

PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS



Volume 33, No. 1
Dec 2018 - Feb 2019
Issued July 2019





PENNSYLVANIA BIRDS

Journal of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology

Volume 33 Number 1 Dec 2018 - Feb 2019

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Cover: Northampton's second Varied Thrush was found 19 February in Hanover Twp., where it found a plentiful supply of crab apples, keeping it in the area until at least 12 (here 3) March. (Dave DeReamus)

In this issue.....

We have often seen comments on the PABIRDS listserv or on Facebook about various species that have disappeared from someone's feeding station or seem to be missing in general from favorite birding locations. These concerns are seldom indicative of any true population crash of a given species – maybe the missing birds are frequenting a feeder down the road or a Cooper's Hawk has been haunting that favored birding spot.

This past winter we heard such claims again, particularly about chickadees and Tufted Titmouse in southeastern counties. This time, however, the missing birds really were missing, at least to very significant degree, as can be seen in Nick Bolgiano's annual CBC report in this issue.

What happened? Well, Nick addresses that as well in his thoroughly researched report of the impact of West Nile Virus (WNV) on some species. The case for involvement of WNV as the cause of the decline is substantial, if not quite 100% proven. Among other species likely susceptible to WNV is our state bird, the Ruffed Grouse, although the relative effects of WNV vs. habitat loss are not clear.

The 2019 PSO meeting...

...will be held September 13-15 in Williamsport, *Lycoming*. There is still time to register and details are in the recent *PSO Pileated* and at the PSO website: <https://pabirds.org/index.php/annual-meeting>

Pennsylvania Birds has a new photo editor

Ted Nichols II took over as photo editor beginning with the spring issue in 2016. He has served in that role for 11 issues and has been a major contributor to the journal, taking on a task that requires much time and considerable organizational talents, not to mention the skills involved in preparing the photos for publication. Ted even kept up his good work during his six months of deployment with National Guard in Qatar, never missing a beat. Ted is now moving on to new activities, including training for banding of Northern Saw-whet Owls.

Our new photo editor is **Rob Dickerson** who lives near Reedsville in *Mifflin*. Readers of this journal will recognize Rob as someone who has contributed many

excellent photographs over the last few years, including some amazing warbler photos, many from his own back yard, or nearby Rothrock State Forest. Rob is a recent retiree from Penn State in State College.

With the photo editor transition, this is a good time to review some of our photo policy. At the risk of over-simplifying, there are two categories of photos we want: (1) high quality photos of just about any bird, and (2) lesser quality photos ("documentation" shots) of rare or uncommon birds, or of unusual behavior, nesting evidence, or anything else of interest.

From the photos we get each season, we try to use at least one from everyone who submits, excepting those of poor quality (unless of a rarity). I can't guarantee that will always happen – so if your photo is not used one season, please don't give up – send again.

Would you like to sponsor color photos?

Over the last year, a major improvement in *Pennsylvania Birds* has been the move to all-color printing for the photos, the cost of which has fallen enough to make it possible. However, color does add some cost to each issue, probably in excess of \$150 per issue, or at least \$600 for one year of four issues. The first year was generously sponsored by the Bird Screen company (Frank and Barb Haas). Our bank account will allow us to continue with color, but we want to explore other possible ways to pay the cost by soliciting contributions from individuals, businesses, or local bird clubs.

Such contributions could cover the whole cost for one issue or just a portion of the cost for one issue. Individual donations would be acknowledged or could remain anonymous. Businesses would receive free advertising and local bird clubs would get publicity. Contact me if you are interested.

Compiler news

August Mirabella has been compiling *Bucks* since 2000. With this issue's report, he is stepping down as compiler. August's contributions from one of the busiest counties have always been must-reading and he also has served a keen-eyed reviewer of the seasonal Birds of Note report. With the spring issue, *Bucks* will be handled by **Paul Heveran**.

New compilers debut in two counties beginning with this issue. **Mike** and **Laura**

Jackson take over for **Tom Dick** in Bedford, and in Monroe **Bruce Johnson** replaces departing **Brian Hardiman**. Beginning with the spring issue, **Carol Light** will be compiler for *Forest and Elk*.

The following counties need a compiler: *Bradford, Fulton, Luzerne, and McKean*. Contact the editor if interested.

County compilers: **Phil Keener** (Adams, York), **Mike Fialkovich** (Allegheny, Fayette), **Marjorie Van Tassel** (Armstrong), **Geoff Malosh** (Beaver, Lawrence, Washington), **Laura** and **Mike Jackson** (Bedford), **Rudy Keller** and **Matt Wlasniewski** (Berks), **John Carter** (Blair), **August Mirabella**, **Paul Heveran** (Bucks), **Oscar Miller** (Butler), **Dave Gobert** (Cambria), **Mark Johnson** (Cameron), **Billy Weber** (Carbon), **Nan Butkovich** (Centre), **Holly Merker** (Chester), **Carole Winslow** (Clarion), **Diane Bierly** (Clearfield), **Wayne Laubscher** (Clinton), **Andy Keister** (Columbia, Northumberland), **Rob Hodgson** (Crawford), **Vern Gauthier** (Cumberland), **Sandy Lockerman** (Dauphin), **Sheryl Johnson** (Delaware), **Jerry McWilliams** (Erie), **Bill Oyler** (Franklin), **Marjorie Howard** (Greene), **Greg Grove** (Huntingdon, Juniata), **Margaret Higbee** (Indiana), **Thomas Glover** (Jefferson), **Chad Kauffman** (Juniata), **Ryan Johnson** (Lackawanna), **Zach Millen** (Lancaster), **Tim Becker** (Lebanon), **Bill Etter** (Lehigh), **Bobby Brown** (Lycoming), **Glenn Koppel** (Mercer), **Jon Kauffman** (Mifflin), **Brian Hardiman** (Monroe), **Brian Henderson** (Montgomery), **Evan Houston** (Montour), **Michael Schall** (Northampton, Pike), **Holger Pflücke** (Philadelphia), **Dan Hinnebusch** (Perry), **Robert Snyder** (Potter, Tioga), **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).

Photo correction

The photo of a White-winged Crossbill in Vol 30, No. 2 was taken by Ray Barlow. That photo should not have been included for that season, location, or credited as shown.

Evidence for West Nile Virus-Related Avian Declines in Pennsylvania

Nick Bolgiano

When West Nile Virus (WNV) arrived in Pennsylvania in 2000, one year after the first North American detected case in New York City, there was much concern about how it would affect humans, horses, and birds, all of which can become infected and potentially die if the virus invades the nervous system. WNV is transmitted and sustained via a mosquito-bird cycle – infected mosquitoes bite birds. Some birds sicken and die, some sicken and recover, some are unaffected, and some replicate the virus in their bloodstream but remain healthy. If the virus sufficiently amplifies internally to cause naïve biting mosquitoes to become infected, the infected host is considered “competent”. Competent hosts can transmit the virus to unaffected mosquitoes that bite them, and if the birds move to new locations, they can transmit the virus to new mosquito populations. For these reasons, WNV quickly spread post-introduction: in 2000 it was found in 12 northeastern states and the District of Columbia; in 2001 it had spread to the central and Gulf states; in 2003 to the Great Plains from Texas to Canada as well as to southern California; by 2004 to Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean; and by 2006 to southern South America (McLean 2006; Kilpatrick et al. 2007).

In response to this epidemic, Pennsylvania’s Departments of Agriculture, Environmental Protection (DEP), and Health developed a statewide monitoring network, which traps and tests mosquitoes, tests dead birds, and monitors the testing of humans and horses (PA WNV Control Program 2019). Only a very small percentage of infected humans risk serious illness or death, and the vast majority have few or no symptoms. Similar monitoring programs have been adopted by other states, with Pennsylvania’s being among the more comprehensive and long-running (CDC WNV Disease Maps 2019). While some Pennsylvania counties terminated the monitoring in 2008, DEP biologists continue to monitor those counties at lesser intervals (Michael Hutchinson, per. comm.).

During the initial WNV peak (2001-2003), large numbers of dead birds, particularly American Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) and Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*), found in Pennsylvania were a major concern. In fact, across much of the country, the detection of dead birds, especially corvids, was typically the first indication that WNV had arrived (McLean 2006). In areas where individual American Crow populations were closely monitored, large numbers of crows disappeared during this time. Of marked individual crows, an estimated 68% died in Champaign/Urbana, IL, during 2002 and 72% died in Stillwater,

OK, during 2003 (Yaremych et al. 2004; Caffrey et al. 2005).

In Pennsylvania, corvids made up the majority of dead birds that tested WNV-positive since the program began: 2110 American Crows (73.4%) and 526 Blue Jays (18.3%) (PA WNV Control Program 2019). Those percentages are enhanced because DEP began to accept only corvids and raptors for WNV testing once it became obvious that both were susceptible to WNV and highly noticeable to the public (Michael Hutchinson, per. comm.). Dead bird surveillance was likely more efficient in the early period of WNV because of the fear and uncertainty experienced by the public regarding the virus, and public requests from surveillance agencies to submit dead birds found on the landscape.

Somewhat overlooked during these early years of the WNV epidemic, was the fact that fewer chickadees and Tufted Titmice (*Baeolophus bicolor*) were observed. After the disappearance of Black-capped Chickadees (*Poecile atricapillus*) from several areas around Chicago, IL, Bonter and Hochachka (2003) noted that both Black-capped Chickadees and Carolina Chickadees (*Poecile carolinensis*) had declined at many Project Feeder Watch stations from the upper Midwest to New England. Less-widespread declines were noted among American Crows, Blue Jays, and Tufted Titmice in those same areas (Bonter and Hochachka 2003).

By the end of Pennsylvania’s second Breeding Bird Atlas in 2009, the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) indicated that American Crows had suffered a multi-year downturn during the initial WNV peak, but subsequently recovered (Brittingham 2012), and there was no indication that Blue Jay numbers were adversely affected by WNV (Gross 2012). However, it was also apparent that Pennsylvania’s Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) experienced a population decline after WNV arrival, as evidenced by the high number of dead owls found relative to their being a secretive species, their severe response to WNV when infected, and their relative scarcity (declines in both the Christmas Bird Count and block detections between breeding bird atlases) (Bolgiano 2012). At that time, Great Horned Owls were the only bird species in Pennsylvania generally thought to be experiencing a sustained decline from WNV.

The decline in Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) evident at the end of the second atlas was initially attributed to the lack of sufficient young forest (Gregg 2012). However, after further review of the data both in-state and across the Mid-Atlantic, a focus study was launched in 2015. Laboratory testing showed that young Pennsylvania Ruffed Grouse were highly

susceptible to WNV, with as many as 80-90% of infected chicks suffering either rapid mortality or moderate to severe tissue damage in the heart and brain (Nemeth et al. 2017). Statistical modeling using Pennsylvania breeding bird atlas block occupancies, Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) flush rates, and the availability of young forest further indicated that both habitat and WNV were affecting the persistence of local grouse populations and their ability to colonize nearby areas (Stauffer et al. 2017).

While a total of 332 bird species, including 249 native and non-captive species, have been found dead in the United States and WNV-positive from follow-up testing (CDC ArboNET 2019), the effect of WNV infection varies widely among species. When verifying that an agent is causing a disease, it is customary to infect a healthy organism and observe whether symptoms occur. In addition to Ruffed Grouse, WNV mortality from such challenge experiments has been observed in Blue Jay, Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*), American Crow, Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*), Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*), Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*), House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), and Tufted Titmouse (Komar et al. 2003; Kilpatrick et al. 2013). WNV infection was also observed in previously healthy birds after contact with infected birds or by eating an infected host (Komar et al. 2003).

Competent host species, those that when infected internally amplify the virus so as to cause naïve biting mosquitoes to become infected, play an important role in sustaining WNV epidemics. Blue Jay, American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), House Finch, Common Grackle, House Sparrow, Ring-billed Gull, Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), and Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) have been identified as competent hosts (Komar et al. 2003; Reisen et al. 2005; Kilpatrick et al. 2007; LaDeau et al. 2008; Fonseca et al. 2018). Thought to be particularly-important to sustaining WNV epidemics have been House Sparrow in the initial New York City epidemic (Fonseca et al. 2018), American Robin in eastern North America (LaDeau et al. 2008), and House Finch near the west coast (Reisen et al. 2005; Wheeler et al. 2009).

Death from WNV in birds usually occurs 4-8 days after infection. If the bird survives, the virus is commonly present for up to seven days (Komar et al. 2003) and the bird starts producing antibodies at around day four. Antibodies are long-lasting and protect against re-infection (Kilpatrick et al. 2007). Antibody presence is more a measure of WNV resistance than susceptibility (McLean 2006; LaDeau et al.

2008). As an example, in a 3-year study of hunter-harvested grouse in PA, antibody prevalence was found to be nearly as low as in American Crows and Greater Sage-Grouse (*Controcercus urophasianus*) – both of which are considered highly susceptible (Nemeth et al., in prep.).

While many raptors have been found dead from WNV, how WNV has affected raptor populations remains largely unknown. In Pennsylvania, five raptor species predominated the dead raptors found to be WNV-positive: Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) (38 birds), Great Horned Owl (35), Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) (23), Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) (12), and American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) (7) (PA WNV Control Program 2019). The same five species also dominated the national list of WNV-positive dead raptors, with slight differences in order (Nemeth et al. 2006). It is thought that eating dead infected hosts may make raptors more prone to acquire WNV (Komar et al. 2003; Nemeth et al. 2007; Saito et al. 2007). However, if a raptor is feeding on local prey infected with WNV, the bird itself is likely being exposed to WNV mosquito vectors in that area.

WNV challenge experiments of American Kestrel, Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Red-tailed Hawk, Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), and Great Horned Owl failed to produce clinical disease (Nemeth et al. 2006). Wild raptors admitted to a rehabilitation clinic were frequently infected with WNV, but clinical disease progression varied among species, with Great Horned Owls and Red-tailed Hawks showing higher infection rates among admitted birds; Great Horned Owls showed the highest level of neurological symptoms and American Kestrels were among the lowest. While recovery after rehabilitation is common, some infected raptors exhibited subclinical levels of damage thought to be sufficient to decrease survival in the wild (Nemeth et al. 2006, 2009). Necropsies have shown WNV to be the frequent cause of raptor death (Saito et al. 2007; Wünschmann 2004, 2005, 2014). In the most comprehensive raptor necropsy study, WNV was indicated as the cause of death in 5% of 1448 Ontario raptors (1991-2014), including Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) (WNV caused 13% of all goshawk deaths), Sharp-shinned Hawk (11%), Merlin (10%), Great Horned Owl (8%), Red-tailed Hawk (7%), American Kestrel (7%), Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) (5%), and Cooper's Hawk (3%) (Smith et al. 2018). Other studies have shown that Cooper's Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, Great Horned Owls, and American Kestrels that possess antibodies to WNV, implying that they were once exposed to the virus, reproduced at around the same rate as birds that had never been exposed (Stout et al. 2005; Dubé et al. 2010; Dusek et al. 2012).

Statistical analyses have examined

WNV effects upon birds. Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data from the Northeast showed declines in American Crows and Great Horned Owls early in the WNV epidemic, but not in eight other species, including Blue Jays and chickadee spp. (Black-capped and Carolina), which suggested cautious optimism that WNV has limited effects (Caffrey and Peterson 2003). A multi-state analysis of Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data, including from the Northeast, showed declines over a longer time period (2000-2006) in American Crow, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, chickadee spp. (Black-capped and Carolina), House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), and Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) (LaDeau et al. 2007). Almost all species identified as affected by WNV were previously-identified as susceptible to WNV from laboratory experiments. In California, the WNV risk to different bird species was computed from four data sources: the WNV levels in free-ranging birds, the percent of WNV-positives in dead birds, susceptibility in challenge studies, and analytical results from BBS data. Species found to have the highest WNV risk were American Crow, House Finch, Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), California Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), and Yellow-billed Magpie (*Pica nuttalli*). While data for Oak Titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*) were incomplete, it was also suspected to be at high risk (Wheeler et al. 2009). Another analysis used data from over 500 MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) stations in 49 states to detect if annual survival of birds changed after WNV arrival, with data from all sites combined to detect changes after WNV arrival. Either one-year declines and subsequent recovery, or a consistently lower annual survival rate were estimated for 23 of 49 bird species. Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*), Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*), Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), Song Sparrow, and Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) were among those species showing a one-year decline, while Tufted Titmouse was among those species showing a consistently lower annual survival (George et al. 2015).

For this article, I reviewed the WNV literature and trends for all bird species for which there is sufficient count data in the CBC, BBS, and Pennsylvania hawk watches and report here on declines that are or could be WNV-related. I also note additional species for which there is evidence elsewhere of WNV effects.

Method

Pennsylvania WNV Index Measures. The Pennsylvania WNV control program supplied two data sets. One is the WNV "vector index", an indicator of the annual WNV prevalence in mosquitoes (available

since 2003 courtesy of the Department of Environmental Protection). The WNV vector index is calculated as the average mosquito density multiplied by their estimated percent WNV-infected, summed for the two mosquito vectors, *Culex restuans* and *Culex pipiens*. Thus, the index estimates the average density of infected mosquitoes. Being a direct measure of the WNV risk from mosquito vectors, the vector index is the preferred measure of WNV risk.

The PA-DEP WNV Surveillance Program also provided the WNV testing results for dead birds, 2000-2018 (PA WNV Control Program 2019). The percent of dead birds that tested as WNV-positive data was used to estimate the vector index values for 2000-2002, using simple linear regression without a constant term (and omitting 2018 as an outlier).

Christmas Bird Count and Breeding Bird Survey. Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data were obtained (NAS 2018; Sauer et al. 2017) and trends were examined for 80 species in the CBC and 124 species in the BBS (total 150, with 54 in both surveys) to see if visible changes occurred after 2000. Because the strongest evidence for WNV-related declines was found in CBC data, those data are featured here, with the BBS corroborating in some cases. The analyzed CBC data are from 1980-2018, to provide periods before and after WNV arrival. Because each CBC period spans the end and beginning of consecutive years, the year is considered to be the one in which Christmas occurred. BBS data are the 1980-2015 hierarchical model estimates of the mean birds per route (unavailable after 2015).

CBC data were adjusted for effort, either count per ten nocturnal hours for owls or count per ten party hours for non-owls. Omitted were counts with less than one nocturnal hour for owls or 20 party hours for non-owls or sites having less than four years of those effort minimums.

