getgood (non-voting secretary), Ian Gardner (non-voting secretary).

25 Years Ago in *Pennsylvania Birds*

Volume 6, No. 1

Dan Brauning and Brenda Peebles reported on Bald Eagle nesting success the previous year (1991). They noted that the 6 nests and 12 fledged young in 5 counties were the largest numbers since pre-1960!

The first Mew Gull (*Larus canus canus*) record for Pennsylvania was reported from Berks County with an article detailing the subspecies identification. Originally found at Lake Ontelaunee, it was later found at Blue Marsh Lake and then Strausstown. It was present from 1/2/1992 to 2/23/1992

The first live (see the article!) Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) record in the twentieth century for the state was also documented (Warren County). It was seen by many observers from 1/28/1992 - 3/27/1992.

This issue can be read at pabirds.org.

Summary of the Season: Winter 2017-18

Nick Bolgiano

The winter of 2017-18 saw a weak La Niña effect. La Niña winters in the Northeast typically vary between cold and dry and mild and stormy (Galimberti 2017) and that temperature regime is what we experienced this season. Temperatures during the first three weeks of Dec were seasonal, but cold snaps occurred Dec 25-Jan 8, Jan 14-19, and Jan 30-Feb 8. In between, temperatures were above normal, as was the temperature during the second half of Feb (Pennsylvania State Climatologist 2018). There was relatively little snow, unless you lived near Erie, where five feet of lake-effect snow fell around Christmas and another 1.5 feet on Dec 29-30. On Jan 11-13, three inches of rain fell in the west and two inches in the east (NOAA Regional Climatic Center 2018), which raised rivers and dampened waterfowl and gull numbers (see *Beaver* report).

Highlights of winter 2017-18 included distributions of geese and raptors seeming to respond to warming winters, a winter-rare **Mississippi Kite**, a surge in **Sandhill Crane** numbers, a first winter record for **Purple Gallinule**, a state CBC-first **Caspian Tern**, invasions of **Snowy** and **Short-eared Owls**, a rare **Gyrfalcon**, numerous vagrant **Cardinalidae**, and a state-first **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch**. There were also multiple cases of apparently the same individual returning to the same wintering location: **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** (*Chester*), **Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Northampton*), **Spotted Sandpiper** (*Northampton*), **Black-headed Gull** (different birds at *Butler* and *Delaware/Philadelphia*), and **Painted Bunting** (*Lancaster*).

Black-bellied Whistling Duck, quite rare in winter, was present in *Adams* until 12/19, continuing from the fall. However, as Malosh (2018) noted, its provenance is uncertain given little post-breeding dispersal in summer 2017.

Snow Goose was again widespread, found in 38 counties. Its northward push began early, in late Jan, and peaked in late Feb with a new high of 200,000 at Middle Creek WMA (see *Lancaster* report). Large flocks were observed streaming northward from the southeast (e.g. 12,000 observed in *Lackawanna*). Away from expected locations, Snow Geese were found in seven western counties plus *Blair*, *Centre*, *Clearfield*, and *Potter*.

Ross's Goose incidence increased during the winter of 2016-17 and this trend accelerated in 2017-18, as their distribution increased from 18 counties to 23 counties. In the *Bucks* report, August Mirabella termed this an upgrade from "accidental to rare". It was found in ten southeastern counties, eight western counties (including a possible second county record for *Fayette*), plus *Blair*, *Carbon*, *Luzerne*, *Lycoming* (a possible first county

record), and *Montour* (with the largest group of 10).

Greater White-fronted Goose may be following Snow and Ross's Geese in increasing incidence. The winter of 2015-16 was notable for the Feb incursion to 18 counties. The next winter, 2016-17, it was found in just six counties, more typical of earlier years. However, during the winter of 2017-18, Greater White-fronted Goose was found in 25 counties, with double-digit groups in 11 counties. It was recorded throughout that state except in the well-forested northern tier and in the southwestern corner. In *Somerset*, it continued to be targeted by hunters as a trophy.

Among the rarer geese, **Pink-footed Goose** was at *Bucks* 12/1-2 and 2/4-5, possibly the same bird as seen in late Nov. **Brant** were uncommon, with seven flyovers at Middle Creek, *Lancaster*, and singles at *Lebanon*, *Lehigh*, and *Luzerne*. **Barnacle Goose** in *Northampton* was thought to be the individual first seen in nearby *Lehigh* in Nov.

Cackling Goose was found in 24 counties, compared to 21 in 2016-17. It again was fairly common in many southeastern counties and also recorded in *Carbon*, *Centre*, *Erie*, *Lycoming*, *Luzerne*, *Mercer*, *Montour*, and *Washington*.

Trumpeter Swan was in *Bucks*, *Lancaster*, and *York*, a typical showing. **Tundra Swans** were relatively few in the CBC, with many still in the northwest (see CBC report). In *Allegheny*, a late flight southward extended into early Jan. Winter numbers were judged as plentiful in *Berks* and *Bucks*. The northward flight started early, beginning in late Feb, and Tundra's were noted in ten county reports, with a high of 800 in *Juniata* 2/27.

There were two early winter reports of **Blue-winged Teal**, in *Mifflin* and *Northampton*. A high count of 107 **Gadwall** was made at Pymatuning, *Crawford* 12/3. **Eurasian Wigeon** was at *Chester*, *Dauphin*, *Erie*, and *Philadelphia*. A total of 417 **American Wigeons**, the high count, were at L. Ontelaunee, *Berks* 2/25. A male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** at *Chester* 12/24 to end of period was the sixth consecutive winter for one in the county.

Although the third-most common duck species in the CBC, **American Black Duck** numbers continue to decline, with CBC numbers now half of what they were a decade ago (see density map in CBC report). **Mallard**, the most common duck, has also been steadily declining during this century, with CBC numbers now half of what they were two decades ago.

An **Eider sp.** was at *Erie*. Female **Harlequin Ducks** were at *Crawford* and *Erie*. A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** was at two

locations on the Delaware R., *Northampton* 12/27-1/1 and 1/20-2/8, the fifth consecutive winter for one being seen there.

Scoters were well-scattered, found mostly on large rivers and lakes. As usual, they were most abundant at *Erie*, where high counts were 19 **Surf Scoters**, 110 **White-winged Scoters**, and 4 **Black Scoters**. Surf Scoter was also found on the Ohio R., *Allegheny*, on the Delaware R., *Bucks*, and on the Susquehanna R., *Lancaster*. Unusual were two Surf Scoters on Tunagwant Creek, *McKean*. White-winged Scoter was on the Allegheny R. in *Allegheny*, *Warren*, and *Westmoreland*; at the mouth of the Beaver R., *Beaver*; at Bald Eagle SP, *Centre*; at Marsh Creek SP, *Chester*; on the Susquehanna R., *York*; and noted in flight over Stone Mt. hawk watch, *Huntingdon*. Black Scoter was also at Penn-Warner Tract, *Bucks*, and on the Susquehanna R., *Lycoming*, where it was thought to be a first winter county record.

There were noteworthy counts of diving duck species. High counts of **Canvasback** were 40 in *Crawford*, 62 in *Lancaster*, and up to 200 in *Philadelphia*; of **Redhead**, 143 in *Crawford* and 82 in *Lebanon*; and of **Ring-necked Duck**, 449 in *Crawford*. High counts of **Common Goldeneye** were 77 in *Crawford*, 100 in *Mercer*, and 75 in *Venango*. High counts of **Common Merganser** in *Bucks* were 3000 and 2750.

The steep decline in **Ruffed Grouse** continued. It was reported from 24 counties, compared to 34 the previous winter. The 38 grouse in the CBC were the fewest since 1959, and compared to 57 the previous year. Most reports were from central and north-central counties.

Red-throated Loon was in nine counties compared to seven the previous winter: in the west at *Armstrong*, *Westmoreland*, and *Erie* (high of 10); in the southeast at *Bucks*, *Dauphin*, *Lancaster*, *Montgomery*, and *Philadelphia*; and in *Luzerne* in the northeast. **Red-necked Grebe** was present only in *Bucks*, *Crawford*, and *Erie* during Dec, and then not recorded for a five-week period before a modest invasion occurred into 14 counties during Feb when recorded in four western, two central, and eight southeastern counties. The Feb timing was consistent with prior invasions.

Great Cormorant was found along the Delaware R. in *Bucks* and *Philadelphia*, where it is annual, but was missed downriver in *Delaware*, where usually found. Unusual were two along the Susquehanna R., *Lancaster*, following a storm. **American White Pelican** on the Susquehanna R., *Lancaster*, 2/25 represented one of a few state winter records.

Among uncommon herons, **American Bittern** was at *Berks* 12/23; **Great Egret** at John Heinz NWR, *Delaware/Philadelphia*

12/1-12; and **Black-crowned Night-Heron** on the Southern Bucks CBC, *Bucks* 12/16.

Black Vulture continued to be found in two regions where it has been expanding - in *Fayette* and *Westmoreland* in the southwest and *Bradford* and *Tioga* in the north-central. **Turkey Vulture** continued to overwinter in small numbers in central counties, where once rare during that season.

A sub-adult **Mississippi Kite** was observed in *Northampton* 2/28, at one of the state's most productive birding yards (Arlene Koch). This species typically begins to appear in south Texas in late Mar to early Apr, very rarely reaching this far north so early. This suggests that it didn't winter in Central or South America with most of its cohorts. **Osprey** was unusually late in Dec in *Bucks*, *Monroe* (on the Pocono Mt CBC), *Perry*, and *York*; and early arriving in Feb to *Philadelphia*.

Northern Harrier was reported at modest densities, with 173 on the CBC and 117 on the WRS. Concentrations were noted in *Adams*, *Huntingdon* (a high of 17 at one site), and *Montgomery*. **Northern Goshawk** was found in eight counties (five when omitting hawk watches), compared to 11 the previous winter.

Red-shouldered Hawk continued its trend of increased overwintering, found in 56 counties, compared to 51 the previous year. The CBC tally of 192 was just short of the high of 197 set the previous year, while a new high of 144 was set in the WRS (previous high was 101 in 2014). **Red-tailed Hawk** wintering densities continued to decline in the Susquehanna Valley and the southeast, according to both WRS and CBC (Bolgiano and Grove 2018), as many remain farther north; the 2906 in the CBC were the fewest since 2000. However, Red-tail densities in the west have remained relatively constant, where 54 were tallied on a *Westmoreland* WRS route. The general adaptability of raptors suggests that additional species could be changing their migration in a similar manner.

Rough-legged Hawk was found in 44 counties, compared to 41 the previous winter. Numbers in both CBC (25) and WRS (65) indicate low densities. It was primarily found in northwestern, northern tier, and central counties. **Golden Eagle** was recorded in 21 counties compared to 19 the previous winter. The CBC total of 12 was one more than the previous high of 11 set the previous year and in 2001. As during the previous Feb, Golden Eagles were on the move early; the Tussey Mt hawk watch, *Huntingdon*, recorded 31 during Feb 20-28. Observations of the last two winters indicate that this species may be overwintering more frequently.

Sandhill Crane continued to increase during the winter period, concentrated in the northwest. In the CBC, 205 were reported from Grove City (center in *Mercer*) and 164 from Linesville (center in *Crawford*). Fifty were observed in *Allegheny* 12/26. An early movement northward was observed during

late Feb in *Bucks* and *Northampton* in the east and *Clinton*, *Huntingdon*, and *Juniata* in the central, with a high of 30 in *Clinton*.

Virginia Rail was more widespread than usual, in *Bucks*, *Chester*, *Erie*, *Lancaster*, and *Philadelphia*. Most unexpected was a **Purple Gallinule** in *Philadelphia* for a first state winter record. It was discovered in a Morrell Park neighborhood 1/14 after a frigid night following a warm spell, captured, rehabbed, and released in Virginia.

Dunlin was in *Erie* and *Lebanon*. **Spotted Sandpiper** was at *Northampton* for the third consecutive winter. Sandpipers not annually seen in winter were **Lesser Yellowlegs** in *York* and **Greater Yellowlegs** in *Delaware*.

In recent years, there have been many gull sightings in new locations, as gull watching has spread beyond the lower Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers and Lake Erie to *Allegheny*, *Beaver*, *Butler*, and *Crawford* in the west; *Lycoming* and *Tioga* in the north-central; and *Carbon*, *Luzerne*, and *Monroe* in the northeast.

Black-headed Gull sightings featured two separate individuals apparently returning to their same wintering areas. The *Butler* bird returned to Moraine SP for the 7th of 10 years. The John Heinz NWR bird in *Delaware/Philadelphia* was in the same location as one the previous winter – that bird was an immature and this winter's bird an adult, so it seems reasonable to think that reports of both winters probably refer to the same bird. **Little Gull** was at *Erie* 12/20 and on the Susquehanna R., *Lancaster* 2/25-28. **Laughing Gull** was at Susquehanna R., *Lancaster*, 2/26, and two *Philadelphia* locations where historically more common. **California Gull** at Moraine SP 12/3 provided a first *Butler* record.

The 53,500 **Herring Gulls** on the Southern Bucks County CBC was again a continent-wide CBC high by a large margin. **Iceland Gull** was in 14 counties, compared to eight the previous winter. It was found in eight southeastern counties, where historically more common; in *Allegheny*, *Beaver*, and *Butler* in the west; plus, *Lycoming*, *Monroe*, and *Tioga*. **Glaucous Gull** was in six counties, compared to seven the previous winter, found in *Bucks*, *Crawford*, *Erie*, *Lancaster*, *Northampton*, and *Philadelphia*. **Herring x Glaucous** hybrids were observed in *Allegheny* and *Bucks* and **Herring x Lesser Black-backed** was observed in *Bucks*.

Lesser Black-backed Gull was in 13 counties, compared to 17 last winter, including nine southeastern counties, plus *Allegheny*, *Carbon*, *Crawford*, and *Erie*. Perhaps with the closing of the Tullytown dump in southern *Bucks*, Lesser Black-backed Gull was less concentrated in southern *Bucks*, with more being observed in northern *Bucks* and *Northampton*. The Southern Bucks County and Upper Bucks County CBCs ranked third and fourth, respectively, among North American CBCs for Lesser Black-backed Gull

numbers. Outside of Lake Erie and the southeast, **Great Black-backed Gull** was at *Allegheny* and *Crawford* in the west; *Columbia* and *Lycoming* in the upper Susquehanna Valley; and *Carbon*, *Luzerne*, and *Monroe* in the northeast.

Caspian Tern at *Monroe*, a seasonal rarity north of the Carolinas, was a first for the state CBC. Several **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were at established locations at Shartlesville, *Berks* and Shady Grove, *Franklin*.

Barn Owl was in *Centre*, *Clinton*, *Cumberland*, *Juniata*, and *Northampton*; a frequency consistent with recent years. **Snowy Owl** was found in 29 counties (omitting counties where only satellite-tracked), compared to four the previous winter and 47 during the 2013-14 invasion. This winter's irruption ranks among the largest in recent decades, yet well below the level of 2013-14. The highest concentration was in *Erie*, where there may have been up to 16 individual birds, consistent with eBird reports showing high Snowy Owl densities around Lakes Erie and Ontario. Snowy Owls were also in *Allegheny*, *Berks*, *Centre*, *Delaware*, *Franklin*, *Lycoming*, and *Philadelphia*.

Short-eared Owl numbers were the highest they have been in a number of years. They were widespread, occurring in 34 counties, compared to 19 the previous winter. The 29 tallied on the CBC were the most since 2003, and included 11 at Clarion and six at Gettysburg. Many were in specific locations where birders have learned they are likely to be found in winter. **Long-eared Owl** was in eight counties: *Bucks*, *Carbon*, *Erie*, *Huntingdon*, *Lancaster*, *Lebanon*, *Montgomery*, and *Wyoming*, a higher incidence than sometimes reported.

After a six-year period with increased observations, the only **Rufous Hummingbird** was at *Lancaster* 12/2-20. This sparseness of observations extended throughout the northeastern U.S.

Red-headed Woodpecker was in 27 counties, compared to 22 the previous winter. After an exodus last winter, presumably due to low food supplies, the 63 in the CBC was the second highest tally in the last decade. It was most common in the south-central, particularly *Adams* (high count of 12) and *York* (nine locations). See the density map in the CBC report. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was particularly abundant, with the 850 on the CBC far exceeding the previous high count/party-hr average (see density map in CBC report). Its abundance was noted in the *Bucks* and *York* reports. Now that emerald ash borer has swept from west to east across most of Pennsylvania's ash range, is there a linkage?

American Kestrel numbers were similar to levels of the previous winter, according to both CBC and WRS. However, there was considerable variation across the state. They were described as heavily reported in *Adams* and *Armstrong*, but numbers were discouraging in *Berks* and *Bucks*, both in the southeast where kestrels have significantly

declined. In *Bucks*, August Mirabella relates the contrast of the three-site CBC total of 16 with the pre-2003 average of 120. **Merlin** and **Peregrine Falcon** sustained ongoing population expansions. In the CBC, Merlins set a new high of 62 and Peregrines were second-most to last winter. A dark gray **Gyr Falcon** was observed hunting Snow Geese near the Northampton Quarry and Delaware R., *Northampton* possibly as early as 12/29, positively identified in Feb, and continuing into Mar.

Ash-throated Flycatcher was found in *Montgomery* 12/17 during the Upper Bucks County CBC and then briefly re-located 1/14. **Eastern Phoebe** was in 24 counties, mostly in the southeast and southwest, an average showing. Unexpected was the first Dec phoebe in *Indiana* and one in Jan in *Tioga*.

Northern Shrike was in 15 counties compared to 13 the previous winter, mostly in the northwest and central, plus *Adams*, *Cumberland*, and *Somerset* in the south. This showing is typical of recent years, modest by historical standards.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow was again present at the NE Philadelphia Treatment Plant in *Philadelphia*, through at least 2/19, with a high of 100 on 12/10. Up to 30 were seen at John Heinz NWR, *Philadelphia*, during the first days of Dec; smaller numbers were seen elsewhere along the Delaware R. in *Philadelphia*; and one was in *Dauphin* along a Susquehanna R. tributary 12/5. This frequency is similar to the previous winter. **Tree Swallow** lingered to 12/2 in *Philadelphia* and reappeared during Feb in five southeastern counties (*Bucks*, *Chester*, *Delaware*, *Dauphin*, *Philadelphia*), starting 2/17 in *Philadelphia*.

After a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** irruption the previous winter, low numbers were observed this season - the 149 tallied on the CBC typical of a non-irruption year. **House Wren** was on the Pocono Mt. CBC, *Monroe* and Southern Lancaster County CBC, *Lancaster*, both 12/17. **Marsh Wren** concentrated in usual locations, with four in *Chester*, two at John Heinz NWR in both *Delaware* and *Philadelphia* sections, and one in *Perry*, where unexpected. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was seen on the Southern Lancaster County CBC, *Lancaster* 12/17, and lingered from the fall until 12/10 at John Heinz NWR, *Philadelphia*.

Lapland Longspur and **Snow Bunting** were fairly widespread, occurring in 28 and 41 counties, respectively, compared to 12 and 27 during the previous winter.

Among the warblers, five species were decidedly uncommon, including **Ovenbird** in *Centre*, *Montgomery*, and *Philadelphia*; a bird thought to be a **Northern Waterthrush** in *Clinton*; and **Black-and-white Warbler** in *Centre*. **Nashville Warbler** was long-staying at *Chester* and *Lancaster* feeders, the latter bird recorded for the Western Chester County CBC. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was found eating insects in a *Crawford* garage

12/20-29, reminiscent of its wintering behavior in Central America.

Four warbler species were found in small numbers, matching their annual pattern. **Orange-crowned Warbler** was in *Bucks*, *Lancaster*, and at least five locations in *Philadelphia*. In recent years, this warbler has joined the same tier of abundance as the next three species, at least in the southeast. **Common Yellowthroat** was in *Bucks*, *Delaware*, *Juniata*, *Schuylkill*, and *Philadelphia*; **Palm Warbler** in *Berks*, *Bucks*, *Cumberland*, and *Philadelphia*; and **Pine Warbler** in *Bucks*, *Clinton*, *Cumberland*, *Montgomery*, and *Montour*.

Harris's Sparrow was found in *Bucks* for the Central Bucks County CBC, the second county record and the seventh on a Pennsylvania CBC. **Clay-colored Sparrow** was in *Dauphin* and *Northampton*. The only **Vesper Sparrow** was in *Mercer*. **Lincoln's Sparrow** was fairly widespread, found in *Allegheny*, *Bucks*, *Chester*, *Dauphin*, *Lancaster*, *Lebanon*, and *Lehigh*. **Oregon Junco** was in *Allegheny*, *Berks*, *Crawford*, and *Monroe*, a good showing of this subspecies.

Yellow-breasted Chat was at *Lancaster* 12/16-18.

Vagrant **Cardinalidae** made a great showing, as also occurred during the winter of 2015-16. **Summer Tanager** was at a feeder in *Harleysville*, *Montgomery* mid-Dec to end of period, the first winter Pennsylvania record in seven years. Three **Western Tanagers** were in the southeast: one at *Bucks* feeders 1/17-2/17, one at a *Lancaster* feeder 12/23-1/16, and one at Middle Creek WMA, *Lancaster* 12/31. The *Lancaster* observations represent the first two county records.

An immature **Blue Grosbeak** was at Chestnut Grove Natural Area, *Lancaster* 1/6-22. An adult male **Painted Bunting** returned to Mohnton feeders, *Lancaster*, for a second consecutive winter 12/17 through period. **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** visited feeders in *Juniata*, *Washington*, and *York*; their winter incidence has been increasing. **Dickcissel** was in *Montgomery* and *Northampton*.

Female **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were in *Berks* and *Luzerne*. **Eastern Meadowlark** was in 26 counties, with highest concentrations around Gettysburg National Military Park, *Adams*, where high counts were 28 and 30. Elsewhere, it was well-scattered, but absent from the northern tier (see density map in CBC report). The CBC total of 30 was low. **Rusty Blackbird** was in 35 counties, mostly in the southern half of the state (see density map in CBC report). An exception was *Tioga* in the northern tier, where a total of 80 provided the state high count. Other highs included 36 in *Adams* and 50-60 in *Somerset*. The CBC total of 299 was the highest since 2011.

Bullock's Oriole was at an Allegheny feeder 12/8 to end of season. After ten **Baltimore Orioles** the previous winter, mostly in the southeast, there were just three this winter - in *Allegheny*, *Bucks*, and *Perry*, with

the latter recorded on the New Bloomfield CBC.

The bird of the season was the **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** that appeared at *Crawford* feeders 2/1-24 for a first Pennsylvania record. This is the only eBird report for this species this winter east of the Rockies. While not found often east of the Great Plains, when it does occur, it has tended to be found near the Great Lakes, so this observation was consistent with historical records.

Winter finches were comparatively scarce, consistent with the prediction they would stay north where cone crops were abundant (Pittaway 2017). The 168 CBC **Purple Finches** represented the fewest since 1964. The count of 178 **Pine Siskins** in the CBC was typical of a non-irruption year. High siskin counts during the winter were 75 at *Crawford* and 32 at *Cameron*.

After irrupting the previous winter, there was only one report of **Red Crossbill** this winter, a single bird at an *Erie* feeder. **Common Redpoll** was most abundant at *Erie*, where double-digit flock numbers were reported on four occasions. Elsewhere, a flock of 13 was at *Tioga* and singles were in *Centre* and *Philadelphia*.

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Birds of Note – December 2017 through February 2018

This report summarizes unexpected species reported in Pennsylvania for this period. As a general rule birds must have been recorded in five or fewer counties to qualify for inclusion here, but rare species recorded more frequently, or irregular species exhibiting an unusual seasonal occurrence, are also included. "Listserv" indicates records deemed credible which were gleaned from the PABIRDS listserv for counties with no reporting compiler. "eBird" indicates valid records deemed credible which were entered into the eBird database for counties with no reporting compiler.

An * denotes species on the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee (PORC) Review List. Details or descriptions that are submitted for species on the PORC Review List will be reviewed by the committee. The terms "no doc" and "doc submitted" indicate whether documentation has been submitted on reports of Review List species listed herein; "no doc" indicates that no documentation was known to have been submitted as of the time of writing. The PORC Review List can be found at the PSO web site <<http://www.pabirds.org>>.

Birds in *Italic* typeface are uncommon or rare, but occur during this time period in most years.

Birds in **Underlined** typeface occur at least 4 to 7 out of 10 years during this time period.

Birds in **Italic and Underlined** typeface occur fewer than 4 to 7 out of 10 years during this time period.

Birds in **Normal** typeface are noteworthy for rarity, but are recorded annually, usually in more than one county.

Black-bellied Whistling Duck* – *Adams*: one continued at Lake Heritage from the fall until 12/19 (m.ob.).

Pink-footed Goose* – *Bucks*: one at Peace Valley Park 12/1-2 (August Mirabella, *doc submitted*) and one at Upper Makefield Firehouse 2/4-5 (Barbara Bennett, *doc submitted*), possibly the same bird, and possibly the same bird as seen in late Nov.

Brant – *Lancaster*: 7 flyovers at Middle Creek WMA 12/5 (Bruce Carl). *Lebanon*: one at Quittapahilla Educational Wetlands 2/1 (Pat Williams, Richard Williams). *Lehigh*: one at Fogelsville Quarry 12/25 (Frank Dickman). *Luzerne*: one at Harveys Lake 12/24 (John Miller).

Barnacle Goose* – *Northampton*: one at Hanover Twp. ponds 12/3-10 (Dave DeReamus), thought to be same as one seen in *Lehigh* in Nov.

Trumpeter Swan – *Bucks*: one at Nockamixon SP 1/14 (Paul Cooper). *Lancaster*: one at ponds in Kinzers from fall through 12/28 (m.ob.). *York*: pair at Codorus Creek 1/21-2/3 (anon, m.ob.).

Eurasian Wigeon – *Chester*: male at Struble Lake 2/26 (Larry Lewis). *Dauphin*: male near West Fairview 2/24-27 (Joe Gyekis, m.ob.), on both sides of river, with one report from nearby *Perry* at same time. *Erie*: male at Presque Isle Bay 12/24-26 for earliest *Erie* record (Jerry McWilliams), likely same bird at Swan Cove 2/26 (Nancy Andersen). *Philadelphia*: male at FDR 12/15 (Tony Croasdale, Dan Efrogmson).

Blue-winged Teal – *Mifflin*: one at Milroy 12/4 (Robert Hosler). *Northampton*: one at Martins Creek Environmental Preserve 12/27-1/6 (Jason Horn).

Eurasian Green-winged Teal (Common Teal) – *Chester*: male primarily at Eagleview Pond 12/24 to end of period (Michael Hartshorne, Lauren Diamond, m.ob.).

Eider sp. – *Erie*: female at Sunset Pt 12/13 (Jerry McWilliams, *doc submitted*).

Harlequin Duck* – *Crawford*: female at French Creek 1/7 (Ed Atts). *Erie*: female at Sunset Point 12/17 (Andy Keister).

Surf Scoter – *Allegheny*: 5 on Ohio R. at McKees Rock Bridge 12/15 (John Flannigan). *Bucks*: 3 on Delaware R., Bristol 12/2 (Dawn Denner). *Erie*: 10 reports 12/7-2/24, with high of 19 at Sunset Pt 12/13. *McKean*: 2 on Tunagwant Creek 1/6 (John Fedak). *Lancaster*: one on Susquehanna R. 12/18 (Bruce Carl).

Black Scoter – *Bucks*: one at Penn-Warner Tract 12/3 (Mark Gallagher, Devich Farbotnik). *Erie*: 7 reports 12/2-2/26, with high of 4 at Sunset Pt 12/13. *Lycoming*: one at Williamsport Dam 2/24 (David Brown, Deb Brown, Bobby Brown).

Barrow's Goldeneye* – *Northampton*: female at two locations on Delaware R. 12/27-1/1 and 1/20-2/8 (Jason Horn, Adam Miller).

Great Cormorant – found in *Bucks* and *Philadelphia*, where annual, but missed in *Delaware*, where usually found. *Lancaster*: unusual were 2 flyovers along the Susquehanna R. 1/7 (Josh Houck, Meredith Lombard, Mike Epler, Nicole Koeltzow, Zach Millen).

American White Pelican – *Lancaster*: one on Susquehanna R. 2/25 (Mike Epler, m.ob.)

American Bittern – *Berks*: one at Maiden Creek swamp 12/23 (Kyle Klotz).

Great Egret – *Delaware/Philadelphia*: one at John Heinz NWR 12/1-12 (Scott Reynolds, m.ob.)

Black-crowned Night-Heron – *Bucks*: one on Southern Bucks County CBC 12/16 (DF).

Osprey – *Bucks*: one at Pine Run Reservoir 12/1 (Toby Levin), one at Nockamixon SP 12/4 (Paul Cooper). *Monroe*: seen on the Pocono Mt CBC 12/17. *Perry*: one at Waggoner's Gap 12/10 (Dave Grove). *Philadelphia*: one at Art Museum Waterworks 2/23 (Karenne Snow). *York*: one at Gifford Pinchot SP 12/14-15 (Dean Newhouse, Ray Withers).

Mississippi Kite* – *Northampton*: subadult at Koch residence 2/28 (Arlene Koch).

Virginia Rail – *Bucks*: one at Peace Valley Park 12/14 (Andrew Harrington). *Chester*: up to 2 at ChesLen Preserve 12/1-14 (Holly Merker, John McNamara). *Erie*: one on CBC 12/16 (Emmanuel Erb, Henry Chupp, Neil Troyer). *Lancaster*: one at Wood's Edge Park 2/21-22 (Pamela Fisher, Larry Bernhardt). *Philadelphia*: one at John Heinz NWR 12/3 (Geoff Veith, Rich Ziegler).

Dunlin – *Erie*: one at mouth of Walnut Creek 12/7 (Jerry McWilliams). *Lebanon*: one at Fox/Prescott Rd ponds 12/1 (Bruce Carl).

Spotted Sandpiper – *Northampton*: one at Martins Creek Environmental Preserve 12/19 through period (MS, m.ob.).

Lesser Yellowlegs – *York*: one at Long Arm Reservoir 12/17-20 (Brian Rollfinke, Max Rollfinke, Dean Newhouse).

Greater Yellowlegs – *Delaware*: one at John Heinz NWR 12/1 (Scott Reynolds).

Black-headed Gull* – *Butler*: one returned to Moraine SP for 7th of 10 years, 11/12-12/11 (m.ob., *doc submitted*). *Delaware/Philadelphia*: adult at John Heinz NWR through 2/17, in same location as immature the previous winter.

Little Gull – *Erie*: one at Sunset Point 12/20 (Jerry McWilliams). *Lancaster*: one at Susquehanna R. 2/25-28 (Mike Epler, m.ob.)

Laughing Gull – *Lancaster*: one at Susquehanna R. 2/26 (Meredith Lombard, Steve Schmit). *Philadelphia*: one at John Heinz NWR 1/16-24 (Katrina Rakowski, m.ob.) and 4 at Walt Whitman Bridge 1/2 (David McNaughton).

California Gull* – *Butler*: one at Moraine SP 12/3 (Geoff Malosh, Jeff McDonald, Lauren Nagoda, Michael David, *doc submitted*), a first county record.

Caspian Tern – *Monroe*: one on the Pocono Mt CBC.

Eurasian Collared-Dove – *Berks*: one at Shartlesville colony site 2/23 (Ian Gardner). *Franklin*: 2 at Shady Grove colony 12/16 (Dale Gearhart, Kathryn Lauver).

Barn Owl – *Centre*: one on Penns Valley farm and seen on the Penns Creek CBC 12/27-30. *Clinton*: one at Salona farm 12/24 through at least Jan (Stephen Allgver). *Cumberland*: one at SGL 230. *Juniata*: one at private location (Edward Smiley, Steven Johnson, Tiffany

Willow, Chad Kauffman). *Northampton*: one at Penn Argyl 1/6 (Scott Angus).

Rufous Hummingbird – *Lancaster*: one at Columbia 12/2-20 (*fide* Sandy Lockerman).

Gyr Falcon* – *Northampton*: one possible at Northampton Quarry 12/29 (Steve Boyce), then confirmed during Feb in E. Allen Twp. (Bill Etter).

Ash-throated Flycatcher* – *Montgomery*: one at Green Lane Park during Upper Bucks County CBC 12/17 (Andrew Curtis, Joe Greco, John Becker, *doc submitted*), then re-found 1/14 (Steve Grunwald).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow – *Dauphin*: at Fulling Mill Rd boat launch 12/5 (Daniel Hinnebusch). *Philadelphia*: up to 30 at John Heinz NWR 12/1-3 (m.ob.); one at FDR Park 2/27 (Holger Pficke), 7 at Gen. Pulaski Park 1/13 (Barbara Stollsteimer, Kerry Loux), up to 100 at NE Phila WTP up to 2/19

House Wren – *Lancaster*: one at Quarryville 12/17 (Derek Stoner, Meredith Lombard). *Monroe*: one on Pocono Mt. CBC 12/17.

Marsh Wren – *Chester*: 4 at ChesLen Preserve 12/1-11 (Holly Merker, John McNamara). *Delaware*: 2 at John Heinz NWR 12/3-15 (Jim McConnell). *Perry*: at Frank Tressler Bird and Game Sanctuary 1/1 (Steve Schmit). *Philadelphia*: up to 2 at John Heinz NWR 12/16-22 (CBC team).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – *Lancaster*: one along Susquehanna R. 12/17 (Barry Blust, John McNamara, Jack Sigda). *Philadelphia*: one at John Heinz NWR from fall until 12/10 (m.ob.).

Ovenbird – *Centre*: one at Rockview 12/10 (Carl Engstrom). *Montgomery*: one at Kulpville 12/12-14 (John Ward). *Philadelphia*: one at Center City 12/25 (Russell Kovach).

Northern Waterthrush – *Clinton*: one possible, well-described near Mill Hall 1/6 (Tom Shervinski).

Black-and-white Warbler – *Centre*: one in State College 12/9 (Steven Feldstein).

Orange-crowned Warbler – *Bucks*: one at Feasterville 12/21-2/9 (Kris Koch), one at Penn-Warner Tract 12/16-24 (Devich Farbotnik). *Lancaster*: one at SGL 220 on 12/3 (Tom Garner) and one at an Elizabethtown feeder 1/2 through period (Joanna Sadler). *Philadelphia*: at least five locations Dec-Jan.

Nashville Warbler – *Chester*: one at feeder 1/21 through period (Hank Davis). *Lancaster*: one at a feeder 12/2 through period (Pamela Fisher) and recorded for Western Chester County CBC.

Yellow-throated Warbler – *Crawford*: one in a garage near Hartstown, 12/20-29 (Neil Troyer, Robert Troyer).

Clay-colored Sparrow – *Dauphin*: one at Hershey Special Habitat 12/23 (Alex Lamoreaux, Josh Lefever). *Northampton*: one at Ballas Park 1/22 through period (Rick Wiltraut, m.ob.).

Vesper Sparrow – *Mercer*: one at E. Zahniser Rd 12/2-14 (Neil Troyer).

Lincoln's Sparrow – *Allegheny*: 2 at a feeder in Pine Twp. 1/23 (Pat Lynch, Sherron Lynch). *Bucks*: one at Penn-Warner Track 12/16 (Devich Farbotnik). *Chester*: one at ChesLen Preserve 12/1 (Holly Merker, John McNamara). *Dauphin*: one at SGL 290-Haldeman Island 12/3 (Scott Bills, Stephanie Bills), one at Hershey 12/20 (Alex Lamoreaux). *Lancaster*: one at Spalding Conservancy 1/9-11 (Seth McComsey, m.ob.), one at Chestnut Grove NA 1/11 (Larry Bernhardt). *Lebanon*: one on Lebanon County CBC 12/16. *Lehigh*: one on Lehigh Valley CBC 12/16.

Harris's Sparrow* – *Bucks*: one in Doylestown 12/31 to end of period (anon, Michael Lucas, m.ob., *doc submitted*), found on Central Bucks County CBC.

Oregon Junco – *Allegheny*: one at Oakmont 12/29 (Ryan McDermott). *Berks*: one at N. Oley Valley 12/17 (Rudy Keller) and seen on Reading CBC. *Crawford*: up to 2 at Guys Mills 12/10-16 (Alejandra Lewandowski, Terry Lobdell). *Monroe*: one at Price Twp. 2/5-9 (Jon Corcoran).

Yellow-breasted Chat – *Lancaster*: one at Lititz 12/16-18 (Richard Boshart).

Summer Tanager* – *Montgomery*: one at a feeder in Harleysville mid-Dec through period (Elise Bowers).

Western Tanager* – *Bucks*: female at Bedminster Twp. feeders 1/17-2/17 (Michael O'Shea, Jeanne O'Shea, *doc submitted*). *Lancaster*: one at a Mohnton feeder 12/23-1/16 (*fide* Anne Hurst) and one at Middle Creek WMA 12/31 (Jonathan Heller, Larry Bernhardt, Pamela Fisher, Andy Keister, *doc submitted*); first and second county reports.

Blue Grosbeak – *Lancaster*: one immature at Chestnut Grove Natural Area 1/6-22 (Josh Schulz, m.ob.).

Painted Bunting* – *Lancaster*: adult male returned to Mohnton feeders for second consecutive winter 12/17 through period (*fide* Anne Hurst).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak – *Juniata*: one at a Licking Creek Valley feeder 1/21 (Deb Brackbill). *Washington*: one at feeder in Washington 12/7-13 (Lauren Conkle). *York*: one at a Niles Rd feeder 1/6 (Carolyn Mathur).

Dickcissel – *Montgomery*: one at Harleysville 2/18 to end of period (Tina Fantozzi). *Northampton*: one at a Palmer Twp. feeder 1/10 (Dave DeReamus).

Yellow-headed Blackbird – *Berks*: female at a Boyertown feeder 12/30-1/3 (Ron and Karen Wagner). *Luzerne*: female at Plymouth Flats 2/23 (Rick Koval).

Bullock's Oriole* – *Allegheny*: one at feeder in Hampton Twp. 12/8-1/2 (Ed Shott, *fide* Bob Mulvihill).

Baltimore Oriole – *Allegheny*: one at O'Hara Twp. Dec until 1/13 (Brian Shema). *Bucks*: one at feeder in Middletown Twp. through the period (David Pentland). *Perry*: one at private feeder 12/17 (Jean Devlin) and seen on the New Bloomfield CBC 12/23.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch* – *Crawford*: a female or immature at feeders in Meadville 2/1-24 (*fide* Shawn Collins, m.ob.) for first Pennsylvania record.

Red Crossbill – *Erie*: one at Erie feeder 12/29 (John DePaul).

Common Redpoll – *Centre*: one at Ferguson Twp. 12/2 (Tony Arnold). *Erie*: flocks of 20 on 2/14 (Eric Smyklo), 26 on 12/24 (Jacob Flynn, James Flynn) and 30 on 2/14 (Donald Snyder) on Presque Isle, flock of 20 in Erie 2/11 (Jordan Caldwell). *Philadelphia*: one at Island Green County Club 12/16 during Pennypack Valley CBC (Holger Pficke). *Tioga*: 13 at Pickle Hill Rd 2/22 (Rich Hanlon).