For American Crow, House Finch, and Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), all but those several omitted sites were included in calculating the effort-adjusted CBC means; for other species, contiguous sites from core regions were selected based upon similar densities and landscapes. For Black-capped Chickadee, selected sites were north of the chickadee contact zone, with none reporting Carolina Chickadee or chickadee spp.; for Carolina Chickadee, selected sites were south of the contact zone (Figure 2).

Effort-adjusted CBC counts of selected sites were averaged for each year, thus equally weighting the sites. For American Crow and Mallard, the mean of the natural log of effort-adjusted counts plus 1 was calculated for all sites, with back-transformed means displayed.

Statistical testing of the relationship of effort-adjusted count data to WNV used one of two methods. For those species whose effort-adjusted count data varied closely in response to the WNV vector index, transfer function analysis was used, using both the WNV vector index and previous series values as predictors over 1998-2018 (or 1998-2015 for BBS data). For those species whose trend was linear, simple regression analysis was used, with the predictor being a yearly integer index over 2000-2018 (or 2000-2015 for BBS data). For all species for which there was significant statistical evidence of a WNV effect, the total decline was estimated as the percent change in model predictions between the 2000 and 2018 end points (or 2000 and 2015 for BBS data and 2005 and 2018 for Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottus*)).

Hawk Watch. Pennsylvania hawk watch trends calculated by the Raptor Population Index project (Crewe et al. 2016) were examined to see if any visible changes occurred after 2000.

Results

WNV Vector Index. The WNV vector index (an indicator of the annual WNV prevalence in mosquitoes) was high in 2003, was low during 2004-2009, slowly increased during 2010-2011, and spiked again in 2012. Subsequently, the vector index has remained high, spiking in 2015 and rising further in 2017-2018. The 2018 vector index value was nearly four times the previous long-term average (2003-2017) (Figure 1).

The percent of dead birds that tested positive for WNV (an indirect measure of

WNV risk), showed similar patterns to the vector index (correlation=0.83 during 2003-2017). Regression analysis indicated that this percentage explained 90.1% of the variation in the vector index over 2003-2017, allowing estimation of the vector index values for 2000-2002 and giving form to the 2002-2003 WNV peak (Figure 1).

CBC, BBS, and Hawk Watch. There was evidence to strongly indicate WNV population-level effects in six species and possible, though unconfirmed, evidence to suggest WNV effects in eleven species (Table 1). Each is discussed below and data are shown for all but Red-tailed Hawk and Cooper's Hawk, whose hawk watch trends can be viewed on-line (Crewe et al. 2016). Species designated of greatest conservation need in Pennsylvania (PA Wildlife Action Plan 2015) are noted.

American Crow. (Strong Evidence) American Crow numbers appear to have been highly influenced by WNV. Both the CBC and the BBS indicate that prior to WNV arrival, average densities of American Crows were generally increasing. After WNV arrival, American Crow densities declined when WNV levels in mosquitoes were high and recovered several years after WNV levels in mosquitoes fell to a low level in 2004. The transfer function model (using vector index and prior series values to predict) explained 81.5% of the variation in the CBC American Crow mean/10 party hours and estimated a 57.0% decline statewide over 2000-2018 (Figure 3). Density maps indicate that the most consistent losses between pre- and post-WNV arrival periods were in southeastern Pennsylvania.

The CBC data suggest that crow roost dynamics changed over time and WNV could possibly be contributing. During 1969-1993, the majority of American Crows were reported from site totals of 10,000 or more, indicating large roosts. The contribution from sites with large roosts declined during the second half of the 1990s, such that no CBC site reported more than 4000 American Crows in 2000, the year of WNV arrival. In years when the WNV level in mosquitoes was high, the CBC contribution from large winter roosts increased. The largest roosts during the WNV period have been at Lancaster, Pittsburgh, Bethlehem-Easton, and Scranton.

Great Horned Owl. (Strong Evidence) Great Horned Owls showed a large and sustained decline after WNV arrival, according to the CBC. In the southeast, the linear regression model (using an integer index as predictor) explained 82.8% of the variation in the CBC Great Horned Owl mean/10 nocturnal hours and estimated a 76.1% decline. In the central region, the linear regression model explained 39.2% of the Great Horned Owl mean/10 nocturnal hours and estimated a 42.6% decline (Figure 3). The fifteen CBC sites reporting the highest numbers of great horned owls/10 nocturnal hours were all during the pre-WNV period, with eleven of those being from the southeast, led by Lancaster, Bethlehem-Easton, Wyncote, Southern Bucks County, and Central Bucks County. After the arrival of WNV, sites reporting the highest numbers of Great Horned Owls/10 nocturnal hours were predominantly in the central part of the state, with Lancaster

Table 1. Apparent WNV effect upon different bird species in Pennsylvania.

Species	Strength of evidence for population level impacts of WNV	Observed Trend
American Crow	Strong	CBC mean declined by an estimated 57.0% statewide, 2000-2018
Great Horned Owl	Strong	CBC mean declined by an estimated 76.1% in southeast and 42.6% in central, 2000-2018
Ruffed Grouse *	Strong	CBC mean declined by an estimated 70.6% in uplands, 2000-2018
Black-capped Chickadee	Strong	CBC mean declined by an estimated 36.7% in north and 27.4% in Ridge & Valley, 2000-2018
Carolina Chickadee	Strong	CBC mean declined by an estimated 57.2% at 14 southeastern sites, 2000-2018
Tufted Titmouse	Strong	CBC mean declined by an estimated 49.6% in southern 2/3 of state, 2000-2018
Northern Goshawk *	Possible	CBC mean declined by an estimated 66.4%, 2000-2018
Sharp-shinned Hawk *	Possible	CBC mean declined 44.7% in southeast, 2000-2018
Cooper's Hawk	Possible	Fall hawk watch counts declined at Hawk Mt by an estimated 7.33%/yr, 2006-2016, and at Waggoner's Gap by an estimated 8.14%/yr, 2006-2016 (Crewe et al. 2016)
Red-tailed Hawk	Possible	Fall hawk watch counts declined at Hawk Mt by an estimated 4.51%/yr, 2006-2016, and at Waggoner's Gap by an estimated 4.83%/yr, 2006-2016 (Crewe et al. 2016)
Eastern Bluebird	Possible	Moderate declines in CBC mean when WNV high, but no overall trend, 2000-2018
House Wren	Possible	Moderate declines in BBS mean when WNV high, but no overall trend, 2000-2015
American Robin	Possible	Moderate declines in BBS mean when WNV high, but no overall trend, 2000-2015
Northern Mockingbird	Possible	CBC mean declined by an estimated 64.7% in southeast, 2005-2018
Mallard	Possible	CBC mean declined by an estimated 32.4% statewide, 2000-2018
House Finch	Possible	CBC mean declined by an estimated 56.8% statewide, 2000-2018
Killdeer	Possible	BBS mean declined by an estimated 25.5% statewide, 2000-2015
* - Species of Greatest Conservation Need		

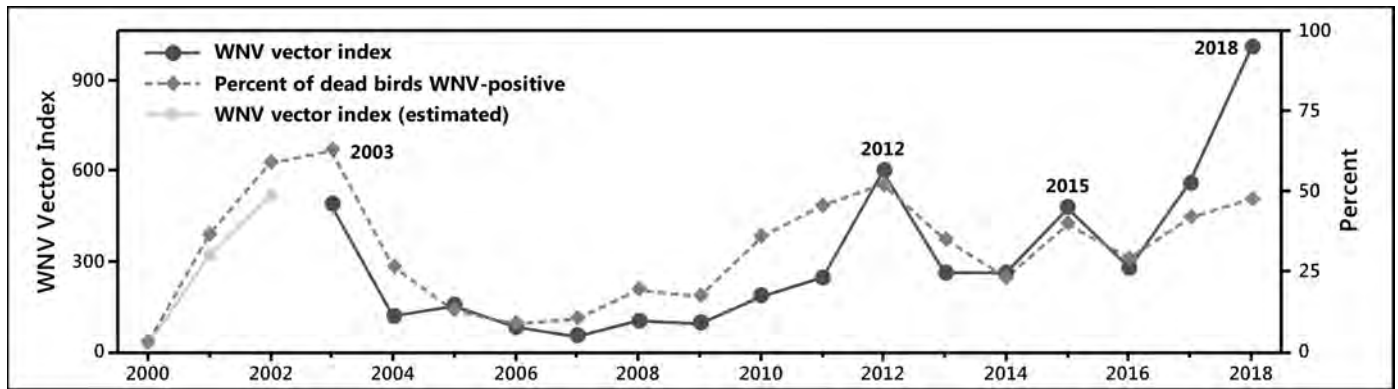


Figure 1. WNV vector index (left scale) and the percent of dead birds that tested positive for WNV (right scale).

being the only southeastern site east of the Susquehanna River among the top twelve.

Ruffed Grouse. (Strong Evidence) Ruffed Grouse also showed a large and sustained decline after WNV arrival, according to the CBC. The linear regression model explained 50.7% of the variation in the CBC Ruffed Grouse mean/10 party hours and estimated a 70.6% decline from a region north of the Kittatinny Ridge and east of Pittsburgh, 2000-2018. After WNV arrival, higher concentrations remained only in the north-central, particularly at Emporium, Benezette, Pleasantville, Northern Lycoming County, and a cluster of sites in the south-central: Lake Raystown, Culp, and Huntingdon. In recent years, few grouse have been reported from the west, the south, and the east (Figure 3). The north-central and northwestern regions are where grouse flush rates from hunter reports appear to have been least affected by WNV. Though these regions do exhibit steep, temporary declines in years of very high WNV prevalence, populations have thus far rebounded quickly during years of low to moderate WNV prevalence (Williams 2015; Stauffer et al. 2017).

Black-capped Chickadee. (Strong Evidence) Black-capped Chickadees showed sustained declines across its Pennsylvania range after WNV arrival. Within the Black-capped Chickadee range, pre-WNV densities were highest in the north and lowest near the southwestern and southeastern contact zone with Carolina Chickadee. In the north, the linear regression model explained 38.3% of the variation in the CBC Black-capped Chickadee mean/10 party hours and estimated a 36.7% decline, 2000-2018; in the central Ridge-and-Valley, linear regression model explained just 18.9% of the variation in the CBC Black-capped Chickadee mean/10 party hours (near significance, p -value = 0.063) and estimated a 27.4% decline (Figure 3). BBS data show a downward trend in Black-capped Chickadees beginning in 2012 (Sauer et al. 2017), which is about when the declines in the CBC data become readily-

apparent.

Carolina Chickadee. (Strong Evidence) Carolina Chickadee numbers were increasing before WNV arrival according to both CBC and BBS, as the contact zone between chickadee species gradually moved northward. After WNV arrival, Carolina Chickadee densities at 14 southeastern CBC sites declined when WNV levels in mosquitoes were high, especially in 2003-2004 and 2017-2018, and recovered when WNV levels in mosquitoes were low, similar to American Crow. The transfer function model explained 73.8% of the variation in the CBC Carolina Chickadee mean/10 party hours and estimated a 57.2% decline from the southeastern region south of the chickadee contact zone, 2000-2018 (Figure 3). Pennsylvania BBS data also showed a drop-off in Carolina Chickadees in 2003-2004, with recovery through 2015 (Sauer et al. 2017).

Tufted Titmouse. (Strong Evidence) Tufted Titmice numbers were also increasing before WNV arrival according to both CBC and BBS. After WNV arrival, Tufted Titmouse numbers declined when WNV levels in mosquitoes were high, especially in 2003 and 2017-2018, and rebounded after the WNV level fell, similar to American Crow and Carolina Chickadee. The transfer function model explained 75.9% of the variation in the CBC Tufted Titmouse mean/10 party hours and estimated a 49.6% decline from their core area that is mostly in the southern 2/3 of the state, 2000-2018 (Figure 3). Pennsylvania BBS data show a drop-off in Tufted Titmice during 2004, with recovery through 2015 (Sauer et al. 2017).

Northern Goshawk. (Possible Evidence) For the Northern Goshawk, during the 1980s and 1990s, there was no detectable trend in the CBC Northern Goshawk mean/10 party hr, although there was considerable year-to-year variation. Since WNV arrival, the CBC trend has been downward. The linear regression model explained 28.5% of the CBC Northern Goshawk mean/10 party hours and

estimated a 66.4% decline outside of the southern corners of the state, 2000-2018 (Figure 4). During 1991-2003, 10-14 goshawks were tallied in the Pennsylvania CBC during 10 of the 13 years; since 2004, a double-digit statewide total was observed only once.

Among Pennsylvania hawk watches, there was significant evidence for long-term declines in northern goshawk counts at Hawk Mountain during 1967-2016, and at Waggoner's Gap during 1985-2016 (Crewe et al. 2016). Though the migrant count declines have spanned decades, the wintering number has dropped more recently.

Sharp-shinned Hawk. (Possible Evidence) For the Sharp-shinned Hawk, migration counts of Sharp-shinned Hawks have declined at Hawk Mountain, PA, and Cape May, NJ, since the end of the large spruce budworm infestation during the 1970s to mid-1980s (Bolgiano 2005; Crewe et al. 2016). At the same time, wintering densities increased in a region centered around the Chesapeake Bay, including southeastern Pennsylvania, as migratory short-stopping apparently kept wintering densities high (Viverette et al. 1996; Bolgiano 1997). Eventual declines in these wintering densities may have been inevitable, given an apparently declining population size; however, the timing is consistent with a WNV effect. The linear regression model explained 64.1% of the variation in the CBC Sharp-shinned Hawk mean/10 party hours and estimated a 44.7% decline in southeastern Pennsylvania (Figure 4).

Cooper's Hawk. (Possible Evidence) After an historical low in the 1960s, Cooper's Hawk densities in the Pennsylvania CBC have steadily increased (Bolgiano 1997) and have outnumbered Sharp-shinned Hawks since 2004, while block detections in the second PA breeding bird atlas were 44% higher than in the first atlas (Goodrich 2012). At Pennsylvania fall hawk watches, particularly at Hawk Mountain, Waggoner's Gap, and Stone Mountain, Cooper's Hawk numbers rapidly increased in a similar manner to the CBC counts, but

starting in the early-to-mid 2000s, these migration counts then rapidly declined (Crewe et al. 2016). Concurrent increases in the CBC and BBS, particularly in the Midwest, were thought to be consistent with migratory short-stopping (Bolgiano 2018). A Wisconsin study showed that the presence of WNV antibodies had no apparent effect upon Cooper's Hawk reproduction (Stout et al. 2005).

Red-tailed Hawk. (Possible Evidence) Declines in Red-tailed Hawk migration counts have occurred at some Mid-Atlantic and northern hawk watches, especially since 2008 and in the Pennsylvania Winter Raptor Survey (WRS) since 2001 in the Susquehanna Valley and the southeast. Because BBS densities have increased across the eastern United States and CBC densities have gradually shifted northward, migratory short-stopping has been proposed to explain much of the Red-tailed Hawk declines (Bolgiano 2013; Paprocki et al. 2017; Bolgiano and Grove 2018).

There is a plausible reason why WNV could be having a disproportionate effect upon those Red-tailed Hawks that are most likely to migrate. A study of transmitted Red-tailed Hawks in southern California found that they were more likely to migrate when young or when prey was limited (McCrary et al. 2019). In Ontario, necropsies of Red-tailed Hawks showed that young birds were nearly four times as likely to be diagnosed with WNV compared to adults (Smith et al. 2018). If young Red-tailed Hawks are those most likely to migrate, increased mortality of the young birds from WNV might explain some migration count declines.

Eastern Bluebird. (Possible Evidence) CBC and BBS data show a modest decline for Eastern Bluebird during 2002-2003 (a 10.4% decline in CBC means), which LaDeau et al. (2007) identified as an apparent WNV effect. There was a more substantial decline during 2017-2018 (a 36.1% decline in CBC means). However, there was no significant evidence for a WNV effect, no overall trend, and it appears that Eastern Bluebirds compensated for the losses (Figure 4).

House Wren. (Possible Evidence) Before WNV arrival, BBS data indicate that House Wrens were undergoing a slow decline in Pennsylvania that continued during the initial WNV peak. House Wren was identified by LaDeau et al. (2007) as experiencing moderate effects from WNV. After WNV in mosquitoes fell, House Wren numbers rebounded, then fell again when WNV attained high levels in mosquitoes in 2012. There was no significant evidence for a WNV effect or no overall trend (Figure 4). Another wren species, the Carolina Wren, experienced intermediate effects in a WNV challenge experiment (8 of 11 infected birds survived) (Kilpatrick et al. 2013).

American Robin. (Possible Evidence) BBS data for American Robin also showed a modest decline in 2003-2005 (a 9.5% drop in means), which LaDeau et al. (2007) identified as an apparent WNV effect. However, this was followed by a large upward spike in 2008-2010 (a 21.3% increase in 2004-2010 means), which was not well-predicted by the transfer function model. That model explained 66.1% of the variation in the BBS American Robin mean/route, but American Robins appeared to have compensated for any losses, at least up to 2015 (Figure 4).

Northern Mockingbird. (Possible Evidence) Northern Mockingbird numbers began a significant decline in Pennsylvania within the last 15 years. The linear regression model explained 87.6% of the variation in the CBC Northern Mockingbird mean/10 party hours and estimated a 64.7% decline in the southeast, 2005-2018. Northern Mockingbird has died from WNV (Tolsá et al. 2018), but the beginning of the Pennsylvania decline was nine years after WNV arrived, unlike other affected species. Further study is needed to see if WNV has had a role in the observed decline. It is also plausible that this decline is related to a recent dieback of multiflora rose from rose rosette disease (a mite-vectoring viral disease), as Northern Mockingbirds have long been associated with multiflora rose for a wintering food source (McWilliams and Brauning 2000).

Mallard. (Possible Evidence) Population estimates for Mallard have fallen about 40% in the Northeast over 1998-2016 (Kosack 2019). The linear regression model explained 66.1% of the variation in the CBC Mallard mean/10 party hours and estimated a 32.4% decline statewide, 2000-2018 (Figure 4). While the Mallard trend looks similar to the trends for several species affected by WNV, the decline period coincided with an expansion of the duck hunting season from 50 days to 60 days, starting in 1998. Biologists suspect that hunting over-harvest and continued loss of high-quality wetlands are contributing to Mallard declines. Therefore, starting in 2019, the daily Mallard bag limit in the Atlantic Flyway will be reduced from four to two, with no more than one hen in possession. If the over-harvest suspicion is true, then population numbers should rebound after this change (Kosack 2019). If Mallard numbers fail to rebound after the daily limit reduction, a WNV-related effect might be considered, as waterfowl have been noted as dying from WNV, particularly juveniles and including Mallards (Austin et al. 2004; Himsworth et al. 2009; Cox et al. 2015; Meece et al. 2016).