Photographic Highlights



Perhaps the greatest annual bird spectacle in Pennsylvania is the gathering of **Snow Geese** at Middle Creek WMA, *Lancaster/Lebanon*; this year's peak number was a record high 200,000, some seen here 30 January. (*Joe Endy*)



Are **Greater White-fronted Geese** becoming more common winter visitors/residents in Pennsylvania? This season they were reported in 25 counties, topping 18 in the "invasion" winter of 2015-16; this flock of 8 was at Centre Hills Country Club, *Centre 22* (here 28) January – 21 February. (*Debra Rittelmann*)



This **Pink-footed Goose** continued from the fall at Peace Valley Park, *Bucks* until 2 (here 1) December; another or the same Pink-footed Goose was in the county 4-5 February. (*August Mirabella*)



This **Barnacle Goose** was seen in *Lehigh* in Nov, then settled in Hanover Twp., *Northampton*, where it stayed until 10 (here 3) December. (*Dave DeReamus*)



Cackling Geese were reported in 24 counties, mostly in the southeast but also in 8 counties elsewhere, including this excellent specimen at Peters Lake, *Washington* 13 December. (*John Flannigan*)



Northern Shovelers at Bald Knob, *Allegheny* 24 February. (*Geoff Malosh*)



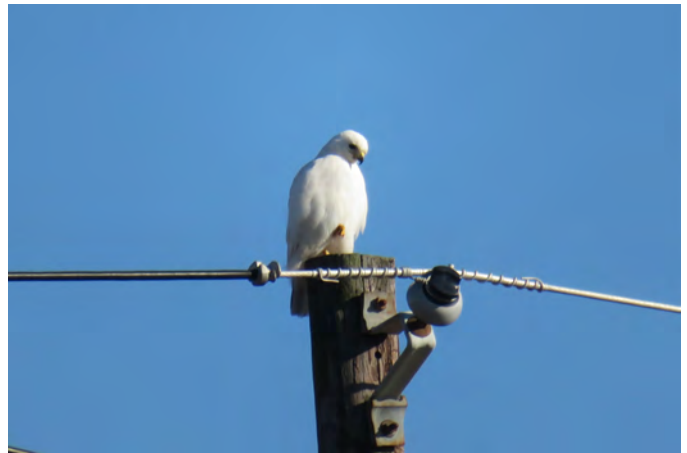
One of two female **White-winged Scoters** on the Allegheny River at Natrona, *Allegheny*; present on limited open water for a week during extreme cold in early (here 7) January, they departed with warmer weather and clearance of the ice. (*Geoff Malosh*)



Ospreys sometimes linger into December; at least 4 were reported this winter, including this bird hunting the lake at Gifford Pinchot SP, *York* 14 December. (*Dean Newhouse*)



Red-tailed Hawk over Spring Mills, *Centre* 12 February. (*Debra Rittelmann*)



Assuming the same individual, this leucistic **Red-tailed Hawk**, seen here 3 February, has been resident in Hatfield Twp., *Montgomery* since 2013; it was confirmed nesting this year and presumably has in previous years. (*August Mirabella*)



Iceland Gull at Nockamixon SP, *Bucks*, a regular location for the species, 24 February. (*August Mirabella*)



Bonaparte's Gull at Marsh Creek SP, *Chester* 10 December. (*Barry Blust*)



A **Black-headed Gull** returned to Lake Arthur at Moraine SP, *Butler* for the 7th year of the last 10, present 12 November – 11 (here 3) December. (*Geoff Malosh*)



Lake Arthur at Moraine SP in *Butler* has become a gull hotspot (see *Butler* summary), this year featuring a county-first **California Gull** found by searching through the large flock of Ring-billed Gulls on 3 December, but not seen thereafter. (*Geoff Malosh*)



There may have been as many as four **Snowy Owls** in *Allegheny*; this owl was spotted on a light bank at Heinz Field in downtown Pittsburgh 20 December and photographed the next day, after which it was not seen again. (*Geoff Malosh*)



One of two **Snowy Owls** found in *Mercer*, this bird was present at Jackson Center 25 December – 19 (here 17) February. (*Ted Nicholls II*)



Red-bellied Woodpecker pair in East Stroudsburg, *Monroe* 17 February. (*Nancy Tully*)



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher found along the Susquehanna R., *Lancaster* during the Southern Lancaster CBC 17 December, the second in the 42-year duration of that count. (*Barry Blust*)



This **Nashville Warbler** spent the winter feeding on grape jelly in Gap, Lancaster, present 2 (here 25) December - 23 April; probably the first winter record for the county. Another Nashville was present much of the season in Chester. (Pamela Fisher)



Providing the fifth county record, this **Western Tanager** was in Bedminster Twp. 17 January – 17 (here 12) February. (August Mirabella)



This **Northern Cardinal** in Warminster Twp., Bucks, seen here 29 December, appears to be a bilateral gynandromorph, female plumage on the right side and male on the left. (Cheryl Hughes)



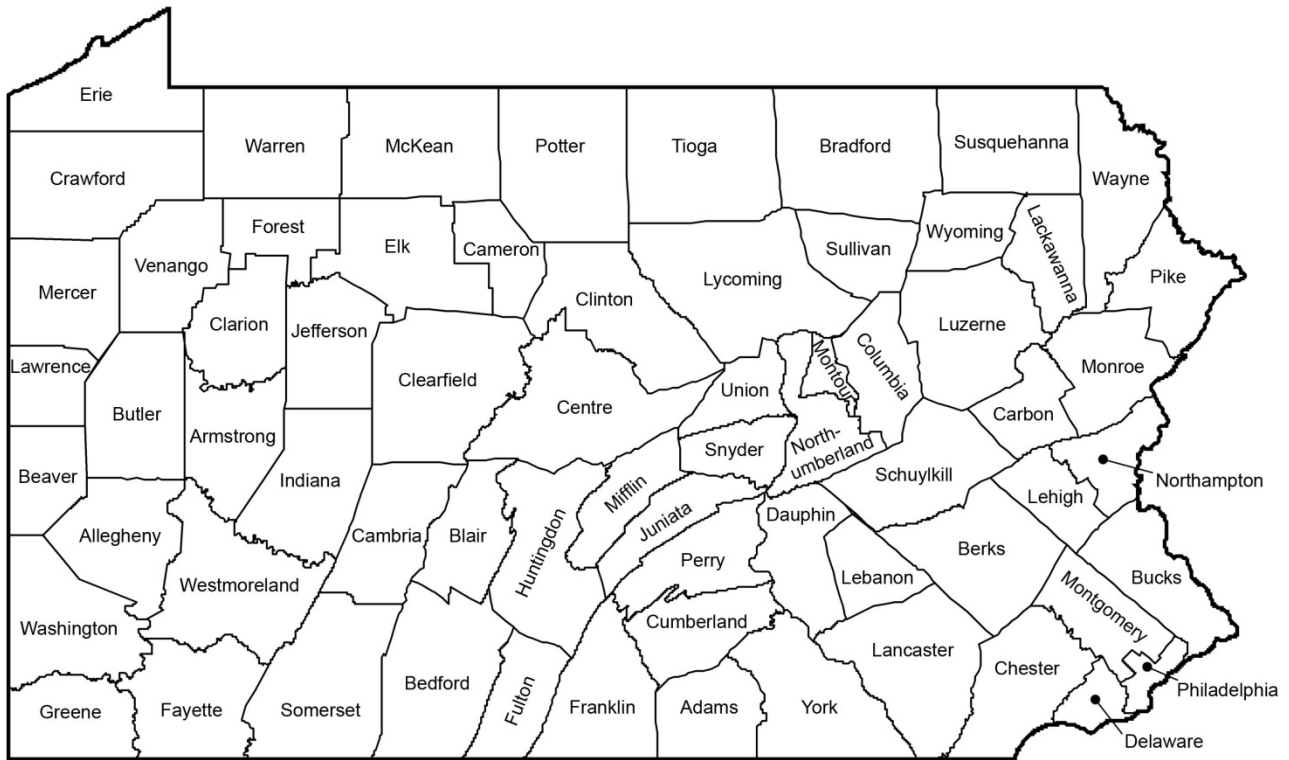
Female **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** visited feeders in Juniata and York, as did this male in Washington, present 7-13 (here 11) December in Washington (town). (Lauren Conkle)



This **Dickcissel** was a one-day feeder visitor in Palmer Twp., Northampton 10 January. (Dave DeReamus)



A **Bullock's Oriole** frequented a feeding station in Hampton Twp. Allegheny 8 (here 9) December- January providing a first county record and first Pennsylvania record west of the Allegheny Front. (Geoff Malosh)



ABBREVIATION

BBS	Breeding Bird Survey	max	maximum	RBA	Rare Bird Alert
C.A.	Conservation Area	min	minimum	Res.	Reservoir
CBC	Christmas Bird Count	m.ob.	many observers	Rte.	Route
C.P.	County Park	Mt. (Mts.)	Mount/Mountain/Mountains	SF	State Forest
Cr.	Creek	NA	Nature Area or Natural Area	SGL	State Game Land
et al.	and others	NF	National Forest	SP	State Park
Ft.	Fort	NM	National Monument	S.T.P.	Sewage Treatment Plant
G.C.	Golf Course	NP	National Park	subad(s).	subadult(s)
G.P.	Game Preserve	NWR	National Wildlife Refuge	Twp.	Township
Hwy.	Highway	PAMC	Pennsylvania Migration Count	vr.	voice recording
imm(s).	immature(s)	ph.	Photographed	vt.	videotape
Jct.	Junction	Pt.	Point	WA	Wildlife Area
juv(s).	juvenile [plumage]; juvenile(s)	R.	River	WMA	Wildlife Management Area
L.	Lake	RA	Recreational Area	WRS	Winter Raptor Survey

eBird Usage: Data for these reports and throughout this journal include observations collected from the eBird database <<http://www.ebird.org>>. Citation: eBird. 2012. eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance [web application]. eBird, Ithaca, New York. Available: <http://www.ebird.org>. (Accessed: 31 March 2014 abundance [web application]. eBird, Ithaca, New York. Available: <http://www.ebird.org>. (Accessed: 31 March 2014)

Editors Note: Winter reports were received from 58 counties. The following counties have no compiler- contact the editor if interested: Bradford, Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Tioga. Perry will have a new compiler beginning with the Spring issue.

Adams County

Locations: Gettysburg Christmas Bird Count (GCBC), Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP), Lake Heritage (LH), Lake Kay (LK), Long Pine Run Reservoir (LPRR), Mountain Rd (MTN), State Game Lands #249 (SGL), York Springs Christmas Bird Count (YSCBC).

A slightly colder than average Dec-Jan period gave way to a mild Feb nearly 6F above average. No large snowfalls were experienced. Total precipitation for the period was somewhat above the norm due to a rainy Feb. Species count of 113 sets a new winter period high for the county. Winter waterfowl reporting continues to be a highlight with 29 species while another winter of sparse northern visitors was a

disappointment. County Winter Raptor Surveys continue to reflect long term trends and a new route was added this year. The 12/16 GCBC was led by Mike O'Brien and reported 79 species while the Vern Gauthier led YSCBC 12/27 found 71 species in the Adams portion of the count circle.

The long staying autumn carryover **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** was last reported at LH 12/19 (m.ob.). Five **Greater White-fronted Goose** were at LK 12/19 (m.ob.). A single appeared at LH 1/26 (CM) followed by a 13 count gagle 2/8 (CM). Five **Snow Goose** reports spanned 12/30–2/17 (m.ob.) with a high of 12 at GNMP 2/17 (Anon.). Singles of **Ross's Goose** were found on the GCBC, at LH 1/9 (JW), and at LK 1/22–2/10 (m.ob.). It is probable all sightings were of the same bird. Adams birders continue their efforts to sort thru **Canada Goose** flocks for **Cackling Goose** and were once again rewarded. Up to 2 were found on various dates 12/13–2/24 (m.ob.), at LH, GNMP, and Gettysburg College. Sixty **Tundra Swan** were found on the GCBC and then not reported again until 2/17–28. High count during the latter period was 185 at Bullfrog Rd 2/27 (CM).

Unusual New Year's Day celebrants were 2 **Wood Ducks** at LK 12/29–1/4 (m.ob.). **American Black Duck** enjoyed good reporting with

the 8 reports paced by a nice count of 22 at LH 1/17 (JW). LH also held a **Mallard x American Black Duck** 1/10-16 (CM, JW). A flock of 45 **Northern Pintails** at LH 1/19 (JW) was a nice count for *Adams*. A pair of **Green-winged Teal** was at LH 12/16 (CM) and 4 showed up 1/11 (JW). A single **Canvasback** was at LH 1/3 and 13 (CM, JW). **Greater Scaup** singles were found at LPRR 12/15 (BO) and on the GCBC. Three reports of pairs of **Common Goldeneye** spanned 12/17–2/12 (VB, NM, NL, CM, JW). A total of 1600+ **Common Mergansers** were found on the YSCBC. Nicer counts of 11 and 13 **Red-breasted Mergansers** came from LPRR 12/15 (VB, NM) and LH 12/14 (AL), respectively. A good count of 24 **Ruddy Ducks** was tallied on the YSCBC. Single **Pied-billed Grebe** at LH 12/18 (DSt) and **Horned Grebe** 2/13 (CM, JW) were the only reports.

The only **Ring-necked Pheasant** was a single along Brown's Dam Rd 2/18 (AF). Higher counts among the 9 **Wild Turkey** reports included 28 on the GCBC, 62 on the YSCBC, and 22 at MTN 2/23 (RDS). The trend for lingering **Double-crested Cormorant** continued with one at LH 12/7 (AK). Raptor reporting was strong with the highlight being up to 5 **Northern Harriers** at GNMP 12/27 (PRW). The YSCBC produced the only reports of **Wilson's Snipe**, **Great Black-backed Gull**, and **Northern Saw-whet Owl**. Eight hundred **Ring-billed Gulls** along Mud Run Rd 2/21 (PK) was an exceptionally high number for the county. Six **Herring Gulls** were at Lake Meade 2/17 (JV).

Twelve reports each of **Great-horned** and **Barred Owl** were on the high side. It was encouraging to see a return of reliable numbers of wintering **Short-eared Owl**. GNMP started to produce reports 12/7 (m.ob.) with a high of 9 on 1/21 (HM). A single was at Bullfrog Rd 12/13 (m.ob.) and a pair along Crum Rd 12/16 (IC). There was no winter exodus of **Red-headed Woodpecker** this year. The 20 reports were paced by a high count of 12 birds at GNMP 1/12 (GC). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** reporting was very high with 20 reports. Thirty, 5, and 3 reports of **American Kestrel**, **Merlin**, and **Peregrine Falcon**, respectively, represents the strongest ever winter reporting frequency for falcons.

Eastern Phoebe was found on the GCBC, at Latimore Twp. 12/27 (PM), along Plank Rd 1/2 (IG, NK), and at Oaks Community Park 2/28 (LM). The late fall period's **Northern Shrike** continued until 12/4 at GNMP (m.ob.). A Christmas Day sighting at Plank Rd may have been the same bird (DBo). Thirteen reports of **Horned Lark** were led by a high of 65 at Hamiltonban Community Park 1/1 (CM).

Surprisingly, **Black-capped Chickadee** was reported at only a single locale, up to 6 at Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve 1/13-18 (EB, JW). Not much better, the 2 reports of **Red-breasted Nuthatch** were of singles at LPRR 12/22 (DB) and Knorr Rd 12/26 (ML, NL). Thirteen reports of **Winter Wren** 12/2-1/29, 7 of **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** 12/16–2/24, and 14 of **Hermit Thrush** throughout the season all represent very high reporting frequency for this period. Uncommon, even in the mildest of winters, single **Gray Catbirds** were along Ridge Rd in Cumberland Twp 1/22 (CM) and along Knorr Rd 2/18 (CK). Also a good winter find was a **Brown Thrasher** on the GCBC. Strong reporting of **American Pipit** 12/6–1/28 produced nice counts of 85 on the YSCBC and 50 along Wenksville Rd 12/15 (BO). Better **Cedar Waxwing** counts included 104 on the GCBC, 74 on the YSCBC, and 88 at LK 2/23 (CM).

Single **Savannah Sparrows** were at SGL 1/9 (JW) and along Bullfrog Rd 1/13 and 19 (AW); GNMP held Savannahs throughout the period with a high of 8 birds 1/9 (JP, AWin, JW). The only **Fox Sparrow** was a single at SGL 2/11 (CM). Unprecedented for this period were 14 reports from 9 sites of **Swamp Sparrow** 12/14–2/19; high was 11 on the GCBC. Equally significant were 16 reports of **Eastern Towhee** throughout the period with a remarkable count of 22 on the YSCBC.

Six sites reported **Eastern Meadowlark** with highs of 28 along Cunningham Rd 1/5 (EB) and 30 along B & F Rd 1/15 (DSt). **Red-winged Blackbird** was reported sporadically and in low numbers in Dec-Jan with detection and counts elevating in Feb. **Brown-headed Cowbird** was found all period while **Common Grackle** was absent in Dec and found only once in early Jan before an increasing presence in Feb. Up to 36 **Rusty Blackbirds** were at GNMP 1/31 (CM) after first being found 1/25 (CM); last report was 2/14 (JW). A single "rusty" was at Oaks Community Park 2/28 (LM). A pair of **Purple Finch** was

found on the YSCBC and a single was at MTN 2/28 (RDS) for the only reports. The 2 reports of **Pine Siskin** involved a single at LPRR 12/17 (VB, NM) and 9 at Fairfield 1/3 (EB).

Observers: **Phil Keener, 198 Jacobs Street, East Berlin, PA 17316, (717) 259-9984, pittche74@yahoo.com**, Gavin Anderson, Tony Arnold, Val Barnes, Eric Beck, Dan Boritt (DBo), Doris Brookens, George Chrisman, Ian Clarke, Josh & Sue Donaldson (JSD), Maryann Fahey, Abbi Fields, Ian Gardner, Vern Gauthier, Deb Grove, Greg Grove, Andy Keister, Cathy Knorr, Nicole Koetzlow, Duane Kornbau, Alex Lamoreaux, Michael Locher, Nancy Locher, Henry McLin, Nancy Magnusson, Linette Mansberger, Peter Martin, Callan Murphy, Ted Nichols II, Mike O'Brien, Bill Oyler, Jason Pietrzak, Jeffrey Roth, Michael S, Matt Sabatine, David Shealer, Ralph & Deb Siefken (RDS), Danny Stoner (DSt), Jason Verdier, Joel Wagner, Dave Wildasin, Patricia & Richard Williams (PRW), Andy Wilson, Anne Winters (AWin), Nathan Zalik.

Allegheny County

Locations: Imperial (IMP), Pine Township (PT).

We experienced a variety of weather this season including two ice storms, some minor snow storms, and both mild and frigid temperatures. Ice built up for a brief period on area rivers concentrating some waterfowl in early January. It looked like a promising winter for gulls during the cold snap, but the gull numbers dissipated once the ice broke up. We had a first county record Bullock's Oriole which was exciting and a few siskins visited feeders in the county but they were not widespread.

A **Ross's Goose** was a nice find at Wingfield Pines 2/11-12 (DW, ST) providing the ninth county record. **Snow Goose** was reported in three locations, a significant event here where they are rare. A blue morph was in Findlay Twp. 12/17–1/1 (MV), a white morph was on the Allegheny River in Blawnox 1/6 (DY), and a white morph was found near Wingfield Pines 2/11 (FK). **Tundra Swan** flocks were noted through Dec and into early Jan, a rather late movement of this species in the county. A flock of 11 were over Squirrel Hill 12/10 (JS, SS), 100 flew over Hampton Twp. 12/13 (DN), 10 were noted flying over the Point in Pittsburgh 12/30 (AP, MVV), and 36 were tallied that day over Kilbuck Twp. (CBC). On 1/4, two flyover flocks were noted: 23 over the northern part of the county (DN) and 22 over Verona (SK).

An **American Wigeon** was found at IMP 12/17 and nearby in Findlay Twp. 12/23 (MV). One was at IMP again 2/25 (MV). Six **Northern Shovelers** were at IMP 2/24 (MV). A **Northern Pintail** was discovered at a very small pond in Highland Park in Pittsburgh 12/19 (BH, AHa) and remained most of the season, offering close looks and photo opportunities. One was at Janoski's Farm in Findlay Twp. 12/23-1/21 (MV, GM, et al.). Up to three **Canvasback** were at Emsworth Dam 1/7-11 (SD, PB, MH). **Redheads** gathered at Emsworth Dam when the rivers were frozen in Jan. The high count was 28 on 1/17 (SD). Five **Surf Scoters** were a nice find on the Ohio River at McKees Rocks 12/15 (JF). Two **White-winged Scoters** were found at Dam#4 on the Allegheny River at Natrona Heights 1/6 (AH, PM, DY), drifting between *Allegheny* and *Westmoreland*. This was the only open water on the river for about a week. When the ice broke, the birds moved on. A **Long-tailed Duck** was with the scoters. One was on the Ohio R. at McKees Rocks 1/1-3 (JF). An immature male settled at Riverfront Park on the Southside in Pittsburgh 2/20 (SA). It remained at least to 2/25 and offered extremely close views and associated with a female **Greater Scaup**. **Common Goldeneyes** joined the crowd at Emsworth Dam and the max count was 31 on 1/9 (PB). A **Ruddy Duck** on the Allegheny River at Blawnox 1/1 was the only report (AP, JC). **American Black Duck**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Ring-necked Duck**, **Greater Scaup**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Bufflehead** and all three mergansers were reported, most in Jan when the rivers froze nearly solid, concentrating the birds.

A flock of 67 **Wild Turkey** were in Verona 12/30 (MHA). Uncommon in winter, single **Horned Grebes** were reported on the

Allegheny R. at Shapsburg 12/31 (AH, PM) and at Six Mile Island in Harmar Twp. 1/1 (AP, JC). One was on the Ohio R. at Emsworth Dam 1/11 (MH) and one was on the Allegheny R. at Fox Chapel 2/24 (SG). The only **American Coot** reported was at Emsworth 1/9 (PB). An interesting passage of **Sandhill Cranes** involved a flock of 59 were observed flying over Moon Twp. 12/14 (JB); and a flock of 60 were noted flying over O'hara Twp. 12/26 (BP).

A late **Killdeer** was at Duck Hollow 12/7 (JS, SS). **Wilson's Snipe** has become a fairly regular, local winter resident. A single bird was at IMP 12/24 (MV) and 2/14 (GM). **American Woodcock** were first noted at IMP 2/20 (AB) and at Boyce-Mayview Park 2/28 (GG). Cold weather in late Dec and early Jan set up conditions for rare gulls in Pittsburgh. An **Iceland Gull** and a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** were at The Point 12/30 (MVV, AP, GM, AH, PM). An adult **Great Black-backed Gull** was there 12/27-30 (GM, ST, MVV, AP) and an interesting first winter **Herring X Glaucous Gull** was a great find 2/9 and 2/12 (DW, ST GM, SD). It looked like a first winter glaucous with dark wing tips. A first winter Iceland Gull was at Emsworth Dam on the Ohio River downstream from Pittsburgh 1/10 (GM). An adult Lesser Black-backed Gull was there 1/9-11 (SD, GM) and perhaps the the same bird was at The Point 2/8-10 (ST, DW, GM). A first winter Great Black-backed Gull was at The Point 2/10 (ST). **Ring-billed Gull** numbers maxed at 6800 at The Point 2/9 (DW, ST, GM).

Small numbers of **Turkey Vultures** were present at various locations the entire season. **Rough-legged Hawk** reports all came from IMP and nearby areas as usual. A dark morph was in Findlay Twp. 12/29-30 (MV), and a light morph was reported at IMP on ebird 2/8 (RMP) and on 2/9 (GM, MV, JHA). **Red-shouldered Hawks** were reported in Shaler Twp. 12/30 (JH), West Deer Twp. 2/1 (AB) and one was at IMP 2/17 (MF).

A **Barred Owl** was found during the Pittsburgh CBC in Indiana Twp., a traditional location. Two **Short-eared Owls** were at IMP 1/22 (GM) and 3 on 1/28 (SD); the first reports since 2015. Sightings continued through the season with a high count of 5 on 2/27 (JM). **Snowy Owls** were reported in Dec including 2 at a private location 12/5 (SR). Another was discovered perched on top of Heinz Field (home field of the Pittsburgh Steelers) 12/20-21 (MW, m.ob.). One was reported on ebird in downtown Pittsburgh 12/29.

An interesting sapsucker visited a feeder in Gibsonia 1/6 (AB). It appeared to be a possible hybrid **Yellow-bellied X Red-naped Sapsucker**. Photos are in ebird however to my knowledge no one knows for certain if it's a hybrid or a variant yellow-bellied. A few **Merlins** were found during the season. Singles were at South Park 12/30 (JP), Schenley Park 1/7 (GM), Mt. Royal Cemetery in Shaler Twp. 12/19-30 (JH), IMP 1/22 (JF). After an absence at a former nest site, 2 **Peregrine Falcons** were present at the Tarentum Bridge 1/12 (DB), raising the hopes a pair will breed there again. A nest box was installed on the bridge several years ago.

The tally for the **American Crow** roost this year was 15,000 birds. Only one **Fish Crow** was reported at Duck Hollow for the season and several were in nearby Point Breeze 1/20 (MVV). Three **Common Ravens** were in Oakmont during the CBC 12/30 (SSN) and 2 were in Greenfield 2/2 (KSJ). A nice count of 250 **Horned Larks** was made at Janoski's Farm in Findlay Twp. 1/7 (GM). **Red-breasted Nuthatch** reports included singles in Forest Hills 12/9 (TBI), Shaler Twp. 12/30 (JH), and Fox Chapel 12/30 (CBC). A **Winter Wren** was at Harrison Hills Park 12/16 (MF, DB) and singles were tallied on the CBC 12/30 in Indiana Twp. and North Park.

Hermit Thrush reports include one at North Park 1/1 (KSJ) and one in Sewickley 1/15 (GM). A late **Gray Catbird** was a surprise in Penn Hills 12/17 (MF). A few **Pine Siskins** were noted visiting feeders during the season. One attended a feeder in Gibsonia for most of Jan with 2 there 1/25 (AB). One was in Fox Chapel 12/20 (SV), 2 visited a feeder in Hampton Twp. 1/16 (DN), and 4 were in O'hara Twp. in late Jan (BSH). Two **Lapland Longspurs** were found at Janoski's Farm in Findlay Twp. 1/7 and one on 1/21 (GM). A **Snow Bunting** was there 1/10 (SA, AP).

Unusual late sparrows were present this season. **Eastern Towhees**, uncommon in winter, were in three locations the last half of

Dec and 8 were at South Park 1/17 (JF). A **Chipping Sparrow** visited a feeder in Harmar Twp. 12/12-15 (JV). One also visited a feeder in Plum 12/25 (AH, PM). **Field Sparrows** are irregular in winter. Two were in Jefferson Borough 12/16 and one 1/19 (BMu, JHA). Two were found at North Park 1/20-21 (SD). Two **Fox Sparrows** were at a feeder in PT 1/6 (PL, SL) and one continued to visit up to 2/11. One was in South Park 1/7 (JF). **Lincoln's Sparrows** are regular fall migrants but any beyond the migration period are unusual. Two visited a feeder in PT 1/23 (PL, SL). A late **Swamp Sparrow** was at Harrison Hills Park 12/16 (MF, DB). Four were along Strauss Rd. in Findlay Twp. 12/17 (MV). This site attracts sparrows due to a corn crib at a farm. **White-crowned Sparrows** are regular in winter at this site and were present during the season. Two were photographed at a feeding station nearby 1/13 (TFo, ebird). A **Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco** was photographed in Oakmont 12/29 (RM).

We had quite a variety of blackbird reports during the season which is unusual here. A **Rusty Blackbird**, rare in winter, was a surprise in Schenley Park 1/14 (KSJ). One visited a feeder in PT 1/20 and 2 on 2/28 (PL, SL). **Red-winged Blackbirds** were still found in Dec, which is unusual. They were present in PT 12/10-2/3 with a max of 22 on 12/23 (PL, SL). Twenty-four were in South Park 1/17 (JF) and 3 were in Jefferson Borough 2/11 (SSN). An **Eastern Meadowlark** was at IMP 2/25 (MV). A **Common Grackle** was at Wingfield Pines 1/20 (GM), one was at Frick Park 1/27 (MF), one visited a feeder in Squirrel Hill 2/24 (MVV), and 3 were in South Park 2/23 (DF), probably spring migrants. A small group of 6 **Brown-headed Cowbirds** took advantage of the food at the farm mentioned above in Findlay Twp. 12/17 (MV). One visited a feeder in Squirrel Hill in Dec (MVV) and 18 visited the feeders at Beechwood Farms 2/2 (BSH). Three were at a feeder in PT 2/3 (PL, SL).

A male **Baltimore Oriole** was photographed at a feeder in O'hara Twp. in late Dec until at least 1/13 (BSH). An adult male **Bullock's Oriole** was a fantastic surprise 12/8, when it was reported at a feeder in Hampton Twp. (ES, fide BMu). It remained through 1/2 and was enjoyed by many observers. This furnished the first county record.

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Armstrong County

Locations: Cochran's Mill (CM), Crooked Creek Lake (CCL), Dayton (DT), Freeport L&D 5, Keystone Reservoir (KR), Kittanning (KT), Leechburg (LB), Logansport (LT), Mahoning Creek Lake (MCL), New Bethlehem (NB) Parks Bend Farm (PBF), Rosston (RT), SGL 247, Worthington (WT).

A beautiful **Snowy Owl** observed and photographed on a dairy farm in Freeport 12/5 (AA) was a great start to the winter season. A **Red-throated Loon** was a nice find at KR 12/1 (RN) and winter ended with a **Red-necked Grebe** at CCL 2/28 (JB).

One blue phase **Snow Goose** first discovered at CCL 11/29 (JB)

continued through 12/3 (JLS, MVT, MD, SGU, phs.) and 20 **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at the dam 12/26 (KK, JLS, ph.). An immature **Tundra Swan** was at CCL 12/17 (CR, ph.) and one was photographed at KT L&D 7 on 1/5 (AB), and 1/9 (MVT, ph.) through 1/11 (AB, SGU).

First **Wood Ducks** to return were 4 in WT 2/25, then 7 in WT 2/26 (AB), and 2 were photographed in the backwaters of CCL 2/26 (MVT). The only **Northern Shovelers** reported were 4 in WT (AB) and only 2 **American Wigeons** were observed, on the Kiskiminetas River near LB (BVT, MVT). Most other duck species were reported from several locations. High counts of **Common Mergansers** were 185 on 12/8 (MD) and 207 on 12/9 (JB), both at CCL. Only one **Red-breasted Merganser** was noted, at Freeport L&D 5 on 1/6 (TR). A few **Horned Grebes** and a lone **Double-crested Cormorant** were included in reports from several locations. A high of 9 **Great Blue Herons** was noted at MCL (AD).

Northern Harriers were in WT all season, as expected (m.ob.), and at DT. The **Red-shouldered Hawk** pair that nests at CCL was very active this winter (AB, JB, SGU, Ak, JK, CR, JLS, MVT) and there were reports of this species at other places such as Apollo, Clinton, DT, and WT. This was a good year for **Rough-legged Hawks** (both light and dark phases); mostly from WT (m.ob.), but one was also reported from Mayport (AK, JK). **Killdeer** returned as early as 12/4 at CCL (AK, JK), others were reported from RT, WT, Rural Valley, and there was a high of 7 from DT (AD). A high count of 73 **Ring-billed Gulls** came from RT 2/18 (LV).

There were a few sightings of **Eastern Screech Owl** and **Great Horned Owl**. Two **Barred Owls** were reported from CCL (JB) and also in Cowansville (SGU, ph.). Possibly a first county record for Dec. **Short-eared Owls** returned on 12/17 to both DT (SGU) and WT (MH, RH), and were at the latter again 1/10 (DF, BG). **American Kestrels** were heavily reported throughout the county with most sightings from WT. **Merlins** were reported from CCL 12/2 (MVT), DT 1/29 (MH, RH), and Elderton 2/19 (JS). A new and welcome sight for birders who enjoy WT has been one of the **Peregrine Falcons** that nest under the Graff Bridge at KT - reported in WT farmlands 1/6 (SGU), 1/16 (AB), and 2/2 (DF, MVT); and near the bridge 12/8 (SGU), 1/14 (MD), and 1/31 (MH, RH). **Common Ravens** are nesting again at CCL.

Horned Larks were numerous in WT with high counts of 100 (DF, MD, MVT), 165 (SGU), and 200 on 1/20 (TR). Also observed with Horned Larks were one-two **Lapland Longspurs** (AB, SGU, DB, phs.). Only 2 **Winter Wrens** were reported: one from Kelly Station 12/20 (JB) and one at CCL 1/14 (TR). **Golden Crowned Kinglets** were reported from many areas including CCL, Kelly Station, L&D 7, RT, and SGL 247 (LT, KR, KT, KT). Single **Hermit Thrush** were at SGL 247 on 12/15 (LS) and CCL 1/14 (TR). Two **American Pipits** were in WT 12/17 (MH, RH) and 28 **Snow Buntings** were there 1/15 (MH, RH, ph.), with 2 buntings in the same area 1/19 (SGU, ph.). An early **Eastern Meadowlark** was observed in WT 1/16 and 3 there 2/27 (AB). A lone **Rusty Blackbird** was a nice find in WT 2/28 (AB). Four **Brown-headed Cowbirds** were at RT 2/18. The only **Pine Siskin** was in KT 1/13 (SGU).

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Beaver County

Locations: Ambridge Reservoir (AR), Independence Marsh (IND), Raccoon Creek State Park (RCSP), Rochester – Beaver River mouth (RCH).

The La Niña winter really ramped up in December. The month overall averaged only 1.8°F below normal at Pittsburgh, but it closed out with extremely cold temperatures, including a whopping -16°F below normal over the course of the last week of the month. This trend continued in January, when the monthly average was -3°F below normal despite a few brief but significant warm spells. February was a tale of two months, with temperatures about 2°F below normal for the first half of the month, then 12°F above for the second half of the month. The warmth of late February did not continue, however, as March was back to -6°F below normal for the whole month, and cold temperatures continued into the first part of April. This kind of bumpy ride is typical of a La Niña in the eastern U.S. It all added up to a strange winter season bird-wise. The strong cold of late Dec and early Jan brought ice to Ohio River and hopes of a gull invasion, but a strong and flooding storm 1/11-12 dumped 2.75" of rain and caused the rivers to choke with rough, uneven ice and wrecked boats and other structures of all sorts. The rivers ran high for most of the season thereafter, which suppressed ice formation despite the cold that persisted until mid-Feb, and the gulls never really came. Waterfowl, too, were reluctant to rest on the rapidly moving rivers, and reports of this family were off as well.

The only report of **Tundra Swan** was of 8 at Vanport 12/30 (DR, GR). Five **Wood Ducks** were back at IND by 2/23 (MV). Up to 5 **American Black Ducks** wintered at RCH (m.ob.), and 2 were at AR 12/23 (DC) just before that reservoir rapidly froze over. Six **Gadwall** at Vanport 1/1 (GR) were probably chased off a frozen body of water farther north; they not reported again until 3 appeared at RCH 2/11 (MV). **Northern Shoveler** is missed some winters, so reports of 10 at RCH 12/23, one there 1/27, and one at IND 2/24 (all MV) made for a good season. One or 2 **Northern Pintails** showed up at RCH 12/24 and were reported regularly through 2/22 (MV, KSJ, et al.). A holdover from the fall was still there 12/1 (MV).

Canvasback, a species that sometimes shows up in good numbers in cold winters, was limited to just 2 birds at RCH 2/16 (MV). **Redheads** fared a bit better, with a handful persisting at RCH throughout Dec (m.ob.) and up to 22 there 2/2-25 (MV, et al.). A **Ring-necked Duck** at RCH 1/12 (MV) provided an uncommon mid-winter record, but they were not seen for the remainder of the season. A **Greater Scaup** appeared at RCH 12/23-25 (MV), and they became daily at RCH from 2/5-25 with the top count of 21 on 2/16 (MV). A **White-winged Scoter** was at RCH 12/21-25 (MV, et al.) and another was there 2/25 (BS *fide* MV). It was a pretty good season for **Common Goldeneye**, with reports of up to 14 at RCH from 1/13-2/25 (m.ob.). Likewise for **Red-breasted Mergansers**, which were reported a little better than they typically are in the winter season, exclusively at RCH (m.ob.). A collection of 24 **Hooded Mergansers** at New Brighton 12/15 (MV) was unusual.

Single **Common Loons** bookended Dec at RCH 12/1 and 12/31 (MV). A **Horned Grebe** hung around RCH 2/5-17 (m.ob.). Very nice was a **Red-necked Grebe** at RCH 2/16 (MV) but unfortunately it did not linger more than a few hours. A late **American Coot** was at RCH 12/24 (KSJ), and **Killdeer** hung on at RCSP to 12/15 (MV). Two **Bonaparte's Gulls**, rare in late Dec, were at RCH 12/25 (MV) in the company of 148 **Ring-billed Gulls**, the leading edge of the hoped-for gull invasion that ended up not materializing. There were 300 Ring-bills there by the end of Dec, but reports dropped off after the Jan flooding storm. A nice gull did show up nonetheless: a first-cycle **Iceland Gull** put down for an hour or so at New Brighton 2/16 (MV), the 7th for the county, but five of the six previous records were associated with a single invasion within a month of each other in Jan and Feb, 2015.

American Kestrels were noted in Hanover Twp. 12/19 (GG), at Monaca 12/25-2/17 where they frequently winter, incongruously (MV), and at Independence Twp. throughout Jan and Feb (m.ob.). A **Merlin** in Ambridge was last seen 12/2 (MV), and one was seen in Hanover Twp. with the kestrel 12/19 (GG). **Common Raven**, perhaps surprisingly at this point, was seen only at RCH 12/16 (MV) and 2/25 (MV, GR, DR). A flock of field birds at Janoski's Farm containing 100 **Horned Larks** and a **Lapland Longspur** spilled over onto the *Beaver* side of the property 1/21 (GM). A handful of **Pine Siskins** showed up at a feeder in Economy 1/14 and 1/21 (KD).

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Bedford County

No Report

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Berks County

Locations: Blue Marsh L. (BML), French Creek State Park (FCSP), E. J. Breneman Quarry (BQ), Hawk Mt. Sanctuary (HMS), L. Ontelaunee (LO), Reading CBC (RCBC), Hamburg CBC (HCBC), Bernville CBC (BCBC).

Mild fall temperatures dropped into the single digit winter range in late Dec and Jan, freezing lakes and streams for about 6 weeks. During this time, many wintering waterfowl moved to BQ, as they usually do. A spring-like thaw in mid- to late Feb triggered strong migration of waterfowl, blackbirds, and a few other species, a familiar scenario.

Snowy Owls were the highlight of the winter 12/12 (SF) through Feb (m.ob.). There were fewer birds and apparently less local movement than during the 2013-14 irruption. Photos (SuS, et al.) show that at least 3 owls were present, an imm. female and 2 imm. males. Dozens of birders' reports indicate that these owls spent most of their daylight hours in a fairly small section of farmland between Fleetwood and Lyons in the Great Valley farmland that crosses *Berks*, a region that has attracted **Snowy Owls** in previous irruptions. One or 2 imm. males were most frequently seen, sometimes together and sometimes a short distance apart. Project SNOWstorm (see website) tracked a fourth bird that had a short layover in *Berks* on its flight to central PA. Sinepuxent, a female outfitted with a transmitter on Assateague Island 1/28, abruptly left the coast and flew inland 2/10, pausing in the Oley Valley near Yellow House and near LO 2/10-12 before flying on to central PA. [See *Union report also – ed.*]

Flocks of a few thousand **Snow Geese** were seen in late Dec and Jan, mostly in eastern *Berks* near the quarries in which they roost. Many more (including 20,000 at Eastern Industries Kutztown quarry 2/14 – RK) quickly migrated through during the Feb thaw. Fourteen **Greater White-fronted Geese**, the first of the season, were a rare addition to the RCBC 12/17. Up to 15 were seen at BQ 12/31-1/15 (m.ob.) and smaller numbers at other ponds till 2/16. Until three years ago, the norm was to see one or a few birds at a time during the winter. One to 6 **Cackling Geese** were reported, mostly with **Canada Geese**, at various places 12/3-2/28 (m.ob.). The "**Cackling/Canada Goose**" option on eBird is underused. A **Snow x Canada Goose** seen at BQ 1/1 was given a cursory description on eBird (IG). This hybrid combination has previously been reported in *Berks*. About 5 **Mute Swans** resided at LO, sometimes wandering to open ponds when the lake froze. **Tundra Swans** were more than usually prominent this winter, increasing in Feb to a seasonal high count of 105 at LO 2/28 (RK).

A few **Wood Ducks** remained till 1/6, then disappeared as usual till 18 returnees were seen at LO (RK) and 41 at Kernsville Dam, Hamburg (KG) 2/25. The small wintering flock of **Northern Shovelers** at BQ, usually 9 or fewer, spiked to 20 on 12/28 (JDP). Up to 35 **Gadwall** were counted at their traditional wintering area around LO till migrants swelled their numbers to 89 at LO 2/25 (RK). Several other duck species that wintered in small numbers reached their seasonal high counts at LO 2/25, a mild, drizzly day that grounded passing migrants. Tallied in addition to those cited above were 417 **American Wigeon**, 68 **Northern Pintail**, 21 **Green-winged Teal**, 10 **Canvasback**, 20 **Redhead**, 130 **Ring-necked Ducks**, 10 **Greater Scaup**, 19 **Lesser Scaup** and 22 **Bufflehead** (RK). **American Black Duck** numbers were again very low, with a seasonal high count of only

100 at LO 12/20 (RK). One or 2 **American Black Duck x Mallard** hybrids were seen as usual with the parent species at various places 12/18-1/7 (RK, PM). Three **Long-tailed Ducks** at BML 12/27 (RK, CR) were the only ones reported. A high count by local standards 36 **Common Goldeneye** were at Hopewell L., FCSP 2/14 (EH). One to 3 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were much sought by listers at BQ 1/5-20 (m.ob.), and up to 4 were seen with hundreds of **Common Mergansers** at LO in late Feb. Most counts of the wintering **Ruddy Duck** flock at BQ numbered 10-20 from 12/4-2/21, with a spike to 50 on 1/1.

Single **Ruffed Grouse** were seen 12/31 on the HCBC and 2/1 (KG) on the Kittatinny Ridge, the last narrow strip of their formerly county-wide range in *Berks*. **Wild Turkeys**, on the other hand, were reported in flocks of 25-50 from at least 6 locations throughout the county. A **Common Loon** at LO 2/22 (DB) was probably an early migrant. A few **Pied-billed Grebes** wintered as usual at BQ (m.ob.) and perhaps Morgantown (S&F). The only mid-winter report of **Horned Grebe** was of one at BQ 1/20 (JB). A late-fall migrant **Red-necked Grebe** was at LO 12/1-6 (m.ob.) and a spring migrant at LO 2/17-24 (m.ob.). Of 3 **Double-crested Cormorants** seen at BQ 1/7 (RK), one stayed 1/9-2/21 (m.ob.). Another was at Kaercher Creek Park, Hamburg 12/27 (MTG). This species has usually left by early Dec and doesn't return till Mar. An **American Bittern** photographed in the shrub swamp of the Maiden Creek at the Rt. 662 bridge 12/23 (KK) provided a rare winter record.

Southbound **Golden Eagles** migrated past HMS 12/27, 12/31 (2), and 1/9 (LG). Single birds were seen in Albany Twp. 1/6 (NL) and near Rt. 183 on 2/21 (KG), both Kittatinny Ridge locations. A juv. was seen at the southern end of the county at FCSP 2/20 (HH). A **Rough-legged Hawk** was found on the HCBC 12/31. Two light morph birds were seen and photographed along Dietrich Valley Rd. near Kutztown 1/10 (NL), and another light morph bird was seen in Bern Twp. 2/11 (JS). The last winter appearance of this species coincided with the 2013-14 **Snowy Owl** irruption. **Northern Harriers** were recorded on all three CBC's and one or 2 were reported from a few other places through the period.

American Coots wintering at BQ usually numbered less than 20, but there were higher counts of 45 on 1/1 and 30 on 1/3 (JDP). A few **Killdeer** and **Wilson's Snipe** again wintered in open springs. **American Woodcocks** were performing courtship flights at LO 2/22 (RK) and FCSP 2/28 (S&F). A very good count of 67 **Bonaparte's Gulls**, part of a regional movement of the species, was made at BML 12/12 (StS). There were no later reports. **Ring-billed Gulls** and **Herring Gulls** were less common than usual, with seasonal high counts of only about 2000 of the former and 50 of the latter. Counts of 1-5 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** on various dates through the period were within the normal winter numerical range. There were only two reports of **Great Black-backed Gulls** - 3 on the RCBC 12/17 and one at BML 2/21 (PJW). A **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was at the established location in Shartlesville 2/12 (IG). A **Short-eared Owl** was found on the BCBC 12/30 and one was at Pheasant Valley Farm, Robesonia, perhaps the best location for the species in terms of habitat, 1/20 (KL).

A **Red-headed Woodpecker** wintered at Bastian Rd., Bowers (m.ob.), the most consistent year-round location for the species. Immature birds wintered in Pike Twp. and at Hopewell L., FCSP, the former attracted by a large crop of hickory nuts and the latter perhaps by acorns. Neither place has been a breeding location. **American Kestrels** wintered in the discouragingly low numbers of recent years. Single **Merlins** were found on the BCBC 12/30 and the HCBC 12/31. One again wintered at the highly favored BML location, and **Snowy Owl** seekers reported one in the farmland near Fleetwood several times. Reading's **Peregrine Falcon** pair remained in residence. A bird seen at a roost in Hamburg 12/3 didn't return (KG), but 2 imm. birds were seen at Hamburg 2/2 (KG). Two other sightings came from Kutztown area farmland 12/20, an adult (RK), and 1/10 (NL).

A lingering **Eastern Phoebe** was recorded on the HCBC 12/31, and a probable early migrant was at Kernsville Dam, Hamburg 2/28 (KG). There were just 4 reports of **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, confirming that this was an off year for the species. Lingered **Gray Catbirds** were reported near Eckville 1/3 (TG) and at Scott's Run L., FCSP 1/13 (JT). **Brown Thrashers**, much rarer than catbirds in winter, were seen at

Kernsville Dam, Hamburg (2) 12/11 (S&F), on the RCBC 12/17, and in Albany Twp. 1/6 (NL). Field birds were in low numbers. The seasonal high count of 6 **American Pipits** was made near LO 12/10 (RH). One or 2 **Lapland Longspurs**, a typical winter number, were seen at each of four farm locations in Dec and Jan (DA, NL, KL). A flock of 17 **Snow Buntings** near Albany 12/10 (TG) was the largest of few groups reported. A late yellow **Palm Warbler** was photographed at Rodale Experimental Farm, Maxatawny Twp., 12/6 (RH).

Three **Chipping Sparrows** were found on the BCBC 12/30 and 3 on the HCBC 12/31; none later. The recent trend of increasing numbers of **Fox Sparrows** wintering continued. Birds were found on two CBC's and one-three were reported from each of seven locations 12/25-2/25 (m.ob.). **Eastern Towhees** have tended to be fairly common in a few winters and rare to absent in most others, but they too may be trending toward more regular winter residency. This season, birds were found on all three CBC's and were reported from 10 locations later in the winter, with a seasonal high count of 4 at Green Hills Preserve 1/21 (JT).

A female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** visited a feeder in Boyertown 12/30-1/3 (R&KW; photo). This species has been reported fewer times than Snowy Owl in *Berks*. The single report of the drastically declining **Eastern Meadowlark** was of 6 at Goose Run Park near Pottstown 2/9 (JT). The RCBC's count of 22 **Rusty Blackbirds** 12/17 was the highest this season. A total of 7 others turned up at various places 12/31-2/16 (DA, KG, NL). Ron Pittaway's winter finch forecast was correct in predicting that most **Purple Finches** would stay north. After a very light fall flight, 10 were found on two CBC's and 1-4 others were seen at scattered locations the rest of the winter. **Pine Siskins** were even more scarce, with one seen at HMS 12/1 (MTG) and 2 at Nolde Forest EEC 12/24 (GS).

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Blair County

Locations: Albemarle Nature Trail (ANT), Bells Gap Trail (BGT), Canoe Creek S.P. (CC), Henry's Pond (HP), Lake Raystown CBC Area 1 only (LR-CBC), Frosty Hollow (FH), Plummer's Hollow (PH), Reese Pond (RP), State Game Lands #278 North (SGLN), Watts Pond (WP).

Information for this report was obtained primarily from eBird data. Additional information was pulled from the 49th Culp CBC held on 12/16 and the LR-CBC on 12/28. A total of 71 species were collected. The winter weather was diverse, ranging from cold and snowy in December, frigid in January, and warm and wet February.

A lone **Snow Goose** was located on Monastery Rd Impoundment 2/17 (AM). A **Ross's Goose** was at Altoona 12/3 (JC). A pair of **Tundra Swans** landed on RP 2/23 (JC) and 40 flew over PH 2/23 (MB). Four **Green-winged Teal** found their way to WP 12/16 (JC, LC, MN) and a single was at RP 2/23 (JC). A **Wood Duck** was at WP 12/16 (JC, LC MN), and pairs were located at RP 2/24, and on the ANT 2/28. Five Wood Ducks were observed at CC 2/25 (JC, LC, MN). Three **American Black Ducks** waded at WP 12/16 (JC LC MN), a single was off Teleport Rd 1/27 (JC LC), and another on HP 1/27 (LP).

Other uncommon ducks that were witnessed include single **Northern Pintails** at HP 1/27 (LP) and RP 2/22 (MN). A pair of **Gadwall** was at Reservoir Park 12/1 (JC, LC) and at the Tipton Wetlands 2/25 (JC, LC, MN). Four Gadwall were resting at RP 2/22 (MN) and 8 more were spread out on CC lake 2/27 (SVH). A group of 4 **American Wigeons** was located on the Tipton Wetlands 2/25 (JC, LC, MN), and

another 4 hung out on RP with 4 **Redheads** 2/22 (MN). Seven Redheads were spotted at Lakemont Pond 2/25. **Ring-necked Ducks** were reported at CC towards the end of Feb by (m.ob.).

A nice raft of 13 **Greater Scaup** 2/23, and 34 **Lesser Scaup** was on RP 2/22 (MN). Three **Buffleheads** were at CC 12/1 (SVH), 5 more appeared at CC 12/10 (TA), and 4 additional Buffleheads floated on RP 2/23 (JC, LC, MN). Uncommon **Red-breasted Mergansers** were viewed at WP 1/7 (JC, LC), and a pair was at CC 2/25 (JC, LC, MN).

A pair of **Double-crested Cormorants** stuck around CC, along with a group of 7 **American Coots** 12/10 (TA). A single coot returned to CC 2/25 (JC, LC, MN). An impressive 8 **Ring-necked Pheasants** were spotted off Golf Course Rd, along with 3 **Northern Harriers** 2/16 (JO), and a single pheasant was located on Pembontor Rd 12/16 (KE).

Turkey Vultures were reported across the county through Feb in decent numbers. A committee of 12 **Black Vultures** roosted at Reservoir Park 2/23 (JC, LC), 3 were near PH 2/26 (MB), and one flew over Altoona 2/28 (DK). Other raptors include single **Sharp-shinned Hawks** at RP 12/8 and 12/20, BGT 1/7 (JC, LC), and PH 2/27 (MB). A high count of 2 **Cooper's Hawks** were observed on Pembontor Rd 12/16 (KE); 7 other singles were reported across the county. Single adult **Bald Eagles** were noted at CC 12/10, and at the Bald Eagle Sportsman Cooperative Nursery 12/15 and again 2/2 (MN). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was perched along the Grandview Rd, and another was found disturbing a flock of sparrows at CC 1/27 (JC, LC). **Red-tailed Hawks** continued to be reported consistently across the county.

A single **Killdeer** was located off Henrietti Rd along with the only reported **Wilson's Snipe** 2/10 (GG), and one Killdeer was near the Monastery Rd Impoundment 2/25 (JC, LC, MN). Two **American Woodcock** made it to a field near RP 2/23 (JC, LC), and singles were at FH 2/28 (LB), and PH 2/26 (MB). A rare **Bonaparte's Gull** showed up with a flock of 26 **Ring-billed Gulls** in a field on Turkey Valley Rd just outside of CC 2/25 (JC, LC, MN).

On 12/28, owls documented in the *Blair* portion of the LR-CBC included 4 **Great Horned Owls** and 10 **Eastern Screech-Owls** (DeG, DB). A Great Horned Owl was also located at Reservoir Park 12/16 (JC) and one on Pembontor Rd (KE). A **Barred Owl** was mobbed by **American Crows** near the ANT 1/19 (JC, LC), and another was in PH 2/25 (MB). Single Eastern Screech-Owls were identified at Reservoir Park 12/1 (JC, LC) and 12/16 BGT (JC, LC, MN).

American Robins and **Red-winged Blackbirds** made a strong return in mid-Feb and were reported across the county. Single **Brown Creepers** were noted at Reservoir Park 12/16, SGLN 1/27, and CC 2/21. **Carolina Wrens** showed up reliably during the period and lone **Winter Wrens** were identified at PH, Sabbath Rest Wetland and in the town of Bellwood, all on 12/16, and at CC 1/27 and PH 2/27.

A nice flock of 7 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** was discovered at CC 12/10 (TA), and 3 more 1/27 (JC, LC). A healthy number of 4 **Field Sparrows** showed up at PH 2/25 (MB) and 5 more at FH 2/28 (LB). A mix of 10 male and female **Purple Finches** showed up at a residence in Altoona 2/17 (SM).

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Bucks County

Locations: Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Central Bucks CBC (C-CBC), Southern Bucks CBC (S-CBC), Upper Bucks-Montgomery CBC (U-CBC), Bedminster Twp. (BET), Delaware River (Del. R.), Maple Knoll Farms, Buckingham Twp. (MKF), Nockamixon State Park (NSP), Peace Valley Park (PVP), Pine Run Dam (PRN), The Penn-Warner Tract (PWT).

The weather report was one of extremes. The very cold several weeks during the middle of the period were preceded and followed by warm temperatures, extremely so in the second half of Feb. The mean temperatures were: Dec 1.7°F below normal, Jan 0.5°F below, and Feb 6.8°F above. There were several light snow falls and a couple of heavy rains. Dec precipitation was 2.11 inches below normal, Jan 1.07 inches below, and Feb 3.21 above. Most lakes and the Del. R. froze to varying degrees in mid-Dec through mid-Feb. In general, it was an off year for cyclic irruptive species, but most half-hardy species were more common compared to scarcity last winter and most persisted through the period. The best highlights were several rarities. The rarest species included Ross's Goose, Pink-footed Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Sandhill Crane, Snowy Owl, Western Tanager, and Harris's Sparrow. The county tally of 143 species exceeded the previous five-year average by nine.

The 50th U-CBC 12/17 had good weather in the mid-twenties to mid-thirties, calm winds, and partly frozen still water, resulting in 41,095 individuals of 99 species. The 52nd C-CBC 12/31 had very cold temperatures in the low teens, calm winds, frozen still water and partly frozen moving water, with 25,653 birds of 82 species. The 71th S-CBC 12/16 had temperatures from 19°F to 40°F, wind calm to mid-teens miles per hour, and still water partially frozen, resulting in 102 species of 86,613 individuals. It should be noted that all three CBCs have part of their count circles outside the county. Christmas Bird Count details and summaries were supplied by Mark Gallagher for the S-CBC, Diane Allison for the C-CBC, and Bill Etter for the U-CBC. As usual, historical references are from *Birds of Bucks County* 1998 by Ken Kitson and subsequent updates recorded in this journal. NOAA weather statistics are from nearby Trenton, NJ based on the three-decade climate normal data from 1981 to 2010. A review of eBird entries contributed to this report.

The now normal random flocks of **Snow Geese**, sometimes with hundreds of birds, were reported through the period (m.ob.). More obvious this year were bursts of northward movement during breaks in the cold weather. The highest estimate was 2500 at Richlandtown 2/8 (BF). **Ross's Goose** seems to have gone from accidental to rare in the last couple of years. An adult continued from Nov visiting both PRN and PVP through 12/9 (m.ob. ph.). An imm. was detected at PVP 2/10 (TFa, AM) and continued to at least 2/19 (m.ob. ph.). **Greater White-fronted Goose** was detected more this winter. One continued from Nov at PRN to at least 12/8 (m.ob. ph.). Four were noted 12/24 at PVP (SA), with 3 there 12/28 (TFa). Singles were there 12/21 (DM), 1/1-2 (AM, RM ph.), and 2/17 (CHe, MLi, AM). Singles were at Giving Pond 1/2 (PC), MKF 1/8 (RS ph.), Upper Makefield Firehouse 2/4 (BBn ph.), and Nockamixon Twp. 2/23 (PC, EB ph.). Three were at Uhlerstown 1/9 (PC). The **Pink-footed Goose** found in late Nov. at PRN was again reported at PVP 12/1-2 (AM ph., m.ob.). The same or another was detected at Upper Makefield Firehouse 2/4 (BBn ph.) and seen the next morning 2/5 (MG ph., TFA). **Cackling Goose** was reported from 14 sites, with good supporting photos from 10 sites (m.ob.). The highest single site count was 10 at PVP 12/29, mostly made up of individuals picked out of a large Canada Goose flock (CR). The high site count of 41 **Mute Swans** was at PWT (DF) as usual, but they were also reported from 15 to 20 other sites (m.ob.). An imm. **Trumpeter Swan** was seen briefly at NSP 1/14 (PC). Our first report of this species was in Dec 2013, but since then another 6 different individuals have been reported, with one group of 3. **Tundra Swan** was reported on 12 dates at seven sites (m.ob.) for a relatively good showing. Nine dates were between 2/12 and 2/28 as they moved north. The highest site counts were 4 at PRN 2/12 (AH ph.), 5 near Ottsville 2/19 (DF), 5 at PVP 12/20 (BCI, AR), 21 at Churchville Park 2/20 (KL ph.), 12 at Churchville 2/24 (VD et al.), 28 at PVP 2/24-26 (TFa, KI ph., m.ob.), and 6 at NSP 2/26 (AH).

Twenty-three duck species were reported. **Canvasback** was again in low numbers. Reports came from seven sites with counts mostly in the low single digits. The highest report was a low 14 at Mud Island 1/8 (DF). Compared to only 5 individuals reported last winter, there were about 40 **Redheads** at about nine sites this year, with reports between 12/29 and 2/24 (m.ob.). The highest single site count

was 8 at Core Creek Park 2/2 (KK, BK). The scoters were represented by one report each. Three **Surf Scoters** were at Island View Crossing, Bristol 12/2 (DD ph.), a male **White-winged Scoter** was at PWT 1/7-21 (DF), and a **Black Scoter** was at PWT 12/3 (MG ph., DF). A total of 21 **Long-tailed Ducks** were noted from six sites on six dates. The highest count was 7 at NSP 12/26 (DF). Relatively low **Common Goldeneye** numbers on the Del. R. may be the new normal as the high was only 71 at Morrisville Levee area 12/27 (KR). **Hooded Merganser** had some nice site high counts. They include: Silver Lake Park 20 12/14 (DD); PVP 30 12/16 (BS); Biles Island 16 12/20 (JP); Core Creek Park 24 2/4 (DD); and NSP 18 2/18 (VMa). **Common Merganser** numbers continue to amaze. The highest PVP estimate before the freeze forced them to leave was 2750 12/24 (SA). The highest count there after the ice opened partially was conservatively 1900 on 2/15 (AM). PWT had an estimated 3000 on 12/16 (DF). The NSP high report was 1200 on 12/28, with more too distant to count (EB). **Red-breasted Merganser** was reported from 12 sites, with counts all in the low single digits (m.ob.).

The 18 **Wild Turkeys** on the S-CBC was only the ninth occurrence in 71 years. The only other CBC report was 2 on the C-CBC. However, they may have had a good breeding season, as there were some noteworthy flocks at eight sites ranging in size from 16 to 55 birds totaling 233. A **Red-throated Loon** was at PWT 12/2 (SS), and one was at NSP 12/6 (PC, BE, RM). It or another was at NSP 12/9 (DF). Another was there 2/23-24 (DF, m.ob. ph.). Dec reports of **Common Loon** came from three sites, with the last 12/26 at PWT (DD). The highest report was 3 at PVP 12/10 (AS). The next report was one at PWT 2/19 (DF), and then 3 at NSP 2/23 (IG). Lingered **Horned Grebes** continued at NSP until 1/6 (PC, DF), and the first returning bird was there 2/14 (PC). On 12/17, single **Red-necked Grebes** were at PWT (MG ph.) and Falls Twp. Community Park (DD, MG ph.). One was at NSP 2/21 (RM) through 2/28 (PC, KI, AM ph., VMa, RS). The highest single site report for **Great Cormorant** was 15 at Island View Crossing, Bristol 2/13-17 (DD). One at PVP 12/7-12/11 (AH ph., DF, SA, KR) was the only report away from the lower Del. R. Often missing in mid-winter, there were no reports in eBird for **Double-crested Cormorant** from 1/9 through 2/25. A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was at PWT 12/16 (DF) for the only report.

Despite expanding from the south and contrary to what one might assume, at least the wintering numbers of **Black Vultures** in the lower county significantly lagged the rest of the county if the CBC counts are indicative. However, all three CBCs are trending higher. The first **Black Vultures** were tallied on the S-CBC in 1981, but not reported again until 1998, and then 10 in 2001. Thus, they were found only three times on the S-CBC in 22 years since first reported through 2002. They became regular starting in 2003 through 2014 but only in single and low double digit numbers averaging 14.75 for those 12 years. Finally, the numbers increased to 54 in 2015, 129 in 2016, and reaching the highest count of 133 in 2017. The resulting average for the 1981 to 2017 37-year period is 13.6. In comparison, the U-CBC had its first report two years earlier in 1979, averaging 39.6 since then, while missing only three of the early years. The high count was 162 in 2013. The C-CBC also had its first report in 1981, averaging 67.5 since then, while missing five of the early years. The high count was 254 in 2016.

The same **Golden Eagle** was spotted in Solebury Twp. (DF) and MKF (RS) on the C-CBC providing a first for that count and a rare winter report. It was another good winter for **Northern Harrier**, with the CBC total of 16 above the long-term average and eBird reports from at least 21 sites with at least 28 to 30 birds. The CBC total for **Bald Eagle** was 91, with 65 on the S-CBC and 16 a new high for the C-CBC. **Red-shouldered Hawk** provided a record high 10 on the U-CBC compared to the long term average of 3. A dark morph **Rough-legged Hawk** was at BET 1/13-23 (AM ph., DF, m.ob.), and one was over E. Rockhill Twp. 2/21 (VMa).

A **Virginia Rail** walking in the snow and peeking out from under a fishing pier at PVP 12/14 certainly was a surprise (AH ph.). They have been found in the past at Quakertown Swamp into early Jan but not in recent years. It has been an extraordinary year for **Sandhill Crane** in the county, with the total jumping from 12 previous known reports to a

new total of 17. It is possible but not certain that some of the five reports this past year involved the same birds. This season's reports included the continuing 2 birds from fall that were roosting at PRN until at least 12/5 (m.ob.). Then, 3 were tallied for the U-CBC 12/17, a first for that count. However only one was in Bucks Co. at Milford Twp. (TB). Then 3 were reported from Warrington Twp. 1/19-20 (JS, MB, VMe, AM), and seen also 1/20 near PRN (HS). They continued through the period being seen primarily first at a corn field in New Britain Twp. near PVP, and then regularly at a corn field adjacent to PRN and the grass fields at PRN (m.ob.). The 3 appeared to be a possible family group, with one adult larger male, one adult female, and one imm. bird.

A presumed result of the icy conditions, no **Killdeer** were reported in eBird from 1/9 through 2/9. Displaying **American Woodcock** was first reported 2/15 at Tinicum Twp. (PC). **Wilson's Snipe** lingered at Bradford Dam to 12/20 (GJ), with the high count 11 on 12/5 (AM). Five were tallied for the S-CBC 12/16 at Maple Beach south of Bristol (DD), and one made it on the U-CBC at NSP 12/17 (AK). One was at Silver Lake Park 1/7-8 (DF), one was at BET 2/19 (DF), and 5 possibly northward bound birds were at Bradford Dam 2/28 (AM). **Bonaparte's Gull** was reported only in early Dec on three dates, with high counts just one 12/11 at NSP (SG), and 4 at PVP 12/18 (JF). **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** A first cycle **Iceland Gull (Thayer's)** was at PWT 12/16 (GA, TJ, et al. ph.) and again 1/20 (GA, BQ, et al. ph.). An adult was at Morrisville Levee 2/8 (BCu ph). **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was reported in lower numbers this winter, with high counts 116 at Core Creek Park 12/16 (CM), 94 at PVP 2/15 (AM), 240 at NSP Fishing Pier 2/23 (IG), and 156 at NSP Marina 2/23 (IG). The two NSP counts the same day cannot be added since the birds move from the marina to the fishing pier area late in the day. **Glaucous Gull** is relatively rare compared to Iceland Gull at sites away from the lower county. Thus an adult at NSP 2/17 (RS ph.) is noteworthy.

CBC GULL COUNTS

SPECIES	U-CBC	C-CBC	S-CBC	TOTAL
Ring-billed Gull	898	141	2826	3864
Herring Gull	18	3	53,534	53,555
Iceland Gull	1		22	23
Lesser Bl.-backed Gull	148	7	183	338
Herring x Lesser Bl. Bk.			4	4
Glaucous Gull			3	3
Herring X Glaucous Gull			2	2
Great Black-backed Gull	1	1	796	798
TOTAL	1066	152	57, 369	58,587

The 229 **Eastern Screech Owls** on the U-CBC 12/17 was the second highest count compared to the high of 237 in 2010. A **Snowy Owl** was found injured at Morrisville 1/7 and died (BP, MG). Another was on a house roof only on 1/14 in Yardley, confirmed by photos (*vide* CM). Our records show only about seven previous reports. Only 2 **Long-eared Owls** were reported, both at PVP. One was first noted 12/9 (DB) and the second 2/16 (AH). Two **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were found on the U-CBC 12/17 (DA, DF), and 2 were in the Tinicum Twp. area for the C-CBC 12/31 (DA, et al.). **Red-headed Woodpecker** was reported from known breeding sites in Buckingham Twp. (DS), Haycock Twp. (DF), and Hilltown Twp. (BBE, KB). A record 268 **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** on the U-CBC 12/17 contributed to the total CBC tally of 544, almost three times the long term average. A record 57 **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** on the U-CBC and a second to highest 32 on the C-CBC, provided almost all the CBC total of 97, which was about four times the long term average.

A check of the successful central and upper county **American Kestrel** 76 nest box sites along a 175-mile route produced 18 birds 1/28 (DF). The CBC total was 16, about average since 2003. Wintering birds may be increasing slightly but still only a small fraction of the pre-2003 historical CBC average of 120. Most **Peregrine Falcon** reports are from the vicinity of nest sites along the Del. R. Exceptions are increasing. An imm. was at BET 12/17 on the U-CBC (DA et al.), and was only the fourth occurrence for the count. One imm. and one adult

were unexpected at Quakertown Swamp 1/23 (BE), and an imm. was at Milford Twp. 1/28 (DF). An adult at BET 1/13 (AM ph.) had a single bicolored black over green leg band 67/AP. Per Art McMorris, it was banded as a nestling on 6/10/2013 at the Martin's Creek Power Plant in Northampton County. It is now the nesting male from the site near Kintnersville, about nine miles from where spotted. An imm. bird was at MKF 1/30 (RS ph).

An **Eastern Phoebe** at MKF 12/16 (RS ph.) provided the only report. Reports of **Common Raven** were more frequent, coming from 20 sites, with 11 of those having 2 to 4 birds on at least one visit (m.ob.). Four was a new high count on the U-CBC. **Horned Lark** was reported from eight sites, with only two sites having noteworthy counts. The MKF high count was 165 during 2/4-9 (RS), and the Shady Brook Farm high was 130 on 1/7 (KL). **Black-capped Chickadee** did not move into the area this winter, but a chickadee at Tinicum Twp. was believed to be a Black-cap (PC), although hybrid might be more likely. Similarly, the 21 on the U-CBC are surprising and inconsistent, since they are the only others reported this winter. The **Winter Wren** CBC total was 49, five times the long term average and mostly due to the record 32 on the U-CBC. One **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was at Churchville Park 12/2 (*vide* BW), and one was well described at a feeder at Ivyland (JF) 1/7, for the only reports. Both kinglets had tallies on the CBCs about two times the long term average, with 120 for **Golden-crowned Kinglet** and 42 for **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**.

The 554 **Eastern Bluebirds** found on the CBCs was 17% higher than last year despite less effort due to bitter cold on the C-CBC. The total **Hermit Thrush** CBC count was 38, three times last year's total. **American Robins** totaled 8297 on the CBCs, over seven times last year's tally. **Gray Catbird** was reported from 10 sites, with at least 15 birds (m.ob.). However, only 2 were reported in Feb, making this species an exception to being above normal all period. Similarly, **Brown Thrasher** reports were higher with 7 individuals, but 5 of those were before 12/17, with 2 after 2/17 (m.ob.). The total on the CBCs of 128 **Northern Mockingbirds** was slightly higher than last year for a species showing a significant downward trend in recent years.

The **American Pipit** reports were much better than last winter. The highest site counts were 42 at PVP 12/11 (SA), 8 at PWT 12/16 (DF), 10 at Bradford Dam 12/20 (GJ), and 10 near Dublin 12/31 (AH, TH) plus 5 more from three other sites (PH, MG, TJ, GA et al.). The **Cedar Waxwing** total for the CBCs was 586, three times last year's tally. A **Lapland Longspur** was at Shady Brook Farm 1/1 (DF) and 1/6 (MG ph.). One was at MKF 1/8-2/9, with 2 there 2/17-18 (RS). Possibly bird seed spread at the NSP Fishing Pier kept **Snow Bunting** from Nov through at least 1/2 (m.ob. ph.). The high count there was 3 12/30 (DF). Also, one was near MKF 12/14, 2 at MKF 1/18, and one there 2/9 (RS). Three were at Shady Brook Farm 1/7 (KL), and 10 at Nockamixon Twp. 1/18 (PC).

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** at suet in Feasterville 12/21-2/9 was likely the same bird seen there in Feb and Nov 2017 (KK ph.). One was also at PWT 12/16-24 for the eighth appearance on the S-CBC (DF). One **Common Yellowthroat** at Richland Twp. 12/17 (TFo) furnished the only report and fourth occurrence on the U-CBC. An eighth occurrence for the S-CBC, a **Palm Warbler** was at PWT 12/16-24 (DF). A wintering male **Pine Warbler** believed to be the same bird returning to feeders for the eleventh year in a row was first spotted 12/3 at Lower Makefield Twp., two days earlier than last year. (CF ph.). It provided the sixth ever for the S-CBC (CF, SH). The CBC total of 209 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** was almost six times last year's count and almost two times the long term average.

Most sparrows were likely within normal variation from average numbers with exceptions. **American Tree Sparrow** has declined here as a wintering bird for decades. This year the CBC total was 42 compared to the long term average of 349. The historical three CBC sum of the highest counts is 1465! **Chipping Sparrows** fluctuate from year to year in fairly low numbers. The CBC total of 17 was 3 times the long term average but less than the sum of the historical highest counts totaling 25. High counts in eBird were 6 at MKF 12/21 and 1/27 (SA, MN, RS), 13 at PVP 1/3 (JB), and 6 at Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve 2/19 (DF). A **Harris's Sparrow** was found on the C-CBC

12/31 (anonymous) and remained through the period (MLu, m.ob. ph.). This is only the second report for the county, the first being in 1965. A **Song Sparrow** at PWT 12/24 was a pure albino (DF). A **Lincoln Sparrow** at PWT 12/16 provided only the fourth record for the S-CBC (DF). Another half-hardy species, **Eastern Towhee** totaled 15 on the CBCs compared to 6 last year, and was about 25% above the long term average.

A female **Western Tanager** was first detected at feeders in BET 1/17 and remained through at least 2/17 (MO, JO). This furnished the fifth known occurrence for the county. Photos of a bird seen late Dec to early Jan at a Warminster private business showed a **Northern Cardinal** with female plumage on its right and male plumage on its left (Chu ph.). It was verified as having the rare condition known as bilateral gynandromorphism (*vide* BM). The last few years saw an unusual number of wintering **Baltimore Orioles** at feeders at one site in Middletown Twp., however, only one bird appeared this winter compared to 5 last winter (DP). Also unusual, there were no other reports. Again, there were no **Eastern Meadowlarks** on the CBCs and incredibly only one at PRN 2/28 made it into the season (MB). The 57 **Rusty Blackbirds** on the S-CBC 12/16 and 87 on the U-CBC, a new high count, were noteworthy. The most dependable spots as usual were Silver Lake Park (DD ph.) and Quakertown Swamp (PC, AH, TH, PH ph., RM). Purple Finch and Pine Siskin went unreported.

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Butler County

Locations: Lake Arthur (LA), Lake Oneida (LO), Moraine State Park (MSP), State Game Lands 95 (SGL 95), South Shore (SS), Wildlife Observation Area (WOA). LA, SS, and WOA are located in Moraine State Park.

The highlight of the season were rare gulls at Lake Arthur hosting rare gulls, totaling six species over several days in early December, including the first ever *Butler* record of **California Gull**, the probable second record of **Iceland Gull** as well as the returning **Black-headed Gull**. See details below. Despite terrible weather, for the second year in a row, the *Butler* CBC ended with a species total of 73, slightly above the average of 67. Individuals totaled 5602, lower than the average of 8955. Four owl species were found: **Great-horned Owl**, **Barred Owl**, **Eastern Screech Owl** and **Northern Saw-whet Owl**.

The **Mute Swan** that spent the entire fall season at LA remained until at least 12/6 (m.ob.). Despite being an attraction for some park visitors, its aggressive behavior toward other birds causes some to hope it won't return. Compared to 3 reports during the 2015-16 winter season and 16 reports of **Tundra Swan** last winter season, 3 reports of whistlers came in, with a nice flyover of 100 at North Shore 12/16 (BB, MC). Like last year, an early freeze-over of LA and LO brought waterfowl reports to an end in mid-Dec, exceptions being sporadic

reports of **Canada Goose** and **Mallard**.

A warm spell the third week of Feb brought optimistic sightings of the first north bound arrivals following the appearance of a nice flock of 10 **Northern Pintails** photographed at Thorn Reservoir 2/10 (KB). The following species were not seen in Dec but returned in late Feb: **Wood Duck**, **Northern Shoveler**, **American Black Duck** and the aforementioned Northern Pintail. Species seen until mid-Dec and then returning in late Feb included **Gadwall**, **American Wigeon**, **Canvasback**, **Ring-necked Duck**, **Greater Scaup**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Bufflehead**, **Hooded Merganser**, **Common Merganser**, **Red-breasted Merganser** and **Ruddy Duck**. Because migration is winding down in Dec and just getting started in Feb, no big flocks or movements were noted. The few notable high counts include 92 Gadwalls at Wildlife Observation Area 12/3 (BB), 33 Lesser Scaup at LA 2/26 (TR), 28 Scaup sp. at South Shore 2/27 (GK, MAK), 41 Hooded Mergansers at SS 12/10 (GM), and 33 Ruddy Ducks at SS 12/3 (OM). No triple digit count of any duck sp. was reported.

Both sightings of scarce **Ruffed Grouse** came from the same area of Moraine SP with one at Burton Rd. 12/16 (BB) and one at Muddy Creek Wetland 2/26 (RM). **Wild Turkey** remain plentiful with four flocks of over 50 birds reported including 96 grazing in corn stubble near Bish Rd. 1/6 (KB). **Common Loons** remained in pairs or as singles at LA until 12/10 (m.ob.). **Pied-billed Grebe** and **Horned Grebe** showed the same pattern as the ducks, being present in small numbers until 12/16, then returning at the end of Feb (m.ob). High counts included 9 Pied-bills at SS 12/11 (JF) and 7 Horned Grebes there the same day (MF, JV).

Bald Eagle was seen through the season as singles or in pairs (m.ob) unlike last winter when 7 gathered at LA. **Northern Harrier** sightings are definitely increasing in *Butler*. Perhaps scarcity of food in their usual haunts in nearby *Lawrence* and *Mercer* caused them to forage farther east into *Butler*. It is also possible that with greatly increased birding and reporting, birders have discovered where to reliably locate marsh hawks. Unusual in *Butler*, 2 **Rough-legged Hawks** were at Reichert Rd. 2/2 (MC). **American Coot** was reported in flocks of 10 to 64 birds at their usual spot at SS until 12/16 (m.ob.). A **Sandhill Crane** was heard over Zelienople 12/14 (DK) and the first returning **American Woodcock** included 4 at Clay Township 2/27 (BB).

Bonaparte's Gulls, noted in small numbers at LA in early Dec, built to highs of 17 on 12/6 (MH, RH) and 21 on 12/10 (GM). For the 7th year in the last 10, the celebrated Black-headed Gull returned to the same location at SS 11/12 (MV) and continued to at least 12/11 (m.ob). The best bird of the season was *Butler's* first-ever **California Gull**, which was in fact the first for western Pennsylvania anywhere away from Erie as well. It was spotted among over 350 **Ring-billed Gulls** gathered on the lawn at SS 12/3 (GM). The **Iceland Gull** was nicely photographed at the same location 12/1 (CE), likely the second *Butler* record; the previous record was made during an Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania outing 3/26/1977 (PH). The impressive season total of six gull sp. was rounded out by **Herring Gulls**, which are normally present at LA in low single digit number, but a nice tally of 30 was at SS 12/10 (GM). Perhaps increased gull

Gulls rare for Western Pennsylvania visit Butler County! Lake Arthur, best among many features of Moraine State Park, has become a regular winter gathering spot for four species of gull: **Bonaparte's Gull**, **Herring Gull**, **Ring-billed Gull** and the **Black-headed Gull** that has returned for 7 of the last 10 years. This winter season, history was made with the discovery of the first-ever *Butler* sighting of **California Gull** 12/3 (GM) as well as the second ever county record of **Iceland Gull** 12/1 (CE). Both were beautifully photographed (eBird). Both the California Gull and the Iceland Gull were discovered by careful birders looking through a large group of Ring-bills. Earlier that day, while looking for the Black-headed Gull and counting carefully to get an accurate high count of 382 Ring-bills, paying more attention to counting and less to detail, the author may well have missed spotting the California Gull that was found just a few hours later. Lesson learned: pay attention to detail! More details in main text.

watching at LA will reveal additional rare visitors similar to those that occasionally gather at the three rivers in Pittsburgh.

A **Merlin** was at SS 12/11 (MF, JV) and one, perhaps the same bird, was seen at Swamp Run Rd. 12/16 (GK, MAK). **Common Raven** was seen as singles and pairs in various locations through the season (m.ob). **Horned Lark** was spotted 5 times with a high of 60 at Kildoo Rd. 1/21 (BB). The only report of **Red-breasted Nuthatch** came from Herman 2/17 (DA). An early **Hermit Thrush** appeared at SGL 95 on 2/23 (KB).

The only **American Pipit** report came from Clay Twp. 2/23 (BB). Fourteen **Lapland Longspurs** and 12 **Snow Buntings** flew over Poplar Forest 12/8 (BAS). A second report had one longspur with 2 Snow Buntings at Kildoo Rd. 1/21 (BB). **Yellow-rumped Warblers** appeared 4 times - with 8 at Swamp Run Rd. 12/16 (GK, MAK), 2 at WOA 12/16 (BB, MC), 4 at SS 12/16 (BB), and one at WOA 1/28 (BB). A hardy **Eastern Towhee** was a treat on the South Butler CBC 1/6 (GK, MAK) and an unusual winter flock of 42 **Red-winged Blackbirds** was at Reichert Rd. during the Butler CBC 12/16 (BB, MC). **Pine Siskins** were scarce with one at North Shore 12/16 (BB, MC), 3 at CT 1/14-17 and 2 there 1/30 (BB). Six were photographed at a feeder at Seven Hills Rd. 1/15 (KB).

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Cambria County

Locations: Patton (PA), Prince Gallitzin St. Park (PG).

Waterfowl at PG was early and late. Some of the better sightings were **Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, and Red-breasted Merganser** (TA, DG). Unusual were the high number of sightings of **Red-shouldered Hawks** in and around PG.

A young female **Snowy Owl** was found dead, the victim of a car accident at the Patton Wind Farm 1/3 (DG). The Pennsylvania Game Commission ended up with the carcass and apparently did some research. An **Eastern Screech Owl** was at PA 2/25 (DG). A single **Short-eared Owl** was present in the PG area during late Dec and early Jan (DG, RL). **Horned Lark** flocks were smaller than usual and more spread out, probably due to lack of snow and large amounts of manure being spread. Small numbers of **Snow Buntings** were mixed with the Larks. A few feeders in the northern *Cambria* reported small groups of **Pine Siskins**.

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Cameron County

Locations: Emporium Christmas Bird Count 12/17 (PAEM), Sinnemahoning State Park (SSP), Hicks Run Elk Viewing Area (HREVA), Sterling Run Strip Mines (SRSM), Sterling Run (SR), May Hollow (MH), Upper West Creek Trail (UWCT), West Creek (WC).

Wild fluctuations of cold and unseasonable warmth characterized

our winter season. The Emporium Christmas Bird Count (PAEM) was conducted 12/17. Seventeen participants compiled 49 species.

Canada Geese were seen sparingly throughout the winter with 111 on PAEM. Seven **Tundra Swans** were reported from SSP 2/28 (MPB). Fifteen late **Hooded Mergansers** were observed at SR 12/10 (MJ). Fifty-eight **Common Mergansers** were at SSP 2/26 (KL). **Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Duck**, all began to be arrive in decent numbers by the third week in Feb, mostly at SSP (m.ob.).

A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was at MH 1/23 (MJ). Fourteen **Red-tailed Hawks** were seen on PAEM (MJ). A late **Killdeer** was seen on PAEM (m.ob.) and an early **American Woodcock** was at SR 2/23 (MJ). A **Ring-billed Gull** was at SSP 12/9 (MJ). The **Mourning Dove** count for PAEM was 406 (m.ob.). Three **Eastern Screech Owls**, 3 **Great-horned Owls**, and 2 **Barred Owls** were heard on PAEM (m.ob.). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard at SR 1/28 (MJ). Three **Belted Kingfishers** were at SSP 2/26 (MJ).

Six **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**, one **Northern Flicker**, and 29 **Pileated Woodpeckers** were reported on PAEM (m.ob.). Forty **American Crows** were at SR 2/2 (MPB). Twenty **Common Ravens** were counted on PAEM (m.ob.). Thirteen **Red-breasted Nuthatches** and one **Winter Wren** were also seen on PAEM. Six early (or late?) **American Robins** were counted at WC 1/26 (MPB). An **American Pipit** and 20 **Cedar Waxwings** were counted on PAEM (m.ob.), as were 4 **Eastern Towhees** (m.ob.). Twelve **American Tree Sparrows** were found at SRSM 12/3 (MJ). A single **Swamp Sparrow** was at UWCT 12/24 (MJ) and a lone **White-crowned Sparrow** was found on PAEM (m.ob.).

Three early **Red-winged Blackbirds** were at WC 2/19 (MPB), followed by 85 Red-wings and 11 **Common Grackles** at SR 2/23 (MJ). Thirty-two **Pine Siskins**, a scarce bird this year, and 105 **American Goldfinches** were at a feeder in SR 1/13 (MJ).

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Centre County

Locations: Bald Eagle S.P. (BESP), Black Moshannon S.P. (BMSP), Centre Hills Country Club (CHCC), Colyer L. (COL), Millbrook Marsh Nature Center (MMNC), Scotia Barrens and Pond (SCO), Toftrees pond and gamelands (TOF), Tusseyville-Williams Rd. (T/WR).

The following rare winter species were observed in five or more locations: **Snow Goose, Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Turkey Vulture, Golden Eagle, American Woodcock, Merlin, Winter Wren, Ruby-throated Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Snow Bunting, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Rusty Blackbird, and Common Grackle**. Information for this report were obtained primarily from eBird and the State College Bird Club listserv with background and status now from *Birds of Central Pennsylvania* by Nick Bolgiano and Greg Grove (*B&G, 2010*).

Multiple **Greater White-fronted Geese**, which are considered accidental, were observed. Up to 8 were present 1/22-2/21 at the CHCC pond. They were accompanying a flock of **Canada Geese** (JCa, et al.). Four were also noted at BESP 2/20 in the company of 3 **Snow Geese** and "a large group of Canada Geese" (JP). **Cackling Geese** are reported nearly every winter and may not actually be considered

rarities. This year, one flew over MMNC with a flock of Canada Geese 2/21 (EZ). A couple were spotted 2/23-25 on Old Gatesburg Rd. (JoW, JoS, JV), and one was present 2/24-25 at Muddy Paws Marsh (JG, JP). Two were seen 2/25 "in [a] flooded field along Tadpole Rd." with a Snow Goose and a very large flock of Canada Geese (CE, et al.).

Quite a variety of wintering ducks was present perhaps due to the relatively mild winter weather. Single **Northern Shovelers** were recorded at the Axemann Rd. pond 1/21-29 (AM, et al.) and in Talleyrand Park 2/9-18 (JCa, et al.). Three were spotted in Centre Hall 2/17-25 (SH, JG, JP), and up to 6 were present at BESP 2/23-26 (JV, JP, EZ). As many as 26 **Canvasbacks** were counted at BESP 2/25-26 (JP, et al.). A single **Greater Scaup** was spotted 2/26 at SCO (JCa) while one or 2 were present at BESP 2/20-28 (EZ, et al.). Only one **Lesser Scaup** was reported, present at BESP 12/28-30 (BSn).

There were 2 sightings of **White-winged Scoters** at BESP - one was in a flock of **Common Mergansers** and **American Black Ducks** 12/24-26 (JL; PB) and the other was present 2/20 (EZ, et al.). Half a dozen **Long-tailed Ducks** were observed at COL 12/10 (JCa, MN, LC), while one, either an "Immature male or female," was "sleeping with scaup and redheads [sic]" (JP). As many as 19 **Common Goldeneyes** were spotted at BESP 12/2-2/27 (ToA, et al.), while 2 were found in Bald Eagle Cr. 1/1 (NiB). Between 2-4 were present at the Axemann Rd. pond 1/5-13 (DG, et al.). Up to 3 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were seen at BESP 12/9-2/24 (FM, et al.), and one was present at the Axemann Rd. pond 1/5-7 (DG, et al.). Up to 5 were noted at COL 2/22-23 (JV). A sleeping adult male was also observed at TOF 2/27 (BV). Up to 3 **Ruddy Ducks** were noted at BESP 12/11-27 (JM, FM). One or two were present there 2/16-26 (BSn, et al.).

A late **Common Loon** was at COL 12/2 (JD), and one or 2 were present at BESP 12/2-9 (ToA, et al.). A **Horned Grebe** was at BMSP 2/24 (JP) and one at COL on the same day (SH, CE, JL). B&G (2010) describes winter **Red-necked Grebes** as "very rare." Nonetheless, one was observed at the CHCC 2/3-6 (JV, et al.). Up to 4 late migrating **Double-crested Cormorants** were noted 12/1-12 at BESP (JP, et al.).

Two birders identified a "large stocky accipiter with banded tail" along T/WR 12/10 as a **Northern Goshawk** (JD, SL). Another one was observed for about 20 minutes with a spotting scope at the Fairbrook Wetlands 1/20 (NEK, JD). Yet another "very large bulky accipiter" with the markings of a juv. Northern Goshawk was spotted in Rock Springs 1/30 as it flew toward the Jo Hayes Vista (JV). **Bonaparte's Gull** was the only gull species of note - One was spotted in Howard 12/10 and a dozen were reported on the same day in BESP (both JP).