House Finch. (Possible Evidence) The House Finch population underwent a rapid

expansion, peaking in the late 1980s to early 1990s, and then abruptly declined from conjunctivitis, a highly contagious bacterial eye disease (Grove 2012). Numbers stabilized during 1996-2001, but then declined again. The linear regression model explained 47.9% of the CBC House Finch mean/10 party hours and estimated a 56.8% decline statewide over 2000-2018 (Figure 4). BBS data show a similar pattern (Grove 2012). In California, House Finch annual survival declined after WNV arrived (Pelligrini et al. 2011).

Killdeer. (Possible Evidence) Killdeer is considered a competent host and the BBS trend is downward since WNV arrival. The linear regression model explained 61.5% of the BBS Killdeer mean/route and estimated a 25.5% decline, 2000-2015 (Figure 4).

Discussion

During the initial WNV peak in 2001-2003, dead birds, mostly American Crows and Blue Jays, marked its passage across the landscape. When the WNV risk declined in 2004-2009, there was a relative hiatus in dead birds, which gave reason to think that the danger from WNV had waned. However, current evidence reveals that WNV levels in mosquitoes have remained high since 2012, several bird species have experienced substantial WNV-induced declines, and WNV effects are possible for additional species.

Initial WNV amplification, then subsidence, has been observed in many locations (Wheeler et al. 2009), and indeed, this was also the case in Pennsylvania through 2009. However, WNV prevalence in mosquitoes has re-amplified in Pennsylvania, reaching the highest observed level in 2018. Warmer spring temperatures and alternating wet and dry periods during April-July are the conditions usually associated with higher levels of WNV in mosquitoes (McLean 2006; Little et al. 2016). While vector index values do not readily match up with corresponding rainfall totals, higher than average rainfall has occurred in Pennsylvania during the WNV era: during 2003-2004 in some areas, and very high levels in 2011 and 2018 in most areas (including some record highs in 2018) (NOAA Regional Climate Center 2019). Pennsylvania mosquito testing shows the southeast region as frequently having higher WNV risk than elsewhere (PA WNV Control Program 2019).

Strong evidence for WNV-caused declines is indicated for American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, and Tufted Titmouse by their count data inversely mirroring the WNV levels in mosquitoes, falling after the WNV levels in mosquitoes rose and rebounding soon after the WNV level fell. Ruffed Grouse showed the same response in data collected by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, particularly in the hunter flush

rate index (Williams 2015). There is a hint of this pattern in the Black-capped Chickadee data, but their decline has been more steadily downward, as it has been for Great Horned Owl and Ruffed Grouse. Corroborative evidence for WNV causation is from challenge experiments producing high mortality for American Crow, Ruffed Grouse, and Tufted Titmouse; deaths or disappearance upon WNV arrival for American Crow and Black-capped Chickadee; and Great Horned Owl tending to show severe responses to WNV infection.

In recent decades, Pennsylvania's Northern Goshawk population has declined and retracted (Brinker 2012) and an ongoing research project aims to clarify its PA status. The CBC provides evidence to suggest a declining trend since WNV arrival. It is conceivable that Northern Goshawks could be getting WNV from either mosquitoes or eating WNV-infected Ruffed Grouse, one of Northern Goshawks' favorite prey items, or are declining because Ruffed Grouse are also declining. That Northern Goshawk necropsies showed WNV as the likely cause of death and that goshawks died from WNV at a relatively high percentage (Wünschmann et al. 2005; Smith et al. 2018) may indicate that Northern Goshawks can readily acquire the disease.

Among other raptor species, Red-tailed Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Cooper's Hawk stand out by their combination of being often found dead from WNV and having a notable decline during the WNV period (migration counts for Red-tailed Hawk and Cooper's Hawk, migration and CBC counts for Sharp-shinned Hawk). More research is needed to determine if WNV is contributing to those declines.

While American Kestrels have also been found dead from WNV, their populations have been declining since the 1970s, predating WNV arrival (Smallwood et al. 2009; Bolgiano et al. 2015; Crewe et al. 2016). Among raptors infected with WNV, they have shown lower levels of neurological symptoms (Nemeth et al. 2006, 2009), and while WNV antibodies have been found in American Kestrels near Hawk Mountain (Medica et al. 2007), Québec and Colorado studies showed that the presence of WNV antibodies in adult kestrels had no apparent effect upon their clutch size, or the hatching and fledgling success of young (Dubé et al. 2010; Dusek et al. 2012). Compared to the three accipiters and Red-tailed Hawk, it seems less likely that American Kestrel populations have been affected by WNV. American Kestrel is also a species of greatest conservation need in Pennsylvania (PA Wildlife Action Plan 2015).

House Wren, American Robin, and Eastern Bluebird were identified by LaDeau et al. (2007), using BBS data, as being affected by WNV over 2000-2005. However, population losses appear to have been short-term, concentrated when WNV

levels in mosquitoes were high, and rebounding afterwards. The MAPS study also found no long-term trends for House Wren and American Robin (George et al. 2015).

Northern Mockingbird, Mallard, House Finch, and Killdeer are all experiencing steep declines, with WNV being a plausible cause for each. More research is needed to show a connection.

Black-crowned Night-Heron was judged to be a species at high risk from WNV in California (Wheeler et al. 2009). However, Pennsylvania's breeding Black-crowned Night-Herons have been in steep decline since their Rookery Island colony in the lower Susquehanna Valley was abandoned in 1988, several years after the 1985 peak (McWilliams and Brauning 2000). It is now typical for no Black-crowned Night-Herons to be reported during the Pennsylvania CBC. It remains unknown if WNV has contributed to their recent decline. Black-crowned Night-Heron is also a species of greatest conservation need in Pennsylvania (PA Wildlife Action Plan 2015).

There was no discernible effect in Pennsylvania count data for Blue Jay, Common Grackle, House Sparrow, and Song Sparrow after WNV arrival, nor was there for Fish Crow. Fish Crows and Blue Jays appear to be more resistant to WNV than American Crows (LaDeau et al. 2008). A severe initial response and subsequent population recovery has been common to Blue Jays in eastern North America (LaDeau et al. 2007; Smith et al. 2013).

All species whose declines were noted above as linked or possibly linked to WNV were residents or short-distance migrants and had been previously identified as being affected by WNV in some way. It isn't clear if those species are among the most susceptible to WNV or if their life-histories create more exposure to mosquitoes.

For those species commonly observed in the CBC, that survey's large tallies, compared to the BBS, allowed better detection of WNV effects. The year 2015 illustrates CBC vs. BBS effort and sample differences across Pennsylvania. In the CBC, 75 sites reported 6,574 party-hours and 366 nocturnal hours; in the BBS, 104 routes were run, with 260 total hours of observation. Statewide, there were 10,663 Tufted Titmice tallied in the CBC vs. 954 in the BBS; 8,645 Black-capped Chickadees tallied in the CBC vs. 621 in the BBS; 5,993 Carolina Chickadees tallied in the CBC vs. 156 in the BBS; 300 Great Horned Owls tallied in the CBC vs. nine in the BBS; and 75 Ruffed Grouse tallied in the CBC vs. three in the BBS. The signal in the sheer volume of CBC data can overwhelm the noise created by protocol inconsistencies among sites (Caffrey and Peterson 2003)

Avian populations in Pennsylvania that need further statistical investigations into WNV effects include those not well-

sampled by the CBC, particularly long-distance migrants. As this study showed that some avian population trends are inversely related to WNV levels in mosquitoes, analysis of BBS data (e.g. LaDeau et al. 2007) or MAPS data (e.g. George et al. 2015) is best done within regions having common WNV prevalence in mosquitoes.

Research questions suggested by this analysis include: Have WNV re-amplification and similar bird declines occurred elsewhere? Is there sufficient data on WNV levels in mosquitoes to permit an updated assessment of continental bird losses caused by WNV? Will WNV subside naturally or have high levels in mosquitoes become the norm? Can human interventions dampen WNV and limit avian declines without significant side-effects? How are WNV-related declines affecting contact zone dynamics between chickadee species? Does WNV promote winter flocking in American Crows?

Going forward, awareness is needed of the high degree of WNV risk for Pennsylvania's birds. Individual property owners can help by eliminating pools of standing water where mosquitoes lay their eggs. The next Pennsylvania breeding bird atlas can further delineate avian losses from WNV. Future institutional needs include continued mosquito monitoring, the value of which has been demonstrated here; studies on effective mosquito interventions in wild settings; enhanced management for Pennsylvania's habitat-limited species, especially those of greatest conservation need, such as Ruffed Grouse, Northern Goshawk, and Black-crowned Night-Heron; enhanced within-state expertise on WNV effects upon birds; and studies on whether WNV is involved in the declines in the several noted species or additional ones. It is possible that additional bird species in Pennsylvania will be identified as being affected by WNV.

Acknowledgments. I thank the many volunteers who recorded the observations summarized here; Lisa Williams of the Pennsylvania Game Commission for sharing her knowledge about WNV and helpful suggestions about this article; the PA Department of Environmental Protection for use of the WNV vector index; Greg Grove, Michael Hutchinson, Rudy Keller, and Sean Murphy for helpful suggestions about this article; and Betsy Manlove for obtaining references.

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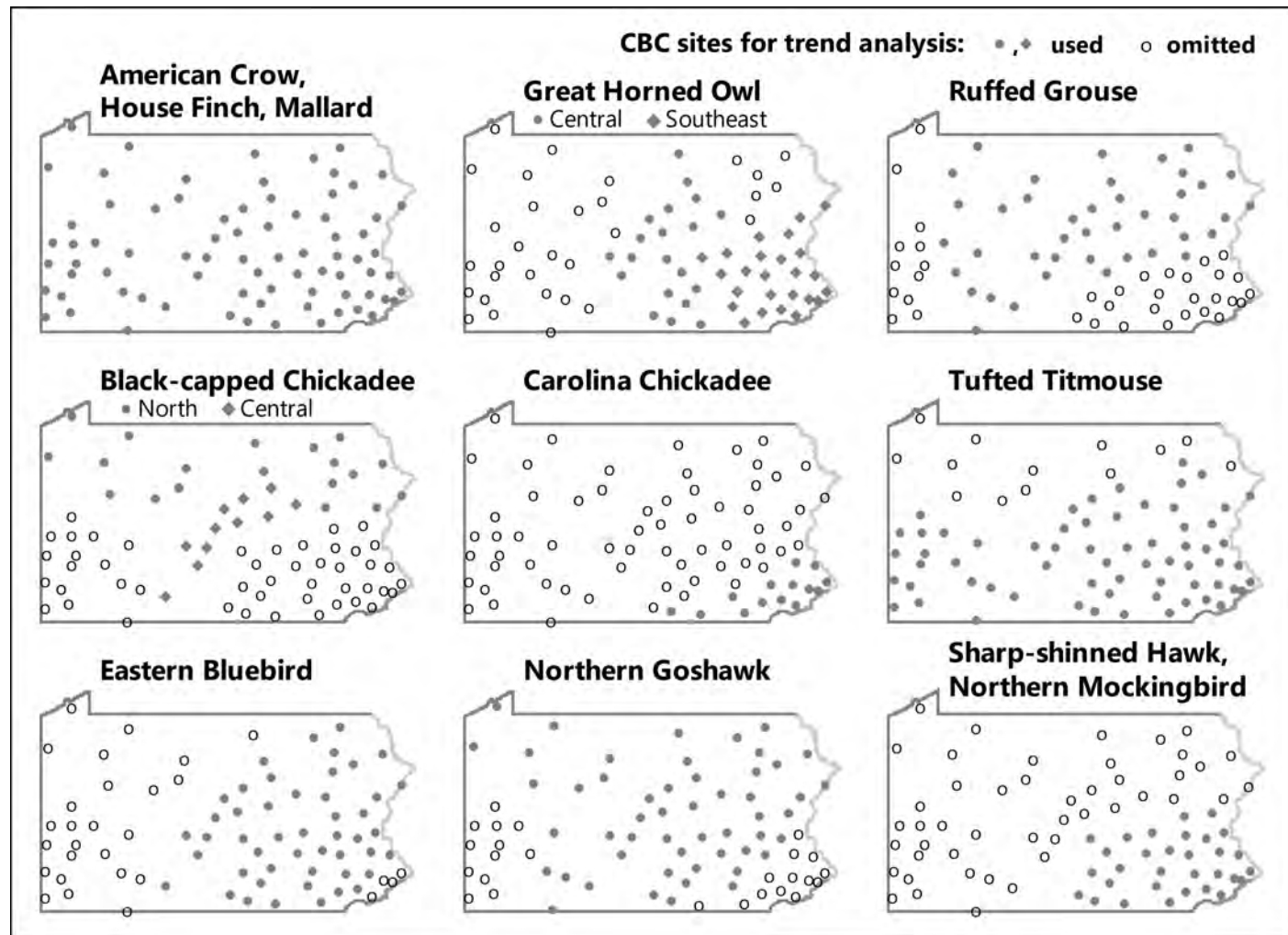


Figure 2. CBC sites used to calculate trends (dark symbols).

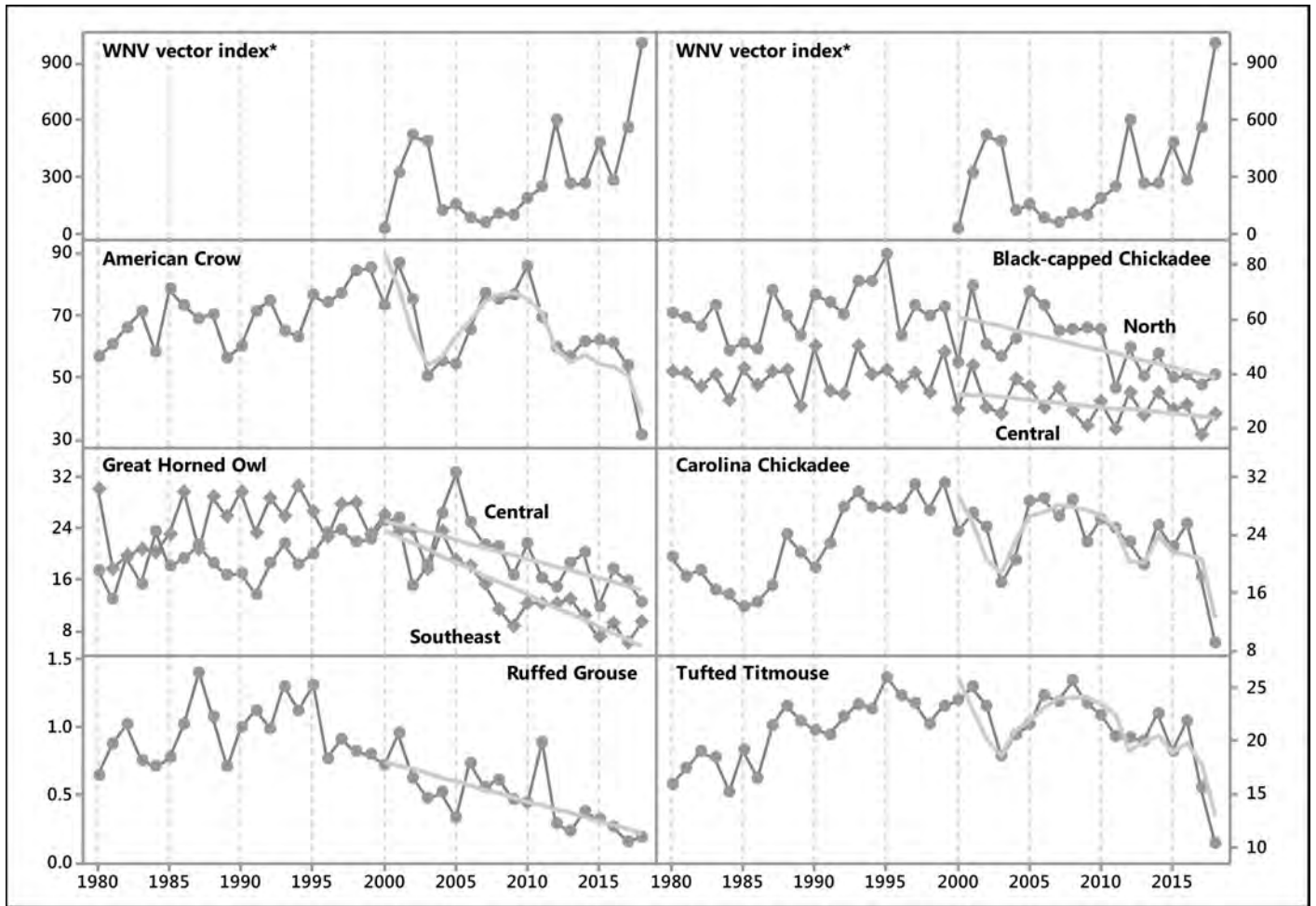


Figure 3. The WNV vector index (including the estimated 2000-2002 values) and Pennsylvania count data for six bird species for which there is strong evidence of WNV effects, along with model predictions (light gray lines). Data are CBC mean count/10 party hours, except Great Horned Owl data are CBC mean count/10 nocturnal hours.



Great Horned Owls are believed to be among the first and hardest hit species by WNV. (Photo from Victory Park, *Mifflin* January 3, 2019 by Rob Dickerson)



Ruffed Grouse are declining in Pennsylvania, probably due in part to habitat loss because of forest maturation and over-browsing by deer, but also susceptibility to WNV. (Photo from Kinzua Bridge SP, *McKean* June 20, 2013 by Rob Dickerson)

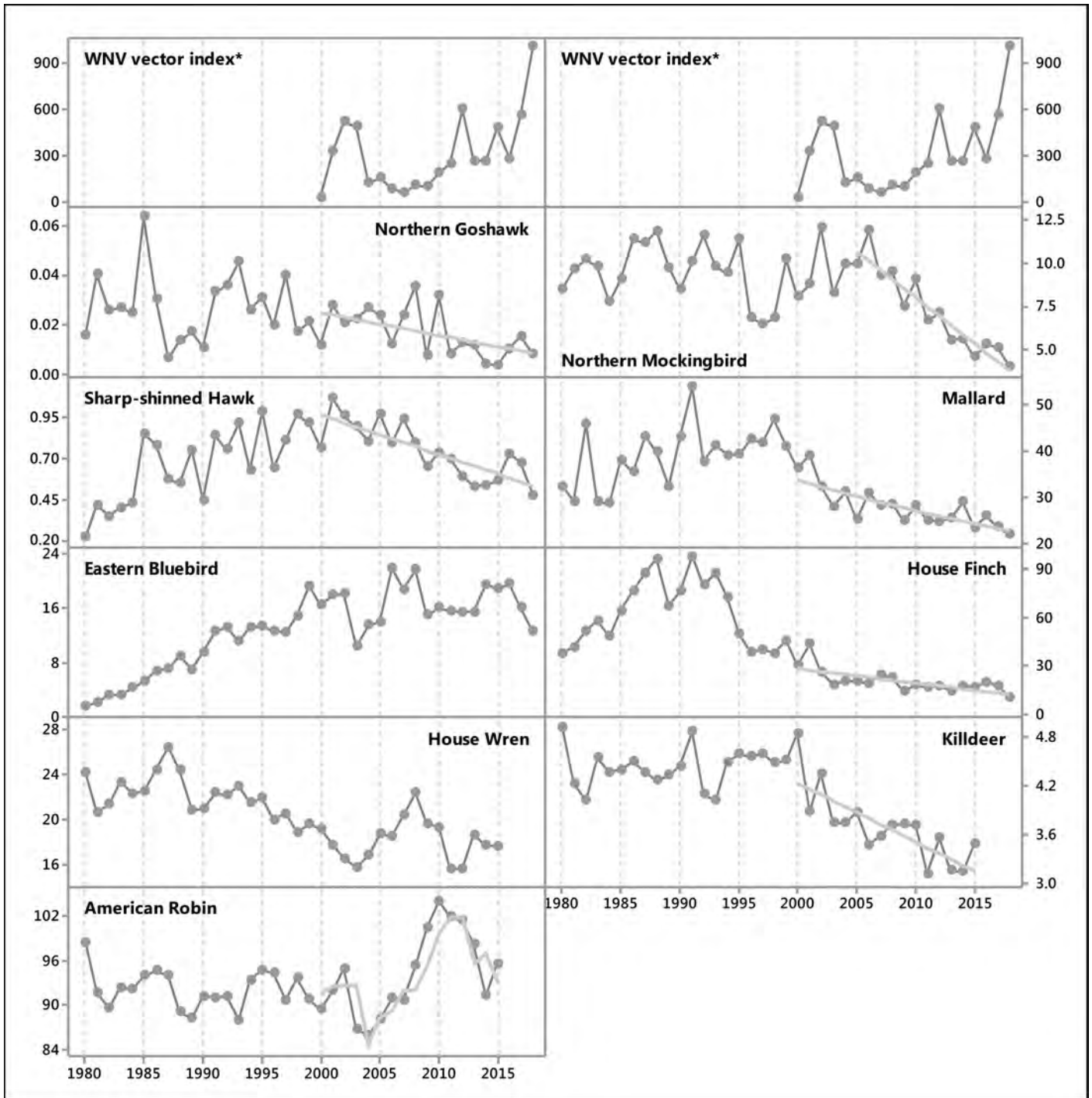


Figure 4. The WNV vector index (including the estimated 2000-2002 values) and Pennsylvania count data for nine bird species for which there is possible evidence of WNV population effects, along with model predictions (light gray lines). Data are CBC mean count/10 party hours (top six species), except that House Wren, American Robin, and Killdeer data are BBS mean birds/route (bottom three species).

Confirmed Nesting of Osprey in Centre and Clinton in 2018

Text and photos by Bob Snyder

The first successful nesting of **Ospreys** in *Centre* and *Clinton* occurred during 2018. No prior confirmed records of Osprey nesting existed for these two counties in the literature consulted, though S. N. Rhoads reported (early 1900's) "*an osprey nesting in the mountains near Round Island, somewhere along Cook's Run*" in *Clinton*, but that report was never confirmed (Todd 1940). Additionally, according to former county historians, there were no recent historical records from *Centre* (personal communication: John Peplinski, via Greg Grove), or *Clinton* (personal communication: Wayne Laubscher, via email from Paul Schwalbe). Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) safe dates for Osprey nesting are 6/1 - 8/30.

Centre

The Osprey nest that had been built on the cell tower, north of the Rte. 150 Overlook at Bald Eagle SP was first observed on 6/9/18, though the date when the nest was built was not recorded. Osprey usually arrive in *Centre* by mid-April, so the nest could've been overlooked for nearly two months. There had been efforts by Ospreys to build a nest on the same tower during 2014 and 2015 that failed, as the nests were not built well and fell from the tower each year. The tower was not observed during 2016 and there may have been a successful nesting in 2017 as a nest was observed on the tower in the fall, but no nesting activity was reported.

The cell tower is in close proximity to the lake at Bald Eagle State Park and is easily seen from the Rte. 150 overlook, or the Howard Divide Road, near the intersection with Rte. 150. Observations during 2018 were made through June and July, ending in mid-August when the juveniles fledged. Two young birds were first observed with their heads above the rim of the nest 7/22 (Image 1). Both juveniles were observed testing their wings by hovering above the nest 7/28. When observed on 8/8, shortly before the young left the nest, one adult was perched on the tower,

one juvenile was in the nest, and the second juvenile was observed carrying a fish to the nest (Image 2).

New cellular equipment was installed on the tower over the winter of 2018-19 which has apparently discouraged nest-building in 2019. Two Ospreys had returned to Bald Eagle SP on 4/11/19, but did not appear to be interested in building on the tower. One of the birds was photographed carrying a large stick, but did not land on the cell tower (Image 3), and at this writing a new nesting location has not been found. An Osprey was seen carrying a sunfish it had caught from Bald Eagle Creek, at the confluence with Bullit Run, in Bald Eagle SP 4/27. Were these three Osprey seen in April 2019 local breeding birds, or were they migrating through? Whether Osprey nest again in *Centre*, remains, for now, an unanswered question.

Clinton

Wayne Laubscher, PSO compiler for *Clinton*, informed me in mid-May 2018, that a pair of Ospreys had built a nest on the cell tower at the Clinton Country Club golf course in Mill Hall. The cell tower at the golf course is a short distance from an impoundment created by a low-head dam built across Bald Eagle Creek and upstream of the confluence with Fishing Creek, which runs through the golf course property. The author observed and photographed two Ospreys at the cell tower 5/27/18, and returned 7/21 and 8/5 to photograph two young birds that were visible in the nest (Image 4). Note that a date of fledging was



Image 2 - Bald Eagle State Park, Centre 8/8/2018

not obtained, but on 8/18 only one adult remained on the tower.

In an update for 2019, on 4/4 Elizabeth Zbenger reported that two Ospreys had returned to the Clinton Country Club cell tower. Wayne Laubscher reported on 4/7/19 that nest building and mating had occurred. I visited the Country Club on 4/11 and talked to the course manager about the Osprey nesting. The cell company had removed the old nest, then installed screening to give a stable base for a nest. The nest building was well underway, when the Osprey were photographed on 4/11 (Image 5). Both Ospreys were observed obtaining large sticks or branches nearby, and protecting their territory by diving at an immature Bald Eagle.

Osprey nesting history and a dispersal hypothesis

Beginning in 1979 Osprey hatchlings were brought from the Chesapeake Bay area as part of a reintroduction program in northeast Pennsylvania (Brauning 1992). A total of 111 Osprey nestlings were hand-reared and hatched between 1980 – 1986 and thirty reintroduced adults had produced thirty-six offspring by 1989. Reintroduction



Image 1 - Bald Eagle State Park, Centre 7/22/2018



Image 3 - Bald Eagle State Park, Centre 4/11/2019

success has occurred in Pennsylvania - only 9 atlas blocks saw confirmed breeding records during the first BBA, while 90 atlas blocks had confirmed breeding in the second BBA. During the first BBA, there was just one 'possible' sighting of an Osprey in northeastern *Centre* (shown in the approximate location of Bald Eagle SP), while no Osprey were observed in *Clinton*. During the second BBA (2004 – 2009), there were no sightings of Osprey in *Centre*, but two were listed as 'possible' in *Clinton*: a) at the confluence of Bald Eagle Creek and the West Branch Susquehanna, and b) at Kettle Creek SP in northwestern *Clinton* (point locations approximated from the distribution map for Osprey in Wilson et al).

Young male Ospreys are more likely than females to return to their natal site and females may disperse into neighboring breeding habitat during spring migration. Of 150 breeding pairs in southern New England monitored, 80% returned to areas near their nesting sites (S. Postupalsky, personal communication to Bierregaard).

The source of the nesting birds in *Centre* and *Clinton* is not known. Although there is no direct physical evidence to support the hypothesis, it seems a good possibility that these birds could be from *Tioga* or nearby counties with Osprey nesting centers, from which birds may have dispersed to Bald Eagle SP in *Centre* and Mill Hall in *Clinton*. Both of these sites are in Bald Eagle Valley, between Bald Eagle ridge, the western-most of the ridge and valley province and the Appalachian Plateau. Clusters of confirmed Osprey nesting sightings were found during the second BBA and were thought to represent the return of breeding birds to locations where reintroductions had occurred (Brauning, in Wilson). These confirmed breeding sites, which are within 80-160 km (50-100 mi) of Bald Eagle SP and Mill Hall, are in *Tioga* (11), *McKean* (5), *Elk* (3), and *Clearfield* (one) (Wilson et al. 2012). The closest, largest, and most direct breeding cluster to *Centre* and *Clinton* is in *Tioga* (Tioga-Hammond Lakes/Cowanessque Lake areas). Birds from *Tioga* could fly through Bald Eagle Valley during fall migration and then return to *Centre* and *Clinton* via other migration flyways such as Tussey Mountain and Stone Mountain during spring migration. However, it is also possible that birds from *McKean*, *Elk* and *Clearfield* could have come to *BESP* and Mill Hall following different pathways as well.

Ospreys closely associate with human activity and nests are built near impounded waterways, lakes, reservoirs or rivers, with 87% of nests placed on human structures such as poles and towers provided for them, or cell and power line towers. However, Osprey will also nest in large trees with limbs strong enough to support their large nests, large rocks or bluffs free of mammalian predators. Habitat requirements for nesting Ospreys includes an adequate supply of fish within 10-20 km of nest site and shallow

waters 0.5 - 2 m deep (Bierregaard). As the northern Osprey population expands, birds from *Tioga*, *McKean*, *Elk* and *Clearfield* may find suitable nesting sites in *Clinton*; i.e., along the West Branch Susquehanna River and Bald Eagle Creek and state parks with a sizable lake such as Kettle Creek SP; or in *Centre*; i.e., Bald Eagle SP, Bald Eagle Creek, and perhaps Colyer Lake.

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Image 4 - Mill Hall, Clinton 8/5/2018



Image 5 - Mill Hall, Clinton 4/11/2019

The 2018-2019 Christmas Bird Count in Pennsylvania

Nick Bolgiano

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held for the 119th time during December 14, 2018 to January 5, 2019. (Below, when I refer to a single year, it is the one in which Christmas occurred.)

Seventy-eight sites reported, including three new sites: Cowanesque Lake in Tioga County with Sean Minnick and Gary Tyson as compilers; Montrose Area in Susquehanna County with Evan Mann as compiler; and Ohiopyle in Fayette and Somerset counties with Matthew Juskowich as compiler. Statewide, 5864 party-hours were recorded, the third highest historical total, plus 288 nocturnal hours and 1006 feeder-watch hours.

Temperatures were seasonal. Heavy rain was reported on Saturday, Dec 15, at Buffalo Creek Valley, Chambersburg, Delaware County, and Gettysburg, and on Sunday, Dec 16, at Pocono Mt, Reading, Southern Lancaster County, and Tunkhannock. Light rain was reported elsewhere on that first weekend. Typically, first weekend counts report some of the highest species numbers; this time, it was second weekend counts that excelled, for example Lititz, Western Chester County, and Bethlehem-Easton.

A statewide total of 160 count-day species were reported, which is near the average for this time period and one more than the previous year, plus four count-week species. **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was a new species for the Pennsylvania CBC, and further was found at two sites. There were small-to-moderate irruptions of **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **Evening Grosbeak**, **Purple Finch**, and **Pine Siskin**. Six species set new statewide high tallies for the Pennsylvania CBC: **Trumpeter Swan**, **Virginia Rail**, **Black Vulture**, **Bald Eagle**, **Merlin**, and **Swamp Sparrow**.

What may have distinguished the 119th count was the many species reported in comparatively low numbers. For **Ruffed Grouse**, **Great Horned Owl**, **American Crow**, **Carolina Chickadee**, **Black-capped Chickadee**, and **Tufted Titmouse**, low CBC counts are closely tied to West Nile Virus (WNV) levels in mosquitoes (see the WNV article in this issue for details). For **Mallard**, **American Black Duck**, **Wilson's Snipe**, **Northern Mockingbird**, **American Tree Sparrow**, and **Eastern Meadowlark**, the low numbers continued established trends.

For **American Coot**, **American Woodcock**, **Short-eared Owl**, **Horned Lark**, **American Pipit**, **Lapland Longspur**, **Snow Bunting**, **Dark-eyed Junco**, **Eastern Meadowlark** (included here and above), and **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, low numbers were

consistent with a seasonal effect. Contributing may have been the 6-12 inches of snow that fell on much of the state on Nov 15, 2018, an unusually high snowfall for Nov, and subsequent cold temperatures. Distributions of four of these species are highlighted in Figure 2 maps comparing 2018 counts to ten-year averages.

Species Numbers. Lititz recorded the highest species count, with 102 species (the last time Lititz was the top site was in 1924, when its species count was 31). Southern Bucks County was second with 100 and Harrisburg was third with 95. The below table shows the top 10 list and Figure 1 shows a map of site species totals.

Top 10 Sites for Species Number

1. Lititz	102
2. Southern Bucks County	100
3. Harrisburg	95
4. Western Chester County	93
5. Bethlehem-Easton	91
T6. Lehigh Valley	90
T6. Southern Lancaster County	90
8. Delaware County	87
T9. Central Bucks County	84
T9. Elverson	84
T9. Lancaster	84

Hits and Misses

A "hit" is an unlikely species found in 2018, 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 numbers).

Hits

Black-headed Gull
American Bittern
Empidonax sp.
Blue-headed Vireo
Townsend's Solitaire
Clay-colored Sparrow
LeConte's Sparrow
Black-and-white Warbler
Cape May Warbler
Black-throated Gray Warbler

Misses

American Woodcock
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Lapland Longspur
Baltimore Oriole
Brewer's Blackbird

Species Details. While **Snow Goose** numbers have been increasing in Pennsylvania since 1993, the three highest totals have been recorded in the last six years. This season's 178,000 snow geese ranked

third and included 129,000 at Bethlehem-Easton, 22,000 at Wild Creek-Little Gap, and 18,000 at Lehigh Valley. Two **Ross's Geese** were at Bethlehem-Easton. After a statewide high in **Greater white-fronted Geese** last year, the eight recorded this season from five sites was more typical of recent years. **Barnacle Goose** was a count-week species at Western Chester County.

The six **Trumpeter Swans** observed statewide was one more than the previous high from 2008 and included two each at Indiana and Johnstown and singles at Dubois and Southern Lancaster County. The 442 **Tundra Swans** were the fewest since 1995, with the high count being 332 at Lititz.

Mallard numbers continued their steady decline that began in 2000. See the WNV article for details, although duck hunting season changes may mostly explain this. The decline in **American Black Ducks** that began around 1970 appears to be accelerating. In 2005-2008, the statewide Black Duck tally ranged from 3007 to 4144; in 2018, it was 1410.

Scoters included eight **Surf Scoters** at Erie and one at Southern Bucks County, 6 **White-winged Scoters** at Harrisburg and one at Johnstown, and two **Black Scoters** at Southern Bucks County.

Common Mergansers were plentiful, as the 10,287 statewide comprised the highest tally since 2002. This included 3556 at Southern Bucks County and 1609 at Central Bucks County.

The 42 **Ruffed Grouse** were only four more than the historical low from 2017.

Two **Red-necked Grebes** were at Southern Bucks County, one was at Bushy Run S.P., and it was a count-week observation at Erie.

After seven consecutive years with at least one **Rufous Hummingbird**, 2018 was the second year without one.

Considerable year-to-year fluctuations are typical for **American Coot** numbers. However, the 123 Coots tallied statewide were the fewest since 1963. Figure 2 shows the 2018 distribution compared to the 10-year average. Typically, Erie, Linesville, Butler County, Southern Bucks County, and Dallas Area report higher coot numbers; this didn't occur in 2018. (Omitted from the 10-year average maps are several sites of smaller duration or effort.)

The 221 **Sandhill Cranes** was the third highest tally in the Pennsylvania CBC and included 186 at Linesville, 31 at Grove City, and four at Butler County. The seven **Virginia Rails** was a new statewide high, and included

two each at Central Bucks County, Lancaster, and West Chester, and one at Upper Bucks County.

American Woodcock was missed for just the second year of the last 36. A decline in **Wilson's Snipe** numbers has been observed during the last six years and just 10 were tallied across five sites in 2018; not since 1951 were so few observed in Pennsylvania.

Only 11 **Bonaparte's Gulls** were reported among five sites, the third year in a row with few. A similar low period occurred in 2009-2010, but then Bonaparte's Gulls were once again tallied in the thousands statewide. **Black-headed Gull** at Delaware County was only the fifth report in the Pennsylvania CBC.

As usual, four gull species were highly concentrated at Southern Bucks County. The 36,000 **Herring Gulls** reported there was once again a continent-wide CBC high by a large margin. Also at Southern Bucks County were 920 of the 1278 state's **Great Black-backed Gulls**, 13 of 16 **Iceland Gulls** and 11 of 12 **Glaucous Gulls**. Iceland Gull was also at Bethlehem-Easton, Elverson, and Lancaster, while Glaucous Gull was also at Elverson.

Lesser Black-backed Gulls concentrated again in the lower Delaware Valley: 241 at Central Bucks County, 128 at Bethlehem-Easton, 120 at Southern Bucks County, and 88 at Upper Bucks County, plus nine more at six other sites, the fourth highest statewide total in the Pennsylvania CBC. This continued the northward distribution shift from their initial Pennsylvania focus at Southern Bucks County.

Two **Red-throated Loons** were at Erie and it was a count-week observation at Gordon Glen Belsano. **Great Cormorant** was at Pennypack Valley and Southern Bucks County.