An unusually large number of **Snowy Owls** were observed. One was reported in State College on the Blue Golf Course 12/17 (JD). The first birder to spot one on T/WR described his heart as pumping and his hands shaking as he realized he was looking "straight into the eyes of a large white round headed owl with extensive thin black barring on its body." Many other birders were also able to observe the bird 1/5-6 on T/WR (JG, et al.). Another birder observed a photographer flush another owl at the BESP marina 1/11. This sparked a lively discussion about birding ethics on the State College Bird Club listserv (JV). The last bird was spotted in Boggs Twp. 2/25 (JL). Two **Short-eared Owls** were observed "flying low and bat-like over the field" at Woodward Gap 12/16. One was recorded doing a bark call, which is appended to the eBird report for this sighting (JP). A **Barn Owl** was observed in Penns Valley 12/27-30 and was listed on the Penns Creek CBC (m.ob.).

A **Peregrine Falcon** was spotted 1/7 on Hoot Rd. "Thanks to the stream of feathers dropping from above" (JL). Another was present on T/WR 1/7-15 (AM, et al.), and a third was present at Whitehall Farms 2/3 (JCa). **Northern Shrikes** were identified at four locations. During early winter, BESP is scrutinized for any sign of this species. This year was not disappointing, with one was spotted 12/2-1/27 (BSn, et al.). Another was seen at Jacksonville Quarry 12/23 (JD, SL), and a third was reported at the Rusnak Hill reclaimed strip-mine 1/27 (BC, et al.). There may have been a second one present there that same day; another birder spotted one "chasing a chickadee" at a different location within the reclaimed strip-mine (JCa). Finally, a single bird was present at the Julian wetlands 2/16-24 (JCa, et al.).

There were four reports of **Gray Catbirds**, at least 2 of which were "mewing." One was heard 12/17 on the State College CBC (JL, RoF), and another was identified during the Penns Valley CBC 12/27 (CP). A third was reported on Sinking Cr. Rd. 12/27 (JG), and the last was in the Stan Yoder Memorial Preserve 12/28 (AM). It was a good winter for spotting **Lapland Longspurs**. Two were observed 1/16 on T/WR (EZ, BV), and up to 17 were present in a mixed flock with **Horned Larks** and **Snow Buntings** in Rock Springs 1/17-2/5 (JV, et al.). One was also present on S. Nixon Rd. 2/8 (JP), and 2 were identified on Garbrick and Airport Rds. 2/11 (JL).

While **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were widely reported, representatives of a couple other warbler species lingered during their migration. An area birder reported "maybe one of the last birds I thought would be encountered on this snowy and windy day" - an **Ovenbird** - in the Rockview fields 12/10. He reported getting good looks at reasonably close range before the bird finally disappeared into nearby woods (CE). Another birder was very surprised to discover a **Black-and-white Warbler** "creeping up the base of a hemlock tree in my backyard and feeding on the ground at the base of the same tree" in State College 12/9. Based on the markings, the observer believed the bird to be a first fall male (SF).

A birder identified a rare winter **Chipping Sparrow** in State College by plumage characteristics and flight calls (CE). A few **Fox Sparrows** lingered through the winter. Single birds were noted in Tudek Park 12/2 (JCa, LC) and on Kirk St. 12/25-2/4 (Jon Kaufmann), while one or 2 were reported at BESP (SB, et al.). A couple birds were seen on Airport Rd. 1/16 (EZ, BV), and 2 others were reported near State College 2/18 (JuW). Two **Savannah Sparrows** were observed, one in Spring Cr. Canyon 12/17 (NiB) and the other in SGL 333 on 2/18 (JP). A trio of rare winter **Eastern Towhees** was spotted at BESP 1/7-2/17 (FM, et al.). A **Common Redpoll** was well-described in Ferguson Twp. 12/2 (Amy Arner).

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Chester County

Locations: ChesLen Preserve (CP), Marsh Creek State Park (MCSP), Struble Lake (SL).

The season trended colder than average, to near average, with many consistent days of subfreezing temperatures. Area lakes were frozen for a period, leaving only agitated water features free of ice. There was minimal precipitation in the first half of the period, while the second half was marked with just a few storms, producing minimal snowfall. Seasonal highlights included: **Virginia Rail, Golden Eagle, Snowy Owl, Marsh Wren**, and a wintering **Nashville Warbler**.

A good southward push of **Snow Geese** occurred at the end of Dec. A high count during this was of 3800 at Crow's Nest Preserve 12/31 (SS, NF). Another good count came from the Cochranville region,

1100 on 12/29 (MG, PM, HD). Other significant movements were recorded between the last week of Jan and early Feb (m.ob.). A **Ross's Goose** was picked out of a skein of Snow Geese by an observer with a careful eye at Somerset Lake 1/24 (JS). A good find was a single **Greater White-fronted Goose** among the **Canada Geese** at the Coatesville Res 12/26 (MD, CH, MH), and again 1/1 (MD, CH). This location tends to be favored by this species, as its occurrence here is spiked compared to other areas of the county. As waterfowl migration begins to peak, good numbers of **Tundra Swans** make a push into the region, though often just using *Chester* airspace rather than putting down. A high count of 62 was made at SL, 2/28 (LL, KP).

Wood Ducks tend to be difficult to detect in winter, and reports are scattered. These fanciful ducks are most commonly found on creeks or rivers, or stream-fed ponds, during winter. A nice high count of 10 was from Somerset L. 12/10 (JS). The private community of Wedgewood, in Thorndale, typically holds the seasonal high count for **Gadwall** in the pond in recent years, and continued that trend, with a high count of 55 on 2/22 (LL, KP). **Eurasian Wigeon** is always a good find, as birders pick through duck concentrations at area lakes and ponds. One appeared at SL 2/26, along with a nice collection of multiple species (LL). Since winter of 2013, *Chester* has been winter host to a drake **Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)**. This year, he made his seasonable debut 12/24 (MH, LD). **Canvasbacks** are uncommon visitors, and this handsome saltwater duck always attracts an audience of birders. Atwater Quarry, and West Liberty Quarry played host for most sightings 1/2-14 (AM, m.ob.). Both SL and OCTRES hosted a group of 4 Canvasbacks 2/28 (LL, MG), tying the high count between the two lakes. **Redheads** were enjoyed by many birders, and were found 12/25-2/28. A good high count of 17 was seen 2/25-26 at CL (RR, AG, LL).

Scoters are often missing from the winter roster of waterfowl in *Chester*, so 3 **White-winged Scoters** at MCSP 12/17 were a pleasant surprise (HM). **Long-tailed Ducks** dropped into area lakes for a single day 12/10, with singles at CL and MCSP (JDP, HM, BB) and 3 at SL (MH, LD). Other sightings were at MCSP 12/26 (HM), and the Schuylkill R. 1/7 (DB). The **Common Goldeneye** is a duck we don't rely on seeing in good numbers, and this species is often difficult to find away from the Schuylkill R. However, deep water and resistance to freezing renders Atwater Quarry a favored location for goldeneyes - a nice gathering of 23 there was the seasonal high count 1/20 (MH, LD, CH). **Red-breasted Mergansers** arrived in early Feb, and continued through the end of the period. The highest number of these salt-water loving mergansers was 7 at MCSP 2/24-25 (BB, m.ob.).

Common Loons were missing in Jan., likely due to frozen lakes, but returned to MCSP mid-Feb, and at least one lingered there through the season (m.ob.). A **Red-necked Grebe** was discovered on the lake at MCSP 2/15 (BB). Presumably this same individual, remained through the season and was seen by many. Another Red-necked Grebe was at Kurtz's Fish Hatchery 2/18 (SS, NF). Some years, this species can be completely absent.

This was the best winter in recent history for **Golden Eagle**. One was seen in flight over Malvern 2/28 (TF, EF) and another was at OCTRES 2/28 (MG). Both individuals were sub-adult. Two **Virginia Rails** were detected within CP's vast wetlands 12/1 (JM, HM), the first time in several years that this species, deemed rare for the season statewide, was discovered in winter; one continued at that location through at least 12/14 (JM). A grand total of 21 **Bonaparte's Gulls** at MCSP 12/10 made for a very nice record number of this species in winter (BB). Another 2 were found in a gull flotilla at SL. 12/ 12 (SS, NF). An **Iceland Gull** was reported from MCSP 2/9 (LL), the only observation of any white-winged gull species.

A big surprise was a **Snowy Owl** spotted atop a telephone pole in Highland Twp. 12/31 (JC). It seemed a matter of time before a report of this irruptive arctic visitor was made in *Chester*, since it was known that these arctic nomads were traveling through the region in a moderate irruption. This owl was not to be relocated, and no further reports of Snowys surfaced. Vagrant hummingbirds did not turn up this winter, continuing a recent trend. An uncommon winter visitor, Red-headed Woodpeckers also went undetected. In some years, there is a localized

population tied to a Pin Oak mast crop, but generally sightings are rare for this handsomely plumaged bird.

Eastern Phoebes are considered half-hardy, and tolerant of some of winter's colder temps. The species was recorded 3 times: at Westtown L. 12/26(MH), Red Clay Greenway 12/27 (GT), and New Bolton Center 1/13 (LL). The harsh cold seems the likely culprit for slightly fewer records this season compared to recent years; however, the occurrence is about average for this flycatcher wintering in the region.

A pair of **Common Ravens** were seen nest-building within the cell phone receptors atop an old power plant chimney at the West Chester University campus 2/27 (JA). This is a terrific new record of this species nesting in the county, and marks the third known nesting site here for ravens. Ravens are a new addition to the county list, within the last 10 years, and all nesting attempts remain noteworthy. Encounters remain widespread but are still uncommon. There was a marked early influx of **Tree Swallows** 2/27, with observations from 3 locations on that date: MCSP (BB), Landenberg (SC), and SL (LL). Late Feb. Tree Swallows are good to seek out during favorable southerly winds.

It was a non-irruptive year for **Black-capped Chickadees**, which accounted for the paucity of reports in the general region, and lack of any reports in *Chester*. The only report of **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was from State Line Woods Preserve 12/2 (JA). This is consistent with the rest of the region, where this species was rarely detected during this non-irruptive year. A singing **Marsh Wren** was a big surprise for 2 birders censusing the wetlands at CP 12/1 (HM, JM)! Topping that surprise was finding a total of at least 4 Marsh Wrens in this location on that date. Marsh Wrens winter along some areas of Pennsylvania's Coastal Plain region, but winter reports from the piedmont are scarce. At least 2 remained through 12/14, but were not detected in marsh bird surveys after this date.

Gray Catbirds were tallied 6 times, from scattered locations, about average for this half-hardy songbird (m.ob.). Birders found **Brown Thrashers** a total of 7 times, but reports of this species ceased after 1/20 (m.ob.). The seasonal high count for **Cedar Waxwing** was 45, from Unionville Community Park 1/28 (LL). This species can be nomadic, and birders cannot always depend on finding them during winter months. Birders combed through flocks of **Horned Larks**, hoping to find something more unusual, but were not rewarded with a prized longspur or bunting. The high count of 450 larks came from Honey Brook 2/19 (LL), where the species thrives with Amish farming practices.

A standout bird of the season was a **Nashville Warbler** that appeared in the yard of a lucky birder 1/21 and continued feasting on suet through the reporting period (HD). While this warbler has been documented in *Chester* in winter at least one other time, the duration of this visit is noteworthy. This individual was the second of this species to spend winter in The Commonwealth with another attending a feeder in nearby Gap, *Lancaster* (PF). These individuals were the only 2 documented in eBird past early Jan in the entire northeastern United States.

Chipping Sparrows lingered through the last week of Jan., but vanished for the rest of the period (m.ob.), consistent with recent timing trends in our region. A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was discovered among a large group of sparrows along the edge of the wetland at CP 12/1 (HM, JM), an unexpected find since Lincoln's Sparrows tend to be gone from the region by late Oct. Birders detected **Rusty Blackbirds** in small numbers sporadically in Dec and Jan, but all reports ended after 2/1 (m.ob.). This species is declining rapidly, so keeping a pulse on reports seems prudent.

Reports of **Purple Finch** were lighter than some winters, and consisted of only 2: one at a Kirkwood Preserve 1/11 (NP), and another from Waterloo Mills Preserve 1/21 (MC). There was only a smattering of **Pine Siskin** observations, all from the southern half of the county, with a high of 7 at Wolf's Hollow CP 2/16 (MG). It was not a good irruptive year for these winter finches.

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Auld, Ellen Bacino, Dorothy Bedford, Barry Blust, Sharon Burke, Kayann Cassidy, Evan Coates, John Conlow, Steve Cottrell, Mike Coulter, Alan Crawford, John Daniel, Hank Davis, Mike Defina, Joey Della Penna (JDP), Lauren Diamond, Barb Elliot, Eric Fernandes, Tony Fernandes, Pamela Fisher, Nikki Flood, Judy Ford, Kevin Fryberger, Michael Gardner, Louise Gensemer, Al Guarente, Denice Hardtmann, Michael Hartshorne, W. Brian Henderson (WBH), Chad Hutchinson, Kristen Johnson, Sheryl Johnson, Dale Kendall, Rick Keyser, Carol Kuniholm, Larry Lewis, Dave Luning, Sarah MacLellan, Carol Majors, Ron Majors, Doris McGovern, John McNamara, Patrick Millar, Michael Niven, Kathleen Pileggi, Nick Pulcinella, Sharon Pulcinella, Brian Quindlen, Brian Raicich, Rick Robinson, Joe Sebastiani, Vince Smith, Arthur Steinberger, Tim Sterrett, Ian Stewart, Scott Stollery, George Tallman, Jaime Thomas, Gerry Tieg, Andy Urquhart, Patricia Verbosky, Laura Wagner, Jeff Wahl, John Werth, Patty Werth, Ann Williams.

Clarion County

Locations: Curllsville (CV), Kahle Lake (KL), Mt Airy (MA), Mt Zion/Piney Tract/SGL 330 (MZ).

Two different species of goose are worthy of mention, with the first being a single **Snow Goose** seen with a flock of **Canada Geese** at New Bethlehem along Redbank Creek 12/22 (J&AK). At KL, a **Ross's Goose** was seen in flight with a flock of Canada Geese 12/25 (GE). Also seen in New Bethlehem along Redbank Creek was a male **Northern Pintail**, noted both 12/22 and 1/23 (J&AK). Another male was also seen further upstream in Oak Ridge 1/14, possibly the same overwintering bird (J&AK). In the same area up to 4 male **Green-winged Teal** were also seen for the second winter, 12/4- 2/20, associating with a large winter flock of **Mallards** and Canada Geese (J&AK, MM, MVT).

Turkey Vultures are now regularly returning in Feb and this year the first was noted near CV strips 2/25 (CW). The best raptor of the season was a young **Golden Eagle** seen at the mouth of the Clarion River on the Allegheny River near Foxburg 1/5 (KC). Surprisingly there was only a single report of **Northern Harrier**, a male near Limestone during a WRS 2/5 (CW). **Rough-legged Hawks** had a pretty good showing with multiple birds seen mostly over southern Clarion. Likely at least 6 individuals were present, 2 dark and 4 light morph. Reports came from Henry Rd, Dairy Rd and Leatherwood area all near New Bethlehem (AB, MH, RH, MM, CW), two locations at MA (AB, MH RH, RN, CW), Reidsburg (CW), and Alum Rock (ML). Sightings occurred 1/6-2/13.

Once again this year, **American Woodcock** made their return before the official spring season. Four were heard calling and doing flight displays in a regular breeding area near CV 2/28 (CW). **Short-eared Owls** were reported from two locations, a single on Rankin Rd near CV 12/6 (CW), and 2 at a reclaimed strip area near Callensburg 1/7 (MH). During the Clarion CBC on 12/17, a total of 11 Short-ears were found by observers covering four different locations, all on reclaimed strip mine property (PC, GE, DF, MH, ML, et al.). A video of a **Snowy Owl** taken by a non-birder showed a bird just north of Clarion 12/23 (DF), and one was also reported near Sligo 12/25 (LG). At the Clarion Airport north of town, a third report of the species was noted 1/12 but on follow up could not be confirmed (PC, DF). The only report of a **Northern Shrike** was an adult bird seen on a WRS at MA 1/19 (RN, CW).

There were just several areas with **Horned Larks** reported. Six were found at a location that is a possible breeding area, Rankin Rd near CV 12/15 (CW). At another location near CV, on McCall Rd, a flock of 40 was noted in a pasture, along with 4 **Snow Buntings** and one **Lapland Longspur** 1/19 (RN, CW). At a large farming area on Dairy Rd near New Bethlehem there was a small flock of 9 Horned Larks, 2 Lapland Longspurs and 23 Snow Buntings 2/24 (JF).

A **Fox Sparrow** was observed 12/15-17 at a feeder area near CV, a late migration date for this species (CW). Also near CV, a late **Swamp Sparrow** was found during the Clarion CBC 12/17 in a large cattail

marsh area where they are regular breeders in summer (CW). During a WRS near St. Petersburg in western Clarion, an **Eastern Meadowlark** was found 2/13, a rather early return date for this grassland species (ML).

The only finch species of note was **Pine Siskin**, which was reported sporadically. Small numbers were present 1/13-1/15 at feeders in Rimersburg and CV (MM, CW). A feeder in Strattanville hosted up to a dozen birds also from 1/13 and then off and on in small numbers through the end of the season (RM).

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Clearfield County

Despite miserable weather (temperatures in the 20s with stiff winds and constant snow flurries), the DuBois Christmas Bird Count tallied 52 species and 4624 individual birds. Unusual for this count were one **Redhead**, several **Turkey Vultures**, one **Northern Mockingbird**, and one **Eastern Meadowlark** (MA, JSm). This count includes parts of Jefferson and Elk.

Four Winter Raptor Surveys routes were completed during Jan and Feb. The mild weather and lower than usual snow cover may have been factors in an unusually high number of **Red-tailed Hawks** (26). Two **Red-Shouldered Hawks** and 2 **Rough-Legged Hawks** were also observed.

Two **Snow Geese** were on Bimini Lake amongst a modest sized flock of **Canada Geese** 12/25, joined a day later by 15 **Greater White-Fronted Geese** (DR). A Turkey Vulture, rare for mid-winter, was observed along the DuBois-Rockton Road 1/20 (DR). A **Northern Goshawk** was observed at S. B. Elliott SP 1/2 (KD). One **Snowy Owl** was observed along Industrial Park Road in Clearfield 1/13 and 2/8 (RK) and 2/22 (JS); another one was seen near Mahaffey 1/23 (RM). A **Short-eared Owl** was seen 12/19-20 at Sandy Ridge SGL (Nick Voris).

A **Red-Headed Woodpecker** was observed along McGee Road 1/13 (JSk). A **Northern Shrike** was seen along Saddle Club Road near Luthersburg 1/11 (DR). One **Snow Bunting** was at Curwensville Lake 12/3 (DG) and a flock of 20 was seen near Penfield 2/2 (ET, NW). An early **Red-Winged Blackbird** was seen at a feeder near DuBois 1/13 (MA). A small flock of 15-20 **Pine Siskins** fed along the berm of the DuBois-Rockton Rd. outside of DuBois 12/17 (DR). One siskin was observed with a flock of 75 **American Goldfinches** near DuBois 1/13 (MA) and 6 were seen near Clear Run 1/20 (DR).

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Clinton County

Locations: Lamar (LM).

Single **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen near LM 1/7 (BS) and near Mackeyville 1/21 (CE). A **Snowy Owl** was photographed near Loganton 12/11 (MC). Likely the same bird, a Snowy was reported throughout the latter half of Dec near the earlier sighting on and adjacent to a nearby farm (SF). Two **Short-eared Owls** were found in SGL 321 on 12/3 (BS). Rare for Clinton, a **Barn Owl** showed up at a farm near Salona around 12/24 and stayed through at least Jan, often seen roosting in an equipment shed (SA). Also rare for the county and

especially noteworthy as the second and third reports since Nov, were 2 **Northern Shrikes**. One had been seen near Salona sporadically through Dec and on 12/14, making it a count week bird for the local CBC (SA). Another shrike was found near LM 1/21 (BS).

On 1/21, a small mixed flock of **Horned Larks**, 3 **Snow Buntings**, and 3 **Lapland Longspurs** was observed at South Avis (CCH). Although remaining unconfirmed but well described in a wooded wet spring area was a possible **Northern Waterthrush** near Mill Hall 1/6 (TS). A hardy **Eastern Towhee** was seen at a feeder near LM 1/14 (SB). In Woolrich, up to 6 **Pine Siskins** attended a feeder 1/13-17 (CCH).

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Columbia County

Locations: Bloomsburg Boat Launch (BBL), Bloomsburg Rail Trail (BRT), Bloomsburg Town Park (BTP), Catawissa (CAT), Catawissa River Bridge (CRB), Columbia County Farm Complex (CCFC), Crow Hill Sanctuary (CHS), Fort McClure Boulevard (FMB), Hemlock Township (HT), Jamison City (JC), Millgrove Road (MR), Montour Township (MT), Quarry Road (QR).

This winter season was a busy one in *Columbia* with several notable sightings and an overall increase in birder effort. The season was a rather cold one and icing conditions on the Susquehanna River concentrated waterfowl. Later in the season, conditions moderated, creating an early push of birds into the county.

A possible first record for the county, 2 **Greater White-fronted Geese** were observed flying with a flock of **Canada Geese** near a pond along QR 2/27 (AK). Usually not observed until Mar, 91 **Tundra Swans** were seen on the Susquehanna River along FMB 2/24 (AK). Another early sighting, 4 **Wood Ducks** were observed in Fishing Creek along the BRT 2/18 (CB). Usually only observed on the Susquehanna River or at Briar Creek Lake, a group of 25 **Redheads** was seen in a flooded field near FMB 2/24 (AK). These birds were most likely pushed to this location due to high water on the Susquehanna. **Common Goldeneyes** are rarely reported in the county, but this was a good season for them. Observations included 4 along FMB 1/17 (AK), 8 at BTP 1/27 (m.ob.), one at the CRB 2/17 (TJ), and one along FMB 2/22 (AK). Cold weather pushed **Red-breasted Mergansers** into the county - 2 were at BTP 1/12 (AK), 2 at FMB on 1/17 (AK), and 3 again along FMB 1/27 (m.ob.).

Nearby counties had a particularly good season for **Rough-winged Hawk** but *Columbia's* only record was a single light morph observed flying over Interstate 80 in HT 1/25 (AK). **Wild Turkey** is certainly not rare in the county; however, a large flock of 120 along MR 1/7 (AK) represents the eBird high count.

A single **Wilson's Snipe** was in a wet area along the BRT during the CBC 12/17 (KP). **American Woodcock** made an early appearance. The season's first observation was a single flying over Route 11 in MT on the morning of 2/27 (AK). Three more were heard calling and displaying along QR during late evening 2/27 (AK). **Herring Gulls** put in a strong showing in many central Pennsylvania counties this season. *Columbia's* only reports were of 2 at a flooded field along FMB 2/25 (AK). An adult **Great Black-backed Gull** was observed at the same flooded field along FMB 2/55 (AK), only the third eBird report of this species in *Columbia*.

Ordinarily, sightings of **Eastern Screech Owl** wouldn't be notable; however, this year a particularly photogenic gray phase bird was present along FMB 1/2 through at least 2/24 (m.ob.) and on most sunny days emerged for an afternoon photo shoot. A single **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard calling along FMB 12/17 (KP) during the CBC. Rarely reported in winter, a **Merlin** was observed 1/27 near the BBL (KP). Possible breeders in the county, the season's only **Peregrine Falcon** was observed near the CCFC 12/17 (KP).

Although last year four species of warbler were reported in the county, this year the lone report was a single **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at BTP 1/27 (m.ob.). Unusual in winter, one **Chipping Sparrow** was photographed at a feeder in CAT 12/11 (JS). **Field Sparrows** are surely present but rarely reported in winter but this year one was reported singing along FMB 2/25 (TF) and another was reported singing at the BBL 2/28 (KP). A single **Fox Sparrow** lingered at CHS from 2/2 until at least 2/13 (DG). A single **Red-winged Blackbird** attended a feeder at CHS 1/28 (DG). Twenty **Rusty Blackbirds** were observed with a large mixed blackbird flock in MT 2/28 (AK). The only report of **Pine Siskins** was of 3 at a feeder in JC 1/13 (JL).

Observers: **Andy Keister, 110 Hawk Ridge Road, Bloomsburg, 17815, (570) 337-3802, akeister110@gmail.com**, Charisse Baldoria, Traci Fetterman, Doug Gross, Tonia Jordan, Judith Lynn, Karol Pasquinelli, John Slotterback.

Crawford County

Locations: Conneaut Lake-Marina (CL-M), Erie N.W.R.- Sugar Lake (E N.W.R.- SL), Pymatuning S.P.-Causeway (P S.P.-C), Pymatuning S.P.- Miller's Ponds (P S.P.-MP), Pymatuning S.P.- Spillway (P S.P.-S), Woodcock Lake-Causeway (WL-C).

The bird of the season was a female or immature **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch**, believed to be of the interior breeding population, which frequented the yard and feeders of a private residence in the Meadville area. The bird represented a first confirmed sighting for Pennsylvania. It was observed reliably each morning sitting in various trees and shrubs and coming to eat seed below a feeder, and then sporadically throughout the rest of each day 2/1-24. Thanks to the generosity of the homeowners, many birders were able to see this unexpected visitor to our state.

Sightings of **Snow Goose** included an excellent count of up to 62, including several blue morphs, in the Pymatuning area 12/23 (TNo); a great count of 57, with 21 blue morphs, at P S.P.-C 12/24 (KP); 10 off of Hollis Rd. 12/26 (KP); and 2 in the Pymatuning area 1/1 (TNo). A single **Ross's Goose**, an excellent and increasingly observed bird in the county, was at P S.P.-MP 12/2 and 12/3 (m.ob.). A good count of 7636 **Canada Goose** was made in the Pymatuning area during the CBC 12/17 (m.ob.). A notable total of 107 **Tundra Swan** were at SGL 277 on 2/27 (RSc).

A single **Wood Duck**, rare in winter, was at CL-M 12/27 (TNo, KP) and 12/31 (RSc). An excellent count of 106 **American Black Ducks** were at Conneaut Lake 12/17 during the CBC (CN, TNico). A good count, 107 **Gadwalls** were in the Pymatuning area 12/3 (IF, RL). Multiple observations of **Northern Pintail**, including 10 at WL-C 12/22 (TNo) and 6 at the same location 12/24 (KP), represented significantly early dates for this species, about a month earlier than expected.

A nice count of 40 **Canvasbacks** were observed at P S.P.-S 2/14 (RL). A notable tally, 143 **Redheads** were at Conneaut Lake 12/14 (CN). A good count of 449 **Ring-necked Ducks** were observed at Conneaut Marsh 2/28 (RL). There were increased **Greater Scaup** observations this season, primarily in the Pymatuning and Conneaut Lake areas (m.ob.). A female **Harlequin Duck**, an excellent observation for *Crawford*, was seen in French Creek near Wilson Chute Rd. 1/7 (EA). The only observation of **Long-tailed Duck** was an excellent count of 64 observed at P S.P.-C 12/2 (RL). A notable count of 77 **Common Goldeneyes** were at Conneaut Lake 12/17 during the CBC (CN, TNico). A great count, 429 **Hooded Mergansers** were in the Pymatuning area 12/3 (IF, RL). Good counts of **Common Merganser** included up to 750 at the P S.P.-C 2/17 (CB, ME, CK, TNII) and 772 at the same location 2/27 (RL). A good count of 1364 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were observed in the Pymatuning area 12/3 (RL).

The only sighting of **Ruffed Grouse**, a notable and declining bird in *Crawford*, was a single bird seen on Church RD. near Canadohta Lake 2/17 (DA). There were several notable early sightings of **Horned Grebe**, including one seen 2/17-18 at P S.P.-C (JB, SD, TNo, KP), 2 at

the same location 2/19 (RH), and one at Pymatuning S.P.-Espyville Maria 2/20 (TNo, KP). Observations of **Red-necked Grebe**, an excellent bird for the county, included singles at Pymatuning S.P.- Ford Island 12/3 (IF, RL) and P S.P.-C 2/14 (RL) and 2/15 (PW, RW). **American Coot** is expected during winter, and usually occurs in high numbers at Conneaut Lake. The high count this year was 223, observed at Conneaut Lake 12/17 during the CBC (TNico, CN), which is lower than in recent years. **Sandhill Cranes** were observed in their expected locations and numbers, with high counts of 164 in the Pymatuning area during the CBC 12/17 (m.ob.) and approximately 100 flying over the E N.W.R.-SL area 12/26 (RE).

A single **Wilson's Snipe**, an excellent bird for the season, was seen across the road from the Fish Hatchery at Pymatuning S.P. 12/3 (IF, RL). There were several notable gull sightings at Pymatuning S.P. A good count of 1236 **Bonaparte's Gulls** were observed in the Pymatuning area 12/3 (IF, RL). The observation of 7302 **Ring-billed Gulls** in the Pymatuning area 2/18 (IF, RL) is an excellent count for *Crawford*. A great count of 250 **Herring Gulls** were observed at P S.P.-C 2/17 (TNo, KP). A single **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, notable for the county, was seen at P S.P.-C 2/17 (ME, TNi, TNo, KP). Observations of **Glaucous Gull**, an excellent bird for the county, included a single at P S.P.-C 2/3 (TNo, KP) and two there 2/29 (RL). There were several observations of **Great Black-backed Gull**, rarely observed in *Crawford* this season - sightings included a single at CL-Ma 12/23 (TNo) and up to two seen P S.P.-C 2/17-18 (m.ob.).

Fourteen **Common Loons**, a good total, were at P S.P.-C 12/3 (CE, IF, RL). There were several early observations of **Double-crested Cormorant**, all from P S.P.-C, including one 2/8 (PF), one 2/10 (BV, NV), one on 2/17 (m.ob.), and 2 on 2/20 (RSc). Remarkable counts of **Bald Eagle** included 57, both adult and immature, observed in the Pymatuning area during the CBC 12/17 (m.ob.) and 51 in the Pymatuning area 2/18 (IF, RL). **Rough-legged Hawks**, notable but expected bird during winter, were observed in their usual locations, primarily the Pymatuning area (m.ob.).

The only report of **Great Horned Owl** was of one at a private location on Tower Rd. 2/17 (CN). The irruptive year for **Snowy Owl** in Pennsylvania resulted in multiple sightings. One Snowy was seen at Canadohta Lake 12/7 (DA) and one was observed at P S.P.-C 12/17-1/9 (m.ob.). A single **Short-eared Owl**, notable for *Crawford*, was seen in the fields off of Yankee Hill Rd. 12/31 (RSc). All observations of **Red-headed Woodpecker**, an excellent and increasingly expected bird in winter, were in the Pymatuning S.P.-Tuttle Beach and Pymatuning S.P.- Jamestown Campground areas (m.ob.). Especially notable were the high counts in these areas, including observations of up to 6 at Pymatuning S.P.-Tuttle Beach 12/2 and 12/3 (m.ob.) and at least 4 at Pymatuning S.P.-Jamestown Campground during the CBC 12/17 (RHo, TNo, KP). A single **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, an excellent find for the season, was at a feeder at a private residence 1/7 (KZ). Another was seen near Pettis Rd. 2/14 (RL).

Observations of **Merlin**, a notable bird for the county, included singles on the Allegheny College Campus in Meadville 2/12 (RHo) and at a private residence in Meadville 2/23 (TNo). **Peregrine Falcon** observations, also a notable bird during winter, included singles at Greendale Cemetery in Meadville 12/16 (IF) and at PSP-C 12/18 (BoR). Observations of **Northern Shrike**, expected but scarce, included singles at PSP-C 12/1 (RL), off of Highway 285 near Sadsbury Township 12/4 (SSc), off of Powder Rd. 1/11 (BoR), off of Wayland Rd. near Meadville 1/27 (TNo) and at a private residence off of Pettis Rd. 2/25 (RL).

Four **Common Ravens**, a good count and a notable species, were observed on the winter raptor survey in south eastern *Crawford* 1/25 (PC, GE, ML, JW). Additional observations included one at P S.P.-S 2/10 (JFed, JPI) and up to 2 at a private residence on N. Richmond Rd. 2/25 and 2/27 (RSc). Reports of **Horned Lark**, expected but scarce during winter, included one at Pymatuning S.P.-Ford Island 12/13 (RL), 7 seen off of Porter Rd. near Conneaut Lake 12/21 (RL, IF), 17 seen off of Gravel Run Rd. 1/31 (JFer), and 14 at the same location 2/10 (TNo).

Red-breasted Nuthatches, expected but notable during the

winter, were observed in expected numbers and locations (m.ob). Observations of **Carolina Wren**, also notable but expected during the winter, were from the usual locations, in normal numbers (m.ob). A nice count for the date, 5 **American Robin** were at the Hartstown Towpath in the Pymatuning area during the CBC 12/17 (CN, TNico).

A high count of 9 **Purple Finch** were at feeders at a private residence off of N. Richmond Rd. 1/1 (RSc). There were a number of reports of **Pine Siskin** throughout the county, including multiple observations of groups seen for nearly the entire season (m.ob.). A good count of 75 was made at feeders at a private residence near Meadville 1/16 (SC). Observations of **Lapland Longspur**, an excellent bird for *Crawford*, included singles at P S.P.-C 12/1 (RL) and there again 2/28 (RL). The majority of **Snow Bunting** sightings this season were at P S.P.-C (m.ob.), with a high count of 22 on 12/23 (TNo). Two were seen off of Porter Rd. 1/2 (IF).

There were several reports of **Eastern Towhee**, notable during the winter. Two were at the feeders of a private residence in the Meadville area 12/29 and 1/19 (SC), a male was seen 1/11-14 at the feeders of a private residence in Meadville (KP), one was seen along Route 27 near Titusville 1/17, 1/30 and 2/18 (ES), and one near Pettis Rd. on 2/18 (RDe). A single **Chipping Sparrow**, excellent for the season, was at feeders at a private residence near Meadville 1/19 (SC). A single **Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)**, a rarely found subspecies in *Crawford*, was seen coming to feeders at a private residence in the Guy Mills area sporadically 12/10-16, and 2 were observed at the same feeders 12/16 (AL, TL).

Observations of **Rusty Blackbird**, a very good bird for the winter, included one near Geneva 12/3 (IF, RL) and another near Conneaut Lake 12/17 (CN). **Common Grackle** is uncommon during the winter, so the observation of 3 birds near Jamestown 1/5 is notable (SA). A single **Yellow-throated Warbler**, a remarkable find during the winter season, was observed in an unheated garage near Hartstown 12/20-29 (NT, RTr); it was observed catching insects in crevices of the building and occasionally heard chipping.

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Cumberland County

Locations: LMBS (Laughlin Millpond on the Big Spring), PSQ (Pennsy Supply Quarry on the Carlisle Pike in Mechanicsburg), SGL 230 (State Game Lands 230)

The winter period had normal temperatures but lighter than average snow amounts. Note that unless otherwise stated occurrences, including number of prior occurrences, of species listed in this report are according to eBird records and An Annotated List of the Birds of Cumberland PA Birds 2016 Volume 30 NO 3 (Gauthier). It should also be noted that there may be current and historical sightings for *Cumberland* listed on eBird from the Susquehanna River that may be possible to list on this report, but without clear documentation otherwise they are considered *Dauphin* birds as the county line is the west shoreline of the river. This is the first *Cumberland* report using the 58th Supplement of the 7th Edition of the AOU Check-list of North American Birds. This is of note as a number of taxonomic changes were made.

The following notable waterfowl are among those less reported during the winter in *Cumberland*. There were 2 reports of **Snow Goose** with one dark morph being seen at PSQ 1/1-7 (SB, DB, StB, DK, VG, AnM) and one dark and one white morph reported at LMBS 2/7 (VG, BF). For the second consecutive year there was one **Greater White-fronted Goose** reported at LMBS 2/18 (JM). This was also the first winter record for *Cumberland*. One **Cackling Goose** was at LMBS 1/31 (VG) and 4 at PSQ 2/3 (HM). One **Northern Shoveler** was on the Yellow Breeches 1/4-5 (SB, m. ob.) and one at the Boiling Springs Children's Pond 1/9 (TJ). Additionally, one **Long-tailed Duck** was present at the Lisburn Road Quarry 2/10-25 (SB, SK, AD) and 2 **Ruddy Ducks** were at the same location 2/10-25 (SK, AD).

One **Red-necked Grebe** was seen at the Lisburn Road Quarry 2/10-25 (SK, AD, SB, TA). This species is a vagrant to *Cumberland* except in invasion years, the last of which was 2014. A **Greater Black-backed Gull** was viewed on a lamp post at West Fairview Boat Launch 12/22 (JM). Another report on eBird of 2 others was actually of *Dauphin* birds; while Greater Black-backed Gulls are seen with regularity on the Susquehanna River they are rare in *Cumberland*. The only **Barn Owl** reported was at SGL 230. Usually one or more are reported in winter but this is an unusual location for this species. Up to 4 **Short-eared Owls** were seen on Ponderosa and Pinedale Rds near Opossum Lake; the latest report was 1/20 (VG, m.ob.). A Short-ear was also noted at SGL 169 on 1/14 (AnM). It was a good season for **Merlin**, with numerous reports. Single **Peregrine Falcons** were seen in Mechanicsburg 12/31 (JS), near Airport Road Shippensburg 1/26 (VG, AM, GW, DG), and Mud Level Road 2/6 (VG).

Only one **Eastern Phoebe** was reported, seen on the Big Spring 12/30 (SB, TW, VG). A **Northern Shrike** was on Hunter Road 1/19 (GH). The bird came into a feeding station on a farm with much suitable habitat for a shrike; unfortunately, it was not relocated. This species is only occasionally found in *Cumberland* during the winter season.

In a non invasion year, there were no reports of Purple Finch and only 2 of **Pine Siskin**, both on the South Mountain. One large flock of approximately 30 birds was at Big Flat 12/3 (DH, JW) and 4 at Camp Michaux 1/7 (VG). "Field Birds" were reported with less frequency than usual. There were 2 reports of **Lapland Longspur** from Mud Level Road, with one 1/6 (VG, AM, DB, SB, StB) and 2 there 1/16 (VG). A season high of 5 were on Red Shed Road off of Route 533 1/6 (AnM) and one was on Farm Road Newville 1/17 (VG). In a very poor year for **Snow Bunting** only one was reported, at the corner of Mud Level and Britton Roads 1/06 (SB, DB, StB).

Eastern Towhee continues the trend of being more common during winter in *Cumberland*. There were numerous reports throughout the season including a surprising 8 at SGL 169 1/1(AnM), and 6 at Camp Michaux 2/1 (VG). It was a fairly normal year for **Rusty Blackbird** with reports of one to 7 birds scattered throughout the county; 3 double digit reports included 10 at the Appalachian Trail, Middlesex 1/19 (IG), 14 at Huntsdale 2/28 (VG), and 15 at Pine Road Penn Township 12/30 (PL, RM).

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Dauphin County

Locations: Blue Mountain Parkway (BMP), Capital Area Greenbelt-19th Street (CAG-19), Clark's Ferry Bridge (CFB), Detweiler Park (DP), Former Harrisburg State Hospital (HSH), Fort Hunter (FH), Hershey-Fishburn Road (HFR), Hershey Important Birding Area (HIBA), Highspire Reservoir (HR), Middle Road, Lykens Township (MR), MYO Park-Millersburg (MYO), Old Hershey Factory-Hershey (OHF), Rachel Carson State Office Building-Harrisburg (RCSOB), State Game Lands 211 (SGL211), State Game Lands 290-Haldeman Island (SGL290HI), Susquehanna River Front Street (SRFS), Susquehanna River Millersburg (SRM), Susquehanna River West Fairview (SRWF), Weiser State Forest-White Oak Road (WSF-WOR), Wildwood Lake (WL).

Snow Goose flocks reported in the Hershey area this season were not as large as last year but a flock of 2000 was seen 1/13 (AB). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen among a flock of **Canada Geese** at WL 12/27 (TM). Sixteen **Tundra Swans** were observed in a flyover of eastern Harrisburg 1/20 (R&PP) and another flock of 11 was observed just outside of Hershey 2/16 (BB). All the common species of ducks except the Ruddy Duck, and White-winged and Surf Scoters were seen during Feb on the Susquehanna R. either from SRFS or SRWF (m.ob.). Adding a bit of excitement to the mix, a **Eurasian Wigeon** was discovered near the SRFS 2/24 (JG) and seen by many observers through 2/27.

Only seen a handful of times during the winter in the last 10 years, a **Ruffed Grouse** was observed along the BMP 12/4 (MB). A **Red-throated Loon** was near SRWF 2/25 (IG) and one was at Heritage Park on the Susquehanna 2/26 (EB). Three species of grebes were observed in Feb: A **Pied-billed Grebe** at WL 2/26 (DH) and again 2/28 (DS), a **Horned Grebe** at SRWF documented by photos 2/15 (R&PP), and a **Red-necked Grebe** at SRM 2/15 (S&SB).

Bald Eagles are seen quite regularly in SRFS and FH area of the river. Five were reported 2/10 (S&SB) and 5 again 2/16 (EC). The highest total seen was 10 on 1/27 at SGL290HI (S&SB). **Red-shouldered Hawks** were observed in Harrisburg this winter along CAG-19 on 2/28 (RS), in the northern section of *Dauphin* along Rt. 443 on 12/4 and 2/13 (JM), and 2/26 in the WL area (EC).

An early **American Woodcock** was observed at WL 2/26 (DH) and a **Wilson's Snipe** was on the mudflats of the south lobe of WL 12/4 (EB). Not reported in at least 10 years, an **Iceland Gull** was observed along Route 743 near Hershey 12/23 (IG, AL, JL). Four species of owls were observed in *Dauphin*. Two **Eastern Screech-owls** were in SGL211 on 12/1 (IG) and one at a home in the Halifax area 2/28 (S&SB). A **Great Horned Owl** was seen in the area of Progress Avenue in Harrisburg 12/16 (EB). HIBA was host to a **Barred Owl** 12/23 (IG, AL, JL) and a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was spotted in the WSF-WOR 1/26 (IG, JL).

There was quite a bit of **Peregrine Falcon** activity on the RCSOB nest ledge in Harrisburg this winter. The male previously seen there last winter, banded in *Clinton* in 2010, was seen in late fall but then the resident male showed up at the ledge 1/26. An un-banded female was observed at the ledge between 12/12 and 12/28 but the resident female reclaimed the ledge 1/26. Only the resident pair has been observed since then (SL). The pair of Peregrines on the CFB has been sighted throughout Jan and Feb, with both observed sitting together 2/25. Sightings of a pair of Peregrines in Hershey at the OHF have been regular during Jan and Feb, with the pair seen on the cocoa bean silos

(TB) and photographed 1/20 on top of the building (IG, AL, JL). It is speculated that it is the same pair as in 2016 and 2017 but confirmation of successful nesting has not occurred.

An **Eastern Phoebe** was spotted just north of Hershey near the Swatara Creek 12/3 (AM) and one was heard calling and seen diving off its perch at MYO 2/10 (S&SB). A late **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was at Fulling Mill boat launch 12/5 (Dan Hinnebusch). **Hermit Thrushes** were reported at 4 locations; the farthest north in *Dauphin* was at DP 1/1 (KW), the farthest south was at HR 2/28 (RS) and the other 2 were at the HSH 2/28 (TA) and at WL 12/4, 1/1 and 2/15 (EB, IG, NK, R&PP). **Gray Catbirds** were seen during Dec but then not again until mid-Feb. One was at HR 2/19 (JF) and one was photographed at WL 2/28 (DS).

American Pipits were observed at HIBA 12/24-26 (m.ob.). One hundred **Horned Larks** were seen on MR 12/31 (S&SB) and the next day the same area produced one **Snow Bunting**. One **Lapland Longspur** was observed in northern *Dauphin* 1/20 (RK) and only one **Snow Bunting** in the same area 1/2 (S&SB). Not reported since 2013, a **Chipping Sparrow** was observed at a home in upper *Dauphin* 1/30 (S&SB). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was seen at HIBA 12/23 (AL, JL). This species had not been reported since 2004. A super find to add to the sparrow list was a **Lincoln's Sparrow** discovered at SGL290HI on 12/3 (S&SB) and another one photographed at HFR 12/20 (AL).

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Delaware County

Locations: Chadds Ford Marsh (CFM), Commodore Barry bridge/riverfront (CB), Crum Creek Reservoir (CCR), Darlington Tract (DT), Delaware County Community College (DCCC), Delaware River (DR), Earles Lake (EL), Episcopal Academy (EA), Fort Mifflin (FM), Glen Providence Park (GP), Haverford College (HC), Hildacy Farm Preserve (HILD), John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge (JHNWR), Linvill Trail (LT), Marcus Hook (MH), Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), Bridle Trail (BT) at Ridley Creek State Park (RCSP), Rose Tree Park (RTP), Smedley Park (SP), Springton Reservoir (SR), Thornbury Township Trail (TTT), The Willows (WILL).

December was challenging for birds and birders with three messy snowstorms of under 4" each, followed by a two-week long cold spell that started on Christmas Day when temperatures dropped below freezing. Additional snow of 3-4" on 12/30 was followed 1/4 by the large storm Grayson across the entire eastern seaboard. It dropped only about 5" in *Delaware* but came with destructive high winds. Jan 8 provided an afternoon and evening icing event before the temperatures finally rose back above freezing 1/9. Soon thereafter highs reached 63F on 1/12, with another warm spell in the 50's 1/27 and 1/28. Feb continued the warming trend hitting 64F on 2/11 and then highs of 72F on 2/20 followed by a record high of 79F on 2/28.

The celebrity species of the season was **Snowy Owl**. The first bird was found at the western end of PHL 1/6 (RF). Reports from pilots, and the recovery of a deceased bird, indicate at least 3 individuals were present. One or two remained throughout the season, often attracting a crowd of onlookers and providing easy photo opportunities as they sunned or napped on light posts and other poles, fences, and the ground. Although most of the airport is in *Delaware*, where the lightest bird spent most of its time near the Fire Training Facility, a second, darker bird seemed to prefer *Philadelphia*, or perhaps its location reflects partitioning of the available space.

The 98th annual Glenolden Christmas Bird Count was held 12/16

with 75 participants, of which 67 were in the field. Eighty-seven species were recorded, which is slightly below the 10-year count average of 90 (DE). **Black-headed Gull** at JHNWR (RM) was a new addition to the CBC list. **Great-horned Owl** (3) remained low, but **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** (40) and **Fish Crow** (261) established new all time highs. One **American Pipit** on SR dam (WS, AC) and 2 at DR at FM (AG) were good finds.

Occasional lone **Snow Geese** were seen during the reporting period though a total of 900 were reported on the CBC 12/16. Migrants were reported over GPP 2/24 (50, SG) and on 2/28 over both Wallingford (900, RF) and Media (250, AG). One **Cackling Goose** was detected flying among a flock of **Canada's** over Aston 1/19 (AG), and one was observed among a flock at EL 12/5 (DO), 12/6 (BR, MM), and 12/20 (DO). Thirty-three high-flying **Tundra Swans** were headed downriver on DR at FM 1/9 (RF) and 5 were at MH 1/21 (AG)

A single **Canvasback** on the DR at FM 1/8 (AG, SW) turned into 5 at the same location 1/10 (RF). During 1/8-24 from one to 12 **Greater Scaup** could be found on the DR at FM (m.ob.) and a single was at SR 2/23 (AG). Single **Lesser Scaup** were at DR at FM 1/17 (RF) and at JHNWR 2/1 (RF) and 2/10 (AG). A **Long-tailed Duck** was reported on the DR at FM 1/11 (m.ob.) The best county bet for **Common Goldeneye** is CCR, which held multiple birds on many dates throughout the period (m.ob.) **Red-breasted Mergansers** were noted on the DR at FM 1/16 (JMc), at JHNWR 1/26 (RF), and 2/23 (AG) through 2/28 at SR (m.ob.) where up to 3 were found. Eight **Ruddy Ducks** were noted at JHNWR 12/18 (JH), 6 were on the DR at FM 1/7 (Dan Efroymsen), and 2 were at SR 2/28 (AB, DB, RF). The only **Common Loon** was at SR 12/16 (AG). **Pied-billed Grebes** were at JHNWR 12/7 (JMc), SR 12/5 (WS) and 2/27 (DO), and CCR 2/16-28 (m.ob.). **Horned Grebe** was noted at SR 2/23 (AG) and 2/28 (AB, DB, RF).

Wild Turkeys have pretty much disappeared from *Delaware* so it was nice to see a report and photos of 6 hens and a tom at CFM 1/24 (DS) and presumably the same birds (6) on 2/12 at nearly the same location (TF). A lingering **Great Egret** at JHNWR, oblivious to the county line, was on the *Delaware* side of the canal 12/7 (RF). One **Northern Harrier** was at the mansion at RCSP 1/19 (AG); the same location produced a gray ghost 2/3 (AG). Other reports were from HILD 12/30 (NS) and JHNWR 12/3, 12/14 (gray ghost), 12/15, and 12/16 (all JMc). **Bald Eagles** continue to gain air space, with numerous reports (m.ob.) from locations across the county during the winter period.

A lone **American Coot** was at SR 1/11 (RF). Besides 2 on the CBC, 2 vocal **Killdeer** were noted at Liseter 2/27 (BS). A late **Greater Yellowlegs** was at JHNWR 12/1 (Scott Reynolds). An **American Woodcock** was also found on the CBC at JHNWR (RM) but the species was not reported again until 2/21 at HC (SJ) and 2/28 at EA (WS). Four **Wilson's Snipe** were on the CBC 12/16 at JHNWR (RM). Once again, the **Black-headed Gull** at JHNWR, which spent most of its time in *Philadelphia*, slipped across the county line into *Delaware* and was observed 12/19 (JMc), 1/15 (DO), 1/19 (RF), and 2/26 (JMc). The only other Larid of note was a **Lesser Black-back Gull** at the Ridley Twp. Marina 1/13 and 1/19 (RF).

Two **American Kestrels** were noted at DT during the CBC 12/16 (NK). Others were at TTT 12/21 (JM), in Springfield 1/20 (John Hand), and noted as a drive-by from the Blue Route in the vicinity of SP 1/21 (CB). A single kestrel was regularly reported throughout Jan and Feb from DR at FM (m.ob.). **Merlin** were reported 9 times during the period (m.ob.), while **Peregrines** were spotted 8 times on multiple dates (m.ob.). An **Eastern Phoebe** was found lingering at EL 12/5 (DO) and another was at WILL 12/7 (DO). The next report was not until 2/27 at JHNWR (DO, JMc). Three **Horned Larks** were a good find DR at FM 1/15 (BR).

The first **Tree Swallow** report (6 birds) came in from JHNWR 2/16 (MS) while the same location held the last two **Marsh Wrens** 12/15 (JMc). Species more numerous than usual in the reporting period this year included **Hermit Thrush**, **Gray Catbird**, **Cedar Waxwing**, and **Yellow-rumped Warbler** (m.ob.). A **Common Yellowthroat** was found on the CBC 12/16 at the FedEx complex (AG) and stayed to be counted on New Year's Day.

American Tree Sparrows were reported from several locations during the period, including their stronghold JHNWR where 11 were noted 12/15 (JMc). Three **Chipping Sparrows** were at TA 2/14 (AG), where 6 had been reported 12/16 (SBN). Other CBC reports came from DT (2, NK), RTP (SB, LH, SJ, KJ) and HILD. A whopping flock of 19 **Chipping Sparrows** was found at HILD 1/1 (AG) and 10 **Field Sparrows** was a good count at TA 1/21 (DE). During winter, **Fox Sparrows** are most reliably found at DT and JHNWR where the season's high count of 9 was reported 12/15 (JMc). A juvenile **White-crowned Sparrow** lingered at JHNWR through 12/15 (JMc), long enough to be added as a count-week bird for the CBC. Two **Savannah Sparrows** at DT 12/16 (NK) were surpassed only by a report of 5 at the same location 1/22 (BR). Thirteen **Rusty Blackbirds** at JHNWR 12/14 (JMc) was a substantial count. There were no winter finches.

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Elk County

Locations: Benezette CBC (BCBC), Benezette Twp (BT), Lake City (LC), SGL 44, SGL 311--Winslow Hill (WH).

Only the four most regular winter waterfowl species were seen this quarter, including 3 **Tundra Swans** at St. Mary's 2/24 (CB) and a total of 23 on the BCBC (m.ob.). **Common Mergansers** were found in decent numbers for winter along the Clarion River in Spring Creek Twp., including 10 at LC 12/22 (EK) and 17 at SGL 44 on 1/27 (MD). Fairly hard bird to come by in *Elk*, single **Ring-necked Pheasants** were found at LC 12/22 (EK), and near Kersey 1/15 (CB). Hopefully it is just because of a lack of reports this season, but the only **Ruffed Grouse** found this period were 3 on the BCBC (m.ob.) and one in BT 2/10 during a Winter Raptor Survey (CE).

A few **Turkey Vultures** made an appearance during the warm spell at the end of Feb when 4-5 were seen in BT (CL). A surprising find on the BCBC was a total of 3 **Golden Eagles**, which can be hard to come by in the county; however, the BT area still remains the stronghold. On the other hand, **Bald Eagles** were found at various locations across the county during the period (m.ob.). A couple **Red-shouldered Hawks** remained this winter with one on the BCBC 12/31 (m.ob.), and one along Glen Hazel Rd in Jones Twp. (JL). **Rough-legged Hawks** were found at 2 locations including one at LC 12/22 (EK) and one at WH 1/27 (MD). Two **Eastern Screech-Owls** and one **Barred Owl** were found on the BCBC 12/31 (m.ob.), but the most exciting owl report was of a **Short-eared Owl** at RM 12/31 (JF).

A surprising find was a **Northern Shrike** near Wilcox 2/18 (SS). As always, **Common Ravens** could be found in good numbers across the county, with a nice total of 40 on the BCBC 12/31 (m.ob.). Four **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were found on the BCBC 12/31 (m.ob.), and one was seen in Fox Twp. 2/19 (LC). A few late migrant **Field Sparrows** were around in late Dec with 2 at LC 12/22 (EK) and a total of 6 on the BCBC (m.ob.). Another sparrow rare during winter in *Elk* is **Eastern Towhee** - one was found on the BCBC 12/31 (m.ob.). **Purple Finch** numbers were down compared to recent years, with only one seen on the BCBC 12/31 (m.ob.) compared to 20 or more over the past few years. **Pine Siskins** were found at 2 locations including 3 at both BT 2/10 (CE) and Tambine Ridge 2/18 (AM).

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Erie County

Most of December was snow-free in the Erie area until Christmas Eve when over 65 inches of snow blanketed Erie in just 48 hours, breaking all kinds of records. Over seven feet of snow became the final total by February 28. Frigid temperatures during this two-month period put ice on everything including up to 90% of Lake Erie. With little open water in the area, there was a poor showing of wintering gulls. The only white-winged gull was a single **Glaucous Gull** at the Lake View Landfill in Jan (JM). It was another banner year for **Snowy Owls** in the Erie area with possibly 16 individuals reported, mostly from Presque Isle State Park, but also south and east of the park. The only northern finches were **Common Redpolls** and a single **Red Crossbill**. See details below.

The following birds of note were recorded from Presque Isle State Park (PISP) unless noted otherwise.

The **Ross's Goose** reported in the fall remained at the Fairview Business Park until 12/3 (m.ob.). Up to nine **Cackling Geese** were at the Fairview Business Park from the fall until 12/5 (m.ob.), and a single bird was at PISP 12/16 (DS). A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was in Presque Isle Bay west of the ranger's station 2/24-26 for the earliest *Erie* record (JM, Nancy Andersen). A female eider flew past Sunset Point during the waterbird count 12/13 (JM). A female **Harlequin Duck** was at Sunset Point 12/17 (AK). Up to 19 **Surf Scoters** were present 12/7-24 (JM, m.ob.), and 3 during 2/24-26 (JM, Robert Scribner, ph). Up to 110 **White-winged Scoters** were in a tight raft off Sunset Point 1/15, then later off Gull Point and the Channel to 2/6 (JM).

A **Red-necked Grebe** was reported at PISP 12/17 (AK). Quite unexpected was a **Virginia Rail** seen on the CBC in flight and on the ground for a very late record 12/16 (EE, HC, NT). The flock of 20 **Sandhill Cranes** was a high winter count at North East on Christmas Day (TL). Two Sandhill Cranes flew over B-trail 2/27 (DZ) and on the same day one was in Waterford (*fide* JH). The only **Little Gull** was an adult flying past Sunset Point on the waterbird count 12/20 (JM).

Possibly as many as 16 different **Snowy Owls** were reported, mostly from PISP, but also south and east of the park (m.ob.). Quite unusual was a **Short-eared Owl** photographed sitting on a window sill of a building in Millcreek Twp. the first week of Jan (*fide* SS). Another Short-ear was photographed in a more traditional area at Gull Point 1/26 (KF). The only **Long-eared Owl** was seen briefly in the pines at PISP 2/28 (RD). Single **Northern Shrikes** were at the Fairview Business Park from the fall season to 12/7 (m.ob.), in Erie 12/26 (CS), and in Summit Twp. 2/3 (JM).

Up to 2 late **Gray Catbirds** were along Pine Tree Trail 12/16-24 (m.ob.). A single **Lapland Longspur** flew past Sunset Point during the waterbird count 12/14 (JM). An immature, or female, **Red Crossbill** made a brief appearance at a feeding station in Erie 12/29 (JD). A flock of 26 **Common Redpolls** was in the birches along Ridge Trail 12/24 (JF) and another flock of 30 in birches along Pine Tree Trail 2/14 (DS).

Observers: **Jerry McWilliams, 3508 Allegheny Rd., Erie, Pa. 16508-2129, jerrymcw@aol.com**, Henry Chupp, John DePaul, Roger Donn, Emmanuel Erb, Kyle Filicky, Jim Flynn, Jamie Hill, Andy Keister, Tim Lyons, Susan Smith, Don Snyder, Carolyn Sturtevant, Shannon Thompson, Neil Troyer, Dean Zeller.

Fayette County

The season mainly consists of waterfowl reports. A cold snap in December and early January resulted in frozen lakes. There were a few

ice storms and some snow.

A **Ross's Goose** was a great find at Filbert Lake 2/9 (AJ), only the second record of which I'm aware in *Fayette*. Two **Tundra Swans** were at Filbert Lake 1/27 (MJ, AJ). Three **American Black Ducks** were at Filbert Lake 2/27 (MJ). Single **Gadwalls** were at Filbert Lake 1/27 (MJ, AJ) and Greenlick Run Lake 2/23 (MF) and a **Northern Pintail** was there 2/25 (MJ). A variety of waterfowl stopped at Greenlick Run Lake 2/24 including 2 **Wood Ducks** (CL, PL); and 6 **Gadwalls**, 2 **American Wigeons**, 12 **Northern Shovelers**, 2 **Green-winged Teal**, 4 **Canvasbacks**, 45 **Redheads**, 100 **Ring-necked Ducks**, 6 **Greater Scaup**, 2 **Buffleheads**, 6 **Common Goldeneyes**, 2 **Common Mergansers** and 2 **Red-breasted Mergansers** (MA).

A **Pied-billed Grebe** was at Greenlick Run Lake 2/23-24 (MF, CL, PL). Uncommon in the county, a **Red-necked Grebe** was a nice find at Hutchison Recreation Area 2/11 (MJ). **Horned Grebe** reports include singles at Hutchison Recreation Area 2/11 (MJ) and Greenlick Run Lake 2/3 (MF). Five were there 2/24 (CL, PL), as was an **American Coot** (CL, PL).

Three **Killdeer** returned to Greenlick Run Lake 2/24 (CL, PL). A large kettle of 80 **Turkey Vultures** was observed over Chalkhill 2/23 (PL). There were 2 **Black Vulture** reports in ebird: 2 in Menallen Twp. 2/17 (MM) and one near Lake Lynn 2/20 (KC). Reports of this species are becoming regular from the southern part of the county where a pair was confirmed nesting a few years ago.

A **Purple Finch** visited a feeder in Dunbar Twp. 2/19 (PL) as did a **Pine Siskin** in Dunbar 1/18 (AJ). **Red-winged Blackbirds** returned to Greenlick Run Lake 2/24 where 5 were counted (CL, PL). A **Rusty Blackbird** was photographed just outside of SGL 51 in Dunbar Twp. 1/14 (PL).

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Forest County

Locations: Allegheny River (AR), Buzzard Swamp (BS), Cook Forest (CF), Marienville (MA), Red Brush (RB), Tionesta (TI).

Waterfowl included an **American Wigeon** and 2 **American Black Ducks** at the TI Fish Hatchery ponds 1/5 (KS). A **Bufflehead**, uncommon in the northwest away from Lake Erie in winter, was spotted on the AR near West Hickory 1/6 (KS). Two **Common Goldeneyes** were seen 1/5 on the AR across from the hatchery, 7 were spotted on the AR near West Hickory, another was at Nebraska Bridge (KS), and 2 were at CF 1/18 (SK); goldeneyes are also uncommon to rare away from Lake Erie in winter. An early **Hooded Merganser** was at CF 2/28 (SK). Unusual for midwinter, 2 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were on the AR near West Hickory 1/7 (KS).

Wintering **Rough-legged Hawk** numbers appear to be declining statewide, so it is encouraging to report that Rough-legs were seen in four locations. One was at BS 12/24 (EK); a dark-phase was seen several times 12/31-1/7 at the Neiltown Fields (WDD, FM, JM, KS); a light-phase at RB, and another at Pigeon Hill 1/12 (FM, JM). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was spotted near MA 1/11 (TR).

A **Brown Creeper**, uncommon in Pennsylvania in winter, was photographed at West Hickory 12/24 (KS), and 4 were at BS 12/24 (EK). A **White-throated Sparrow** was observed at West Hickory 12/24-1/7 (KS) and another near TI 1/17 (FM). One or two **Pine Siskins** were noted near TI 2/8-18 (FM, JM). Two **Purple Finches** were at BS 12/24 (EK), and they were somewhat regular 12/29-2/17 at feeders near TI, with a high of 5 on 2/17 (FM).

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Franklin County

Locations: Greencastle Reservoir (GRRE), Kriner Rd. Retention Ponds (KRRP), Mountain Brook Rd. Pond (MBRP), Little Dipper Pond (LD), Mountain Lake Fannettsburg (MLF).

The most notable highlight from the winter was the sighting of **Snowy Owls** in the county. There were reports from four locations, two north of Chambersburg and two in the southern part of the county. A bird was seen and photographed on top of a silo along Rowe Run Rd. near Letterkenny Army Depot 12/22 (BO). It was observed for about 30 minutes on the silo and flying to perch on a utility pole. Possibly the same bird, a Snowy Owl was observed and photographed by staff making rounds within Letterkenny Army Depot 1/9-2/10 (DC). A third sighting, and one that birders were able to take advantage of, came from the SW part of the county along Lemar Rd. near Upton 1/19-29 (JG, SG, DG, m.ob.). This is in the same general area where 3 Snowy Owls spent much of January 2014. A fourth report was received of a bird seen along Five Forks Rd. in the SE part of the county 2/18 (BC).

A lively Dec for waterfowl faded as ponds and lakes froze over for much of Jan, and things didn't pick up much in Feb. A **Snow Goose** was reported at Parklawns Cemetery 12/9 (JD, SD, BO), at Little Dipper pond 12/9 (BO) and 12/13 (CG), at MBRP 12/14-17 (AL, DK, m.ob.), along Loudon Rd. 12/23 (BO), near Upton 1/24 (SK), and at GRRE 2/1 (DG). A **Ross's Goose** was observed at MBRP 12/13-19 (AL, DK, m.ob.), at GRRE 12/27 (DG), at LDP 2/22-26 (CG, BO), and at MLF 2/24 (CG). An impressive number of 8 **Greater White-fronted Geese** were observed at Keefer Rd. pond 12/1-11 (DC, VB, NM, m.ob.). Also, a **Cackling Goose** was found at GRRE 12/16-17 (CG).

Winter ducks were few and far between. There were reports of late staying **Ring-necked Duck** at LLP 12/1-15 (CG), **Ruddy Duck** at LLP 12/9 (BO), and **Redhead** at GRRE 12/27 (DG) and 1/13-28 (CG, BO). There was a slight uptick in duck activity as expected the last third of Feb with most interesting sightings being Redhead (2) at Bender's Farm 2/18 (BO), **Northern Pintail** (2) at Keefer Rd. 2/22 (CG, BO), and **Red-breasted Merganser** at a pond alongside Letterkenny 2/24 (CG). Another water related species worth reporting was **Horned Grebe** at MBRP 12/15 (JD, BO, CG) and at KRRP 1/25-29 (CG, BO, DC, VB).

The first report of **Wilson's Snipe** was at Findlay Rd. 1/14 (BO), first **American Woodcock** at Heisey Rd. 2/8 (BKe), and first **Eurasian Collared-Dove** from the expected location in the Shady Grove area 12/16 (DG, KL). Besides the Snowy Owl sightings described at the beginning, there was excitement of having **Short-eared Owls** hunting fields along Mowersville Rd. 1/31-2/9 (BO, BKe, VB, m.ob.). Two owls seen hunting and interacting 2/6 (BO, KH). **Red-headed Woodpeckers**, absent last winter, were reported regularly and from various locations.

There were a number of reports of the rarer falcons. **Merlin** sightings were on Shatzer Rd. 1/9 (JB), Lemar Rd. (2) 1/21 (ScB), twice in the Scotland area 2/3 (JD, SD), near Pleasant Hall 2/10 (BO), and on a Winter Raptor Survey near Quincy 2/13 (DG, CG). The 2 Merlins reported from Lemar Rd. 1/21 were observed attacking the Snowy Owl also seen there (ScB). **Peregrine Falcon** sightings continue to be regular this winter as they were last winter. Sightings were on I-81 Guilford Twp. 12/16 (FM), Commerce Street Chambersburg 12/18 (DC), GRRE 12/19 (CG), Airport Rd. 1/9 (AM), and downtown Chambersburg 12/17, 1/20, 2/11 (BO). The falcon that spent time in downtown Chambersburg was photographed on a ledge of the base of the steeple of Central Church on the square, which apparently was a favored eating perch indicated by the white wash on the building and discarded pieces of the bird's prey in the bushes beneath it.

Winter **Eastern Phoebes** were found at Siloam Rd. 12/16 (DB, ScB, StB) and at the Keener feeder 2/10 (BKe). There were several reports of notable winter field birds. Three **Snow Buntings** were reported from Lemar Rd. 1/22 (AM) and one from Bender's farm 1/27 (BO). Twelve **Lapland Longspurs** were reported from Hissong Rd. 12/31 (DC), one from Murray Rd. 1/6 (BO), 2 from McClay's Mill Rd. 2/9 (BKe), and 2 from Doylesburg in Path Valley 2/13 (MW). Overwintering **Chipping Sparrows** were reported from Bricker Rd. 1/2 (DC) and from

The Pond Trail Roxbury 1/11 (JM).

Winter finches were hard to come by. The only **Red-breasted Nuthatch** reports were of 2 at Caledonia Golf Course during the 12/16 CBC (BF, JT) and one at Renfrew Park near Waynesboro 1/21 (GA). The first **Pine Siskin** reports were at Caledonia SP 1/3 (EB), 1/13 (BO), and 3 on 2/1 (BO). During Feb, there were regular reports of siskins in the Caledonia area at the state park feeders and personal feeders in the greater Caledonia area with the known high count of 25 (VB, NM, DP).

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Fulton County

Locations: Back Run Road (BRR), Heavenly Acres Road (HR), Metzler Road (MZR), Pointer Road (PR), Rock Hill Road (RHR), Sawmill Road (SR), State Game Lands 53 (SGL 53), Tuscarora Summit (TS).

Geese and raptors were this season's highlights. One **Snow Goose** was seen on 2/13 near the RHR and BRR loop about a mile east of SGL 53 (DG, GG), the only one recorded on ebird for *Fulton* this season. Two **Cackling Geese (Richardson's)** were photographed flying south with **Canada Geese** during a cold 9 °F at TS 12/13 (AL).

Single **Golden Eagles** were observed in two different locations – One was spotted from I-76 near Breezewood on 1/26, less than a mile west of PR (FI) and an imm. was seen near SR north of Needmore 2/13 (DG, GG). A **Rough-Legged Hawk** was observed near 913 MZR 2/1 (DG, GG), the first *Fulton* ebird report since 11/21/2003. A **Short-eared Owl** was spotted perched on a fence post and flying in the afternoon sun over a field off HR 2/28 (PK), the first submission of this species for *Fulton* on ebird.

Observers: **Joshua Markel, 25 Biesecker Road, York, PA 17408, (717) 650-5552, josh.markel@jpatrickwriting.com**, Deborah Grove, Greg Grove, Alex Lamoreaux, Frank Izaguirre, Phil Keener.

Greene County

Locations: Claylick (CL), Cumberland Twp. (CT), East View (EV), Franklin Twp. (FT), Last Chance Ranch (LCR), Sycamore (SY), Whiteley Twp. (WT).

American Black Duck was in WT 2/18 (GD). During the Clarksville CBC 12/29, 3 **Common Mergansers** were recorded (TD). Over 50 **Wild Turkeys** invaded the tame duck feeding area at CL 1/26 (RA, LA). At LCR, a lone **Black Vulture** was seen pecking on deer bones 2/21, among **Turkey Vulture**, which were first reported at same location 2/15, (MLP). A **Bald Eagle** flew over FT 12/27 (CDB). In CT, **Northern Harrier** and **Rough-legged Hawk** were sighted 12/29 (EK, KK).

Killdeer was found in CT 12/29 (EK, KK). A **Wilson's Snipe** was a nice surprise during the Clarksville CBC 12/29 (EK, KK). **Great-horned Owl** was heard in SY 12/4 (JC, AC) and in FT 2/19 (CW). On the Clarksville CBC, **Barred Owl** was heard 12/29 (TD). At SY, 2 **Belted Kingfishers** were seen 2/16 (AC, JC). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was found at SGL 223 in WT 1/3 (JB).

In SY, **Eastern Phoebe** was seen 1/14 and **Brown Creeper** was there 12/9 (AC, JC). **Winter Wren** was spotted in the duck pen at CL 1/26 (LA). One **Golden-crowned Kinglet** was in CT 12/29 (EK, KK). **American Robin** was reported throughout the period (KK, MLP, MH).

A lone **Cedar Waxwing** was in WT 2/18 (GD).

Two **Purple Finches** visited the feeder at SY 1/29 (JC). For most of the period, **Eastern Towhee** was noted in various areas of the county (MH, GD). **American Tree Sparrow** was in SY 1/14 (JC). **Fox Sparrow** and **White-crowned Sparrow** were reported in WT at SGL 223 on 1/3 (JB). **Red-winged Blackbird** and **Common Grackle** were present throughout the period at EV (MH).

Observers: **Marjorie Howard, 149 Preachers Road, Waynesburg, PA 15370, (724) 852-3155, rkbirdclub@yahoo.com**, Lyn Argent (LA), Ron Argent (RA), C. David Bell (CDB), Christine Bezouska (CB), Bethany Boback (BB), John Boback (JB), Al Churney (AC), Jan Churney (JC), Terry Dayton (TD), Lucy DeFrank (LD), Al Deynzer (AD), Gordon Dinning (GD), Mary Grey (MG), Larry Helgerman (LH), Chase Howard (CH), Jerry Howard (JH), Michelle Howard (MiH), Mike Howard (MkH), Ed Kern (EK), Kathy Kern (KK), Mary LaPlante (MLP), Gary Mankey (GM), Joyce Mankey (JM), Debbie Osborne (DO), Greg Riggle (GR), Nancy Riggle (NR), Carlotta Whyte (CW), and Jerry Wolfe (JW).

Huntingdon County

Locations: Aitch Access at Raystown Lake (AA), Brumbaugh's Access at Raystown Lake (BA), Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Cornpropst Mills (CM), Ennisville (ENN), Entriken Overlook at Raystown Lake (ENT), Huntingdon (HU), Juniata River (JR), Pennsylvania Furnace Rd (PF), Raystown Lake (RL), Seven Points Rec Area at Raystown Lake (SP), SGL 322 at Petersburg Pike (SGL322), Smithfield (SF), Stone Mt. hawk watch (SMHW), Stone Valley (SV), Summit Schoolhouse Road (SSR), Tussey Mt. hawk watch (TMHW).

The headline species for the season were, in fact, literally headliners, both making the front page of The Daily News in Huntingdon. Both birds were rare owls, found injured and subsequently taken to rehab. First was a **Snowy Owl** found a few days prior to Christmas within the grounds of the Smithfield State Correctional Institute, a medium security prison. During it's brief stay, no birders saw the owl, but presumably it was enjoyed (and ticked?) by prisoners and guards! On Christmas morning it was found with minor wing damage near a razor wire fence. The owl was captured and taken to Centre Wildlife Care, where it appeared headed towards recovery and possible release into the wild.

On 1/25, a **Long-eared Owl** with a damaged wing was found along Rt 26, near ENN. It was collected by PennDot workers and also ended up at Centre Wildlife Care, in the care of Robyn Graboski and her staff. The damage was serious but not life-threatening (unless it had not been captured); this bird will never be released back into the wild but will serve as an educational bird in a nature center.

Overall, the season was colder than the previous two winters. Extreme cold dominated from mid-Dec through mid-Jan. Temperatures averaged 3 degrees below normal in Dec and 2 below in Jan; only Feb was relatively warm, 4 degrees above average (thanks to a very mild second half of the month that included some record high daily temperatures). Precipitation was low in Dec, normal in Jan, and 3.3 inches above normal in Feb thanks to heavy rain that accompanied warm weather late in the month. Snow fall at Huntingdon was unremarkable - for the season a total of 21 inches. There were no significant snow storms and for substantial periods there was no snow cover.

Two CBCs fall mostly within *Huntingdon*. The Huntingdon CBC, compiled by Deb Grove, was conducted 12/17. Participation was high, with 35 in the field. The species count was 70, above the average of 65. New for the count was **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, 3 of which were recorded. Another rarity was **Northern Shrike** (JC, et al.). Thirteen species set record highs, impressive for a count conducted for the 34th time. The Lake Raystown CBC, conducted 12/28, was the coldest ever (dating to 1993), starting at 3F in the pre-dawn period. The species count matched the long term average of 66. No new species were added to the cumulative list; Ruffed Grouse was a notable miss (GG).

et al).

Early **Tundra Swans** included a flock of 39 at BA 2/25 (TK, DK) and 70 over TMHW 2/27 (NB). Twenty-seven **Greater Scaup** at RL dam provided a good count 2/24 (TK, DK). A surprising **White-winged Scoter** flew over SMHW 12/6 (NB); also unusual was one in mid-winter at SP 2/6 (DK, TK). High counts of **Common Mergansers** were 144 at ENT 12/28 (NB, BM) and 150 at AA 2/25 (TK, DK); 8 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were also present at AA on the latter date. **Hooded Mergansers** continue as a now-common winter duck, with many reports – high was 35 at AA 2/25 (TK, DK). Unusual in mid-winter was a **Ruddy Duck** at RL 2/3 (TA). A **Red-necked Grebe** was at SP 2/19, providing the only report (DK).

The assemblage of **Northern Harriers** in the expansive, wide-open fields at PF was remarkable. As many as 17 were present at one time, with that high number noted 1/11 (m.ob.). Up to 10 were still being reported through late Feb. With warm winds in late Feb, an impressive 31 **Golden Eagles** had already been tallied at TMHW by 2/28 (NB, Henry Hvizdos). As many as 3 **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen on multiple occasions in Trough Creek Valley (m.ob.).

PF hosted up to 2 **Short-eared Owls** 1/3-9 (JK, JV); after an apparent absence, 2 were found again in late Feb (JP, m.ob.). **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were reported at four locations: up to 3 (2 adults, one immature) at SGL 322 during Jan and Feb (GG, DG, CM, DK); one on SSR 1/27 (GG, DG, DGr); 2 in Woodcock Valley 2/13 (Dawn Thompson), and one at CM 2/20 (Andy Weber). At least one **Merlin** apparently wintered in HU, where singles were noted at the SF bridge on JR 1/31 (DK, TK) and on the Juniata College campus in HU 2/11 (KS); one was also seen in northern SV 2/28 (Luke Fultz).

Not annual here, a **Lapland Longspur** was a good find at PF 2/8 (JP). Two **Snow Buntings** were at PF 2/9 (GG, DG, DK, TK, AS). Among several reports of **White-crowned Sparrow** were two from Harper Hill Rd. where 10 were noted 1/7 and 1/20 (DGr). As usual there were scattered observations of 1-2 **Swamp Sparrows** (m.ob.). **Eastern Towhees** are not found every winter; singles were in SV 12/3 (GG, DG) and 12/17 (JK). Also not annual in winter, 6 **Eastern Meadowlarks** were at Harper Hill Rd. 1/7 and 1/20 (DGr). The only reports of **Rusty Blackbird** were of 2 during the Huntingdon CBC 12/17 and one in ENN 2/7 (DW). The only **Pine Siskins** were 4 at a feeder in SV 2/26 (AS) and one at ENN 1/13 (DW).

Observers: **Greg Grove, 9524 Stone Creek Ridge Road, Huntingdon, PA 16652, gwg2@psu.edu.** Tina Alianiello, Diane Bierly, Susan Braun, Nick Bolgiano, John Clickner, Rob Dickerson, Ian Gardner, Debra Grim (DGr), Deb Grove, Lewis Grove, Jon Kauffman, David Kyler, Trudy Kyler, Betsy Manlove, Dennis McGillicuddy, Laurie McGillicuddy, Crystal McNeal, Julia Plummer, Ben Steines, Alex Sharp, Karl Suttman, Joe Verica, Doug Wentzel.

Indiana County

Locations: Indiana (IN), Lewisville (LV), Shelocta (SH), Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

On 12/26, the day of the Indiana CBC, two **Greater White-fronted Geese** flew over Tonkin Rd. near Blue Spruce Park where they were photographed (TB) this was the seventh county record. Top **Tundra Swan** count was 81, flying over YC 2/27 (LC, SD, DK, PT).

Two dates marked the return for most of our waterfowl. Feb 20 (LC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DK) yielded the first 2 **Wood Ducks**, 6 **American Black Ducks**, 3 **Ring-necked Ducks**, one **Greater Scaup**, 5 **Buffleheads**, and one **Common Merganser** while the morning of 2/24 (MH, RH) produced a single **Northern Shoveler**, 91 **Gadwalls**, 15 **American Wigeons**, 21 **Northern Pintails**, 14 **Canvasbacks**, 32 **Redheads**, 6 **Lesser Scaup**, 3 **Common Goldeneyes**, 3 **Hooded Mergansers**, 3 **Red-breasted Mergansers**, and 2 **Ruddy Ducks**. First 5 **Green-winged Teal** were observed 2/27 (LC, DK).

A single **Ruffed Grouse** photographed at Hemlock Lake 2/21 (AK, JK) was the only report. The first 26 **American Coots** were spotted

2/27 (LC, SD, DK, PT). The first 2 **Killdeer** appeared at YC 2/20 (LC et al) while singletons were noted in IN (JaP, JP), at Hemlock Lake (AK, JK), and near LV (MC) the next day. First **American Woodcocks** were 2 at Nolo 2/25 (DB); this is the 11th Feb record. A **Wilson's Snipe** was reported in a field north of YC 2/24 (MH, RH); this is only the second Feb record with the first on 2/3/2003 (EB) near Clymer.

Seven **Bonaparte's Gulls** at YC 12/26 (RC, MH, DK) were late; the previous YC date was 12/23/2011 (LC). Twenty-five **Ring-billed Gulls** were listed at IN 1/27 (JaP, JP); other maxima included 31 north of Rochester Mills 2/24 (BV) and an estimated 100 at YC 2/27 (LC, SD, DK, PT). Two **Common Loons** lingered at YC 12/9 (SR). A **Great Blue Heron** was a nice find in IN 1/16 (JP), especially in a season with no CBC reports of this species.

An amazing 9 **Black Vultures** flew over Pine Ridge Co. Park 2/20 (DL); 4 were listed at the same location 2/28 (DL); this was the first winter report for a still uncommon *Indiana* bird. Jan reports of **Turkey Vultures** include singles at Blairsville 1/26 (ED, MH, RH, GL) and in IN 1/27 (NV); before last year's report of 1/25/2017 (TG, MH, RH, GL), the only other years with vultures in Jan were 2001 and 2005, when single birds were sighted once. Only 2 **Northern Harriers** were reported – one near YC 12/19 (MH, RH, DK, GL) and one near Bethel Church 12/27 (MH, RH). A **Rough-legged Hawk** was at the West Lebanon strips 1/20 (SG); a light morph was seen midway between Smicksburg and Plumville 1/25 (MH, RH). An adult **Golden Eagle** sitting in a field near Penn Run 2/14 (GL) was the season's raptor highlight.

An **Eastern Screech-Owl** was heard periodically near LV between 12/2-2/28 (MC), a gray morph occupied an owl box near SH 12/3-2/6 (MH, RH), a red morph was found roosting in a tree cavity for the Belsano CBC 12/28 (MH, RH), and another gray morph was photographed roosting in a squirrel box s. of SR422 near SR. 954 on 1/6 (SD). A red morph was photographed roosting in a hollow beam near IN 2/13 (JaP, JP). **Great Horned Owls** were heard only near SH 12/13 and 2/24 (MH, RH), at Nolo 1/3 (DB), and near LV 2/26 (MC). **Barred Owl** was found at Nolo on four dates (AB, DB) – 1/20, 2/12, 2/21-22 – and at YC 2/19 (PA). One to 4 **Short-eared Owls** were reported near West Lebanon between 12/6 (TB) and 2/24 (SD, EF, PhF, TF, TG, DP, JaP, JP); a great addition to the IN CBC was the sighting of 2 Short-eared Owls near YC 12/26 (GL); one was later seen at the same location 2/13 (LC, MH, RH, DK) flying very high mid-morning. This is only the second time Short-eared Owls have been noted on the CBC.

Unusual was the total absence of **Belted Kingfishers** in the county between 12/3 (MH, RH), when one was observed near SH, and 2/17 (MH, RH), when one was noted at another nearby location also near SH. Three **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were noted on the IN CBC 12/26 – 2 at YC (ED, JT) and one southwest of IN (DC, MC); another showed up 12/29 (MH, RH) near SH where it stayed through 1/19 (MH, RH, DK). Single **Merlins** were nice finds in IN 12/15, 1/12 (JT) and at YC 12/26 (RC, MH, DK). A late **Eastern Phoebe** was at YC 12/19 (MH, RH, DK, GL); this is the first Dec. record. The only **Fish Crow** report was of mentioned 5 in IN 2/27 (DK).

Winter Wren reports included 2 at YC 12/26 (RC, MH, DK) and one at the Waterworks Conservation Area 1/23 (SD); although there have been multiple Dec sightings, this is only the fifth Jan Winter Wren observation for *Indiana*. Last **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were listed at YC 12/9 (JP, SR). A single **American Pipit**, the fifth winter record, was seen walking on the road at West Lebanon 12/7 (MH, RH, RW). One to 3 **Pine Siskins** appeared at feeders near SH 1/14-18 (MH, RH) while Nolo feeders hosted 1-5 between 1/16-19 (CL, GL); one popped up again near SH 2/24 (MH, RH) while 5 reappeared at Nolo the next day (CL, GL).

A **Lapland Longspur** was reported near Bethel Church 12/26 (CW, PW). A WRS near Cherry Tree yielded 22 **Snow Buntings** 1/19 (MH, RH, DK, GL). A **Fox Sparrow** wintered at a feeder near SH 12/11-2/16 (MH, RH). The IN CBC yielded 3 **White-crowned Sparrows** 12/26 (CW, PW); a singleton wintered near SH between 1/15-2/19 (MH, RH). The only other report detailed 3 near YC 1/16 (MH, RH). One to 2 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** wintered near LV through 2/24 (MC); one at YC 2/20 (LC, PF, TG, MH, RH, DK) was the only other report.

Observers: Margaret Higbee, 3119 Creekside Road, Indiana, PA 15701-7934 (724-354-3493; bcoriole@windstream.net Pat Andrascik, Alice Beatty, Dave Beatty, Eli Beiler, Tony Bruno, Rich Carlson, Lee Carnahan, Dan Cunkelman, Marcy Cunkelman, Sue Dickson, Ed Donley, Patience Fisher, Elyse Fuller, Phoebe Fuller (PhF), Tom Fuller, Tom Glover, Steve Gosser, Roger Higbee, Debbie Kalbfleisch, Avis Keener, John Keener, Clayton Lamer, Gloria Lamer, Dennis Lauffer, Dominic Pumford, James Pumford (JaP), Joseph Pumford, Scott Reynolds, John Taylor, Phyllis Terchanik, Bill Voris, Nick Voris, Ray Winstead, Chris Williams, Paula Williams.