American Bittern at both Delaware County and Lehigh Valley were the first in the Pennsylvania CBC since 2007. **Great Egret** was at Lititz after not being reported statewide for two years. **Black-crowned Night-Heron** has been in a steady decline since the 1990s and its miss was the fifth in the last seven years.

Black Vultures have been steadily increasing since the 1970s and the 2962 tallied in 2018 was a new statewide high. The 4438 **Turkey Vultures** was the third-highest statewide total. **Osprey** was at Pennypack Valley and Williamsport, the eighth of the last nine years with at least one.

Sharp-shinned Hawk and **Cooper's Hawk** densities began upward trends in the Pennsylvania CBC around 1970. Sharp-shinned Hawks reached their peak density in 2001 and have been declining since then, with the 203 recorded in 2018 being the fewest since 1990. Cooper's Hawk numbers have

been exceeding Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers in the CBC since 2004 and now appear to be leveling off at roughly double the Sharp-shinned Hawk level. **Northern Goshawk** was observed at Hamburg (two), Gordon Glen Belsano, and Linesville. See the WNV paper for a discussion of possible WNV effects upon the accipiters.

Bald Eagle numbers kept increasing, with 899 tallied in 2018 compared to 804 the previous year, which was a high at that time. Bald eagles were reported from 73 sites (93.6%). The 2966 **Red-tailed Hawks** was a similar tally as in 2017. The 17 **Rough-legged Hawks** at eight sites was a relatively low count, but similar to counts of several other recent years.

Lititz was the top owling site in 2018, followed by Central Bucks County and Hamburg. The top 10 list is below, which included eight southeastern sites, plus Pittsburgh and Lewistown.

Top 10 Sites for Owls

	Barn	EScr	GH	Barr	LE	SE	NSW	Sum
1. Lititz	0	51	16	0	7	1	3	78
1. Central Bucks County	0	35	10	0	0	0	3	48
2. Hamburg	1	28	15	1	0	0	0	45
3. Pittsburgh	0	22	17	1	0	0	0	40
4. Western Chester County	0	25	8	4	0	0	1	38
5. Pennypack Valley	0	27	6	0	0	0	1	34
6. Harrisburg	0	11	16	2	0	0	2	31
7. Lewistown	0	18	6	2	0	0	0	26
8. Southern Lancaster County	0	18	5	1	0	0	1	25
9. West Chester	0	22	2	1	0	0	0	25

Among the uncommon owls, **Barn Owl** was at Hamburg and Penns Creek and a count-week bird was at Lewistown. No **Snowy Owls** were reported after six were recorded in 2017. The 23 **Long-eared Owls** were at five sites, including 11 at Upper Bucks County, seven at Lititz, and three at Gettysburg. A year after 29 **Short-eared Owls** were a CBC highlight, the only Short-eared Owls were singles at Clarion, Grove City, and Lititz.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker numbers were about half the average, one year after setting a new statewide high. **Red-bellied Woodpecker** and **Pileated Woodpecker** numbers were down about 15%, after steadily increasing for decades. The 52 **Red-headed Woodpeckers** statewide was an average number and included 18 at York Springs, six at Linesville, four each at Lewistown and Penns Creek, but only two at Gettysburg, usually a top location.

Beginning the 1990s, **Merlin** and **Peregrine Falcon** numbers steadily increased in tandem. Merlin numbers have continued increasing at a fairly steady rate and the 69 Merlins was a new statewide high. Peregrine Falcon numbers kept pace until leveling off in recent years; there were 30 Peregrines in 2018.

An **Empidonax** sp. was observed at Newville. There have been seven previous reports of empids in the Pennsylvania CBC. Pacific-slope Flycatcher was identified at Southern Lancaster County in 1991 and 1992, and an empid identified as either Pacific-slope Flycatcher or Cordilleran Flycatcher was observed there in 2001. When viewing a winter empid, these are possibilities to consider.

For the fifth consecutive year, **Northern Shrikes** were scarce, with singles reported at Cowanesque Lake, Dingman's Ferry, Johnstown, and Lehigh Valley. **Loggerhead Shrike** was a count-week species at Gettysburg. **Blue-headed Vireo** at Lititz was only the tenth for the Pennsylvania CBC. There were 60 **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** at Pennypack Valley, the usual hotspot, and 10 at Audubon. A single swallow sp. was at Huntingdon.

Horned Lark numbers often show considerable year-to-year variation. However,

the 1836 Horned Larks tallied in 2018 was the lowest statewide tally since 1965. Figure 2 shows the 2018 distribution compared to the 10-year average. Typically, most sites in the central Susquehanna Valley and the southeast report high numbers of Horned Larks; few sites did in 2018.

The 470 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** qualify as a modest-sized irruption. Two **House Wrens** were at Curtin and singles were at Delaware County and Lititz, while **Marsh Wren** was at Delaware County and Penns Creek.

Eastern Bluebird counts indicate a possible WNV effect, although to a lesser extent than for other species (see the WNV article for details). **Townsend's Solitaire** at Indiana was just the second in the Pennsylvania CBC.

The steady decline in **Northern Mockingbirds** that began around 2009 continued; densities have declined by nearly two-thirds in their core southeastern region. While the spread of multiflora rose helped mockingbirds to expand their range northward into Pennsylvania (McWilliams and Brauning 2000), it is possible that the dieback of multiflora rose from rose rosette disease (a

mite-vectored viral disease) could be contributing to the mockingbird decline. It is also possible that WNV is contributing to the decline - see the WNV paper for details.

Only 36 **American Pipits** were recorded statewide, the fewest since 1989. This included 33 at Lancaster, two at Western Chester County, and one at Buffalo Creek. Typically, the Pennsylvania pipit count is at least several hundred and periodically more than 1000.

Small irruptions occurred for **Evening Grosbeak** and **Purple Finch** and a moderate-sized irruption occurred for **Pine Siskin**. The 81 Evening Grosbeaks were the most since 2012, with 30 at Pleasantville, 17 at Benezetze, 10 each at Bloomsburg and Warren, and 14 more at five other sites. Recent Purple Finch irruptions have been indicated by a mere doubling over a baseline level. This happened again in 2018, with the 483 Purple Finches more widespread than normal, recorded at 68% of sites. The 707 Pine Siskins were fewer than the 1823 in 2014 and far fewer than the 11,600 in 2008, the largest documented siskin irruption in Pennsylvania. Siskins were fairly widespread, recorded at 60% of sites. 52 **Common Redpolls** were recorded at five sites, including 40 at Pocono Mountain. **Hoary Redpoll** at Erie was a count-week species. No crossbills were reported.

No **Lapland Longspurs** were recorded, only the second time that has happened since 1972 (also in 2015), although it was a count-week species at Johnstown. Only 16 **Snow Buntings** were recorded, the second fewest in many decades, with 13 at Lebanon County and three at Penns Creek. Longspurs seldom number more than 20 and snow bunting numbers are usually in the 50 to 400 range.

Clay-colored Sparrow at Central Bucks County was only the seventh report in the Pennsylvania CBC; **Vesper Sparrow** was at Lehigh Valley; **LeConte's Sparrow** at York Springs was only the fourth report in the Pennsylvania CBC; while two **Lincoln's Sparrows** were at Lititz and one at Benezetze, where it was unusual for a higher elevation site.

American Tree Sparrows have been gradually declining, but the 1782 Tree Sparrows recorded statewide were the fewest since 1937. **Dark-eyed Junco** numbers, when adjusted for effort, have remained at a relatively constant level for decades and it is usually the most numerous sparrow species. However, the 2018 tally of 28,000 Juncos was about 40% below the normal level and **White-throated Sparrow** was the most numerous sparrow species. Figure 2 shows the 2018 junco distribution compared to the 10-year average. Typically, most sites report high junco numbers, with the highest numbers along the southern edges of the eastern and central mountains; in 2018, juncos were

scarcer than usual in the west and the highest counts were confined to the east of the Schuylkill River.

The 675 **Swamp Sparrows** was a new high for the Pennsylvania CBC. The trend has been for Swamp Sparrow to be increasingly reported from more sites; it was reported from 61 sites (78%) in 2018.

Yellow-breasted Chat was at West Chester.

The seven **Eastern Meadowlarks** were the fewest since 1929. The long-term decline in their numbers was apparently exacerbated by the conditions that limited other farmland birds. Western Chester County tallied 265,000 blackbirds, predominantly **Common Grackles** and **Red-winged Blackbirds**. The miss of **Baltimore Oriole** was just the second since 2002.

Eight warbler species were reported, including **Black-throated Gray Warbler** at Lancaster and State College, firsts in the state CBC; **Black-and-white Warbler** at Lititz; **Orange-crowned Warbler** at State College and a count-week bird at Delaware County and Lititz; and **Cape May Warbler** at Pennypack Valley, only the seventh report in the Pennsylvania CBC.

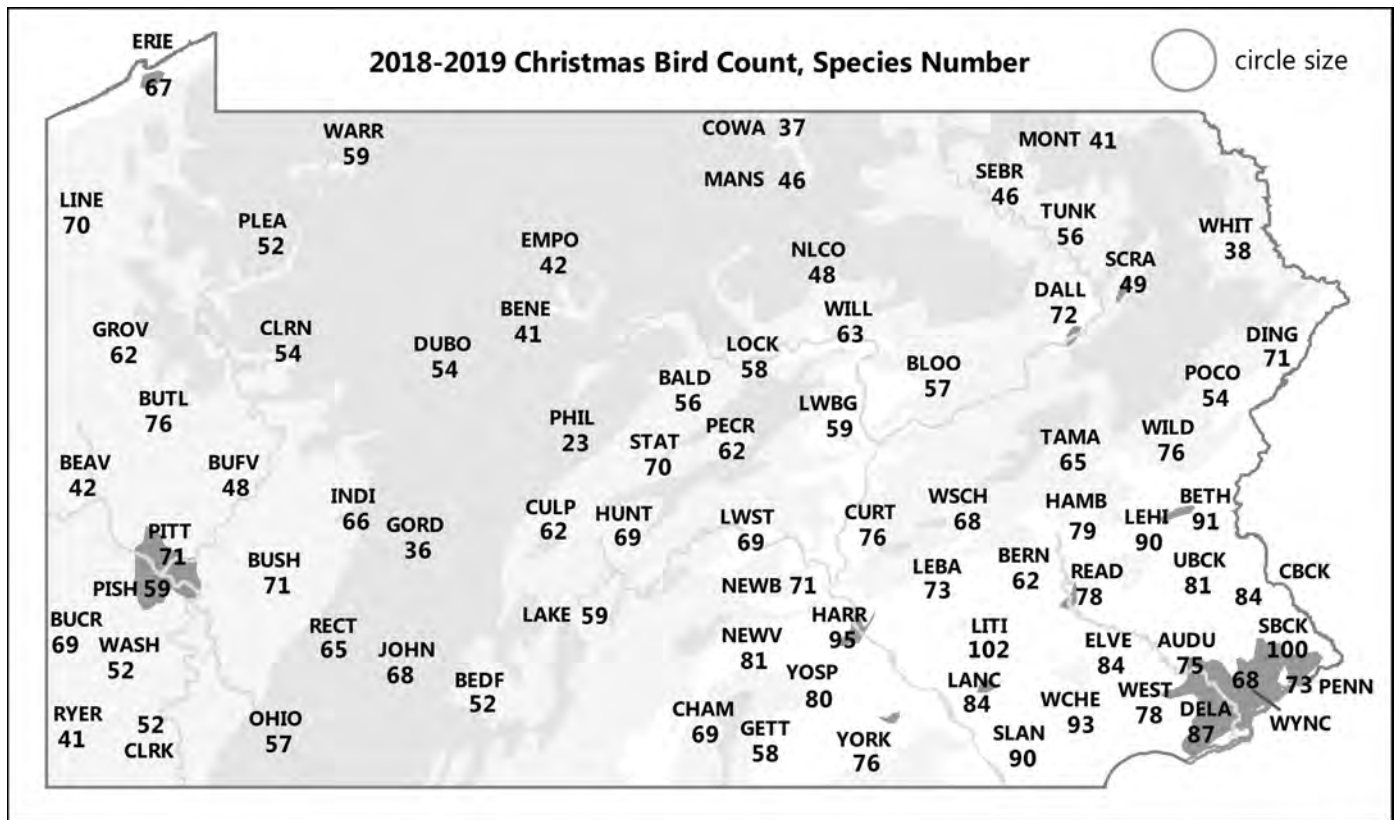
Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers vary from year to year and typically about 500-1000 are recorded annually in the Pennsylvania CBC. The 180 recorded in 2018 was the fewest since 1966, although 2016 was another year with a low count (213). Figure 2 shows the 2018 distribution compared to the 10-year average. Typically, Erie, Bushy Run SP, and Linesville in the west and numerous southeastern sites report good numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers; in 2018, only a few sites in the lower Susquehanna Valley did so.

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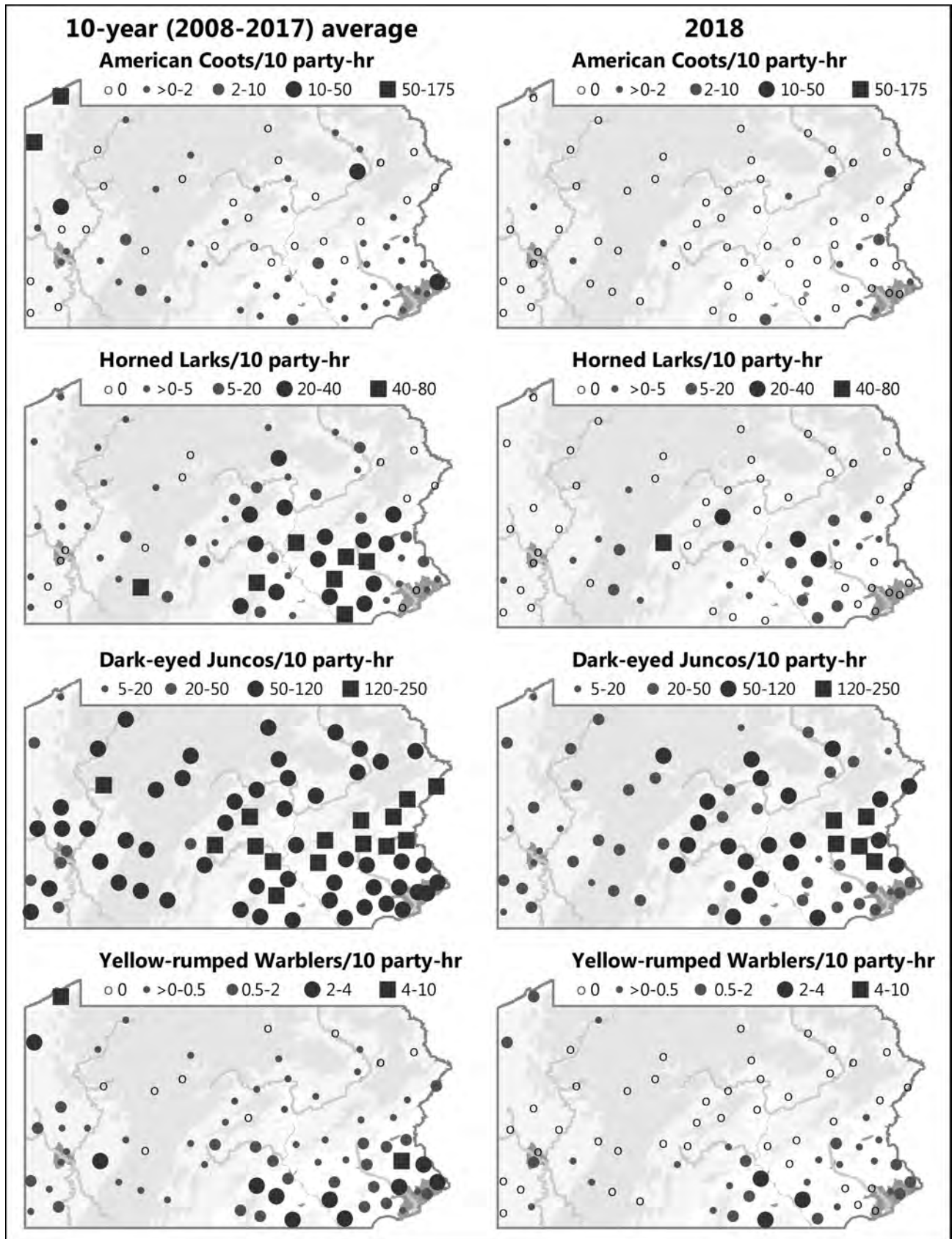
Figure 1. Pennsylvania CBC sites and species numbers. Background shows elevations (<1000, 1000-2000, >2000 ft) and main rivers and cities.



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
BUCK	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. Side-by-side comparisons of 10-year average count/10 party-hrs (left) vs. 2018 count/10 party hours (right), for four species.