Jefferson County

Locations: Clear Creek State Park (CC), Elk Run Ave. (ER), Fordham Lake (FL), Kyle Lake (KL), Mahoning Shadow Trail (MS), Pine Drive (PD), Ringgold (RG), 13669 PA Rt. 28 (Rt28), 2560 PA Rt. 36 (Rt36), Shaffer Road (SH), Skyline Road (SR), Punxsutawney (PX), Winslow Pond (WP).

Highlights for the period include a record high in eBird of 20 **Snow Geese**, found on WP 12/22 (NV); an additional 4 Snow Geese were found off Rt 28 on 12/26 (EK). Twenty **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at a pond east of PX 1/22 (NV). Other waterfowl observations include high counts of 134 **Canada Geese** on FL 2/21 (AK, JK), 22 **Ring-necked Ducks** on WP 2/22 (JS) 14 **Common Mergansers** on FL 2/23 (AK, JK). A highest count ever recorded of 15 **Redheads** was made on KL 2/26 (NW). A number of species were observed only once over the period, including 9 **Tundra Swans** on WP 2/24 (NV), 2 **Wood Ducks** on the MS 2/28 (AK, JK), 16 **Northern Pintails** on WP 2/22 (JS), 2 **Hooded Mergansers** on FL 2/28 (AK, JK), and 2 **Ruddy Ducks** on KL 2/28 (AK, JK).

The only **Ring-necked Pheasant** was on PD 12/12 (LP) and the only **Great Blue Heron** on ER 1/9 (NV). One of the resident **Bald Eagles** of the MS was found on the nest 2/25 (AK, JK). The first two **Turkey Vultures** were reported for the period on Rt 36 on 2/24 (JF). A **Rough-legged Hawk** was reported on SR 1/7 and 1/20 (AK, JK).

Three **Ring-billed Gulls** were on KL 2/26 (NW). A **Great Horned Owl** was in RG 12/28 and 2 were there 1/4 (AK, JK); one was in CC 2/18 (TN, ME). A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was observed numerous times at a feeder in RG 1/4-2/5 (AK, JK). The only **Northern Flicker** was found on the MS 2/28 (AK, JK). A **Northern Mockingbird** was on SH 1/25 for the only report (AK, JK). The 16 **Cedar Waxwings** on SR 1/19 also was a lone report for that species (AK, JK).

A first ever ebird report for *Jefferson*, 43 **Snow Buntings** were discovered on SR 1/19 (AK, JK). The first 2 **American Tree Sparrows** for the season were found in RG 12/3 (AK, JK). A **White-crowned Sparrow** was in RG 12/15 (AK, JK). A high count of 10 **Pine Siskins** was noted in PX 1/15 (NV).

Observers: Thomas Glover, 210 Highland Ave., Punxsutawney, PA 15767, tomglover@comcast.net, John Fedak, Mike Epler, Avis Keener, John Keener, Eric Keith, Ted Nichols, Lance Pennington, Jerod Skebo, Nick Voris, Nathan Weyandt.

Juniata County

Locations: Juniata River (JR), Lewistown Narrows Canal Park (LNCP), Licking Creek Valley (LCV), Lost Creek Shoe Shop (LCSS), Mifflintown (MIF), Oakland Mills (OM).

Greater White-fronted Geese, numbering at least 6, continued from the late fall at the Beaver Pond north of OM, where present through 12/8 (CK, RH, m.ob., ph). At the other end of the period, 3 Greater White-fronts were spotted in a flock of **Tundra Swans** passing over LCSS 2/27 (DT). That north-bound swan flock was one of 5 seen that day, containing a total of about 800 birds.

Unusual in mid-winter were 4 **Wood Ducks** in LCV 1/27 (DB). Among several reports of **American Black Duck** was one of 15 at LNCP 1/1 (CK, RH). Also unusual in mid-winter were 2 **Green-winged Teal** on Metz Rd. 1/13 (CK, TW, SJ, ES). Metz Rd. hosted 2 **Gadwall** 2/18 (CK, CB) and one was on the JR 2/24 (CK, RH). A nice find on New Year's Day was a **Common Goldeneye** at CC (CK, RH); 2 were on the JR at MIF 2/7-10 (CK, RD). Another unusual mid-winter find was a flock of 8 **Red-breasted Mergansers** on the JR at MIF 1/11 (CK).

A **Golden Eagle** was at Filkroad Rd. 1/1 (CK, RH). Seventeen **Bald Eagles** were at a private location 1/20 (anon.). Two **Rough-legged Hawks** were found on a WRS route 1/20 (CK, et al.). Two **Sandhill Cranes** stopped briefly in a field near LCSS 2/28 (DT, DB, CK, ph). There were multiple reports of one-two **Wilson's Snipe** from locations near MIF. The first **American Woodcock** was at OM 2/16 (AT).

A visit to Tuscarora SF 2/20 produced 4 owl species –one **Northern Saw-whet Owl** and 2 each **Eastern Screech**, **Great Horned**, and **Barred Owls** (Deuane Hoffman). A **Barn Owl**, regular but rare, was observed at a private location 1/13 (CK, TW, SJ, ES). At least one **Red-headed Woodpecker** was at the established location near McAlisterville 1/1 (CK, RH) and 2/18 (CK, CB). A **Merlin** was found near Richfield 2/1 (CK). **Eastern Phoebe** provided good mid-winter finds, with singles at LCSS 1/22 (AT, et al.) and at LNCP 1/24 (Mark Nale, Darla Shank).

An apparent **Carolina Chickadee** was noted near Thompsettown 2/10 (CK); this area is just north of the chickadee hybrid zone. Unusual for winter was a **Common Yellowthroat** at LCSS 1/28 (DT, CK, GG). **Savannah Sparrows** are at the edge of their northern winter range in *Juniata* – one was at MIF 12/2 (CK) and 3 at Metz Rd. 1/1 (CK, RH). **Eastern Towhees** were at several locations, with an impressive high of 5 at Cedar Springs 1/1 (CK, RH). A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was reported to have spent five minutes at a bird feeder in LCV 1/21 (DB).

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Lancaster County

Locations: Alcoa Marsh (AM), Beechdale Rd. Farm Pond (BRFP), Brenner Quarry, Chestnut Grove Natural Area (CGNA), Chickie's Rock County Park (CRCP), Conewago Recreation Trail & Wetlands (CRTW), Greenfield Ponds (GP), Ironville Community Park (ICP), Lancaster Airport (LA), Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area (MCWMA), Muddy Run Reservoir (MRR), Noel Dorwart Park (NDP), Octoraro Reservoir (OR), Riverfront Park (RFP), Speedwell Forge County Park (SFCP), Speedwell Forge Lake (SFL), Shenk's Ferry Wildflower Preserve (SFWP), Spalding Conservancy (SC), Sporting Valley Turf Farm (SVTF), Susquehanna River Bainbridge Islands (SRBI), Susquehanna River Conejohela Flats (SRCF), Susquehanna River Lake Clarke (SRLC), Susquehanna River Long Level (SRLL), SGL 156, Susquehanna W.T.P Washington Boro (SWTPWB), Wood's Edge Park (WEP).

Average temperatures were 32°F in Dec (34°F historical mean), 27°F in Jan (30°F mean), and 35°F in Feb (33°F mean). The weather saw wild temperature swings, where multiple high and low record daily temps were set. A four-day stretch from Dec 31-Jan 3 tied or set new lows on each day, the coldest being Jan 1 at -2°F. Subsequently, a high on Feb 21 of 81°F set a new heat record for Feb since historical records began, and several close dates also saw new highs. Overall, there was below average snow and ice cover through the winter. Any distribution notes (were more abundant, less common, etc.) are compared to that species' 5-year eBird data trend. 146 species were recorded during the period.

It was a strangely excellent waterfowl season, and partly unprecedented. Up to 25,000 **Snow Geese** arrived at MCWMA by the last days of Jan, signaling an early movement. Indeed, possibly spurred by the warm Feb temps their numbers came through en masse, with a new mark of 200,000 around 2/20 set since the WMA's creation in the 1970s. These birds moved on almost as quickly as they came, dropping to nearly a quarter of that in less than 48 hours. One of several (likely) continuing **Ross's Geese** first reported at BRFP before the period was at AM 12/5-12 (DS, m.ob.). It subsequently was relocated at the BQ 12/30, where up to 4 were photographed through 1/20 (DS, m.ob.), and one was again photographed over a nearby Lancaster home 2/26 (DH). Single birds were also picked out of Snow Goose flocks at MCWMA beginning 2/17 (JC, RK, m.ob.). A similar story played out with **Greater White-fronted Geese**. The wintering flock from BRFP prior to the period moved to AM for the month of December where up to 26 were photographed (EW, m.ob.), then with the New Year freeze they relocated to the deep-water BQ 12/30-2/3 with up to 25 seen (DS, m.ob.). The flock was frequently seen in flight throughout the area and cycling through several nearby pond and river locations (DH, DS, RS). Additionally, 3 birds were at MCWMA 2/3-17 (P&RW, m.ob.), and another 2 at CRTW 2/17 (LB). A wonderful record of 7 **Brant** came from MCWMA 12/5 as flyovers in heavy fog (BC). Up to 4 **Cackling Geese** at once were recorded during the entire period at 10 separate locations, representing quite a few individuals. The wing-tagged **Trumpeter Swan** "P02" remained at the farm ponds in Kinzers through 12/28, when it disappeared with the deep freeze. A follow-up report from a birder who spoke with the farmer stated that he attempted to lure the bird with his Mute Swans to a pen until the ponds thawed, which was fortunately unsuccessful as it took off for greener pastures.

Low numbers of **Canvasback** were seen throughout the period at MCWMA, MRR, and SRLC. During migration in Feb up to 62 were recorded on SRLC 2/25 (ME, m.ob.). **Redhead** were similar, with up to 12 on SRLC 2/25 (ME, m.ob.). An adult male **Surf Scoter** joined Common Goldeneye on the Susquehanna R near Marietta 12/18 (BC). Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were found near Peach Bottom on the Susquehanna R 12/17, and a large flock of 45 was photographed actively migrating down SRLC 12/26 (ML). Six were then seen there 12/27 (ML), and a female 12/29 (BC). Lastly, a male was on SRLC 2/8-27 (ML, m.ob.). **Red-breasted Mergansers** were found in low numbers along the Susquehanna R through the winter, and staged their usual migration in Feb, with up to 11 at once on SRCF (m.ob.).

On the Susquehanna near Marietta was a **Red-throated Loon** 12/29 (BC). A few **Common Loons** were found on SRLC in Dec (m.ob.), as were single **Pied-billed Grebes** 12/10 and 21 (ML, ME). Three **Red-necked Grebes** appeared at SRCF 2/17, and one continued 2/24-26 (ML, m.ob.). An adult and juvenile **Great Cormorant** flew south over CGNA following the Susquehanna R. Shortly after winter storm Grayson slammed the Atlantic coast. Lone **Double-crested Cormorants** were on SRLC 2/25 and 27 (AG, EZ). One of the best finds of the season was an **American White Pelican** on SRCF 2/25 (ME, m.ob.), which appears to be the 6th county record.

At least one **Golden Eagle** stayed the winter at MCWMA as in most recent years (m.ob.). Two juv **Rough-legged Hawks**, one light and one dark, frequented CGNA for the first week of Jan (ME, m.ob.). Three other sightings were made, of dark types over a Lancaster farm 12/13 (LB) and MCWMA 2/14 (SG), and a light type over a Mount Joy field 1/25 (DK). For the third straight winter season, **Virginia Rails** were found at WEP 2/21-22 (PF, LB). A likely returning **Sandhill Crane** was recorded 12/16-23 at an East Earl field, the same location as one in Mar 2017. Migrating **American Woodcock** were first found on 2/17 at MCWMA (BC). Total **Wilson's Snipe** were 19 over 9 separate locations (m.ob.).

Two mid-winter **Bonaparte's Gulls** were on the lower Susquehanna R 12/17 (BB), one at MCWMA 12/26 (AL, JL), and one on SRLC 1/6 (JSc). A very early **Little Gull** mingled with Bonaparte's on the SRLC 2/25-28 (ME, m.ob.). A **Laughing Gull** was spotted on SRLC 2/26 (ML, SSc). A first-winter **Iceland Gull** was regularly reported on SRLC 12/19-1/7 (SSc, m.ob.), which should represent several individuals. Reports of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** on SRLC

were fewer than usual, with a first-winter 12/26 & adults 1/25 and 2/26 (ML, SSc). A first-winter **Glaucous Gull** was a good find near SRCF 12/26 and 1/24 (ME, ML).

Lancaster barely dipped its toe into the **Snowy Owl** irruption, with a brief sighting at MCWMA 12/18 (AL ph.). Three **Short-eared Owls** were counted at MCWMA on CBC 12/31 and continued through the period (BC, m.ob.). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard at OR 12/17 for CBC (LB). An adult female **Rufous Hummingbird** arrived at a Columbia home 12/2 staying through 12/20 (fide SL).

This winter was non-irruptive for these species; a single **Black-capped Chickadee** was recorded in Lititz 12/19 (DH) and one **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was at a Manheim home 2/18 (BC). A hardy **House Wren** was found in Quarryville on CBC 12/17 (DS, ML), as was a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** along the Susquehanna R the same day (BB ph., m.ob.). As usual, **Gray Catbirds** were irregular at 3 locations through the period (m.ob.). A **Brown Thrasher** was at an Akron home 1/1 (LD), and CGNA 1/14 (WY). Single **Lapland Longspur** reports came from around the county from 12/10 on, but the bulk were in Groffdale farm fields numbering up to 16 at once (m.ob.). The same is true for **Snow Buntings**, with at least 5 near Groffdale 12/15-1/17 (m.ob.).

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was noted at SGL 220 12/3 (TG), and one overwintered at an Elizabethtown feeder for the 3rd consecutive year, arriving 1/2 (JSa). A hardy **Nashville Warbler** survived on mostly grape jelly at a Gap home from 12/2 into the spring period (PF). **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were found at quite a few locations, but none more so than the up to 18 around the warm water runoff at the SWBWTP 12/9 through the period (ME, EW). A few **Chipping Sparrows** were found in Dec (m.ob.), and an early individual was at MCWMA 2/15-17 (MG, JC, LC). Two **Lincoln's Sparrows** were documented, at SC 1/9-11 (SM, m.ob.) and CGNA 1/11 (LB).

A rare winter **Yellow-breasted Chat** visited several feeders in a Lititz retirement community 12/16-18 (RB ph.). The most stunning occurrence of the season was the first and second county **Western Tanagers** coming merely 8 days apart, with one visiting a Mohnton feeder 12/23-1/16 (AH ph.) and another recorded on CBC in junipers at MCWMA 12/31 (JH, LB, PF, AK). An overwintering imm **Blue Grosbeak** was an amazing find at CGNA 1/6-22 (JSc, m.ob.), and only one previous report of this species has ever been made during this season in Lancaster. An adult male **Painted Bunting** returned to feeders in Mohnton for the second winter running from 12/17-3/4 (fide AH), which is the fourth county record. A total of 21 **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported at numerous locations throughout the period (m.ob.). It was a slow season for winter finches, and only 7 reports of mostly solitary **Purple Finches** were made (m.ob.). Five **Pine Siskins** were counted at SGL 156 12/8 (BC), and 6 at a Lancaster home 2/1 (DS).

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Lawrence County

Locations: New Wilmington area (NW), Shaner Road marsh (SR), Plain Grove Twp. (PGT), Volant Strip Mines (VSM).

Following the record-setting flock of **Greater White-fronted Geese** that appeared in mid-Nov, another large flock (or the same one augmented by a few birds) of up to 36 was seen at the VSM 12/5-11 (DD, et al.). Two were at SR 12/27 (AB), and 3 appeared at SR on the

leading edge of spring migration 2/17-20 (KS, RN). **Gadwall** bookended the season at SR 12/10 (BB) and at another pond nearby 2/10 (MV). An **American Black Duck** was at SR 12/27 among the season's top count of 130 **Mallards** (AB), and another black duck was near NW 1/1 (MV). The only reports of **Northern Pintail** and **Redhead** were one of the former and 2 of the latter at SR 12/27 (AB). A few **Ring-necked Ducks** were at SR 12/27-30 as well (AB, et al.). Two **Greater Scaup** made for a nice find at the VSM 2/17, in the company of 2 **Lesser Scaup** (ME, TN). Very nice was a tally of 15 **Common Loons** at SR 12/9 (SD).

There were about 6 sightings of **Rough-legged Hawk** at NW 12/16-2/10 (m.ob.). The **Sandhill Crane** flock that winters in PGT topped out at an impressive 107 on 1/10 (SS). There were 68 still there as late as 2/19 (m.ob.). Up to 6 **Wilson's Snipe** were seen around the Amish country near NW throughout Jan and Feb (MV, MF, SS, et al.), a reliable location even in the harshest winters. There were few reports of the VSM **Short-eared Owls** this winter, but at least 3 were present for much of the season (GK, MAK, m.ob.). Single **Northern Shrikes** were at VSM 12/31(ST) and 1/19 (Kate-St. John, Barbara Griffith, Ramona Sahri), and at SR 12/6-1/20 (AB, MAK, GK, Sam Gutherie, Michelle Hanko, Amy Henrici).

As usual, field birds accounted for about all that is worth mentioning among passerines. Some excellent counts of **Horned Lark** included 192 in PGT 12/31 (ST) and 235 on Vosler Road in Washington Twp. 1/20 (GK, MAK). With them as usual were the more sought-after field denizens: there were various reports of up to 3 **Lapland Longspurs** and small numbers of **Snow Buntings** in the same general areas as the larks 12/31-2/10 (ST, MV, GK, MAK, MF). The only exception to the small numbers of these species was the impressive flock of 100 Snow Buntings in PGT 1/20 (GK, MAK). An **Eastern Towhee**, frequently missed during *Lawrence* winters, attended a feeder in NW 1/25 (RW).

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Lebanon County

Locations: Cornwall Iron Mine Lake (CIML), Fort Indiantown Gap (FIG), Fox and Prescott Rd Ponds (FXP), Lions Lake (LL), Marquette Lake (ML), Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area (MC), Millardsville Quarry (MVQ), Quittapahilla Educational Wetlands (QEW), Reistville Flooded Fields (RFF), SGL 145, SGL 211, Short and Birch Rd (SBR), Stovers Dam (SD).

It was a good winter for **Greater White-fronted Geese**, with 2 at CIML 1/16 and 7 near Lawn 1/24 (P&RW). One was at SBR 2/2 (JF), and 2 more were photographed at RFF 2/24 (JG, DR). Three **Ross's Geese** were at LL 12/27 (P&RW), and one flew over SGL 145 on 2/18 (JH). A **Brant** was a great find among the **Canada Goose** flock in the QEW area 2/1 (P&RW). Up to 2 **Cackling Geese** were intermittent at LL 2/1-17 (P&RW, EH, TB, KB). Two were at SBR 2/2 (JF) and 4 were at CIML 2/3 (P&RW).

It was a notable winter for **Redheads**. Twenty-seven were at CIML 1/7 (P&RW), and 1 at MVQ 1/13-15 (TB, KB, JH). One was at SD 2/1-17 (P&RW, SW). A terrific fallout of 82 Redheads occurred at MLSP 2/23-24 (TB, MC, JH), which combined with 78 at SD 2/23 (P&RW) to provide a new county high count of 160. This crushed the previous county record of 43 Redheads at MLSP in 2011. Two **Greater Scaup** were at LL 12/27 (P&RW), with one there again 2/3 (SW, JH). A Greater Scaup was at MLSP 2/25-27 (RS, TB, KB, TK). A **Long-tailed Duck** was at MVQ 1/6 (CU). Three **Common Goldeneyes** were at MLSP 2/16 (MC, SS), and 4 there 2/24-25 (MC, TB, KB, SW). **Red-breasted**

Mergansers were plentiful; up to 5 were at CIML 1/13-2/3 (P&RW, JH) and 3 were there 2/13 (P&RW). Up to 10 Red-breasted Mergansers were at MLSP 2/20-25 (MC, SW), and up to 11 at nearby ML 2/24-25 (MC, TB, KB, DM).

A **Ruffed Grouse** flushed near Box Car Rocks at SGL 211 on 2/20 (TB). A **Double-crested Cormorant** was at CIML 1/9-16 (P&RW, JH). Seven **Bald Eagles** were found during a county WRS route 1/20 (GB, AS, FH, JF). Three **Golden Eagles** were a highlight of the *Lebanon* CBC at FIG 12/16 (DM, JD, SW). One was found at MC for the Lititz CBC 12/31 (BC, JF, PF), and was there again 2/27 (JH). A juvenile Golden Eagle was at SGL 145 on 1/26 (PB). **Merlins** were at FXP 12/21 (BC) and along Rte 897 near Kleinfeltersville 1/21 (AL).

A **Dunlin** provided a new county late date at FXP 12/1 (BC). The first two peenting **Woodcock** of the year were heard at MLSP 2/19 (TN). The only gull of note was an **Iceland Gull** was at LL 2/4 (JH). A **Snowy Owl** made two widely separated appearances just east of Lebanon 12/25 (*fide* FH) and 1/25 (J&KL). Both a **Long-eared Owl** and a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** offered close views in the Goldmine area of SGL 211 on 2/19 (JH). Three **Short-eared Owls** were found at MC during the Lititz CBC 12/31 (BC, JF, ME, TN).

A **Red-headed Woodpecker** spent much of the winter at ML 1/14-2/28 (SW, P&RW, MC). Two **Winter Wrens** were at the Union Canal Park 2/3 (JH). Twenty-one **Golden-crowned Kinglets** provided a good count at FIG for the *Lebanon* CBC 12/16 (DM, JD, SW).

Eastern Towhees are somewhat unusual in winter. One was found along Iron Valley Drive 1/10 (JF), 2 were at SGL 145 on 1/14 (JH), and one was at FIG 2/3 (SW). A **Chipping Sparrow** was found during the Lititz CBC at MC 12/31 (JH). Also unusual in winter were up to 6 **Fox Sparrows**, found at SGL 145 between 12/23-1/26 (JH, PB). Eighteen **Swamp Sparrows** provided a new county high count during the Lititz CBC at MC 12/31 (BC, JH). Ten **White-crowned Sparrows** provided a good count for the Lititz CBC at MC 12/31 (BC, JF) and 10 were also at SGL 145 on 1/14 (JH). Two **Red-winged Blackbirds** were fairly late at MC 12/6 (P&RW). A **Rusty Blackbird** was seen at MLSP 2/27 (RN).

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Lehigh County

No Report

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Lycoming County

Locations: Mill Street (MS), Montoursville (MTV), Rose Valley Lake (RVL), West Branch Susquehanna River (SR), Williamsport Dam (WD), Williamsport Water Authority (WWA).

December and January saw some very cold temperatures. RVL froze by mid-December, and much of SR was frozen during late December through mid-January as well. February was a bit more moderate, with some fairly warm days. Most bodies of water were unfrozen by the end of February, including most of RVL.

Two CBC circles fall primarily in *Lycoming*: Williamsport and Northern Lycoming. The Williamsport CBC was held 12/16. Twenty-three individuals participated in 10 groups. A total of 67 species were recorded plus 10 additional count week species. New high counts were set for many species: Canada Goose, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Peregrine Falcon, Winter Wren, and Carolina Wren. The Northern Lycoming CBC was held 12/30.

Sixteen participants found a total of 40 species. The day was pretty snowy and totals were down for many species. Despite this, new high counts were set for a number of species including Horned Lark, American Robin, Dark-eyed Junco, and White-throated Sparrow.

Overall, it was a pretty strong season with quite a few rarities and elevated waterfowl numbers. Highlights included Ross's Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Black Scoter, Sandhill Crane, Iceland Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, and a number of Snowy Owls. In total, 113 species were reported during the winter.

It was a fairly weak season for **Snow Goose**, with some small flocks seen in MTV in late Dec and some migratory flocks in late Feb. A **Ross's Goose** was seen with Snow Geese in MTV 12/22 (BB, DeB, BoB), an apparent first *Lycoming* record. Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** flew over MS 2/17 (BB). **Cackling Geese** were seen on several occasions, with one at MS 1/27 (BB, DanB), another at WD 2/16 (DB, EH), and one at RVL 2/25 (SP, NF).

A **Wood Duck** was seen at Greevy Boat Launch 12/2 (BB, DeB, BoB), and another at RVL 12/9 (SP). One was also seen at small pond in Hughesville 12/31 and 1/2 (BB, DeB, BoB). The same pond had 2 **Gadwall** 12/26, 12/31, 1/2, and 1/6 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB); 2 were also at WD 12/30 (BB, DB). **American Wigeons** were also seen at that pond in Hughesville 12/26 and 12/31 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB). There were scattered **American Black Duck** sightings with as many as 16 at Montgomery Boat Launch 12/16 (BB, DeB). A hybrid **Mallard x American Black Duck** was seen at WD 1/4 (DB) and 1/11 (BB). There were a few **Northern Pintail** sightings during Jan, but the species was less abundant than the previous year. **Green-winged Teal** were first seen at South Williamsport Park 2/23 (BB). Most of the expected dabbling duck species were migrating through the county by the last week or two of Feb.

Two **Canvasbacks** were at WD 1/25-2/6 (BB, et al.), and one was at the same location 2/23 (DB). A small flock of **Redheads** was seen at WD for a few days at the end of Dec and beginning of Jan (BB, DB, DeB, BoB), along with a few scattered Feb sightings once migration started picking up. Both species of scaup were seen fairly regularly during the winter, particularly at WD.

A **Black Scoter** was at WD 2/24 (MD, JD, BB, DeB, DB), which is the first known winter record for *Lycoming*. Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were at RVL 12/10 (BB, SP). Other sightings of that species were at WD 12/17 (BB, et al.), 12/26 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB), 1/22 (m.ob.), and 2/16 (DB, EH), along with a report from Pine Cr. 12/19 (CH). **Common Goldeneye** numbers were strong, particularly at WD, with more than 40 seen at times. **Red-breasted Mergansers** numbers were also elevated compared to past winters. **Ruddy Ducks** were seen in small numbers at RVL during the first half of Dec.

The only **Common Loon** was at WD 12/10 (BB, DeB). **Pied-billed Grebes** were seen mainly at WD from mid-Dec through early Jan, along with a few sightings elsewhere. **Horned Grebes** were seen sporadically at WD during the entire season, along with a sighting at RVL 12/8 (SP). A **Double-crested Cormorant** was at WD 12/15-17 (m.ob.), and one was at the same location 12/28 (BB, DB). **Great Blue Herons** were seen pretty regularly during the winter, particularly near SR.

For the most part **Black Vultures** stayed in their normal winter area near the Lycoming County Landfill, but some occasionally strayed north to the Williamsport and MTV area. **Turkey Vultures** were seen in the same areas as Black Vultures, but probably in slightly higher numbers than previous years. The species became more scattered throughout the county by the end of Feb. The only **Golden Eagle** sighting of the winter was in Jackson Twp. 12/30 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB). **Red-shouldered Hawks** were reported three times: One over Duboistown 12/15 (BB), one on Quenshukeny Rd. 1/29 (EZ), and one at Muncy Heritage Park 2/21 (LS). **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen on a number of occasions, but it wasn't a particularly strong year for the species.

Four **Sandhill Cranes** were seen at dusk from Mill Hill Rd. 2/3 (SP). Two **Killdeer** were seen at a pond near Hughesville 12/14 (GM), and the spring arrival date for the species was around 2/20. The arrival date for **American Woodcocks** was 2/21, both at a private residence outside of Williamsport (DF) and at MS (BB, DeB, BoB). Ten

Bonaparte's Gull were at RVL 12/10 (BB, SP), with 3 seen the following day (AK). **Ring-billed Gulls** were noted regularly during the winter. Some relatively large flocks of **Herring Gulls** were seen, with a high count of 41 at WD 1/21 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB). An **Iceland Gull** found at WD 1/22 (DB, et al.) represented the third *Lycoming* record. A **Great Black-backed Gull** flew by WD 1/21 among the flock of Herring Gulls (BB, DB, DeB, BoB). That species has now been recorded four years in a row in *Lycoming*.

It was a very strong season for **Snowy Owls**, with birds reported in six different spots during the winter. Most were seen during the first half of Dec with confirmed sightings in Elimsport, Williamsport, Linden, Cogan Station, and near the Lycoming Mall. The sixth sighting was a bird seen by many birders on Ridge Rd. 2/24-25. **Short-eared Owls** were found reliably along Mill Hill Rd. again this winter, with as many as 5 birds seen.

No winter hummingbirds were found. **Belted Kingfishers** were seen regularly, but mainly confined to a few spots, particularly MS. **American Kestrels** were widely scattered throughout the county, particularly in the south. **Merlins** were seen regularly throughout the winter, especially in the MTV area. The nesting pair of **Peregrine Falcons** were present at WD throughout the winter, and the pair from Montgomery Boat Launch was seen 2/24 (BB, DeB). A single was in Hughesville 1/2 (BB, DeB, BoB).

Fish Crows were found in small numbers during the winter. **Horned Larks** were mostly found in the normal areas, especially in Cogan House Twp. Four **Lapland Longspurs** were reported in Cogan House Twp. 12/17 (SP). **Snow Buntings** seemed scarce, but 4 were reported from Cogan House Twp. 12/17 (SP), and about 60 were at Mill Hill Rd. 1/7 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB).

Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers were far lower than the previous winter, but the species was consistently found at WWA. **Winter Wrens** weren't terribly abundant, but there were still several sightings. A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was found at WD 2/6 (DB, BB). **Hermit Thrushes** wintered again this year at WWA, which has been a reliable site in past years. A **Gray Catbird** found near Greevy Boat Launch 12/23 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB) continued until at least 1/1 (BB).

The only warbler was **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, with quite a few sightings compared to past years. Up to 9 were seen at Canfield Island in multiple sightings during Dec (BB, DeB, BoB). One was observed at Greevy Boat Launch 12/27 (BB). MS became a reliable spot for the species in Jan and Feb, with up to 7 individuals seen (BB, et al.). The only sighting away from SR was 3 birds at RVL 12/30 (SP). **Field Sparrows** wintered at SGL 252 again this year, and one was at WWA 12/16 (DanB) and 12/17 (BB, DeB, BoB). A few **Fox Sparrows** were seen at WWA during Dec and Jan. An adult **White-crowned Sparrow** was found at South Williamsport Park 1/24 (BB) and an imm. was seen at a feeding station on Mahaffey Hollow Rd. 2/11 (DT). There were a few scattered sightings of **Swamp Sparrows**. Quite a few **Eastern Towhees** wintered at WWA.

There were only 2 sightings of **Eastern Meadowlarks**: One along Lockcuff Rd. 2/27 (DF) and 2 at MS the following day (BB). There were only a few sightings of **Red-winged Blackbirds** during Dec and Jan, but numbers picked up dramatically in the second half of Feb. The only **Brown-headed Cowbird** reports were of one on Mahaffey Hollow Rd. 12/14 (DT) and 3 at a feeder in MTV 2/18 (BB, DB, DeB). There were a few reports of **Rusty Blackbirds** during late Feb, including at least 40 at South Williamsport Park 2/25 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB). **Common Grackles** followed the same pattern as Red-winged Blackbirds, with only a few sightings before a dramatic increase by the second half of Feb. Two **Purple Finches** were found at RVL 12/2 (SP), but otherwise the species was hard to find. **Pine Siskins** started descending on feeders after a snow and ice storm 1/13, but were generally fairly uncommon away from WWA, where they wintered in good numbers.

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McKean County

No Report

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Mercer County

Locations: Airport Road (AI), Anderson Road (AR), Buhl Park (BP), Cannery Road (CR), Clark (CL), East Zahniser Road (EZ), Forrester Road. (FR), Greenville (GR), Hermitage (HE), Jackson Township (JT), Lake Latonka (LL), Limber Road (LR), Mahaney Recreation Area (MR), Mercer (ME), New Wilmington (NW), Old School Road (OS), Orangeville (OR), Orr Road (ORR), Otter Creek (OC), Poole Road. (PO), Ramsey Road (RAR), Rattlesnake Swamp (RS), Riverview Manor (RM), Sandy Lake (SL), Sharon (SH), Sharpville (SV), Shenango Reservoir, Chestnut Run (CR), Shenango Reservoir, Golden Run (GR), Shenango Reservoir, Propagation Area (PR), Slater Road (SR), State Game Lands 130 (S130), State Gamelands 151 (S151), Stone Base Road (SB), Tieline Road (TI), Trout Island (TR), White Chapel Road (WC), Williamson Road (WR).

Note that this report follows ABA checklist version 8.0.1.

Warmer and drier conditions continued through the winter season with temperatures averaging almost 4 degrees F above normal with precipitation 1.5 inches below average. December and January were dry months while February precipitation was almost 2 inches above normal. *Mercer* hosted 2 of the many **Snowy Owls** seen in Pennsylvania this year, one of which was seen almost through the entire period.

Ten **Snow Geese** were at FR 12/22 (HT) and 4 on PO 2/20 (NT). During the Grove City CBC on 12/31, a **Ross's Goose** was found at LL (GK, MAK, NT, ST) and seen later in the day in a nearby corn field (BB, GW), LL had a nice group of 8 **Greater White-fronted Geese** 1/3 (NT). Always a good sighting, 5 **Cackling Geese** flew over WR 12/14 (NT). A **Mute Swan** was at BP 12/19 (KS, SS) and seen repeatedly throughout the period (BW, MM, BD). A good count of 76 **Tundra Swans** were at SH 12/31 (SS) and 35 at WR 12/10 (NT). Most of the normal winter waterfowl were present throughout the period. High numbers include 3 **Northern Pintails** 12/26 at LL (GK, MAK, NT, ST) and 3 at PR 2/16 (BW), 35 **Canvasbacks** at PR (NT, ST), 100 **Common Goldeneyes** at MR 2/18 (TN, ME), and 500 **Common Mergansers** at PR 2/21 (NT); however, the high **Red-breasted Mergansers** was only 6 at PR 2/21 (NT, ST).

A single **Ruffed Grouse** on OS 2/11 (RN) was a good find. There were a few reports of **Sandhill Cranes** - 2 on 12/18 at RS (NT), one at PR 2/21 (NT, ST) and 3 on 2/28 at OC (SS). Shorebirds were scarce - 2 **Wilson's Snipe** at EZ 12/2 (ST), one at SB (MM, BD, SS), 5 in NW 1/13 (KS), 3 on CR 1/20 (MM, BD, SS), and 3 on SB 2/4 (MM, BD, KS). **Killdeer** were at ORR 1/3 (NT), 2 at FR 2/14 (HT), and one at CL 2/20 (SS). One **American Woodcock** at AI 2/22 (JTR). The highest **Ring-billed Gull** count was 400 at CL 2/20 (SS).

Bald Eagle counts were good throughout the period. Eleven were at TI 2/8 (BW), 32 were there 2/17 (BW), and 40 at PR 2/22 (BW). One **Northern Harrier** was seen during the Grove City CBC (GK, MAK, NT), and one at GR 1/1 (MH, BD). Four **Cooper's Hawks** were on the Grove City CBC at various locations (GK, MAK, NT, ST). Singles **Rough-legged Hawks** were at EZ 1/1 (NT, ST), SR 1/3 (BW), SB 1/11 (BW), NW 1/13 (KS), and LR throughout Feb (m.ob.)

All expected owls were reported. The highlight was 2 **Snowy Owls**. One was found on LR 12/25 (SB) and seen through 2/19 (m.ob.) The other was found on EZ 12/31 (GM) and seen for a few days after that (GK, MAK, NT, ST). Unfortunately, I did hear reports of the LR owl being harassed by photographers; perhaps we need to think about how we report these owls. Two **Short-eared Owls** were seen 1/2-30 on AI (JTR).

Only one report of **Red-headed Woodpecker**, from EZ 2/12 (SS). This site historically has Red-headed Woodpeckers and bears watching. Falcon reports were scarce with one **Merlin** at SL 2/15 (PW, RW). **Horned Larks** were seen at multiple locations, mostly after manure was spread in fields - 16 at SL 1/2 (GK, MAK, NT, ST), 250 on AR 1/20 (GK, MAK), and 75 the same day on WC (MM, BD, SS).

Irruptive winter finch type birds were hard to find. Only one **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was reported from BP 1/10 (MM, BD, KS, SS). There was one report of a single **Gray Catbird**, present until 12/2 at EZ (ST). **Cedar Waxwings** were reported occasionally; a nice group of 61 was at BP 12/23 (BW). The only reports of **Pine Siskin** were of 39 at S130 on 12/20 (NT) and 3 at PO 1/15 (NT).

Snow Buntings were found on fresh manure spreads: 14 at AR 1/20 (GK, MAK), 4 1/20 at WC 1/20 (MM, BD, SS), and one at SB on 2/3 (RN). A **Vesper Sparrow** was observed 12/2-14 in a weedy field on EZ (NT). Ten **Red-winged Blackbirds** showed up at CR 2/27 (GG, DG). One **Rusty Blackbird** at RAR 12/25 (SK) and one at WR 2/24 were the only ones reported. **Common Grackles** started appearing 2/19 with 2 at HE (JT) and 6 at SH 2/21 (SS), after being at LL throughout Dec.

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Mifflin County

Locations: Back Mountain Road Milroy (BMRM), Victory Park (VP)

Twenty species of waterfowl were observed, five more than the 2016-2017 season, the increase perhaps thanks to additional observer effort and the lack of cold temperatures icing over small ponds. A **Blue-winged Teal** on BMRM 12/4 was a highlight (RH). Two **Northern Shovelers** were at Bunker Hill Rd. 1/3 and 1/15 (RD) and 2 at the home of JZ 1/12-14. Two **Northern Pintails** were on BMRM 12/24 (JD, SD) and one **Long-tailed Duck** at VP 2/19-26 (RD, RH, CK).

Four Winter Raptor Surveys were conducted totaling 22 hours of observation - Newton-Hamilton 1/27, Big Valley 1/20, Ferguson Valley 1/29, and Milroy 2/3. Notable numbers included 74 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 27 **American Kestrels**, 8 **Bald Eagles**, 2 **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, one **Cooper's Hawk**, and 12 **Northern Harriers**. Four **Rough-legged Hawks** were observed on the Milroy route. (BF, et al.). Additional raptor reports included multiple **Northern Harrier** sightings at 14 different locations. A high of 4 individuals were observed on Knepp Rd 12/4 (RD). A **Northern Goshawk** was seen crossing Route 655 in Brown Township 1/4 (KL). **Rough-legged Hawk** reports all came from BMRM: singles on 12/6 (RH), 1/4 (RD), 1/8 (RH), 1/20 (JD, SD); and 2 on 1/11 (RD).

Short-eared Owls have always remained elusive in *Mifflin* throughout the years. However, observers were given the opportunity to watch 2 individuals at two different locations this season. Two were on BMRM 12/22 (JG), continuing 1/5 (RD), with one reported 1/9 (RD, RH). The second location was in Allensville on a farm behind the Allensville Planning Mill. The first sighting was of one individual 1/8 (JZ). Thereafter, 2 were reported 1/9 (DG, GG, JK, JZ) and on 2/3, 2/7, and 2/10 (LS, PS). For a third consecutive year, a **Peregrine Falcon** was at VP, seen 1/25 (RD). Maple Grove Road produced one **Lapland Longspur** and 8 **Snow Buntings** 1/19 (JZ).

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Monroe County

Locations: Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center (KCEEC), Mountain Springs Lake (MSL).

The season was notable for the two straight weeks of below freezing temperatures that followed **Christmas**, and the mild February with above average temperatures. The 38th Pocono Mountain Christmas Bird Count (PMCBC) was held **12/17**, and a record tying 71 species were tallied. Six count firsts were recorded and ten species had all-time count highs.

PMCBC recorded a count high of 1557 **Canada Geese** (nearly doubling the previous count high), while the flock of 10 (TEN!) **Ross's Geese** at Weir Lake was nothing less than spectacular. The birds were well photographed during their stay 12/31-1/18 (BJ, RW). One or 2 **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at Weir Pond 2/25-26 (Rich Rehrig, Adam Miller). No Snow Geese were present with the Ross's. MSL held an excellent variety of waterfowl 2/25 with high counts for some species: 13 **Gadwalls**, 26 **American Wigeons**, an outstanding count of 42 **Redheads**, 8 **Ring-necked Ducks**, one **Lesser Scaup**, 5 **Buffleheads**, and 8 **Common Mergansers** (BJ).

The **Osprey** on PMCBC represented a count first, and PMCBC's 17 **Bald Eagles** and 11 **Red-shouldered Hawks** both represented count highs. The only report of **Rough-legged Hawk** was the dark individual photographed in the Long Pond area 1/25 (BJ). A single **Iceland Gull** at the lake at Mt. Airy Casino 2/25 was an uncommon county find (BJ). A **Great Black-backed Gull** and an exceptional **Caspian Tern** both represented PMCBC firsts.

Count highs were recorded on PMCBC for all of the following species: **Red-bellied Woodpecker** (58), **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** (5), **Downy Woodpecker** (105), and **Pileated Woodpecker** (28). The 8 **Common Ravens** on PMCBC represented a count high, and the **House Wren** on PMCBC was a count first. The 519 **American Robins** on PMCBC was nearly double the previous high count. Another PMCBC first was an **American Pipit**. Two **Eastern Towhees** frequented the KCEEC feeders throughout the entire period (m.ob.). PMCBC's **Savannah Sparrow** and 245 **White-throated Sparrows** represented a count first and a count high, respectively. A high count of 18 **Snow Buntings** were found near Mt. Pocono 1/20 (BJ). The 2 **Eastern Meadowlarks** in Brodheadsville 2/28 were on the early side (BJ).

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Montgomery County

Locations: Green Lane Park (GLP), Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust (PERT), Valley Forge National Historical Park (VFNHP), Wissahickon Waterfowl Preserve (WWP).

This was a winter that couldn't seem to make up its mind. A warm and wet Feb, including a day that approached 80F, stood in stark contrast to a frigid and mostly dry late Dec and early Jan that rarely crept above the freezing point. The big freeze potentially pulled down some waterfowl and raptors that may have stayed to the north otherwise, but the season proved to be one of minimal irruption from the normal northern "usual suspects" almost across the board. Despite the lack of irruptive bonuses, 121 avian species were located within the county, our highest tally since the winter of 2013-14.