SPECIES	TOTAL	SITES	HIGH	HIGH COUNT	SPECIES	TOTAL	SITES	HIGH	HIGH COUNT	SPECIES	TOTAL	SITES	HIGH	HIGH COUNT
Snow Goose	177729	20	129121	BETH	Black Vulture	2962	37	318	YORK	American Pipit	36	3	33	LANC
Ross's Goose	2	1	2	BETH	Turkey Vulture	4438	46	337	WCHE	Cedar Waxwing	4869	64	576	PITT
Gr White-fronted Goose	8	5	3	LEHI	Osprey	2	2	1	PENN,WILL	Evening Grosbeak	81	9	30	PLEA
Cackling Goose	33	11	8	BETH	Golden Eagle	9	7	2	HAMB,NLCO	House Finch	6155	77	415	PITT
Canada Goose	140750	77	18150	LEHI	Northern Harrier	106	40	8	BUCR	Purple Finch	483	53	59	SLAN
Mute Swan	182	32	56	SBCK	Sharp-shinned Hawk	203	58	10	PITT,SBCK	Common Redpoll	52	5	40	POCO
Trumpeter Swan	6	4	2	INDI,JOHN	Cooper's Hawk	427	74	21	LEHI	Pine Siskin	707	47	112	LWST
Tundra Swan	442	13	332	LITI	Northern Goshawk	4	3	2	HAMB	American Goldfinch	7553	78	395	PITT
Wood Duck	53	26	7	BETH	Bald Eagle	899	73	92	SBCK	Snow Bunting	16	2	13	LEBA
Blue-winged Teal	1	1	1	CULP	Red-shouldered Hawk	155	43	11	YOSP	Chipping Sparrow	72	29	7	CBCK,PENN
Northern Shoveler	159	10	90	DELA	Red-tailed Hawk	2966	78	116	HAMB,YOSP	Clay-colored Sparrow	1	1	1	CBCK
Gadwall	427	23	162	SBCK	Rough-legged Hawk	17	8	5	MANS	Field Sparrow	662	57	48	LITI
American Wigeon	95	12	37	YOSP	Barn Owl	2	2	1	HAMB,PECR	American Tree Sparrow	1782	69	227	LEBA
Mallard	17035	76	994	LITI	Eastern Screech-Owl	494	59	51	LITI	Fox Sparrow	92	26	16	DELA
American Black Duck	1410	55	290	LITI	Great Horned Owl	249	62	17	PITT	Slate-colored Junco	28093	78	1999	HAMB
Northern Pintail	41	14	9	SBCK	Barred Owl	55	37	4	WCHE	White-crowned Sparrow	837	49	93	LEHI
Green-winged Teal	75	18	11	SBCK	Long-eared Owl	23	5	11	UBCK	White-throated Sparrow	29985	75	2415	LEHI
Canvasback	238	11	210	ERIE	Short-eared Owl	3	3	1	CLRN,GROV,LITI	Vesper Sparrow	1	1	1	LEHI
Redhead	218	9	200	ERIE	Northern Saw-whet Owl	23	13	4	WSCH	LeConte's Sparrow	1	1	1	YOSP
Ring-necked Duck	780	28	229	WEST	Belted Kingfisher	480	71	26	SBCK	Savannah Sparrow	90	17	22	LITI
Greater Scaup	69	5	42	ERIE	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	281	54	19	HARR	Song Sparrow	9797	77	456	PITT
Lesser Scaup	441	14	340	ERIE	Red-headed Woodpecker	52	15	18	YOSP	Lincoln's Sparrow	3	2	2	LITI
scaup sp.	2415	4	2371	ERIE	Red-bellied Woodpecker	4437	78	228	PITT	Swamp Sparrow	675	61	50	SBCK
Surf Scoter	9	2	8	ERIE	Downy Woodpecker	4982	78	181	HAMB	Eastern Towhee	207	36	34	LITI
White-winged Scoter	7	2	6	HARR	Hairy Woodpecker	1444	77	67	PITT	Yellow-breasted Chat	1	1	1	WEST
Black Scoter	2	1	2	SBCK	Pileated Woodpecker	725	77	34	PITT	Eastern Meadowlark	7	5	2	AUDU,SLAN
Long-tailed Duck	19	8	6	CULP	Yellow-shafted Flicker	1927	68	110	SBCK	Red-winged Blackbird	78472	45	73307	WCHE
Bufflehead	919	48	138	SBCK	American Kestrel	616	69	39	LWST	Brown-headed Cowbird	6896	28	5619	WCHE
Common Goldeneye	401	30	76	ERIE,LINE	Merlin	69	31	5	BETH,LEHI,STAT	Rusty Blackbird	80	11	33	NEWV
Hooded Merganser	801	44	99	SBCK	Peregrine Falcon	30	18	4	LEHI	Common Grackle	189412	31	186705	WCHE
Common Merganser	10287	64	3556	SBCK	Empidonax sp.	1	1	1	NEWV	Black-and-white Warbler	1	1	1	LITI
Red-breasted Merganser	80	11	23	LINE	Eastern Phoebe	25	21	2	LANC,LITI,WCHE,WYNC	Orange-crowned Warbler	1	1	1	STAT
Ruddy Duck	630	16	221	SBCK	Northern Shrike	4	4	1	COWL,DING,JOHN,LEHI	Common Yellowthroat	9	9	1	9 sites with 1 each
Ring-necked Pheasant	134	31	21	CULP,LITI	Blue-headed Vireo	1	1	1	LITI	Cape May Warbler	1	1	1	PENN
Ruffed Grouse	42	15	10	EMPO	Blue Jay	11798	78	518	BUCR	Palm Warbler	2	2	1	LITI,WCHE
Wild Turkey	3799	64	431	BUCR	American Crow	50735	78	18258	LANC	Pine Warbler	5	4	2	SLAN
Pied-billed Grebe	37	11	10	SBCK	Fish Crow	6182	24	3025	SBCK	Myrtle Warbler	180	31	30	HARR
Horned Grebe	21	7	12	ERIE	Common Raven	540	65	30	HUNT	Bl.-thr. Gray Warbler	2	2	1	LANC,STAT
Red-necked Grebe	3	2	2	SBCK	Horned Lark	1836	29	266	BERN	Northern Cardinal	12781	78	485	BUCR
Rock Pigeon	26906	77	1276	LWST	NRough-winged Swallow	70	2	60	PENN	House Sparrow	15042	78	735	PITT
Mourning Dove	29152	78	2613	LEHI	Carolina Chickadee	2526	33	280	BUCR	Individuals	975787		146893	BETH
Virginia Rail	7	4	2	CBCK,LANC,WEST	Black-capped Chickadee	7790	62	350	WARR	Species	160		102	LITI
American Coot	123	15	34	BETH	chickadee sp.	1493	24	305	PITT	Party Hours	5841		433	PITT
Sandhill Crane	221	3	186	LINE	Tufted Titmouse	5303	78	292	PITT					
Killdeer	104	22	16	LITI,WCHE	Red-breasted Nuthatch	470	67	19	CURT,WARR					
Wilson's Snipe	10	5	5	LWST	White-breasted Nuthatch	6041	78	241	PITT					
Bonaparte's Gull	11	5	4	HARR	Brown Creeper	743	74	41	HARR					
Black-headed Gull	1	1	1	DELA	House Wren	4	3	2	CURT					
Ring-billed Gull	43109	50	11656	LANC	Winter Wren	338	50	24	SBCK					
Herring Gull	39366	31	36156	SBCK	Marsh Wren	2	2	1	DELA,PECR					
Iceland Gull	16	4	13	SBCK	Carolina Wren	5561	76	272	SBCK					
L Black-backed Gull	586	10	241	CBCK	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1534	74	122	HUNT					
Glaucous Gull	12	2	11	SBCK	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	136	42	9	SBCK					
Great Black-backed Gull	1279	13	920	SBCK	Eastern Bluebird	5299	76	276	NEWB					
Red-throated Loon	2	1	2	ERIE	Townsend's Solitaire	1	1	1	INDI					
Common Loon	12	10	2	ELVE,LINE	Hermit Thrush	170	43	15	DING					
Great Comorant	18	2	16	SBCK	American Robin	10302	73	1434	SBCK					
Double-crested Comorant	232	9	93	ERIE	Gray Catbird	52	24	13	SBCK					
American Bittern	2	2	1	DELA,LEHI	Brown Thrasher	4	4	1	ELVE,LITI,NEWB,WILD					
Great Blue Heron	677	68	50	SBCK	Northern Mockingbird	1463	65	68	YOSP					
Great Egret	1	1	1	LITI	European Starling	182280	78	14257	CHAM					

The 2019 Winter Raptor Survey in Pennsylvania

Greg Grove

Introduction. The 19th 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 225 routes were run, comprising 850.5 hours and 12,918 miles of observation, the second highest level of hours ever (previous high - 856 hours in 2018) and highest number of miles ever. As usual, *Lancaster* observers led the state, logging 35 hours, followed by *Clarion* and *Huntingdon* (Table 2).

Weather was relatively mild during the early winter. However, by the second week of the WRS period, real winter set in, with extreme cold at the end of Jan, and from that point on there were persistent snow and ice events. While not a truly severe winter, conditions were harsh enough that they may have played a role in the low numbers of Northern Harriers and American Kestrels. Many surveys reported snow cover, but with a few northern tier exceptions, snow cover was not more than a few inches and there were brief periods of no cover between precipitation events in warmer counties.

2019 Results

Summary. The 2019 WRS was a season of contrasts in numbers for different species. Six species broke or tied the previous record for total number of individuals, the most notable being Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Black Vulture, all of which also set high marks for hourly rate. In sharp contrast, Northern Harrier and American Kestrel saw the lowest and second lowest hourly detection rates ever, respectively. Harrier numbers fell by about 50% from last year.

Results for individual counties are in the Appendix.

Red-tailed Hawk. The count of 3351 Red-tailed Hawks was up 8% from last year and was the third highest total ever, due largely to the high level of coverage. The hourly rate of 3.94 was near average for the past decade, when the rate has usually been around 4.0 (Figure 1). The long-term trend for the hourly rate of WRS Red-tails appears to be slightly downward, possibly

mirroring the 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 seasonal dynamics (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, especially the low elevation counties along the Ohio border with their abundance of open lands and small woodlots, ideal for Red-tails (Figure 2). *Lancaster*, with 163 Red-tails, led the state again, followed at some distance by *Adams* and *Berks* (Table 2). Among counties with at least seven hours of coverage, *Adams*, *Juniata*, *Washington*, 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). This year, even with temperatures that were fairly seasonable, excepting the extreme cold of late Jan, the hourly rate for kestrels was second lowest ever, at 0.56/hour (Figure 1). The total of 473 kestrels counted in 2019 was down 21% from last year (600 counted) and 33% from the record year of 2017 (711 counted). 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). Presumably, during severe winters, kestrels either withdraw further south or suffer higher mortality.

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*, *Lancaster*, and *Huntingdon* led with 34, 32, and 26, respectively (Table 2). In counties with at least seven hours of effort, the highest hourly rate was *Snyder* at 1.6/hour; others exceeding 1.0/hour were *Columbia*, *Franklin*, *Fulton*, *Juniata*, *Washington*, and *York*. Numbers in the relatively warm southeast stayed at the same low rate where they have been for many years, well below that of the south-central agricultural counties (Table 3).

Of 402 Kestrels sexed, 251 (62%) were males, consistent with previous results (range: 59-66%).

Rough-legged Hawk. This year's count of 75 Rough-legged Hawks was up slightly from last year's total of 65, but was nevertheless the sixth lowest ever (two of the five lower years were in 2001 and 2002, when coverage was only one-third of the

2019 hours). The rate of 0.088/hour was the fourth lowest ever (Figure 1). The state-wide total of Rough-legs on CBCs was also very low.

Rough-legs were found in 27 counties. They were widely scattered, with some concentration in the farmlands of the upper and middle Susquehanna River drainage (Figure 2). A few reached the southern tier counties, found in *Lancaster*, *Adams*, and *Fulton*. *Clarion* led with 8 Rough-legs, *Mifflin* and *Northumberland* had 6 each, and *Huntingdon* and *Union* had 5 each.

All Rough-legs were identified by color morph - 47 (63%) were light (2001-18 range = 60 -78%).

Northern Harrier. Even aside from the dismal numbers of American Kestrels, the most significant *negative* news was the low number of Northern Harriers. The total of 59 was down 50% from last year and lower than in any year except 2001-2002-2003, when hours of observation were well under half the current level. The rate of 0.069/hour was the lowest ever (Figure 1). As with any species, we can speculate about the complex of factors that result in fluctuations of the population density from year to year. There was some snow cover through much of the period, though mostly not deep and often yielding to brief warm-ups; however, in some areas there may have been a layer of persistent ice. Weather aside, one is strongly inclined to speculate that habitat is a major factor, with seemingly fewer unmowed grassy fields available each winter (Wilson et al. 2010)

The winter harrier range, not surprisingly, tends to mirror that of kestrels, particularly in the farmlands of the central Susquehanna drainage. Highest numbers of harriers came from central and south-central counties. *Northumberland* and *Washington* had 6 each, followed by *Adams* with 5 (Figure 2).

Vultures. Black Vultures continued their long-term upward trend, posting a record count of 1527 and also record rate of 1.8/hour. The Turkey Vulture count of 2730 fell back slightly from last year's record of 3173, but was still a bit above the average of the past decade (Figure 1).

As always, most vultures were in the southeast with *Lancaster* and *Chester* tops for both; those two well-covered counties of the warm southeast accounted for 47% of all vultures recorded (Figure 2, Table 2). Turkey and Black Vultures were found in 28 and 26 counties, respectively, which is fairly typical. There were few conspicuous out-liers, most notably the four Black Vultures in Tioga on 2 Feb (Figure 2). In the southwest, on routes in *Westmoreland*, Turkey Vultures have become almost

routine; 34 were recorded on routes in that county, plus one Black Vulture (T. and J. Kuehl, per. comm.).

Bald Eagle. The Bald Eagles continue upward, of course. Will nothing stop them? The count of 600 smashed the previous record high of 487. The rate of 0.71/hour was also a record high (Figure 1). Bald Eagles were recorded in 54 of 65 reporting counties (Figure 2) with most in Susquehanna and Delaware River drainages and the northwest. As usual *Lancaster* led, tallying 128 Bald Eagles, which included 58 on a single count. *Bucks* was a close second with 101 Bald Eagles, including 96 from one count (79 of which were immature). Eighteen counties reached double digits.

Of the 600 total eagles, 41% (248) were listed as immature, consistent with values of recent years.

Other Raptors Wintering Red-shouldered Hawks continued their recent trend of increase (Grove and Bolgiano, 2014), following the record high count in 2018 with another record this year. The total of 181 represents a 26% jump from last year's total of 144 (Figure 1). As usual they were concentrated in the southeast and south-central counties and especially in the northwest (Figure 2). Leading the count was *Chester*, where 20 were recorded. *Adams*, *Butler*, *Mercer*, and *York* all hit double-digits. The Red-shoulder CBC count for the past winter was also well above average.

Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were similar to recent years, with Cooper's eclipsing the previous record by one. Merlins also set a record high and Peregrine Falcons tied the previous record high. Four Golden Eagles were found, about average. A Northern Goshawk was recorded in *Potter* (Table 1, 2). 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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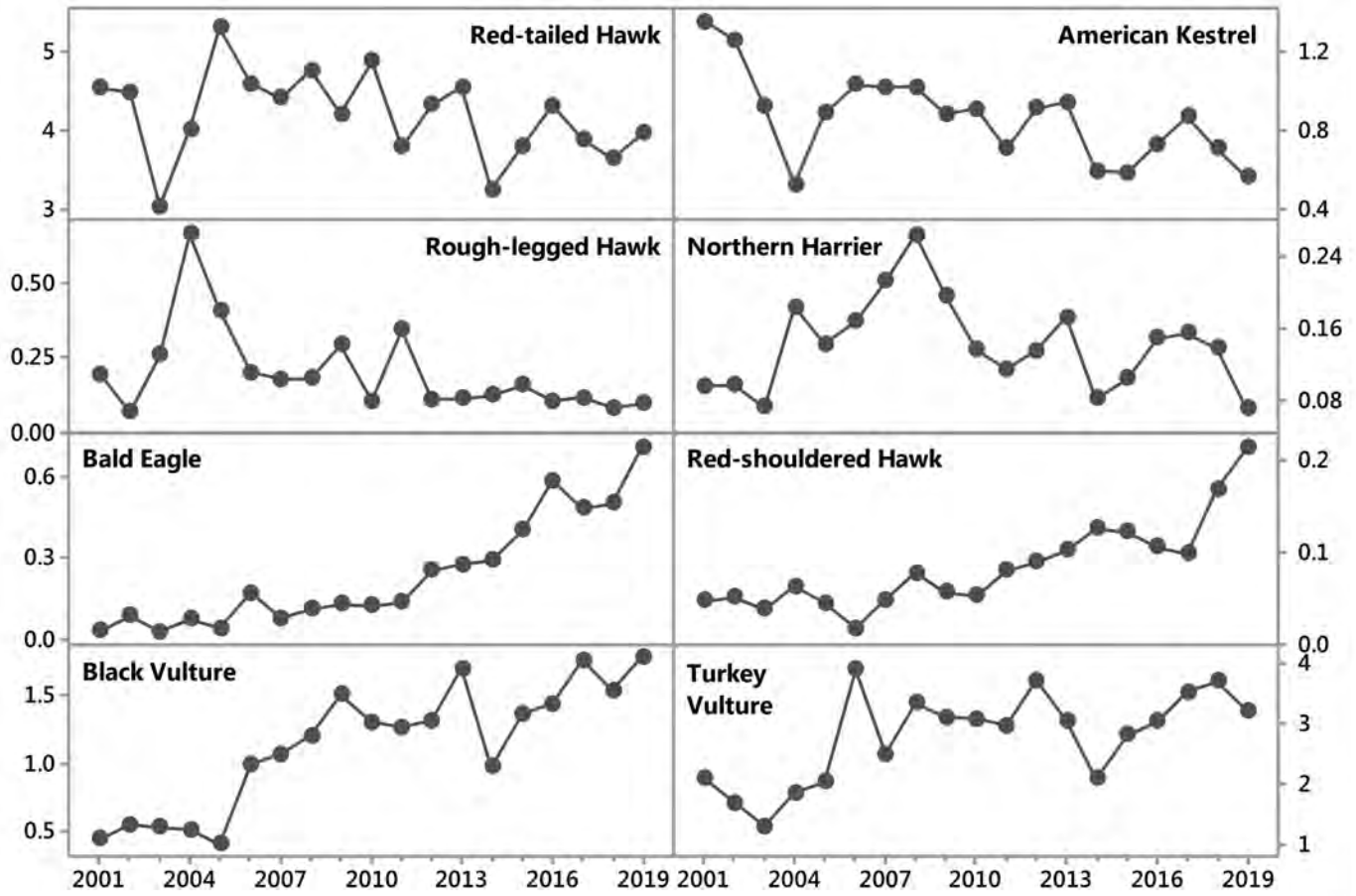
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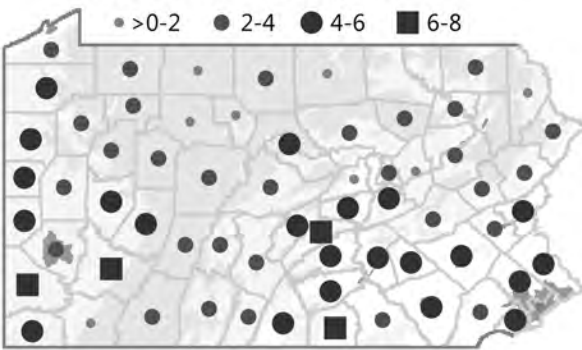
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Winter Raptor Survey 2001-2019
Count/hour