There were two clear highlight birds for the period, but neither wound up being seen by many people. An **Ash-throated Flycatcher**,

the first of its kind to be documented in the county, was found at GLP during the Upper Bucks CBC 12/17 (AC, JG, JB, ph., doc. submitted). It disappeared within a few minutes, and, despite the best efforts of many searching for it in the days that followed, was not refound until 1/14 (SGr, ph.). That proved to be a fluke, naturally, and the uncooperative bird never again revealed itself to another birder.

A female **Summer Tanager** was a semi-regular visitor at a mealworm feeder in Harleysville from mid-Dec through the end of the period, representing what could be the second winter record of this species in PA since the 1970s, and certainly a first over-winterer for *Montgomery* (EB, m.ob., ph.). The location was deemed to be non-ideal for widespread human visitation, however, and the bird was kept mostly under wraps at the request of the homeowners.

Honorable "best bird" mentions go to two other likely first winter records for the county. An **Ovenbird** was present in Kulpsville 12/12-14 (JW, ph.). A **Dickcissel** was seen near-daily in Harleysville - a different location from the Summer Tanager spot - from 2/18 to the end of the period (TF, ph.).

Snow Goose numbers at GLP were unremarkable, with a high count of 1950 on 1/24, flyover flocks comprising the bulk of that number (PH). A single **Ross's Goose** was spotted at GLP 12/19 (AM, ph.). As many as 3 **Greater White-fronted Geese** were observed sporadically at GLP 1/9-2/24 (AL, m.ob.). **Cackling Geese** were picked out of the GLP **Canada Goose** flock in low single digits on at least 8 occasions 12/6-2/21 (m.ob.). A Cackling Goose was also photographed at Norristown Farm Park 2/27 (AO). The overwintering Canada Goose contingent at GLP occasionally contained a Snow x Canada Goose hybrid, first spotted 1/31 (PD), and then, presuming the same bird, again 2/20-25 (LH, m.ob, ph.). A group of 24 **Tundra Swans** at GLP 2/24 represented the high count for the period (m.ob.).

The big freeze in the first half of Jan resulted in an unprecedented (in eBird data) mid-winter conglomeration of **Wood Ducks** at GLP, with at least 10 counted between two sublocations within the park 1/19, including 9 together on Knight Lake (WBH, ph.). This represents a new county eBird high count for the month of Jan. Smaller numbers of Wood Ducks lingered at various locations through the period, which is more typical (m.ob.). Strong **Northern Shoveler** numbers, 2-3x higher than the previous few years, were reported GLP in Dec, including counts of 128 on 12/6 (RK), 126 on 12/12 (RK), 120 on 12/15 (GF) and 76 on 12/21 (RK). Even after the freeze, shovelers stuck around GLP, remaining in single digits through the end of the period (m.ob.). Away from GLP, a pair of shovelers were observed at WWP 2/26-28 (CD, m.ob.), and a single male was found, somewhat unusually, on the creek at PERT 12/30 (JWo, ph.). The period's high count of **Gadwall**, 92 at GLP 12/17 (KC), was well below last winter's high of 151. They did persist at GLP all season, however, with healthy mid-winter numbers like 38 on 1/9 (WBH) and 42 on 2/3 (KC) noted. **American Wigeon** seemed more abundant than usual, including big counts of 41 at GLP 1/19 (WBH) and 52 on a pond near GLP 2/21 (AM). A common duck seen in uncommon numbers at GLP this period, mostly during and shortly after the big freeze, was the **Mallard**. An astonishing 454 Mallards were counted at an ice-free section of GLP 1/22 (SG), just one of many multi-hundred tallies recorded during this period (m.ob.). Fifty-nine **Northern Pintail** at GLP 2/21 (SG), the period high count, was not atypical for the date.

While not a huge season for diving ducks, the Dec/Jan freeze forced some movement that made for a better diving duck winter than some winters (e.g. 2015-16, when they were practically nonexistent). **Canvasback**, in counts of up to 3, were noted at GLP 1/15-2/22 (AM, m.ob.). **Redheads** were a little more widespread. A pair was located on the Schuylkill in Conshohocken 1/10-13 (EP, GV, m.ob.). Single Redheads were observed at Norristown Dam 1/6-11 (PD, m.ob.) and, a decidedly persistent individual was at WWP 1/15-2/18 (AA, m.ob.). Scattered reports of as many as 5 Redheads were filed for GLP 1/6-2/22 (m.ob.). The period high count for **Ring-necked Ducks** was 213, observed at Skymount Lake 2/23 (WBH), a favored location for this species. There were a handful of **Greater Scaup** sightings on the Schuylkill 1/1-15 (m.ob.), as well as a hen noted at GLP 1/22 (SG). A male **Long-tailed Duck** was at GLP 12/26 (DS, ph.), and a female-type

was on the river at VFNHP 1/9-10 (RW). **Common Goldeneye** were widespread on the Schuylkill, primarily in Jan, with a high of 9 seen at Norristown Dam 1/7 (SGr). A single goldeneye enjoyed a long stay at WWP 1/15-2/3 (CD, m.ob.). Up at GLP, where goldeneyes are somewhat less consistent than on the river, there were a number of reports of the species 1/6-15 (m.ob.), including a high of 11 on 1/11 (PD). A hen goldeneye was also spotted at GLP 2/22 (PH).

GLP's Knight Lake hosted a high concentration of **Hooded Mergansers** throughout Dec. Sixty were tallied there 12/19-20 (AM, KC), near double the previous winter's high count. On the Schuylkill at Oaks, 51 hoodies were reported 1/3 (PB). GLP **Common Merganser** numbers topped out at 221 on 12/20 (KC). **Red-breasted Mergansers** were also around, in smaller numbers, with reports in ones and twos at three locations on the Schuylkill 1/6-8 (m.ob.). A semi-consistent bunch at GLP 12/30-1/11 contained as many as 16 individuals 1/6 (KC), but most reports were in single digits (m.ob.). The **Ruddy Duck** high count, 70 at GLP 12/4 (GF), was only a sixth of last winter's monster 415-count.

Two **Red-throated Loons** were at GLP 12/9 (PD, vt.), not a common find for winter. **Common Loon** is none too common in winter either, with just one reported this season, at GLP 12/17 (AC, JG). Pairs of **Horned Grebes** were noted twice at GLP, 12/10 (DM, PM, ph.) and 2/16 (PH). The only **Double-crested Cormorant** of the period was located on its first day, 12/1, at GLP (WBH).

Period high vulture counts were healthy, but not massive: 56 **Black Vultures** were at Souderton 12/1 and 68 **Turkey Vultures** at Fell Rd. in Franconia Twp. 12/17 (both ZM). The open, grassy fields of VFNHP are scarce in modern suburbanizing *Montgomery*, and are appealing to birds that prefer that habitat. Seven **Northern Harriers** were observed at the park 2/11 (SGr). Some interesting **Red-tailed Hawks** were found this period. The mostly-white, leucistic, resident Hatfield Red-tail was observed again 2/3 (AM). A dark morph *calarus* ("western") Red-tail was spotted in farmland near Palm on four occasions 12/15-2/12 (KR, RK, ph.). Additionally, an *abieticola* ("northern") Red-tail was photographed at GLP 2/4 (LA). GLP hosted at least 2 **Rough-legged Hawks**, a dark morph and a light morph, 1/10-22 (TR, m.ob., ph.), potentially related to the long-term cold snap that preceded their arrival. A light morph at GLP 2/1 may or may not have been a continuing individual (RK). A light morph adult was also observed flying over Fort Washington S.P. 1/1 (AF).

An absurdly warm spell in mid-Feb triggered some slightly earlier-than-usual **American Woodcock** display, with first of year birds noted 2/19 at both Temple University Arboretum (AA) and PERT (MG). **Bonaparte's Gulls**, not encountered annually in winter, were found on two dates at GLP (RK) - one was noted 12/11, but a remarkably large group of 36 on 12/12 represents a new county winter high count of this species. Two thousand **Ring-billed Gulls** were estimated at GLP 2/15 (RK), an above average number. A first cycle **Iceland Gull** was observed at GLP 1/28-31 (KC, m.ob, ph.). The maximum number of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** counted at GLP was 54 on 1/21 (PH). An immature **Great Black-backed Gull** was well-described at GLP 2/19 (PH). There were 6 reports of one or 2 Great Black-backs between 3 Schuylkill River locations 12/22-2/19 (m.ob.), where they are more expected.

Single **Long-eared Owls** were located GLP 12/17 (AC, JG, JB) and in the North Wales area 12/25 (MLa, ph.). Two **Short-eared Owls** were observed at VFNHP 12/21 (BM), and one 1/6 (PD). A Short-ear was also photographed at GLP 12/3 (AD). Five widely-spaced GLP Short-eared Owl reports followed, starting about a month later, with as many as 4 owls noted between 1/16 and the end of the period (TR, SG, GF). Despite a Nov that hinted at a more wide-scale **Snowy Owl** irruption, there were no *Montgomery* sightings for the period. **Peregrine Falcon** sightings along the Schuylkill were relatively frequent (m.ob.). Away from the river, singles were noted in Niantic-area farmland 1/25 (AM, ph.), in Franconia Twp. farmland 1/26 (AM, ph.) and 2/26 (SG), at WWP 1/20 (MJ) and 4 times at GLP 12/18-2/21 (m.ob.).

The **Eastern Phoebe** first recorded at WWP 11/9 remained through the entire winter period (CD, m.ob.). Another phoebe was found at Gwynedd Wildlife Preserve 2/13 (TM, ph.). The slow explosion of

Common Ravens into southeastern PA continued. There was an a minimum of 45 reports of 1-2 ravens from locations spanning the entire county (m.ob.). **Horned Larks** were found in our remnant farmland tracts, with the largest flock coming in at 42, in Franconia Twp. 12/15 (SG). The only other field bird of note was a **Snow Bunting** flyover at PERT 12/10 (PD). There was only one report of **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, at a Gilbertsville feeder 2/18 (MA); clearly a non-irruptive winter for them. In similar non-irruption news, there were no confirmed reports of Black-capped Chickadee.

A white-headed, leucistic **American Robin** was photographed 12/25 in Lansdale (KR). Unusual winter mimids included 2, probably 3, **Gray Catbirds**. A catbird that had remained at GLP's Church Rd. area through the latter portion of the autumn period continued there until at least 12/12 (RK, PH). A few days later, on 12/17, during the same fateful Upper Bucks CBC expedition that unearthed the Ash-throated Flycatcher, a catbird was located at GLP's Knight Rd. (AC, JG, JB), possibly the Church Rd. bird moved to a new location, but just as likely a different individual, remained there through 1/16, where it was spotted by birders failing to locate the Ash-throat (m.ob, ph.). Another catbird turned up at Elmwood Park in Norristown during the Audubon CBC 12/23 (SL). A **Brown Thrasher** was observed in Upper Hanover Twp. 1/1 (JG). Beyond the Ovenbird, there was nothing else terribly exciting in the warbler department. Single **Pine Warblers** were found in Plymouth Meeting 12/7 (PB) and VFNHP 1/26 (MR). GLP hosted some larger-than-typical quantities of **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, including a high of 27 on 2/22 (WBH).

Chipping Sparrows overwintered at PERT in staggering numbers again this winter, with shockingly high counts like 83 on 12/3 (PD, ph.), 45 on 12/10 (PD, vt.), and 30 on 2/13 (FB, HB). Why this phenomenon seems to be so isolated to PERT in PA can only be guessed, but it likely has a lot to do with PERT being an island of ideal habitat in the middle of a very developed area. Chipping Sparrows were also found in a minimum 9 other locations away from PERT, with, surprisingly, most of these occurring in the northwestern portion of the county. While most of these winter Chipping Sparrow finds were in single digits, a flock of 10 was in Salford Twp. 2/1 (WBH, ph.), and 6 were at GLP 1/19 (SG, TR). A couple other notable Emberizid seasonal high counts were 6 **Fox Sparrows** 12/10 and 34 **Savannah Sparrows** 12/2, both at PERT (both PD).

An estimated 150 **Brown-headed Cowbirds** were in a mixed blackbird flock in Franconia Twp. 1/23 (BE), a higher-than-typical count for a county that hosts relatively few large winter blackbird flocks. The sole **Rusty Blackbird** report came from Bethayres Swamp, near PERT, where 6 were present during the Wyncote CBC 12/16 (JS, ph.). Few winter finches made their way south this season. Single **Purple Finches** were noted at feeders in Lederach 1/7 (LC), the Unami Creek Valley 1/8 (TR), Gilbertsville 1/21 and 2/9 (MA), and Schwenksville 2/9 (MC). There were no reports of Pine Siskins, crossbills or grosbeaks.

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Montour County

Locations: Montour Preserve (MP).

There were no huge surprises during this winter season, but there

were several seasonal highlights. The MP hosted four species of geese, including a flock of 16 **Greater White-fronted Geese** 12/1-2 (AK, MH) and a **Cackling Goose** 12/14 (LS).

Unlike the previous winter season, **Rough-legged Hawks** were present the entire season with a high count of 3 on Shady Hill Rd. 1/9-17 (KP, AK). **Short-eared Owls** also had a strong showing, with many reports in the northern part of the county with up to 6 at a single spot along Fairview Rd. (m.ob.). An **American Woodcock** at the MP 12/5 (AK) was notable because there are few winter reports of this species here.

A **Northern Shrike** was reported on Stamm Rd. 1/29-2/4, and since there are previous reports from Nov 2017, this individual may have overwintered here. **Lapland Longspurs** seemed easier to find than usual, with Jan and Feb reports of one-two birds from four different locations in northern *Montour*. A **Pine Warbler** at a feeder near Exchange was seasonally uncommon.

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Northampton County

Locations: Martins Creek Environmental Preserve (MCEP), Nazareth Quarry (NQ).

Cold weather aside, the county had an impressive number of rare and uncommon bird sightings during the period. The list of rarities includes **Barnacle Goose**, **Barrow's Goldeneye**, **Spotted Sandpiper**, **Gyrfalcon**, and **Clay-colored Sparrow**. Minsi Lake has been drained but waterfowl found refuge at ponds, quarries, and the Delaware River. Large numbers of **Snow** and **Canada Geese** took advantage of the numerous farm fields that provide a rewarding food source. From these flocks, birders search for the uncommon. A **Ross's Goose** was located in Hanover Twp. at the Valley Center Parkway ponds 12/3 (MS, CCS). A thorough search of the geese at NQ turned up Ross's Goose 12/30-1/22 with a high of 3 on 1/10 (EZ). A flyby Ross's Goose was seen over Moore Twp. 2/27 (BE). Three **Greater White-fronted Geese** were reported at the Albert Rd. Ponds 2/22 (AM) and 4 were 4 at NQ 12/2 (AM, MH). A **Barnacle Goose** first reported in *Lehigh* in Nov and seen at the Valley Center Parkway Ponds 11/22 (SS) became more reliable at the Hanover Twp. ponds 12/3-10 (DD).

An uncommon **Blue-winged Teal** was at the MCEP 12/27-1/6 (JH). **Canvasback** was reported at MCEP 2/2 (MSa), Albert Rd. Ponds 2/23-26 (AM), and on the Delaware River by the Tuscarora Inn 1/20 (AM). **Redhead** is not unexpected but a high of 19 **Redhead** at NQ 1/11 was notable (AM). **Barrow's Goldeneye** has been annual in recent winters on the Delaware River. A female was seen south of the Belvidere Bridge 12/27-1/1 (JH) and by the Tuscarora Inn 1/20-2/8 (AM).

Golden Eagle was seen in Williams Twp. 1/21 (AK) and at NQ flying low over the Snow Geese 2/17 (MS). Very unexpected, a sub-adult **Mississippi Kite** was seen circling over the Koch Property 2/28 (AK). This would be a very early spring migrant. A **Northern Goshawk** was seen migrating by the Little Gap Hawk Watch 12/20 (MS). A light phase **Rough-legged Hawk** was observed at MCEP 12/28-1/3 (AM, KR). Another Rough-leg was seen hunting along I-78 in Palmer Twp. 1/5 (BA, CR). This bird likely moved a few miles north and was seen at the Tatamy exit 1/19-20 (MS). A **Sandhill Crane** was seen along the Monacacy Creek in Bethlehem 2/24 (ES).

A **Spotted Sandpiper** was at the boat launch at MCEP 12/19 (MS). Remarkably, a Spotted Sandpiper has wintered at this location the last 2 years. January was very cold with heavy ice cover on the river where the sandpiper had survived 2 previous winters. Conditions favored this bird moving south but a sighting in March confirms that this

individual survived a third winter. I will be out there searching when winter returns.

As reported in the past, **Iceland Gull** is an expected winter visitor in the county with the first report of the season at Grand Central Landfill 12/3 (AM). A high count of 5 Iceland Gulls occurred away from the landfill at Albert rd. ponds 2/17 (AM). The high count of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was 217 at the landfill 2/27 (BE). A first winter **Glaucous Gull** found 12/21 (MS) was seen regularly at the landfill during the period.

There were no wintering **Snowy Owls** in the county but there was a confirmed report of one in E. Allen Twp. 1/19 (SB). Efforts to relocate this bird were unsuccessful. A **Barn Owl** was at Penn Argyl 1/6 (Scott Angus). An adult **Red-headed Woodpecker** was seen in Upper Mt. Bethel Twp. 12/24 (MS). A possible **Gyrfalcon** was reported near Northampton Quarry 12/29 (SB). People searched but could not relocate the falcon. There were no other reports until Feb when a dark Gyrfalcon was seen in nearby New Jersey. It was present for several weeks before disappearing. Then on 2/28, a dark gray Gyrfalcon was seen going after Snow Geese in E. Allen Twp. not far from the original quarry location (BE). The bird continued irregularly into the next month and was believed to be roosting in a quarry in the area. Sightings for a few lucky birders were at locations associated with the feeding flocks of Snow Geese.

With some searching, a few **Lapland Longspurs** turn up each winter. One was seen at Gravers Hill 12/17-1/20. The farmland near Tatamy had 11 longspurs together 1/4 (BE). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** found 1/22 at Ballas Park (RW) spent the winter there. Two **Eastern Towhees** wintered at Jacobsburg SP (RW) while another was at a feeder in Moore Twp. 12/13-26 (BE). In Palmer Twp. at a private feeder, a **Dickcissel** was observed 1/10 (DD). Three **Eastern Meadowlarks** were found at MCEP 1/1 (ZM).

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Northumberland County

Locations: Adam T. Bower Dam (ATBD), Beaver Run Road (BRR), County Line Road (CLR), Old Swamp Road (OSR), Pine Knotter Park (PKP), Plotts Road (PR), Redman Acres Road (RAR), Riverside (RIV), Shikellamy State Park (SSP), Swartz Road (SR), Urban (URB), Warrior Run Wetlands (WRW), Welliver Boulevard (WB).

This winter season was a busy one in *Northumberland*, with several notable sightings and an overall increase in birder effort. The season was rather cold and icing conditions on the Susquehanna River concentrated waterfowl. Later in the season, conditions moderated, leading to an early push of birds into the county.

Common Goldeneye was regular on the Susquehanna River near SSP, where up to 22 were observed 1/8-27 (KP, SS, KM). Cold weather likely pushed **Red-breasted Mergansers** south into the county. A total of 4 were observed at the ATBD 1/9-11 (KP) and 2 were at PKP 1/18 (KP). The only Dec record of **Double-crested Cormorant** was of 2 at RAR 12/3 (KP). **Rough-legged Hawks** made a good showing in many local counties this year, but *Northumberland's* only report was of a dark morph along SR 1/10 (LS).

Wilson's Snipe are annually reported from a few reliable locations across the county. This season singles were observed at PR 1/18 and 2/6 (AK), at the WRR 2/21 (KP), and along BRR 2/22 (AK). **Herring Gulls** were reported with greater frequency than normal across most of central Pennsylvania this season including one at the ATBD 12/26 (KP) and 4 there 2/11 (KP).

This only **Short-eared Owl** was a single observed along CLR 12/14 (LS). **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were reported only twice, both along OSR where they likely breed - one on 2/9 (KP) and 4 that

appeared to be 2 separate breeding pairs 2/28 (AK). **Merlins** are rarely reported in winter but this year observations of singles were made along WB 1/3 (AK) and along CLR 2/9 (KP); these sightings are not far apart so it's possible these reports were of the same bird.

This season's only **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was seen near URB 2/7 (DS). A **Hermit Thrush** was reported near RIV 2/19 (SF). Snow cover produced some good field birds, including a **Lapland Longspur** 1/18-20 (AK, PW, RW) and a **Snow Bunting** 1/18, both along CLR (AK). Unusual in winter, an **Eastern Towhee** was reported near RIV 1/7 (KJ). A **Savannah Sparrow** was photographed along CLR 1/20 (PW, RW). One **Swamp Sparrow** was observed in the wetlands along OSR 2/4 (AK). The only report of **White-crowned Sparrow** was of a single near RIV 1/7 (KJ). The only **Purple Finch** was reported near URB 12/23 (DS).

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Philadelphia County

Locations: Delaware River Trail (DRT), Franklin D. Roosevelt Park (FDR), Glen Foerd Mansion (GF), Houston Meadow (HM), Island Green Country Club and Golf Course-abandoned (IGCC), John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum-Philadelphia (TI), Navy Yard (NY), Pennypack on the Delaware (POD), Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), Wissahickon Valley Park (WVP).

Despite a two-week-long strong cold spell at the turn of the new year which kept a good portion of the Delaware River frozen, December 2017 and January 2018 were largely average months in terms of temperature and precipitation. In contrast, February was around 6°F warmer than normal (1981-2010), with consequently more rain than snow.

That cold snap in early January was followed by a few days of strong southerly winds and temperatures around 60°F which most likely provided the conditions for the discovery of Pennsylvania's first winter **Purple Gallinule**. After these few spring-like days the bird survived - albeit hypothermic and dehydrated - a night at around 20°F and was discovered by homeowners in the Morrell Park neighborhood in northeast Philadelphia in the morning of 1/14. After rehabilitation at a local wildlife clinic the bird was released a few days later in the Cape Charles area in Virginia.

The fourth **Ross's Goose** for the city was identified during the 32nd Philadelphia Mid-Winter Bird Census (PMWBC) feeding with a flock of **Canada Geese** in a grassy field along Holstein Avenue in southwest Philadelphia (RB, AM). At FDR, a **Cackling Goose** stayed throughout the reporting period and was last seen 2/20 (m.ob.). This bird was joined by a second individual 12/22 (HP). An incredible 61 **Tundra Swans** were discovered on the impoundment at TI 2/26 (FW, AR) of which just over 40 were still being seen 2/28 (m.ob.).

A male **Eurasian Wigeon** was observed only once this season on Meadow Lake at FDR 12/15 (TC, DE). At the NY, the annual raft of wintering diving ducks included up to 200 **Canvasbacks**, 120 **Ruddy Ducks**, 75 **Greater Scaup**, and 60 **Lesser Scaup**. These were joined by a number of **Long-tailed Ducks** in early Jan with a maximum of 6 on 1/18 (AR). Two individuals stayed throughout the reporting period (m.ob.). An additional pair was seen at DRT 1/1 and 1/13 (HP), one at GF 12/29 (BH) and 1/1 (HP) as well as on the Schuylkill River at the Green Lane Bridge 1/16 (DE, LT). A few **Redheads** were seen on the Delaware River and at TI with a maximum of 3 at GF 12/31 (PM).

Red-breasted Mergansers were regularly seen throughout the winter with a highlight of 17 at TI on 1/30 (IG, JL). A fairly common sight this Feb - if you knew where to look for them - **Red-throated Loons** were observed on the Delaware River at GF 2/18 (AB, SB) and NY (m.ob) with a maximum of 2 actively diving at the NY 2/19 (HP). A single **Red-necked Grebe** was discovered at GF 2/18 (AR) and was enjoyed

by many others until the end of Feb.

Very rare in winter, a single **Virginia Rail** was at TI 12/03 (GV, RZ). Two **Sandhill Cranes** were spotted in the upper WVP flying by the Andorra Natural Area 1/13 (BE, DW). This is the first winter record for **Philadelphia** and together with this year's Ross's Goose raises the cumulative species count for the PMWBC to 165 for the years 1987 to 2018. **American Woodcocks** started displaying in the last week of Feb during a warm spell at the usual spots with a maximum of 8 at the Eastwick field next to TI 2/26 (AB, DB), 3 at Houston Meadow 2/28 (m.ob.), but also 4 at FDR 2/27 (HP). A single "peent" was recorded at a nocturnal flight call station in South Philadelphia in early hours 2/21 (HP).

The adult **Black-headed Gull** first reported in Nov 2017 stayed at TI throughout the winter and was last reported 2/17 (m.ob.). Among the usual large gull flock roosting at the NY a first-cycle **Iceland Gull** was reported 1/2 (HP), while an adult bird was observed there throughout Jan (BQ, et al.). In addition, at GF one and 2 first cycle birds were seen 1/16 and 2/4, respectively (FW), with another first-cycle bird reported from POD 1/21 (PM). Two **Glaucous Gulls** were identified at POD 1/7 while another was at GF 1/26 (FW). **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were reported from numerous locations including DRT, GF, NY, TI and POD with a maximum of 8 adults at GF 1/9 (FW). A **Laughing Gull** was at TI 1/16-24 (Katrina Rakowski, m.ob.) and 4 at the Walt Whitman Bridge 1/2 (David McNaughton).

It was another irruption season for **Snowy Owls** in southern Canada and the US and individuals were reported from PHL spanning **Philadelphia** and **Delaware** starting in early Dec. According to the airport's wildlife biologist an estimated 5 owls were observed in the area during the three winter months, including 2 long-staying birds. Trap and relocation efforts were unsuccessful. One individual was found deceased in early Feb. The cause remains unknown, but a necropsy is scheduled to uncover the reason for the bird's death. A new record for the location, a red-phase **Eastern Screech-Owl** was discovered at POD 1/21 and was last seen 2/13 (PM, et al.).

The apparently only **Black-capped Chickadee** in the Delaware Valley region was discovered at TI associating with **Carolina Chickadees** 1/15 and observed until 2/21 (HP, et al.). Two **Marsh Wrens** were at TI 12/16-22 (CBC team). The **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** spotted at TI 11/17 continued to be seen until 12/10 (m.ob.). While there are always a few winter observations of **Gray Catbirds** in **Philadelphia**, the sighting of one pecking at a chicken bone at the Christmas Market in Center City 12/22 was rather peculiar (JG). One of a handful of **Ovenbirds** reported in the Mid-Atlantic, a bird was located in Center City Philadelphia 12/25 associating with **House Sparrows** (RK). As in previous years, **Orange-crowned Warblers** were present at several locations in the county during Dec and Jan.

A sole **White-crowned Sparrow** was reported from IGCC 12/10 and 1/7 (HP). At the same location, a lonely **Common Redpoll** was seen flying over the area 12/16 during last year's Pennypack Christmas Bird Count (HP).

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Pike County

Despite a very cold winter, birders found several noteworthy species. **Mute Swan** makes this list because there are few records in the county - 2 were on a private pond along Sawkill Rd. west of Milford 2/28 (DM). **Golden Eagle** was observed in the Delaware Water Gap NRA near the Eshback Boat Access Area 1/27 (GB, TD) and 2/2 (BW). Other good reports in the Delaware Water Gap NRA include a **Short-eared Owl** on Egypt Mill Rd. 2/8 (DM) and a **Peregrine Falcon** at

Raymondskill Falls 1/27 (GB, TD). A **Winter Wren** was in Milford 1/28 (LF). A large flock of 40 **Snow Buntings** was at Peck's Pond 1/24 (SS).

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Potter County

Locations: Crandall Hill Community Building (CH), Coudersport (CO), Eleven Mile Rd (EM), Galeton (GA), Galeton Lake (GL), Gold (GO), Whitney Valley (WV), Sinnemahoning State Park (SSP), Steer Run, Route 44 and Route 49 intersection (SR), Lyman Run State Park (LRSP), PA Game Lands 204 (SGL 204), Ulysses (UL).

Data were obtained from eBird reports, primarily two young birders in the Coudersport area who do not give their full names, Sam G. and Seth G. This report is the first from *Potter* for some time. The eBird reports are few and only go back to 2012, with just four historical records prior to 2012. Twenty-two birding hot spots are listed for *Potter*, with LRSP having the most species reported (123) and SSP listed number 5 with 105 species reported, as of this writing. This compiler will need to draw on historical sources to give historical context in future reports.

Most waterfowl reports were from Feb, with few, not surprisingly, from Dec and Jan. When studying the bar charts in eBird, species of waterfowl observed in every month of the year were **Canada Goose**, **Mallard** and **Common Merganser**. **American Black Duck** was not observed during June, July or Sep, but was present the rest of the year. **Wood Duck** was reported in every month except Dec.

Most of the observations reported below were from the northern part of *Potter*, between GA and CO and north of Rte. 6, with exception to those from LRSP.

One **Snow Goose** was at SR 2/25 (SaG). Twenty-one **Canada Geese** were reported from GL 2/25 (KR). There were 94 **Tundra Swans** at SGL 204 on 2/28 (SeG). **Wood Ducks** were observed at two sites - 2 at EM 2/24 (MB) and 2 at LRSP 2/25 (SeG). Two **Gadwalls** were reported from EM 2/24 (MB). Three **American Wigeons** were on GL 2/25 (KR) and one **American Black Duck** at SR 2/25 (SeG). Fifteen **Mallards** and one **Northern Pintail** were reported from a small stream SE of the village of GO 2/3 (SaG). One **Northern Shoveler** was at GO 2/25 (SeG). Two **Green-winged Teals** were seen on Nine-mile Run, along State Rte. 6 near UL 2/28 (SeG). An earlier Green-winged Teal was at GO 2/3 (SeG). One **Bufflehead** was at SR 2/28 (SaG). Two **Common Goldeneyes** were at CO 12/17 (SaG). Two **Greater Scaups** were seen on GL 2/25 (SeG) and 2 **Greater/Lesser Scaups** were at GL 2/25 (KR).

Two **Ruffed Grouse** were reported from SGL 204 on 2/24 (SaG). A **Great Blue Heron** was reported at the farm ponds on Water Wheel Farm; Rte. 49, rural CO 1/12 (SeG). Two Great Blue Herons were seen flying over CO 12/17 (SaG).

One **Bald Eagle** was reported at CO 12/17 (SaG), and an adult was observed at Ulysses 1/26 (LC). Single **Northern Harriers** were at CO (SaG) and at CH on Whitney Creek Rd., both 12/17 (SeG). One **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was at WV near Hebron 2/18 (DH). A **Cooper's Hawk** was observed at CO 12/17 (SaG). One **Red-shouldered Hawk** was seen at CH along Whitney Cr. Rd. 1/7 (SaG). One **Red-tailed Hawk** was reported at Nine-mile Run along State Rte. 6 near UL 2/25 (SeG), and 2 were at GO 2/25 (SaG). A **Rough-legged Hawk** was observed along Rte. 49 near UL 1/26 (LC) and a **Golden Eagle** from Rte. 6 at UL 2/25 (SeG).

One **Great Horned Owl** was reported (nocturnal) at CH 1/6 (SaG). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was noted at CH 2/22 (SaG). Single **American Kestrels** were at CO 12/17 and near the Woodland Cemetery at CO 2/27 (SaG). A large flock of 40 **Horned Larks** was observed in a cornfield near CO during the Potter County CBC 12/17 (SaG). **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was reported twice; one at CO 12/17 and one at CH 2/24 (SaG). A **Golden-crowned Kinglet** was at CH 2/24

(SaG). **Three Pine Siskins** were seen on 2/18 in SGL 204 (SeG), and 2 siskins were in WV one-mile ENE of Hebron (DH).

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Schuylkill County

Locations: Air Products Wildlife Sanctuary (APWS), Hawk Mountain Sanctuary – North Lookout (HM), Lake Hauto (LH), Landingville Dam (LVD), Locust Lake State Park (LLSP), Swatara State Park (SSP), Sweet Arrow Lake (SAL), Tuscarora State Park (TSP), West Schuylkill Christmas Bird Count (WSCBC).

Some data for this narrative was gleaned from the three CBCs that take place in the county. The WSCBC took place 12/17, the Tamaqua CBC 12/28, and the Hamburg CBC 12/31 (which covers a small area of the county near Port Clinton). Thanks to Dave Krueel, Jonathan DeBalko, and Laurie Goodrich, respectively, for heading those efforts. In addition to species sightings provided directly to me and posted to PABIRDS, a lot of good data were also found on eBird. Everyone who posted their sightings to eBird was included in the Observer list at the end of this narrative.

With the exception of **Mallards**, a few **Mute Swans**, and **Canada Geese**, waterfowl species and numbers are always low for the county so any postings are considered notable. This season was bitter cold from mid-Dec through mid-Jan. Otherwise, temperatures were relatively mild so open water was available for about two-thirds of the winter. A **Cackling Goose** was reported and photograph at SAL 12/10-19 (DK, MD, TH, TF). **Tundra Swans** are considered rare in the county during the winter but were seen at three locations, all flyovers. Four were seen 2/17 over SGL227 (TB), 8 over LVD 2/25 (TJ), and 120 over SSP 2/27 (TK, BR).

American Black Ducks were reported at APWS, Lake Hauto, SAL, LVD, TSP and Hawk Mountain's Acopian Center (m.ob.) **Northern Pintails**, rare winter visitors, were found on several dates at APWS: 12/28 (JoD, JD), 1/24 (JoD), and 2/21 (JoD). **Green-winged Teal** were seen at two locations: 12/13 (MD) and 12/14 (TK) at SAL and 2/25 at LVD (TB). **Ring-necked Ducks** are also considered rare here in the winter but were reported at two locations in late Feb - One at SAL 2/24 (DD) and one at APWS 2/27 (JoD), followed by 40 a day later at APWS (JoD). Rounding out waterfowl, a late departing **Bufflehead**, a bird usually absent during winter, was at SAL 12/11 (DD).

Besides HM, where **Northern Harriers** were recorded migrating through on three dates 12/3-11 (HMD), singles were at TSP 1/23 (TK) and along Red Dale Rd. 2/19 (LG). What appears to be a pair spent the winter at SGL227 (TB, TJ, TF, JoD). Although considered rare for the county, a **Northern Goshawk** was seen at HMS 12/3, late for their migration period. Not seen during the winter season since 2004, a **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen in mid-Jan in the TSP/SGL227 area for several days (TJ, TB, JoD, TF).

Considered unusual in winter, an American Coot arrived early, seen at SSP 2/28 (BR). The same was true with **Killdeer**, appearing in several locations in late Feb (m.ob.). An **American Woodcock** also arrived early with one heard calling 2/22 at a cemetery in Pottsville (DK). **Ring-billed Gulls** are considered occasional during the winter in *Schuylkill*, but like last year, were found in all three months. The biggest flock of 42 was found at LVD 2/25 (DR). **Herring Gulls** are generally considered more common in the winter but the only reports came 12/13 at SAL (MD) and HMS (HMD). **Merlins** appeared in the county for the third straight winter, seen at three locations: HMS 12/1 (HMD), near Hometown 1/11 (JoD), and TSP 1/16 (JoD). Prior to 2015, there were no winter reports of this bird in the county for eleven years. Late migrating **Peregrine Falcons** moved past HMS 12/13 and 12/20 (HMD).

Several species were found this winter that are normally absent. An **Eastern Phoebe** was at SSP 12/14-1/28 (BR). **Gray Catbirds** were found on the WSCBC 12/17 (DR, DB), at SGL106 on 1/2 (DK), and along SR443 on 1/25 (TK). A **Brown Thrasher** was seen at SGL227 on 1/7 (TB) and again 1/14 (JoD). Two species only seen in winter but are hard to find are **Lapland Longspur** and **Snow Bunting**. This year, longspurs were reported 12/10 (DK), 1/13 (DK), and 1/22 (TJ) in a farm field along Flat Hill Rd. and one was heard outside of Pitman 12/19 (TB). Snow Buntings were found in several locations: 3 on 12/4 at HMS (HMD), 8 in the Schuylkill Mall parking lot 12/16 (JB), one at SSP 1/1 (AB), and 4 near Hometown 1/6 (TB).

Fox Sparrows were not as plentiful as last winter but were seen in two locations - at LLSP 12/9 (TB) and again 1/28 (TB), and at SGL227 on 12/10 (TB) and again 1/1 (TB). A handful of **Eastern Towhees** stayed around this season, found 12/10-2/17 at SGL227 (TB, TJ), at LVD 1/28 (DK), and near Deer Lake 12/31 (DK, BJ). **Rusty Blackbirds** made an appearance at SSP 12/4 (RS) and at a farm in Summit Station 12/31 (DS). After a couple of years of high numbers of **Pine Siskins**, this year they were fairly scarce. Individual birds were found at HMS 12/1 (HMD) and LH 12/28 (JoD, JD).

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Snyder County

Locations: Mahantango Creek near Oriental (MC), Walker Lake (WL)

A pair of **Mute Swans** was found at WL 1/28 (CK, GG, JW, RH). A pair each of **Wood Ducks** and **Buffleheads**, plus an **American Woodcock**, were found along MC 2/26 (KC). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** and a **Merlin** were recorded along Stage Road 1/28 (CK, GG, JW, RH).

A **Snowy Owl** tracked by Project Snowstorm (the juvenile female first banded by Sinepuxent Bay in Maryland) spent the evening of 2/13 until the early morning hours of 2/14 along Clifford Rd. outside Selinsgrove (no direct human observers). Two late **Field Sparrows** were at WL 2/14 (SS). Two **Purple Finches** were reported near Creamer 2/18 (RW).

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Somerset County

Locations: Bluebird Hill Farm- BHF, Buffalo Creek-BC, Confluence Area-CA, Flight 93 National Memorial- Flt 93, Hidden Acres Farm -HAF, High Point Lake- HPL, Indian Lake- IL, Laurel Hill State Park- LHSP, Payne Property- PP, Quemahoning Reservoir- QR, Somerset Lake-SL.

The season started out warm in early December, gradually got colder through the end of the month, was subzero in early January, then became unseasonably warm in February. It was a better than average waterfowl season and decent for **Rough-legged Hawks** and especially

Short-eared Owls. Almost no winter finches showed up.

A large flock of 20 **Greater White-fronted Geese** was found at SL 1/19 (AM). Since there is no distinction in PA in hunting seasons for the plentiful, often problematic **Canada Geese** and the decidedly uncommon "specklebellies" they were targeted as trophies and quite a few were harvested. The higher counts for **Canada Geese** were 1000 at IL 12/17 (JM, MM, CP, JP) and 426 at QR 1/14 (LG). There were 22 **Tundra Swans** at the partially drawn down SL 2/19 (JP). **Wood Duck** was last seen in CA 12/19 (AM) and then 2 were back at QR by 2/18 (LG). Five **Gadwall** were reported at QR 12/18 (CP). The only **American Wigeon** report was of 6 at SL 2/19 (JP). A nice flock of 17 **American Black Ducks** accompanied 194 Mallards at QR at QR 12/16 (LG). Two **Northern Pintails** were at QR 12/11 (AM) and then again 1/21 (LG).

Three **Canvasbacks** and 5 **Redheads** were at SL 2/19 (JP). SL also attracted 32 **Ring-necked Ducks** and 5 **Greater Scaup** 2/28 (LS). QR had 18 **Lesser Scaup** 2/20 (LG). **Long-tailed Duck** reports include 2 12/1 (AM) and one near dam 2/7 (LG). A nice group of 38 **Bufflehead** was at QR 12/15 (LG). The locally uncommon **Common Goldeneye** was represented by 3 at QR 12/28 (PL). Better reports for mergansers included 56 **Hooded Mergansers** at QR 12/15 (LG), 25 **Common** in CA 1/1 (BO), and 18 **Red-breasted** 12/15 at QR (LG). There was one lonely **Ruddy Duck** at QR 12/15 (PL) and 2 at SL 2/28 (LS).

Ring-necked Pheasants released at SGL 93 migrated across the road to Flt 93 where no hunting is allowed and were seen by several observers. A **Ruffed Grouse** was reported at Hillsboro and Cider Press (T&J K). **Wild Turkey** were widespread. A **Common Loon** was at QR 12/3 (LG). QR also had 5 **Pied-billed Grebes** 12/18 (CP) and 12/26 (PL) and 4 **Horned Grebes** 12/16 (LG). A few **Great Blue Herons** overwintered. **Bald Eagles** were reported 14 times on eBird 1/7-2/28.

Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Cooper's Hawk all had several winter reports. More interesting for the county was a **Northern Goshawk** report from CA 2/25 (BO) and 2 **Red-shouldered Hawk** reports, at IL 12/17 (JM, MM, CP, JP) and Laurel Mountain near Bakersville 1/7 (SC). **Rough-legged Hawks** had a decent showing with records from Flt 93 12/17-29 (m.ob.), 1/10 BA (JP), 1/22 South Somerset (LG), and CA 2/25 (BO). **American Coots** were conspicuous by their near absence with only 3 at QR 12/11 (AM). There was a report of 2 **Sandhill Cranes** at BC (where they had summered and bred between 2009 and 2012) at the unusual date of 1/23 (MMA). Efforts to relocate them were unsuccessful.

Three **Killdeer** were a little early 2/16 in CA (TO). **Wilson's Snipe** were also early 2/24 with 4 birds in Rockwood area (AL). **Eastern Screech Owl** is becoming a rarely reported bird, so a bird at BHF 12/27 (PL) was welcome. A **Great Horned Owl** pair was at Old Shetler Farm 12/17 (LG) and 3 others were near IL for CBC (JM, MM, CP, JP). **Barred Owls** were at Flt 93 12/17 and at PP through period. **Short-eared Owls** put on a better than average showing with one in BA 12/12 (JP), 3 at Flt 93 flying with 2 Northern Harriers 12/17 (JM, MM, CP, JP) with one still present 12/29 (JP), one in New Centerville 1/7 (AM), and 2 west of Somerset 1/10 (JM, MM).