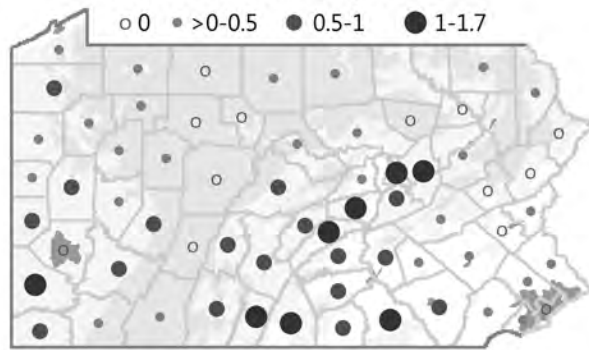


Winter Raptor Survey 2019

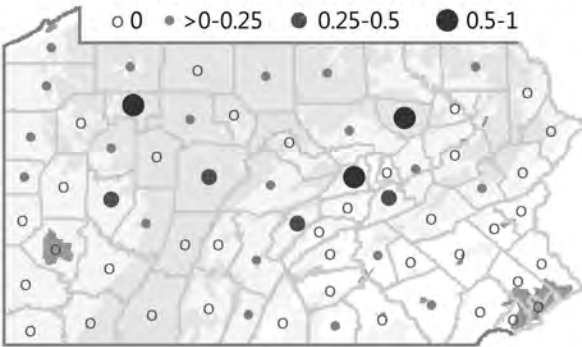
Red-tailed Hawks/hr



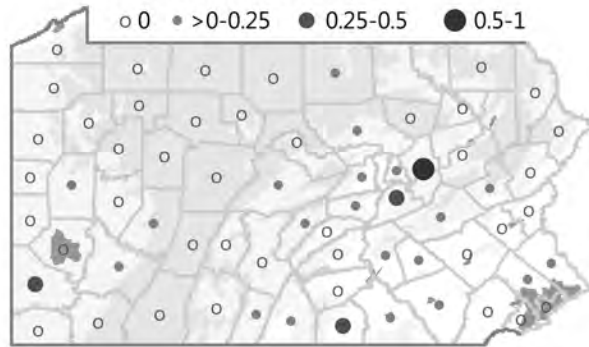
American Kestrels/hr



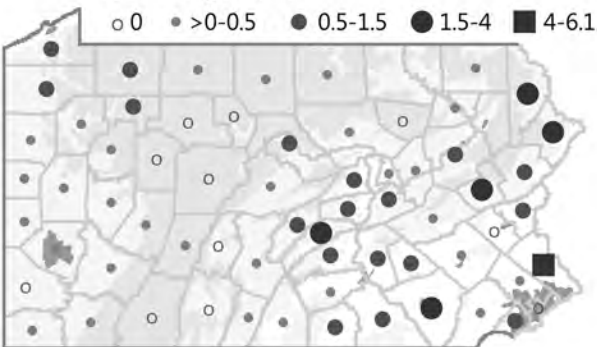
Rough-legged Hawks/hr



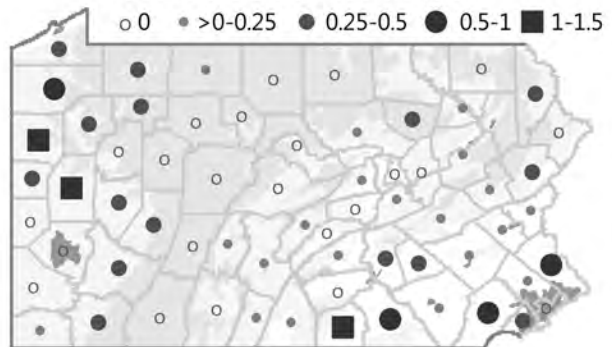
Northern Harriers/hr



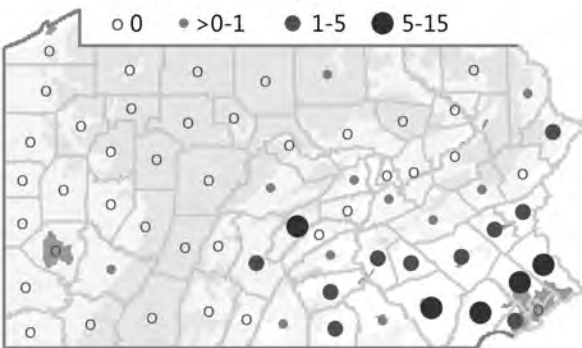
Bald Eagles/hr



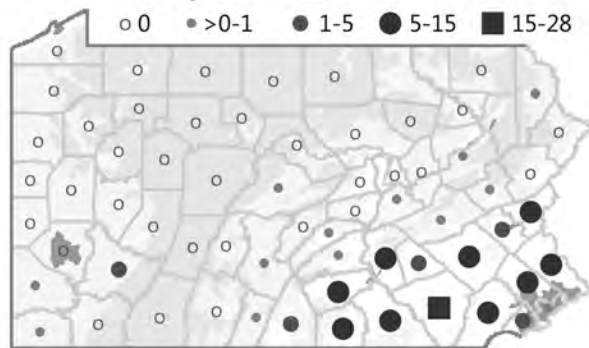
Red-shouldered Hawks/hr



Black Vultures/hr



Turkey Vultures/hr



Appendix: 2019 Winter Raptor Survey Results

County	Hours	Miles	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	TV	BV	NShr
Adams	17	252	10	5		2		18	131	2		17		1	247	49	
Allegheny	2.75	67	1						10					1			
Armstrong	12	164	3			2		3	66	4	1	6					
Beaver	2.75	23	1						12			2		1			
Bedford	7.25	187			2	3			17			6					
Berks	26	364	8			7		1	123			13	1		236	126	
Blair	9.5	160			1			1	35			7					
Bradford																	
Bucks	16.75	185	101	4	3	2		9	93			4	2	1	113	123	
Butler	12.5	181	2	1	1	4		16	25			11					
Cambria	4	93	1			2			11								
Cameron	2	62							1								
Carbon	8.5	149	13	1		2		1	18	1	1				2	1	
Centre	29.25	367	7	3	4	7			110	3		16	1		21	10	
Chester	26.5	443	13		2	5		20	90			7	2		356	206	
Clarion	34.5	480	4			2			87	8		5					1
Clearfield	8	201							18	3							
Clinton	8	128	5		2	2			40			4					
Columbia	8	106	1	4	1	1			14	1		9					
Crawford	17	274	14		3	2		9	94	2		10		1			
Cumberland	22	359	9			6			112		1	16			168	45	
Dauphin	13.5	234	19	2	1	1		4	59	3		12			70	35	
Delaware	11.25	161	11		1	1		4	46			3			35	53	
Elk	4.75	112			1	1			5	1							
Erie	16.75	302	10			5		5	48	3		2	3	2			1
Fayette	14	240	1					4	23			6					
Forest	3	63	2					1	6	2		1					
Franklin	26.5	418	11	2	5			1	106		1	34	3		34	8	
Fulton	8.75	119	3	2		2		2	29	2		13			3		
Greene	16.25	260	2			2		1	91			12			3		
Huntingdon	29.5	431	11		2	6		6	117	5		26	1		20	49	
Indiana	19.75	264	6	3	1	3		7	113	2		12					
Jefferson	14.75	224			1				32			2					
Juniata	12.5	220	29		3	1			91			16			2		
Lackawana																	
Lancaster	35	471	128	3	2	7		1	163	1		32	2	6	969	476	
Lawrence	12.25	155	5		1	3		5	58	3		4	1				
Lebanon	9.75	158	8	1	1	2		4	51			4			43	14	
Lehigh	10	146			1	2		1	39						39	15	
Luzerne	9.5	160	6			2		1	30			3			2		
Lycoming	16.75	303	4	2		3		1	43	4		6					
McKean	6.75	124	1		1			1	9								
Mercer	11.5	161	4			2		14	62	1		3					
Mifflin	20	223	10	1	2	1		2	81	6		20		1		107	
Monroe	7.5	131	11			1		2	21								
Montgomery	10.25	100	3	2	1	3		2	43			3			91	95	
Montour	5.75	123	1	1	1				15			7					
Northampton	18.5	307	13		2	1		1	87			4		1	99	79	
Northumberland	14.25	206	17	6		3		1	79	6		12	1	1	4	3	
Perry	20.25	257	20			1		3	104			18			14	8	
Philadelphia	5.5	63							5						1		
Pike	6	23	20						18					1		6	
Potter	16	240	2			3	1		35	1		1					
Schuylkill	15.75	223	5	2		7		2	59			7	1		7	3	
Snyder	11.75	183	6	1		3			49			19	1				
Somerset	10.75	179				2			33			1					
Sullivan	3	59						1	10	2							
Susquehanna	8.5	94	1			1			27	1		4					
Tioga	16.75	188	1	2		2			21	2		4				4	
Union	6	98	4	1		1		1	10	5		2				4	
Venango	8	142	1					2	16			4					
Warren	11	173	6			2		3	34	1		1					
Washington	15.75	234		6	1	1			97			17			13		
Wayne	6.75	85	13					2	6			1			4	3	1
Westmoreland	18.25	288	2	3	1	8		7	113			11		2	34	1	
Wyoming	6.5	100	3		2			1	23								
York	10.75	228	7	1	2	1		10	37			13	1		100	4	
TOTAL	850.5	12918	600	59	52	133	1	181	3351	75	4	473	20	19	2730	1527	3

American Kestrel Nest Box Projects in Pennsylvania – Results from 2018 season

Editor's note: American Kestrels are believed to be declining in Pennsylvania and in the northeastern United States (Bolgiano et al. 2015). Conservationists in the northeast are attempting to slow or reverse these declines through the use of nest boxes designed to attract kestrels and enhance their productivity. Several Pennsylvania birders, listed below, are making significant contributions to this effort.

The results of kestrel nest box efforts in 2018 in the northeast have been compiled by Steve Eisenhauer of The Natural Lands Organization (natlands.org) who has written an extensive review and commentary on the state of American Kestrels and the possible positive effects of nest boxes. His review can be read in its entirety at:

https://ucs.psu.edu/service/home/~/?auth=co&loc=en_US&id=307890&part=2

Following are a few brief excerpts from his article, focusing on Pennsylvania projects. Following that is a summary by Nate McKelvie and Tim Becker of one nest box program in our state, on the farmlands at the Milton Hershey School in Dauphin County. Their program involves boxes not only for kestrels, but also for Barn Owls, another declining raptor - the two efforts not mutually exclusive as it turned out. As a wonderful bonus, their program has involved hundreds of students from the Milton Hershey School over the past decade, working with box monitoring and data collection.

From the 2018 Northeastern U.S. summary (Steve Eisenhauer) :

On October 12, 2018, a record 5600 American Kestrels were counted migrating over the Cape May Hawk Watch Station. In 2018, 22 kestrel nest box organizations, individuals, and wildlife rehab centers in the Northeast reported 1868 kestrel nestlings or fledglings banded, with a high count of 270 by Mark Manske and associates in upstate New York.....In 2015, kestrels were down-listed from threatened to special concern in Connecticut, primarily due to the success of the state's nest box programs. Are we seeing an overall positive trend, or is the steady 60-year kestrel decline continuing in the northeastern 11-state area? How comfortable are we with Pete Dunne's assertion in his 2016 book, *Birds of Prey*, that the American Kestrel's "newfound ability to expand into urban areas" is one factor that will allow kestrels to become a more familiar species to people?

The short answers are:

- Explanations of the Cape May record American Kestrel count focus on unusual weather conditions that caused the birds to mass on the New Jersey side of Delaware Bay until favorable winds and weather facilitated movement south.

- Nestling and fledgling banding counts are a good local measure of success, but more extensive and inclusive counts are needed to draw conclusions about the region-wide trend.

- Kestrel numbers in the northeastern states are probably still trending downward (Schulwitz et al 2017). We don't know for sure. Some local area populations are definitely increasing. But are they drawing from other areas?

Kestrel young banded as a measure of success

Kestrel nestlings fledge about 30 days after hatching, with banding preferably done between 16 and 22 days: old enough to figure they'll fledge and to determine sex, but before premature fledging is a concern. Banded birds are easily documented, whereas "birds fledged" – used in the past and occasionally today to measure nest box program success – takes more effort to document and define. Does it mean being able to fly after a few hours, a few days, a week? Most established kestrel nest box programs band nestlings. Many also band adult females and occasionally males. The more research-based a program is the more information it seeks from banding and from tracking devices like geo-locators. The more propagation-based programs (and individuals who might only have one or two kestrel nest boxes) may not band even the nestlings, but focus on producing more kestrels each year: just as admirable and may occasionally be even more productive and is certainly easier to replicate. Licensed banders are not available in many areas, and nest boxes/cavities can be difficult or impossible to safely access.

The 1868 kestrel nestlings banded in 2018 includes the geographic region from Virginia to Maine: an area where kestrels have been in steady decline at least since the 1960s. Although this count certainly misses many kestrel young – both banded and unbanded – from nest boxes and natural cavities, it does present a baseline measure, with the hope that additional programs and individuals will add figures, findings and nest boxes in coming years.

The kestrel nestling banding totals of those who contributed to this report from Pennsylvania:

217 by Devich Farbotnik in Bucks County
93 by Jere Schade and Paul Karner in Northampton County

80 by J.F. Therrian in Berks County area around Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

48 by Nick Kerlin, Jon Kauffman, and Steve Eisenhauer in 3-county area around State College

44 by Nate McKelvie and Tim Becker in Harrisburg area

35 by Jere Schade and Steve Benningfield in Bucks County

35 by Emily Hope Thomas in northwest PA area

Total in PA – 552

Milton Hershey School and ZooAmerica Barn Owl and American Kestrel Conservation Partnership

Nate McKelvie (Milton Hershey School) and Tim Becker (ZooAmerica)

Barn Owls (BNOW) and American Kestrels (AMKE) have long been a valuable presence in the rich and rolling agricultural lands surrounding Hershey, Pennsylvania. Starting in 2008, a concerted effort was made by the staff in the Milton Hershey School Environmental Center to install and monitor BNOW nest boxes in appropriate habitat on the school's central campus and surrounding farms; at the time it consisted of seven total boxes. An on-going professional partnership between the staff of ZooAmerica, PA Game Commission, and MHS staff in the Agricultural and Environmental Education Department eventually lead to a more focused and organized collaboration in our nest box and banding efforts in 2012. This bolstered those nest box numbers significantly along with the ability to monitor and maintain those boxes.

The emphasis began with increasing the number of Barn Owl boxes specifically on the Hershey Trust-owned farmlands. It was really about practicality, knowing we had permission to be on the extensive properties that also happened to have prime habitat. This was accomplished in most cases by mounting a BNOW box on the inside of Hershey barns and cutting an entrance hole in the exterior wall. While we had decent BNOW activity, we were surprised at the number of barn owl boxes that were being used by American Kestrels. In one case, we found a kestrel wing in one of our barn owl boxes with evidence of a mighty fray, and thought that it might well be a case of lethal eviction! We began to install kestrel boxes at each of our farms with BNOW boxes hoping to reduce competition. We simply mounted standard sized AMKE boxes to the sides of the barn or another out building. Interestingly, it seems Kestrels find the BNOW boxes as a more desirable penthouse than the common AMKE box, regularly choosing the former over the latter when given the opportunity. Besides the obvious improvement in spaciousness, I wonder whether this has some connection to the findings of Curley et.al. (1987) pointing to an AMKE preference for nest boxes with more light inside? There is an on-going battle in these boxes to evict squirrels, pigeons, and especially starlings.

In light of this, upon discussion with other folks in the AMKE conservation community, we have since added a number of kestrel boxes by mounting them on (telephone) poles, in areas of good habitat with no barn walls available. It seems pole mounting may lead to less issues with starlings if they are a distance away from the barns and other buildings. In the 2018 breeding season, eleven of our twenty-two kestrel boxes were successful, resulting in

36 banded chicks (19 males and 17 females). We have since added seven new kestrel boxes, and relocated six others that have been consistently nonproductive. The Barn Owls didn't represent as well this year, with one nest box fledging 5 young which were banded in July. That has been the trend as of late.

A unique aspect of our joint project is its connection with the Milton Hershey School students. Students are very active in checking boxes, and at banding time, taking measurements and recording data. Now that we have multiple years of data and a solid number of boxes installed, classes are beginning to use the data across the curriculum. All MHS students have backgrounds of poverty and difficult family situations. The opportunity to see wild owls and kestrels up close during the banding process has sparked incredible curiosity and is a profound experience in the lives of hundreds of students and staff alike over the past decade. The opportunity to have an active part in valuable field work will be remembered for a lifetime, and pay dividends for conservation and environmental stewardship in the future.

What is next for AMKE and BNOW efforts around Hershey? Though there are many opportunities we would like to pursue, first will be continued student involvement with increasing focus on data that could have students be publishing this research and informing sound land use decisions. Second, more focus on pole mounted boxes and possible higher densities of BNOW and

AMKE boxes in prime habitat areas. Third, explore use of AMKE boxes in the Milton Hershey School orchard and trial gardens as pest management (following the lead of Catherine Lindell's team at Michigan State studying kestrels as part of Integrated Pest Management in cherry orchards). Fourth, continue to increase ZooAmerica connections to these efforts through students in Zoo Camps. Finally, collaborate, collaborate, collaborate! There is loads of potential to continue to grow our efforts locally and regionally and advocate for strong conservation measures by leveraging our position as a large landowner as well as an educational institution with the responsibility of modeling good stewardship of our resources. We would love to expand our efforts, continue to formalize and improve our processes, and make solid academic and extra-curricular connections for students to engage in real science right in our own backyard!

February 16, 2019

Addendum – an early, partial report on 2019 results of a central Pennsylvania nest box project – from Steve Eisenhauer

As of 6-11-19, the Shaver's Creek Environmental Center's kestrel nest box program in central Pennsylvania reports over 30 boxes occupied by nesting kestrels. Eighty-three (83) kestrel nestlings were banded in 18

boxes as of 6-11. Total number of nest boxes is now 90: up from last season's 40. Seven farms have two active kestrel boxes – only one farm had two active boxes last year – with active box spacing as close as 330 yards. The involved study area includes Centre, Mifflin and the north half of Huntingdon County.

Bolgiano, N., J-F. Therrien and G. Grove. 2015. Pennsylvania's Importance to American Kestrels: A Regional Context. *Pennsylvania Birds* 29:76-83.

Curley, E.M., Bowman, R., Bird, D.M. 1987. Nest site characteristics of boxes occupied by starling and kestrels. Pp. 160-164 in *The Ancestral Kestrel* (D. M. Bird and R. Bowman, eds.). Raptor Res. Foundation, Inc. and Macdonald Raptor Res. Centre of McGill Univ., Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec, Ontario.