Single **Belted Kingfishers** were at QR 12/17 (LG), BC 2/11 (JP), and Addison 2/23 (BB). Interesting woodpecker reports included **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at Stoneycreek Lake 12/17 for CBC and one in CA 2/20 (BO). **American Kestrels** were scarce with two near Boswell 1/20 and one or 2 in BA through season (JP). A late **Eastern Phoebe** was in CA 12/25 (BO, TO). A **Northern Shrike** was a nice find at Flt 93 1/21 (JM, MM) where one had earlier been reported in Nov. A good count of 250 **Horned Larks** was made near Holsopple 12/16 (LG) - it would be interesting to know these birds' migration routes.

A lonely **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was near Stoneycreek Lake for CBC 12/17. A **Brown Creeper** was near Hidden Valley 12/27 (RM). A **Carolina Wren** was near QR 12/18 (CP), this species may have been impacted by the below zero temps in early Jan. Several **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were found for the CBC 12/17 and 3 were found feeding in cold weather near Dividing Ridge 1/13 (JP). **Eastern Bluebirds** were present in lower elevation areas of the county such as CA 2/13 (BO) and Fairhope 1/18 (JP). The last **Hermit Thrush** was at PP 12/6 (JP). **American Robins** were in low numbers and widely

dispersed through season. **Northern Mockingbird** was near Shanksville 12/17 for CBC and one was in CA 2/11 (BO). One **American Pipit** at IL 12/17 stayed for the CBC (CP). **Cedar Waxwing** reports included 28 on 12/17 at Flt 93, one in CA 2/20 (BO), and 32 in Bakersville 2/21 (SC).

A good high count of 35 **American Tree Sparrows** in one spot was made at Flt 93 on 12/17 (JM, MM, CP, JP). Winter reports for **Savannah Sparrow** are few so one in CA 2/6 was welcome (BO). **Swamp Sparrows** were at BHF 12/27 (PL) and through season at PP (JP). **White-throated Sparrow** high count was 4 at QR 12/18 (CP). **White-crowned Sparrow** stayed until 12/25 in CA (BO) and at BHF until 1/1 (PL). Interesting were large roosts of **Red-winged Blackbirds** including 200 in cattails at Flt 93 1/21 (JM, MM, JP) and 550 in Stoystown area 2/28 (LS). **Rusty Blackbird** reports came from several areas mostly in low numbers including 3 near Shanksville for CBC 12/17, 3 in CA 12/30 (BO), and 2 at PP 1/20 (JP). More interesting is a group of 50-60 that visited a corn feeder frequently near Berlin through the season (JC). This location has had relatively large accumulations annually in winter since 2008 when JC started keeping records. **Common Grackles** and **Brown-headed Cowbirds** returned in late Feb. **Purple Finches** were lightly reported with 2 in CA 12/26 (BO) and one on Old Shetler Farm 2/20 (LG). It was also a light year for **Pine Siskins** with singles in CA 2/6 (TO) and at PP 2/11 (JP).

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Sullivan County

Locations: Dutch Mtn (DM), Estella (ES), Hunter's Lake (HL), Litzelman Road (LR), Churchill St area (CH)

The winter season included one extreme cold snap but no major storm events. Snowfall amounts were not heavy. There was a single checklist entered in eBird for the period. No rarities were uncovered and no large invasions occurred. All observations are by the compiler except where noted.

Ponds and lakes remained frozen throughout the period. The only waterfowl report included nine **Ring-necked Ducks** and a lone **Bufflehead** on HL 12/9. One **Ruffed Grouse** was seen on DM 2/17. One **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and one **American Kestrel** were seen in the LR area 12/9. Two winter raptor surveys were conducted on 2/17. The routes wind through Colley, Cherry and Forks townships covering roughly 75 miles. Ten **Red-tailed Hawks**, one **Rough-legged Hawk**, an adult **Bald Eagle**, and one **American Kestrel** were observed.

A **Carolina Wren** and a **Winter Wren** were in ES 1/14 (TR). A large mixed flock in the CH area included 50 **Cedar Waxwings**, 4 **Purple Finch**, and 25 **American Goldfinch** 12/9. Two **Pine Siskin** were observed on DM 2/17.

Observers: **Rob Megraw** (compiler), Tom Roth

Susquehanna County

The reports of 69 species for winter season 2017-18 bested the previous five-year average for the county of 61 species. Historically, here in the northern tier of the state, "winter" meant the onset of cold temperatures resulting in a continuous three-month period of frozen lakes and perpetual snow cover with the exception of a short "January thaw." In recent years that general pattern is being replaced with something similar to this year: alternating periods of thawing

temperatures and open ground followed by cold snaps with snow accumulations. These changing conditions seem to be affecting our bird populations. We find that more of the temperate migrant species that once wintered just south of us are remaining in the county. And this year in particular, feeder activity fluctuated with the weather going from very few seed-eating species present when mast is not under snow and ice, to many birds suddenly appearing at feeders and frenetically feeding prior to impending storms.

The overhead flight of large skeins of geese remain the brackets around our winter season. The last report of southbound **Canada Geese** was of 150 Individuals 12/11 (EB) and the first northbound skein of 225 individuals was seen over New Milford Twp. 2/25 (BM). First reported northbound movement of **Snow Geese** was of 700 individuals New Milford Twp. 2/21 (BM), and another skein of 160 on the same date (NV). An additional 500 were reported overhead in Montrose 2/24 (JS).

Not often seen in winter, 2 **Wood Ducks** appeared at Stump Pond 2/27 (EB) and 10 were seen on the Susquehanna River along Harmony Rd. 2/28 (EM). A pair of early **American Wigeons** was photographed on the river 2/28 (EM). Two **American Black Ducks** found open water on the Susquehanna River north of Susquehanna on Valentine's Day (EM). Twenty-two **Hooded Mergansers** almost celebrated Christmas in the county as they were last seen on a quickly icing Quaker Lake 12/23 (EM). The next time this species was seen was on the Susquehanna River near Hallstead 2/12 (BS). Our local population of **Common Mergansers** retreat during winter to the few open pockets of flowing water on the Susquehanna River. Lingered birds remained at other ice-free spots: 8 at Page Lake 12/2 (DB), 14 on Comfort Pond 12/4 (BS), and one on Quaker Lake 12/21 (EM).

A pair of **Ring-necked Pheasants** stopped traffic as they strolled across Bailey Rd. 12/24 (EM), obviously on their way to a Christmas Eve party. Late Jan was an unusual time to find a pair of **Ruffed Grouse** in New Milford Twp. 1/29 (FV, NV). Single wintering **Great Blue Herons** were at Hollister's Pond 12/1 (TN), near a farm pond in Clifford 12/27 (DS), and at Lord Pond 1/19 (KJ). **Northern Harriers** were found in limited numbers in the southern third of the county where large agricultural fields dominate the landscape 1/9 (EM), 2/1 and 2/15 (JS), and 2/3 (TS, JBS). **Rough-legged Hawks** made a modest incursion into *Susquehanna* with both phases reported (m.ob.).

Two early **Ring-billed Gulls** made a brief appearance at Hollister's Pond 2/25 (JS, DA). Local birders were excited with the discovery of 2 **Short-eared Owls** at a new location in South Auburn where they were photographed 1/21 (TB). The traditional spot in the county for this species did not disappoint with multiple sightings (DA, PA, EM, JM, TS, JS, JBS, FV, NV). An early **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was photographed in New Milford Twp. 12/27 (FV, NV). A combination of intermittent snow-cover and declining dairy farming in the county made searching for "manure" birds problematic this year. The best observations of **Horned Larks** and **Snow Buntings** occurred on Weston Rd. 1/19-20 (JS, JBS, FV, NV, DA).

Wintering **Winter Wrens** were discovered in Springville Twp. 12/16, 18 (NB). It was a good year for **Golden-crowned Kinglets** with strong numbers present over a wide portion of the county (m.ob.). **Eastern Bluebirds** were rarely seen during the winter months in *Susquehanna* a few years ago. Recently that has been changing. This season they made frequent appearances at multiple locations across the county in all three months (m.ob.). The first **American Robin** of the season was photographed 1/8, and was then joined by a flock of 13 the next day at the same location (FV, NV). Good numbers appeared in Feb, often seen foraging on sumac during periods of heavy snow cover.

American Tree Sparrow numbers were particularly strong this winter with frequent visitors at backyard feeders across the county (m.ob.). While some expected seed-eaters proved unusually elusive, their numbers were made up for by exceptionally high numbers of another winter feeder visitor. **Dark-eyed Juncos** were a dominant feeder bird with large flocks visiting feeders and a high count of 38 on 2/9 (EM). A handful of **Common Grackles** slipped into town the last two days of the period (EM, NV) in order to be duly noted here. **Purple Finches** and **Pine Siskins** were absent this winter except for a brief

period, 1/13-16, when both species suddenly appeared at four locations across the county (JS, JBS, LT, FV, NV), and then were gone.

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Union County

Locations: Dale's Ridge Trail (DRT), Spruce Run Reservoir (SRR), State Game Lands 201 (SGL 201), Turtle Creek Park (TCP).

At least 3000 **Snow Geese** flew over the DRT for the Great Backyard Bird Count 2/19 (ASh). Ten **Greater White-fronted Geese** mixed in with a very large flock of **Canada Geese** in a large ice-free section of the Susquehanna River by the Rt. 15 bridge in Lewisburg (MM) 1/1. Another single Greater White-fronted Goose was sighted flying over the Delta Place Depot fields just north of Lewisburg on 2/20 (AK).

A group of waterfowl congregated in mid-winter along Bull Run in Lewisburg, including a **Gadwall** 12/24-25 and an **American Wigeon** 1/4 and 1/16 (MM). **Northern Pintails** were part of the gang, including 4 on Bull Run 1/4 and 1/18 (MM) and 2 on Buffalo Run along Strawbridge Rd 1/28 (PW). A **Hooded Merganser** joined the Bull Run flock 1/9 (MM). A group of 4 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were seen with the more common mergs along Penns Creek in SGL 201 south of Mifflinburg 2/23 (ASh). A late **Common Loon** appeared at SRR 12/2 (ASh).

Like many other counties, the exciting raptor of this lemming-fueled irruption year is the **Snowy Owl**. One that made an appearance for the fall report at the US Penitentiary in Lewisburg was reported by jail staff to have persisted into the early morning hours of 12/1 (BB). Then, on 2/20, one of the Project Snowstorm owls carrying a GPS-enabled backpack was discovered along Pheasant Ridge Rd outside Lewisburg (BS, ES, m. obs.). Project coordinators placed the tracker on the juvenile female owl on Assateague Island beside Sinepuxent Bay in Maryland in late Jan, then (reports say) after too much photographer harassment on the beach, the bird flew off to Pennsylvania. She logged time in *Berks, Snyder* (then passing through *Union* briefly the morning of 2/14 with a pause near Mifflinburg), *Clinton*, and *Lycoming* before crossing back into *Union* between 5:39 and 6:40 pm on 2/15. It spent the first evening and next morning along Hill School Rd near Mazeppa before moving to the Pheasant Ridge Rd area from 2/16 until the evening of 2/20, the first day it was photographed. Is it merely a coincidence that it departed as soon as it attracted attention from the local birding community? Who knows - they're naturally nomads and have a propensity to move at any moment anyway. After a single day stop in *Schuylkill* it headed back to the coast and spent the rest of the period in the wetlands around Brigantine, NJ.

Five **Brown Creepers** were counted at DRT 2/13 (MH). A late **Gray Catbird** was found at TCP 12/2 (MH). Several **Savannah Sparrows** were found along Hill School Rd outside Lewisburg in the days prior to, and including, 1/21 (BB). Three **Pine Siskins** flew over SRR 12/2 (ASh).

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Venango County

Locations: Allegheny River (AR), Buttermilk Hill Nature Sanctuary (BHNS), Franklin (FR), Kahle Lake (KL), Oil City (OC), Windy Hills

(WH).

There were 94 species recorded this period. The winter started off somewhat mild, then turned nasty with much snow and bitter temperatures. The lakes froze earlier than usual, and though there was a late February thaw, they then refroze.

Waterfowl were present for the early part of the period. Then, as expected, most disappeared as the lakes and river froze, then birds started showing up again with the later Feb thaw. Twenty-two species of waterfowl (swans, geese, and ducks) were reported. Highlights included several unusual goose sightings. Sixteen **Greater White-fronted Geese** were photographed at KL 12/28 (MD). **Snow Geese** in flight were reported 1/17 (JS). A **Ross's Goose** was photographed at KL 12/25 (GE). Each of these 3 goose species have only one to three previous records in the county.

Two hundred **Northern Pintails** were on KL 12/22 (GE), where they remained in diminishing numbers through 12/25. **Green-winged Teal**, always a nice winter find, was recorded on AR 12/18 & 1/9 (JS, KG). The only **Canvasback** record was from the AR 2/15 (GE). High count of **Common Goldeneye** was 75 on 1/7 AR (GE). The last **Ruddy Duck** was at KL 12/23 (RS); there were no Feb reports.

The only **Horned Grebe** was at KL 2/26 (JS). The last **Double-crested Cormorant** report was 12/8. The first **Great Blue Herons** of 2018 were at KL 2/11 (MK, NK). **Turkey Vulture** was observed through 12/8 and then beginning again 2/20. A juvenile **Golden Eagle** was photographed at WH 1/2 (RS, GE). The only **Northern Harrier** was sighted 2/20 (JS, KG). Several **Rough-legged Hawk** were seen through the winter - 12/29 near KL, 12/31 at WH, 2/28 near KL; all were light morph. The first **Killdeer** was 2/20 (JS) and first **American Woodcock** was at BHNS 2/26 (JS). **Bonaparte's Gulls** were at KL through 12/12. **Ring-billed Gulls** were observed sporadically through the season.

A **Snowy Owl** was photographed in Seneca 2/22 (JA). A **Short-eared Owl** was photographed on the Pleasantville CBC 12/31. This was a first for the count, and the first in the northern part of the county and away from their former haunt in Barkeyville. First **Belted Kingfisher** was at KL 2/22 (GE, MK, NK). Our third Jan record of **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** came from a feeder near FR on several occasions during the month (NB). A **Merlin** was perched near the AR 2/15 (RS). **Horned Lark** numbers were low, with 6 records but few individuals (all sightings, except on 12/31 at WH, with one to 6 individuals).

A **Winter Wren** was noted 1/19 (JS). **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were in low numbers. A **Gray Catbird** was in FR 12/16 (DH). One **American Pipit** was at KL 12/8 (GE), the only record of the season. A **Lapland Longspur** was found on the Pleasantville CBC 12/31 (RW, MC, BB), as was a single **Snow Bunting** (RW, MC, BB); another Snow Bunting was seen at KL 2/2 (NK, MK).

The first **American Tree Sparrow** was on 12/22; they remained in low numbers all season. Two **Swamp Sparrow** were at WH 12/31 (RW, MC, BB). A mid-winter **Red-winged Blackbird** was found on at WH 1/1-2 (GE, RS). An early **Eastern Meadowlark** was sighted at KL 2/22 (NK, MK). The first **Common Grackle** of the year was at a feeder in Seneca 2/20 (ME, GE). A late **Brown-headed Cowbird** was found on the Pleasantville CBC 12/31. Reports of **Pine Siskin** came from feeders near OC 1/13 (NK, MK) and the FR area 2/25 (NB).

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Warren County

Locations: Akeley Swamp (AS), Alder Bottom Rd. (AB), Allegheny National Forest (ANF), Eisenhower High School (EH), Glade Bridge (GB), River Road (RR), Starbrick (SB), Willow Bay (WB).

This winter was a roller-coaster ride of mild, spring-like weather followed by deep freezes and piles of lake-effect snow. Relatively few birders braved this meteorological craziness. Due to the seasonably warm weather, waterfowl were relatively abundant, including a dozen **Greater Scaup** were seen with among the many **Common Mergansers** on the Allegheny River at SB 1/26 (SHS). A single **White-winged Scoter** was seen along RR 12/16 (JB).

For the second year in a row, not a single **Rough-legged Hawk** was reported from *Warren*, despite two Winter Raptor Surveys run through the county's farmlands. A minimum of 4 **Golden Eagles** (2 imm. plumage, 2 adult) were regulars on the Forest Service eagle-camera at ANF throughout the winter (SHS, DW). Despite it being called major flight year, only a single **Snowy Owl** was seen in the county, just east of EH 11/14 (JF). An adult **Northern Shrike** was seen for several days at AB starting 2/15 (SHS, DW).

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Washington County

Locations: Canonsburg Lake (CL), Charleroi Locks and Dam (CLD), Cross Creek County Park (CC), Peters Lake (PL), Peters Township (PET), Washington Reservoir #4 (R4).

Three **Snow Geese** put down at R4 on 12/28 (RI). On 2/11, an adult **Ross's Goose** and an immature **Snow Goose** were located on both sides of the *Allegheny/Washington* line in the vicinity of Frosty Valley Golf Course (FK, JF, LF). Four days later, the pair was located again at Shilling Hill Farm near Canonsburg 2/15 (FK). The Ross's represented the fourth record for *Washington*. A **Cackling Goose** was described at PL 12/13 (JF), also rare for the county. The only report of **Tundra Swan** was 4 at Cecil Twp. 12/27 (GG).

A **Gadwall** was at CL 1/28-29 (MJ), the only one reported. **American Black Ducks** included 2 at Bentleyville 12/3 (RI) and one at CLD 1/7 (RI). The beginning of a good spring for **Northern Shovelers** was indicated by the presence of 7 on Bebout Road 2/23 (GG, FK). Rare in *Washington*, one **Canvasback** was at CLD 1/7 (RI), and 3 were near New Eagle 2/5 (RI). **Redheads** are more frequent here than their white-backed counterparts, and they were this season as well, with reports of one at PL 12/13-14 (GG) up to 12 at CC beginning 2/22 (JF). Eight were at PL beginning 2/22 as well (JF). Four **Greater Scaup** were a nice find at Trax Farm 2/23 (AK). Small numbers of **Lesser Scaup** were reported variously, culminating with 11 at PL 2/22 (JF).

Quite rare for *Washington*, a **Long-tailed Duck** was at CC 12/27 (RI). **Common Goldeneyes** are also rare here, so any reports are noteworthy: one was at CLD 1/7 (RI) and up to 4 were on the Monongahela 1/25-2/10 (JF). A good count of 14 **Common Mergansers** was made at New Eagle 12/20 (RI), and 2 in a flooded field along McMurray Road 2/16 (GG) were in an unusual location. The only **Red-breasted Merganser** was a single at Bentleyville 12/3 (RI). Six **Horned Grebes** at CC 12/16 (RI) was a good count for the county.

A **Rough-legged Hawk** was at Taylorstown 12/17 (LC) and another was seen at the Donaldson Road grasslands in Robinson Twp. 1/10 (RI). **Herring Gulls** are still infrequent in *Washington*; this season there were 2 at Bentleyville 12/3 (RI) and up to 4 at CL 12/23-1/1 (JF, et al.). A **Snowy Owl** was observed near Cherry Valley Res. 2/12 (GG) but was not relocated thereafter. One or 2 **Short-eared Owls** were also in the Donaldson Road grasslands in Robinson Twp. in Dec (JM, RI). **American Kestrel** was better reported this winter than any time in recent years, for some reason (m.ob.). Reports of **Merlin** included

singles at PL 12/23 (JF), Washington Cemetery 1/28-2/6 (RT, et al.), and CL 2/15 (JF).

A mid-winter **Eastern Phoebe** was at Cherry Valley Res. 1/28 (MJ). The only reports (surprisingly) of **Common Raven** were made from the Montour Trail in Cecil Twp. 12/6-7 (GG). Twenty **Horned Larks** were at the Park Road fields near CC 1/3 (RI), but unfortunately neither of the other two more prized winter field birds were with them. A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was at Washington Cemetery, a reliable location for them in the winter even in very low ebb years in their invasion cycle, like this year. A **Hermit Thrush**, an annual wintering species that is nevertheless not annually reported, was at PL 12/28 (JF). There were a few reports here and there of **Yellow-rumped Warbler** throughout Dec (m.ob.). Two **Fox Sparrows**, not always recorded in mid-winter, were at SGL 232 on 12/11 (RG) and another attended a feeder in Washington occasionally 1/1-2/9 (RI). The bird of the season was without a doubt an adult male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at a (different) feeder in Washington 12/7-13 (ph. LC). **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported only at CL and included 20 on 2/9 (MJ), 7 on 2/15 (JF, LF), and 2 on 2/28 (LN). A **Purple Finch** was at a feeder in PET 12/6 (GG).

Observers: **Geoff Malosh, 450 Amherst Avenue, Moon Township, PA 15108-2654, (412) 735-3128, pomarine@earthlink.net**, Lauren Conkle, Leslie Ferree, John Flannigan, Ross Gallardy, Gigi Gerben, Roy Ickes, Matthew Juskowich, Fred Kachmarik, Alyssa Karmann, Jeff McDonald, Lauren Nagoda, Ryan Tomazin, Mark Vass, Bill Zinn.

Wayne County

Locations: Lake Wallenpaupack (LW).

Two migrant duck species were recorded. Five **Ring-necked Ducks** were seen at the ponds along Finn Swamp Rd. 2/25 (RJ) and 6 **Buffleheads** were at LW 12/2 (LG). Winter resident **American Tree Sparrows** were recorded countywide (m.ob.). **Red-winged Blackbirds** returned to the southern half of the county in mid-Feb; the earliest report was 2 near Lake Ariel 2/17 (LR).

Observers: **Josh Jones, unclechu76@gmail.com**, Linda Greble, Ryan Johnson, Linda Reed.

Westmoreland County

Locations: Beaver Run Reservoir (BRR-380), Ethel Springs Reservoir (ESR, also more commonly known as Derry Lake), Kuehl Property – Murrsville (KP), Latrobe Reservoir (LR, also known as Trout Run Reservoir), Lock & Dam #4 Natrona (L&D4), Loyalhanna Dam (LD), Murrsville Community Park (MCP), New Stanton (NS), St. Vincent Lake/Wetland (SVW), Westmoreland Heritage Trail on MAWC Beaver Run property (WHT - BRR).

Some wild goose chasing and birding of the Allegheny River helped to add diversity to the waterfowl reported for the season, which otherwise could have been limited by the early ice-over of many of the *Westmoreland* reservoirs and ponds. Two Christmas Bird Counts were conducted, Bushy Run and Rector; thanks to Dick Byers and Matt Webb, respectively, for compiling.

One **Tundra Swan** was reported at ESR 1/10 (LP) and a flock of 10 flew over New Stanton 2/20 (MF). One blue morph **Snow Goose** was observed 1/1 at ESR (HP). Five **Greater White-fronted Geese** were photographed at SVW 12/3 (NW). A high count, **750 Canada Geese** were at ESR 1/10 (LP).

Only 2 reports of **Northern Shoveler** for the season, with the high of 5 at ESR 2/12 (RH). A high count for this species, there were 33 **Gadwalls** at LR 2/24 (AM). On 2/24, there were 6 **American Wigeon** at both LR (AM) and at BRR-380 (KB). The high of the many reports for **American Black Duck** was 45 at LR 12/13 (LS). The high count of only

three reports for the season, 3 **Northern Pintails** were in Hannastown, tallied for the Bushy Run CBC 12/31 (Mazuza Party, Steve Manns). The high-count of only two reports for the season, 9 **Green-winged Teal** were at WHT-BR 12/2 (KB).

The only report for the season, 6 **Canvasback** were at LR 2/24 (AM). There were many late-season reports of significant numbers of **Redheads** at ESR, with the highest count being 30 on 2/23 (KB). The highest counts for **Ring-necked Duck** also came late in the season with 59 at LR 2/24 (AM) and then at Hamilton Ponds, with 33 on 2/27 and 26 on 2/28 (PF). The high-counts of just a few reports for scaup was of 4 **Greater Scaup** at LR 12/16 (RH), 8 Greater Scaup on the Allegheny River 1/10 (MF), and 5 **Lesser Scaup** at LR 12/22 (AM).

Several ebird checklists were submitted for the *Westmoreland* side of the Allegheny River at Lock and Dam #4 that provided for several significant species; one on 1/7 included 2 **White-winged Scoters**, one **Long-tailed Duck**, and 14 **Common Goldeneyes** (MF). A 1/10 ebird contained reports for one **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Ring-billed Gull**, and **Herring Gull** (RN). The high-count of sparse reporting for **Bufflehead** was the 10 at Hamilton Pond on both 2/27 and 2/28 (PF). There were a significant 31 **Hooded Mergansers** at Ice Pond in Ligonier 12/3 (AM). There were several large counts of **Common Merganser** - 45 at LD 2/16 (PC), 23 at Tubmill Reservoir 2/18 (AM), and 30 at the Rt. 286 crossing of the Beaver Run Reservoir 2/23 (KB). There were just a few reports of **Red-breasted Merganser** with the high of just 3 at BRR-380 on 2/23 (KB). **Ruddy Ducks** were reported only at LR, and no more than just the 2 on both 12/16 (RH) and 12/22 (AM).

Disappointing given its status as the Pennsylvania State Bird, however, unfortunately, the one **Ruffed Grouse** tallied for the 12/17 Rector CBC was the only one for the season; the bird was flushed on the Blair Brothers Trail (KB, JK, TK, DM, TP). The largest flock reported, 25 **Wild Turkeys** were seen on Loyalhanna Dam Rd 2/23 (KB). First reported 2/12, one **Red-throated Loon** continued to 2/28 at ESR (RH). One **Common Loon** was reported at ESR 2/14 (PC). There were 7 **Horned Grebes** at BRR-380 on 2/24 (KB). Three **Double-crested Cormorants** were at WHT-BRR 12/6 (KB). A bit unusual for woods and strip-mine habitat of the area were 3 **Great Blue Herons** flying over the KP 12/18 (JK).

Reports provided evidence that both vulture species continue to over-winter in the Ligonier Valley area. Most substantial was an ebird Checklist with photographs for a roost near Wilpen, with estimated counts of 59 **Turkey Vultures** and 22 **Black Vultures** on 1/21 (AM). **Bald Eagles** again gathered this winter at Loyalhanna Dam providing for ebird submissions from 12/6–2/25, with the high-count of 12 on 12/19 and on 2/16 (PC). Several reports of single **Northern Harriers** included an eagle flying over Murrysville Golf Course on Christmas Day (Sue Solomon) and one observed during a Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club outing on 1/27 on the farm adjacent to member Georgia Shalek's home just outside of Scottdale. One **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and one **Cooper's Hawk** were also seen on that outing. Participants in the 12/17 Rector CBC began their day with a **Red-shouldered Hawk** perched high in a tree adjacent to the parking lot at the Powdermill Nature Reserve Visitors Center. The only report of the season, a light morph **Rough-legged Hawk** was found on Kemmerer Hollow Rd. in Murrysville 2/9 (TK). And Yes Virginia, **Red-tailed Hawk** is abundant in winter in the farm areas of *Westmoreland* as evidenced by the tally of 54 on the 83-mile Winter Raptor Survey route that includes the farmland around the town of Crabtree (JK/TK).

The open waters of ESR provided the only reliable location for **American Coot**, which was reported in single digit numbers from 1/1 (4 by HP) through 2/28 (7 by RH). Despite the cold start to the season, 21 **Killdeer** were tallied on the 12/31 Bushy Run CBC, a record-high count for that species. Rarely recorded in any significant numbers, 20 **Ring-billed Gulls** were at WHT-BRR (KB) and 16 at BRR-380 on 2/22 (KB). An early morning owling effort in frigid conditions for the 12/31 Bushy Run CBC resulted in one **Eastern Screech Owl** and one **Great Horned Owl** at the MCP, and 2 **Barred Owls** that responded to call-back at the KP at dawn (TK, JK).

A turnaround to check on the falcon perched on the top of a

Norway Spruce provided for the only **Merlin** for the season, in NS 2/20 (MF). A **Peregrine Falcon** chased a **Ring-billed Gull** near the Story Run section of the WHT 12/19 (KB) and the running of a Unity Township WRS route (SG, JK, TK) on 2/3 yielded a sighting a Peregrine (seen flying with prey in its talons) on Pollins Rd. (near the Westmoreland Fairgrounds). **Common Raven** continues to be, well – common, with sightings in both the Laurel Highlands and at lower elevations, including one observed at the Delmont Vet Hospital 2/13 (KB, JK, TK) being one of just several reports in the Delmont area. The farm areas around Crabtree again were reliable for **Horned Lark**, with the Higbee Party reporting 30 on Pine Drive and 28 on Helen Rd., both 1/1.

Not unprecedented - there were no reports for Red-breasted Nuthatch. The same could often be the case for **Winter Wren**, however there were several Dec reports, all of singles, including one tallied for the Bushy Run CBC 12/31. Often found in large flocks, 40 **Cedar Waxwings** were at MCP 2/8 (JK, TK); a photograph of a larger flock of 100 was included in an ebird checklist for the Hart Farm south of Latrobe 2/18 (RH) and 32 gathered in Delmont 2/28 (KB). Large flocks of **European Starling** were also observed, with two flocks, one of 500 followed by one of 1,200 that were seen around one-half mile apart on Hannastown Rd. just south of Rt. 22 on 2/13 (JK/TK).

One **Chipping Sparrow** visited the feeders at Ken Byler's home in Delmont 1/13, as did **Fox Sparrow**, with the high-count of 2 on 1/30. One Fox Sparrow visited the feeders in Murrysville 2/16-18 (DM). Three **Field Sparrows** were tallied for the 12/31 Bushy Run CBC and 3 **Swamp Sparrows** were for the 12/17 Rector CBC. Two **Savannah Sparrows** were reported on Helen Rd. outside of Crabtree 1/1 (HP). First seen on 12/20, a female **Eastern Towhee** continued visits to the feeders at the KP to 2/9 (JK, TK). Four **Rusty Blackbirds** were found along Brinkerton Rd. near the Westmoreland County Fairgrounds during the running of a WRS route 2/3 (SG/JK/TK). Seven **Common Grackles** visited the KP feeders 12/21 (JK/TK). Feeder visitors in Love Hollow included one **Purple Finch** 12/24 and one **Pine Siskin** 1/14 (AM).

Observers: **Tom Kuehl, 3615 Hilty Road, Export, PA 15632, (724)-325-1918, tjkuehl@comcast.net**. Ken Byerly, Pete Campolongo, Mike Fialkovich, Patience Fisher, Rebecca Hart, Janet Kuehl, Alex Lamoreaux-Josh Lefever Party (LP for Lamoreaux Party), Andy Mack, Dale Matuza, Richard Nugent, Tom Pierson, Lauren Schneider, Marjorie Van Tassel, Nathan Weyandt and Ebird Checklist submissions for a birding blitz on January 1, 2018 by Margaret and Roger Higbee, and Denny Lauffer are credited to the "Higbee Party" (HP).

Wyoming County

Locations: Brown's Farm (BF), Grist Flats (GF), Jayne's Bend (JB), Lake Carey (LC), Lake Winola (LW), Lazybrook Park (LP), Nesbitt Road (NR), Oxbow Lake (OL), Riverside Park (RP), Sordoni's Farm (SF), PA State Gamelands 57 (SGL), Sharpe's Lake (SL), Stevens Lake (StL), Scottsville Road (SR), Vosburgh Neck/Endless Mountains Nature Center (VN).

The Tunkhannock Christmas Bird Count, on 12/17, resulted in records of 67 species totaling 6116 individuals. The species count is four less than the average of the previous five years, but within one of the long-term average. The count of individuals is 30% less than the average of the previous five years and 24% less than the long-term average. However, the CBC did produce some interesting records of species either uncommon or even rare for this count.

What I describe below are records of winter transients and stop-over migrants recorded during the period. I have not shown any detail of other species which are PO, PR, or CO breeders in Wyoming and which leave the county for the winter, those species which "shouldn't be here, but we found one or two holdovers". That list includes: **Northern Harrier, Fish Crow, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Field Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Common Grackle**.

Snow Goose was reported only once, a single bird recorded near Factoryville 12/20 (MS). Birders reported **Tundra Swan** on several occasions. Seven were at LC 12/14 (MC), 75 flew over during the CBC at LW (JH and BT), and 4 were recorded at LC 2/17 (MC).

Gadwall made an uncommon appearance on the CBC, when 3 were recorded at LC (JH and BT). Five had been seen at LC 12/11 (MC). A single **Canvasback**, rare for the count also was recorded on the CBC, at LC (JH, BT). **Ring-necked Duck**, a common visitor to *Wyoming* during migration, was observed on several occasions: 44 at OL 12/1 (MC), 38 at OL 12/7 (MC), and 9 at LW 12/17 (JH, BT). In addition, 2 were recorded at LW 12/17 by a person not participating in the CBC (NF). Among other waterfowl, 10 **Buffleheads** were recorded during the CBC at StL (RL, JL). A **Ruddy Duck** was at OL 12/5 (JD). Uncommon for the CBC, **Horned Grebe** was recorded at LW (JH, BT).

Long-eared Owl made a rare appearance on the CBC, as one female was heard calling at VN (RK, SG). **Horned Lark** were recorded in two locations on 1/16: 150 on a farm just north of Meshoppen, near *Wyoming's* northern boundary with *Susquehanna*, and 100 at BF (JD). Both are reliable locations for larks during winter.

Three other species made rare appearances on the 12/17 CBC. A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was at LW (JH, BT); a **Snow Bunting** at GF (RK, SG), and a **White-crowned Sparrow** at GF (RK, SG). There were no other records of these species during the period. **American Tree Sparrow**, a regular and common winter visitor to *Wyoming*, was recorded at multiple locations on multiple dates, usually one to three individuals. The CBC totaled 47, from three locations, and 15 were recorded at VN 2/8 (NF).

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York County

Locations: Codorus State Park (CSP), Gifford Pinchot State Park (GPSP), Hopewell Township Park (HTP), Long Arm Reservoir (LAR), Lake Redman (LR), York Christmas Bird Count (YCBC), York Springs Christmas Bird Count (YSCBC).

The 114 species reported falls within the recent five-year range for the winter period. However, 31 species of waterfowl were on the high side. The 12/16 YCBC led by Bernie Frick produced 81 species and the *York* portion of the 12/27 YSCBC led by Vern Gauthier found 66 species. The 12/17 Southern Lancaster County CBC experienced another year of calm conditions on the limited *York* portion of the *Susquehanna R.* resulting in minimal waterfowl and gull variety. Highlights for the period were led by a county first – a pair of **Trumpeter Swans**, and winter period firsts, **Osprey** and **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**.

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at GPSP 2/20 (DN). **Snow Geese** were found in all months with a high count of 100 at Airville 2/17 (CF). A **Cackling Goose** was seen on the Codorus Creek 1/24 (EY) in the same vicinity as the pair of **Trumpeter Swans**. The trumpeters were first found and photographed by an anonymous non-birder 1/21. The non-banded pair remained in a fairly short stretch of the stream until 2/3 affording many birders a chance to further photograph and confirm identification. **Mute Swan** remain year round residents at Spring Grove. **Tundra Swan** began to show 2/11 (EP) with a high count of 89 at LAR 2/27 (HM).

Attesting to the relatively mild winter, **Wood Duck** was found in all months with one at LAR 1/15 (DN) particularly notable. Lake Lea produced a couple of high counts; 45 **Gadwalls** 1/11 (KJ), 15 **American Wigeons** 1/8 (AW), and the only report of **Northern**

Shoveler with 6 on 1/11 (KJ). A nice count of 18 **American Black Ducks** came from LAR 1/11 (AW). **Northern Pintail** showed well starting in late Dec with a high of 39 at LR 2/18 (KJ). Seemingly, a single **Canvasback** moved back-and-forth between LAR and CSP 1/9-15 (DN, AW). A pair of **Redheads** was at LAR 1/9-11 (AW) and up to 6 were at CSP 1/1-2/14 (m.ob.). Although **Ring-necked Duck** is found throughout the county, the small ponds at Spring Grove continue to attract and hold the largest numbers - high count was 170 birds 2/23 (PK). A pair of **Greater Scaup** were at CSP 1/11 (AW) and a single was at LR 1/18 (DN). A quartet of **Lesser Scaup** at GPSP 12/14 (DN) was the highest count of the 3 reports.

A nice find was a pair of **Long-tailed Ducks** at GPSP 12/1-10 (DN, AWg). Three **White-winged Scoters** were on the *Susquehanna* 12/5 (DK). Four sites reporting **Common Goldeneye** is more than normal as are 5 reports of **Red-breasted Merganser**. A good red-breasted merg count of 60 came from CSP 1/8-9 (DN, AW). **Ruddy Duck** singles were found at GPSP 12/28 (DN) and LAR 2/13 (CB). Up to 2 **Common Loon** were at CSP throughout the period while the YCBC produced a count of 4. Highlight among grebes was 2 **Red-necked Grebes** at CSP 2/10-14 (CB, KJ, AW).

Ring-necked Pheasant was not reported. Strong counts of **Wild Turkey** suggest the county had good nesting success in 2017. The 8 reports included counts of 35 on the YCBC, 19 along Hoff Rd 2/16 (AM), 17 along Aldinger Rd 2/24 (DK), and 48 along Red Mill Rd 2/22 (RS). A Jan flyover of 2 **Double-crested Cormorants** at Tuscarora Drive 1/26 (AP) was unusual. Singles showed up at CSP 2/15-23 (CB, DN) and LW 2/28 (DW). Raptor reporting was strong with the highlight being an **Osprey** at GPSP 12/14-15 (DN, RW). Prior late date for the county was 11/25. **Northern Harrier** is typically found in decent numbers at HTP throughout this period. However, a late season mowing to mitigate invasive spread on the tract and the surrounding farm acreage reduced the attractiveness of the habitat for the winter. As a result, there was only one report of a single harrier 1/9 (AW) at the site while four other sites held singles as well.

A very good Dec find was a **Lesser Yellowlegs** at LAR 12/17-20 (BR, MR, DN). To **Wilson's Snipe** were found in Shrewsbury Twp. 1/2 (PM) and singles at Spring Grove 2/15 (CB) and HTP 2/25 (DF). Four **American Woodcocks** were detected at LR 2/18 (KC) and a 2/20 visit produced one at LR (DNN). Two **Great Black-backed Gulls** were at the Riddle Rd county landfill 1/3 (DNN) and a single at LR 1/12 (AW). Five reports of **Eastern Screech Owl**, including a trio at Nixon County Park 1/26 (AWg), were more than normal. **Barred Owl** also enjoyed higher reporting with 7 records. The temporary loss of more favorable habitat noted at HTP resulted in only one **Short-eared Owl** report, a single bird 12/29 (RP).

Nine sites reporting **Red-headed Woodpecker** was encouraging after last winter's near total dispersal from the county. Up to 12 were noted at GPSP 1/20 (DNN). Thirty reports of **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** were remarkably high. Six sites reported **Merlin** and 5 had **Peregrine Falcon** reports. A 12/31 visit to a Dillsburg strip mall was rewarded with the sight of a peregrine strafing a flock of **Ring-billed Gulls** in the parking lot (DJG). A strong winter count of 90 **Fish Crow** came from GPSP 1/25 (DN). Nice **Horned Lark** counts included 120 along Prayer Mission Rd 1/3 (DNN) and approximately 100 along Roth Farm Rd 1/18 (AW).

Four reports of **Red-breasted Nuthatch** spanned 1/6-2/17 (DC, IWH, JP, DWi). **Brown Creeper**, **Winter Wren**, and **Golden-crowned Ruby-crowned Kinglet** were well reported and found in all months. Further increases in the reporting trend from recent winters were 17 reports of **Hermit Thrush**, 4 of **Gray Catbird**, and 3 of **Brown Thrasher**. The former 2 species were found in all months while the latter was reported up to 1/8. The only **American Pipit** report was of 12 birds on the YCBC. High count for **Cedar Waxwing** was 124 at GPSP 12/9 (AWg).

A trio of **Chipping Sparrows** still lingered at LR 12/4 (JF). Better counts of **Savannah Sparrow** included 9 on the YSCBC, 5 at LAR 12/21 (PM), and 4 at Shrewsbury Twp. 1/22 (PM). Six reports of **Fox Sparrow** spanned 12/16-2/22 and **Swamp Sparrow** saw very strong reporting with 12 observations throughout the period. The 1/6 female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at a Niles Rd feeder (CM) was noted to have strong

breast streaking which helped to separate it from a winter plumaged Black-headed Grosbeak. Further supporting the Rose-breasted ID were other east coast eBird reports including 2 others in Pennsylvania during this winter. Additionally, there were no Black-headed Grosbeak eBird reports this winter outside of the Gulf Coast and California. This sighting shatters the county's apparent previous late date of 10/22.

Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird were found in all months. HTP produced the only **Eastern Meadowlark** sightings 1/3–2/28 (m.ob.) with a high of 11 on 1/18 (DN). Two **Rusty Blackbirds** were in the Lewisberry area 12/16 (EB) and one was on Chardrie Drive 1/9 (IWH). Ten of 14 **Purple Finch** reports were outside the Great Backyard Bird Count period with a high of 4 at Red Lion 12/29 (RS). Pine Siskin was not reported.

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Rain-proof **Canada Goose** with unusual white spots above eyes, at Middle Creek WMA, Lancaster 24 February. (*Debra Rittelmann*)

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE: Materials to be included in the publication are needed by the due dates below.

Issue	Sightings due to Compilers by...	Articles due to Editor by...	Publication Date
Dec-Feb (Vol. 1)	31 March	1 May	July
Mar-May (Vol. 2)	30 June	1 August	October
Jun-Jul (Vol. 3)	31 August	1 October	December
Aug-Nov (Vol. 4)	31 December	1 February	April

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For articles, the Microsoft Office suite (any version) is preferred; however we will accept any popularly used format, or plain text. Please email written materials in an attached document in its original source format (i.e., no PDF files, please).

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IN FOCUS PART 2



Hermit Thrush, the only *Catharus* thrush to winter in Pennsylvania; always keeping a low profile in the protective thickets and thus so much more the delight in finding one mid-winter, like this bird in North Park, *Allegheny* 15 January. (Geoff Malosh)



Most winter reports of **American Pipit** come from the southeast, like this bird at Marsh Creek SP, *Chester* 10 December. (Barry Blust)



Not often do we get a chance to admire the low-key beauty of a **Snow Bunting**; this bird was at Nockamixon SP *Bucks* 29 December. (August Mirabella)



American Tree Sparrow at Marshall Lake (North Park), *Allegheny* 10 December (Alan Buriak)



Rusty Blackbirds winter sparsely in southern counties in Pennsylvania; these birds were at John Heinz NWR, *Philadelphia* 4 December. (Barry Blust)



This exquisitely photographed **Pine Siskin** was one of a flock of two dozen that wintered in Townville, *Crawford*, seen here 18 February. (Alejandra Lewandowski)