Schulwitz, S., McClure, C.J.W., Buskirk, R.V., Pauli, B., Heath, J.A. 2017. *American Kestrel Symposium 2017 - PDF PowerPoint - Research recommendations for understanding the decline of American Kestrels (Falco sparverius) across much of North America*: https://brandywinezoo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Schulwitz_SYMPOSIUM_RecommendationsKestrelDecline_2.pdf



Bander Nick Kerlin in Centre, June 21, 2018. (photo by Jon Kauffman)



Nestlings June 14, 2018. (photo by Jon Kauffman)

BIRDS OF CHILE: A PHOTO GUIDE by Steve N. G. Howell and Fabrice Schmitt, pictorial contents, 5 color maps, over 1,000 color bird photos, how to use this book, introduction, species accounts and plates, appendix, acknowledgments, references, and index, 5 ½ x 8 ¼ in., 240 pp., published by Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2018, \$29.95, soft cover.

If only I would have had this convenient avian guide years ago while undertaking fire ecology research in the Valdivian rain forest. This temperate-marine forest reaches its optimum growth of towering southern beech (*Nothofagus*) and Alerce (*Fitzroya cupressoides*) that reach 75 m or more in height on the slopes of the Chilean watershed between 39 and 42 degrees South latitude in Central and South Chile. This appealing guide would have saved me many hours locating, identifying, and collecting different birds, many of which are familiar neotropical migrants.

Chile straddles the 70-degree West meridian along the western watershed of the Andes, from the Peruvian border at 18 degrees South to Cape Horn at 56 degrees South latitude. In the Northern Hemisphere, this latitudinal 2500-mile span would be equivalent to going from southeast Alaska to southern Mexico. Within this narrow strip of land, bird enthusiasts can find a remarkable variety of birdlife from penguins to colorful tanagers, the world's largest hummingbirds to flightless rheas, the majestic Andean Condor gliding over snow-capped volcanoes to tiny tapaculos skulking in bamboo thickets, and flamingos shimmering on Andean salt lakes to albatrosses feeding on the rich, abundant, seafood in the cold Humboldt Current.

If the co-author name Steve N. G. Howell sounds familiar to journal readers, simply recall the last book review *A Reference Guide to Gulls of the Americas in Pennsylvania Birds*, Vol. 32, No.4, Aug-Nov 2018, pp. 207-208. Howell is a well-known international bird tour leader with WINGS, a research associate at the California Academy of Science, and author of many familiar bird books. Fabrice Schmitt is also an international bird tour leader with WINGS who lived in Chile ten years (2005-2015) and helped develop the eBird online birding tool for Chile and the rest of South America.

The guide covers birds found regularly on the Chilean mainland, adjacent isles, and marine waters to 30 miles at sea. Rare visitors and vagrants are not included. The inside front cover and next three pages offer a pictorial overview starting with Swimming Waterbirds and ending with Meadowlarks and Blackbirds. The format stresses helping birders get quickly to the right group of

birds. Howell first used this arrangement in 2010 by using field-friendly groupings rather than "a non-intuitive, frequently changing, taxonomic sequence" (p. 9). By combining images of species in habitat and context, such images are most helpful when seeking a given species. Key identification features are highlighted in pale yellow text boxes. If a species is "distinctive", that is, not similar to another species in Chile or unmistakable, it is simply stated so.

Species accounts are purposely short, only conveying the most essential field identification characteristics. Each starts with a species' English and scientific names, length (sometimes wingspan as well), and where and when a species occurs. Status and distribution can be complex, so only the main patterns are summarized. Abundance, geographic distribution, and any seasonal status are usually summarized first. Abundance is inevitably subjective, although usually relative between similar species. Geographic ranges are based on Chile's 15 political divisions and three larger scale latitudinal regions which inter-grade with each other: Northern Chile, Central Chile, and Southern Chile (see fig. 1, p.12). Chile's Pacific marine waters and coastline are divided into two latitudinal regions: the Humboldt Current and Southern Ocean. Approximate elevation ranges are given for most Andean birds. If elevation is not provided, a species occurs in the lowlands and foothills below 1,000 m, along the Pacific coast, or at sea. It is assumed a species is resident and breeding unless stated otherwise: use of 'migrant' or 'winter' indicates non-breeding status; 'summer' or 'breeder' indicates seasonal breeding status. Summer is mainly August-April in Central Chile, September-March in Southern Chile; and winter is April-August in Central Chile, March-September in Southern Chile.

This reviewer did not have the privilege of experiencing the Atacama Desert region of Northern Chile in the nearly two years of working in Argentina and Chile. One of the highlights of this guide, therefore, is its succinct descriptions of Geography, Habitat, and Bird Distribution (pp. 11-36). The Atacama has been described as "the most perfect of deserts," being the driest desert on Earth. There are vast areas where rain has never been recorded. However, the desert coastline is far from lifeless, supporting masses of colonial seabirds, thanks to the rich sea-life of the Humboldt Current offshore.

One of the most conspicuous coastal residents is the Gray Gull whose breeding grounds remained a mystery for many years. It nests colonially in the barren vastness of the Atacama Desert. Likewise, over 20 species of migrant shorebirds occur during the boreal winter such as the Hudsonian

Whimbrel, Western Willet, Ruddy Turnstone, Surf-bird, and Sanderling. This season also attracts thousands of migrant Franklin's Gulls and Elegant Terns to share the coast with resident Gray Gulls and Inca Terns (p. 13).

Central Chile and its birdlife can be described in terms of its three zones: Mediterranean, Central Andes, and Valdivian. In fact, Central Chile recalls southern and central California in western North America reflecting a remarkable latitudinal convergence in terms of vegetation, climate, and physical geography. Increased precipitation allows a dense scrub called *matorral* to exist in the lowlands and deciduous southern beech forest grows locally in the coastal mountains and Andean foothills. Such vegetation comprises an ecological island in South America with a high degree of endemism in plants and a number of endemic bird taxa (see pp. 22-23). For example, five insectivores vacate the region in winter for warmer climes: Chilean Giant Hummingbird, Chilean Elaenia, Ticking Doradito, Spectacled Tyrant, and Blue-and-white Swallow. Rainfall increases farther south and the landscape becomes greener grading into the Valdivian Zone. By virtue of a lack of geographic barriers south of 41 degrees South, the avifauna of southern Chile and southern Argentina are quite similar and thus this region is termed the Southern Cone. About 15% of Chile's breeding avian species are endemic, at least as breeders, to the Southern Cone. Characteristic raptor breeding species of this zone of scrub-covered rocky slopes and cliffs include Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Variable Hawk, and Aplomado and Peregrine Falcons. Although the Valdivian rainforest avifauna is minimally diverse, it is highly specialized. Characteristic raptors in the temperate rainforest include Chilean, White-throated, and Rufous-tailed Hawks plus a score of other varied avian species. Forested streams support Spectacled and Torrent Ducks, and Austral Ringed Kingfisher. Ochre-flanked and Magellanic Tapaculos are common in second-growth bamboo but difficult to see let alone collect. The avifauna of local Andes, with peaks of only 2,500-3,000 m, are still not well known but locally common breeding species include Cordilleran Canastero, Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant, and Yellow-bridled Finch. On the other hand, fresh lakes and marshes have breeding populations of numerous waterbirds including Great Grebe, Cooi Heron, White-faced Ibis, Black-necked Swan, Upland and Ashy-headed Geese, Flying Steamer-Duck, Brown-hooded Gull, and Snowy-crowned Tern. Finally, the intertidal mudflats around the Gulf of Ancud support large populations of Hudsonian Godwits in the boreal winter while

Humboldt Current seabirds such as Guanay and Red-legged Shags disappear while Rock and Imperial Shags appear. Mixed colonies of Humboldt and Magellanic Penguins on Chiloe Island further exemplify the transitional nature of this region. The recently described (2013) new species Pincoya Storm-petrel inhabits the Gulf of Ancud within sight of Puerto Montt, yet its breeding grounds remain to be discovered.

Southern Chile extends from approximately 45 degrees South to Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn, about 56 degrees South, and will be quickly reviewed in terms of the Fuegian Zone and Patagonia. The harshness of the climate here is reflected by the presence of two permanent ice caps, the north one at 47 degrees South and the huge southern cap at 48 to 51 degrees South. The northern ice cap, inland from the Gulf of Penas (Gulf of Pain) marks the southern extent of tall temperate rainforest and with it the southern range limit for Chilean Pigeon, Black-throated Huer-Huer, and Chucao Tapaculo. Although the southern Andes are not especially high, they still effectively intercept moisture from the westerly winds and create a rain-shadow to the east. The dry steppe thus formed comprises the heart of Patagonia, a vast, windswept, rolling plateau that lies mostly in Argentina. The main Chilean part of this habitat is in southern Magallanes and northern Tierra del Fuego. Land bird's characteristic of Patagonian grassland and steppe include Darwin's Rhea, Short-billed and Patagonian Miners, Austral

Canastero, Chocolate-vented Tyrant, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant, Austral Negrito, Patagonian Yellow-finch, and Canary-winged Finch. The Andes have good populations of Andean Condors that roam widely seeking dead sheep, goats, or cattle. Local lakes support populations of nomadic Chilean Flamingos as well as numbers of boreal migrant Baird's Sandpipers and Wilson's Phalaropes. The eastern coast of Tierra del Fuego, largely in Argentina, has vast intertidal, mudflats that support thousands of boreal migrant shorebirds, especially Hudsonian Godwit, Red Knott, and White-rumped Sandpiper.

Almost half of the regularly occurring Chilean avian species exhibit some degree of seasonal movement, although details for many species are poorly known. Beside the north-south/summer-winter boreal migrations familiar to observers in the Northern Hemisphere, other types of migration are frequent among Chilean birds: boreal migration, austral migration, and altitudinal migration. Of species breeding in North America and migrating south for the winter, only 36 regularly reach Chile. Shorebirds, gulls, and terns make up 30 of these, although for only 10 species is Chile a major wintering area; 3 regular boreal migrants are passerine swallows. Among species breeding in Central and Southern Chile, at least 70 exhibit some degree of northward migration in winter. These include 28 waterbirds (12 waterfowl, 11 shorebirds) and 32 passerines (including 9 ovenbirds, 15

flycatchers). Austral migration ranges from local withdrawal from less hospitable regions to wholesale movement to separate wintering grounds. In Central and Southern Chile at least 30 species exhibit some level of altitudinal migration, often mixed with degrees of austral migration. Even in Northern Chile, individuals of several species descend to the lowlands in winter (mainly Mar-Sep), such as Andean Gull, Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant, and Gray-bellied Shrike-Tyrant. Finally, other kinds of migration involve crossing the Andes west to east or reverse east to west. And the greatest kind of migration is exhibited by various seabirds, especially albatrosses and petrels, some of which may wander the oceans for months or years before returning to land for breeding. Lastly, some Chilean breeding tubenoses are long-distance migrants that spend their non-breeding season in the North Pacific.

In sum, this is the first modern-style photo field guide to the birds of Chile, an increasingly popular destination for birders and naturalists alike. Compact, light in weight, and easy to carry, pack, and use, more than 1,000 real-life photos and brief texts make bird identification easy and a genuine pleasure to review.

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The winter saw a modest invasion of **Evening Grosbeaks**, reported in at least 34 counties; most counts were small, but a few bigger flocks settled in at favored locations, like that of 40 that spent Jan and Feb at a feeder in Rebersburg, *Centre*, a few of which seen here 16 February. (Ron Crandall)



Who can spot the geotracker antenna on this **Evening Grosbeak** ? - photographed 4 January at Tionesta, *Forest*, 15 miles from where it was fitted with the device, in Marienville, where grosbeaks have been regular at a feeding station in the last decade, even in non-invasion years. (Jeffrey Hall)

Summary of the Season: Winter 2018-19

Nick Bolgiano

Several bouts of cold, snow, and ice during late fall and winter appeared to reduce the numbers of some species, particularly open-country species. Coming as it did during the late migration period, the November 15 snowfall of up to a foot and the accompanying cold blast may have prompted many birds to continue farther south. The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) documented low numbers of **American Coot**, **American Woodcock**, **Short-eared Owl**, **Horned Lark**, **American Pipit**, **Lapland Longspur**, **Snow Bunting**, **Dark-eyed Junco**, **Eastern Meadowlark**, and **Yellow-rumped Warbler**.

While temperatures were moderate most of the winter period, alternating cold and warm periods during late January and early February created extreme conditions for any animal that needed to forage off the ground. Snow fell on January 19-20 and temperatures plummeted to near zero °F on January 20-22; it then warmed and over an inch of rain fell on January 23-24; temperatures then fell, reaching their lowest levels of the winter on January 30-February 1; and the water-logged snowpack froze into a thick ice that persisted for weeks (NOAA Regional Climatic Center 2019). Some open-country species were difficult to find all winter.

The effects of West Nile Virus (WNV) became evident by the end of a year (2018) with the highest recorded rainfall and WNV prevalence in mosquitoes. Observers particularly noted large WNV-related declines for **Carolina Chickadee** and **Tufted Titmouse** (see the *Adams*, *Berks*, *Bucks*, and *York* reports). There is evidence that those two species, plus **American Crow**, **Great Horned Owl**, **Ruffed Grouse**, and **Black-capped Chickadee**, and possibly others have experienced significant declines from WNV. See the WNV article in this issue.

The irruptions of **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **Evening Grosbeak**, **Purple Finch**, **Common Redpoll**, and **Pine Siskin** that began in the fall were evident throughout the winter period. Although small to moderate in size, these events were keenly followed by many observers.

Rarities were modest in number. Most unusual were the 14 species of warblers reported, with relatively high numbers of individual birds.

Snow Goose was in 37 counties (vs. in 38 in 2017-18) and again highly concentrated in the Lehigh Valley. The 178,000 in the CBC, which included 129,000 at Bethlehem-Easton, was the third highest historical total for the Pennsylvania CBC. Billy Weber, in the *Carbon* report, describes the Kittatinny Ridge

as “functioning as a sort of electric fence containing the tens to hundreds of thousands in the Lehigh Valley”. The distribution was similar to 2017-18, again in seven western counties and a handful of central counties. The theme here is consistency.

Ross’s Goose was in five counties (vs. 23 in 2017-18 and 18 in 2016-17), mainly restricted to locations in the Lehigh Valley where Snow Goose concentrated, plus Middle Creek WMA: in *Bucks*, *Lancaster*, *Lebanon*, *Lehigh*, and *Northampton*. After several winters of expansion, this represents a retraction.

Greater White-fronted Goose was in 15 counties (vs. 25 in 2017-18 and six in 2016-17). It was in eight southeastern counties, plus *Crawford* (high of 36), *Erie*, and *Westmoreland* in the west, *Clinton*, and *Somerset* in the central, and *Luzerne* and *Monroe* in the northeast. In *Berks*, Rudy Keller described that “after three winters of “double digit counts”, numbers “fell back to the low numbers seen in most winters since the mid-1990s.” Here on the eastern edge of their North American wintering range, we are seeing a good bit of year-to-year variation in Greater White-fronted Goose appearances.

Brant was found only in two central counties, where not commonly encountered: *Perry* and *Snyder*. **Barnacle Goose** was well-represented, in *Bucks*, *Chester*, *Lancaster*, and *Schuylkill*. **Cackling Goose** was found in 26 counties (vs. 24 in 2017-18 and 21 in 2016-17). As usual, it concentrated in the southeast, but was also found in *Beaver*, *Crawford*, *Erie*, *Washington*, and *Westmoreland* in the west; *Centre*, *Huntingdon*, *Lycoming*, and *Montour* in the central; and *Carbon*, *Luzerne*, and *Monroe* in the northeast. The theme again is consistency.

Trumpeter Swan was present in ten counties, all in the northwest, central, or southeast. This is more than double their usual frequency and may represent a distribution shift from concentrations in Ohio, Michigan, and southern Ontario. **Tundra Swan** numbers have been relatively low in the last several winters. The CBC tally of 442 was the fewest since 1995. It is possible that more could be staying at Lakes Erie and Ontario unless forced to leave by ice. The Middle Creek WMA survey estimated 3500 on February 25 (see *Lancaster* report) and good northbound flights were reported February 27-28, particularly in the northwest at *Butler*, *Crawford* (high of 685), *Mercer*, and *Venango*.

Among uncommon puddle ducks, **Eurasian Wigeon** was in *Armstrong* during

February; **Blue-winged Teal** was in *Blair* and *Franklin* during December and in *Clinton* during January. **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** was in *Bucks* and *Lebanon* during February. A **Brewer’s Duck** (Gadwall x Mallard) was photographed in *Butler*.

Declines in **Mallard** and **American Black Duck** continued. See the WNV article for the Mallard trend, although hunting season changes could explain this. The CBC showed that a steep decline continued in American Black Duck numbers. Despite the losses, surveys at Middle Creek WMA estimated 3000 Mallards and 800 American Black Ducks on December 8 (see *Lancaster*).

Among uncommon diving ducks, **Harlequin Duck** was at *Armstrong* during February. **Surf Scoter** and **Black Scoter** were fairly widespread, in seven and four counties, respectively. A female **Barrow’s Goldeneye** was on the Delaware R., *Monroe* and adjacent NJ, January 4-13 and a female was in *Bucks* January 22-23 and again February 22 (and subsequently in NJ). These sightings could be of the same female to be present here for the sixth consecutive winter.

Noteworthy counts of diving duck species are – **Canvasback**: 515 in *Lancaster* 2/23, 500 in *Erie* 2/24, and 198 in *Bucks* 2/11; **Redhead**: 600 in *Erie* 2/3-23 and 138 in *Crawford* 2/24; **Scaup sp.**: 500 in *Erie* 2/24; **Common Goldeneye**: 222 in *Crawford* 2/5 and 100 in *Mercer* 2/15; **Common Merganser**: 2700 in *Lancaster* 2/17, 2500-2800 in *Bucks* 2/21-27, 2000 in *Berks* 2/22, and 1540 in *Crawford* 1/1; **Red-breasted Merganser**: 930 in *Erie* 12/31.

Ruffed Grouse was reported from 29 counties (vs. 24 in 2017-18 and 34 in 2016-17). It was considered as uncommon by numerous county compilers, but cited as still present. It will thrive to the extent there is both suitable early-successional habit and WNV levels in mosquitoes fall to lower levels.

Red-necked Grebe was infrequently found, present in 12 counties, with no February incursion as sometimes happens.

Eurasian Collared-Dove was counted singly in *Berks* and *Cumberland*, but found in multiple locations in southern *Franklin*.

This was the second consecutive winter period with few hummingbirds. A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was in *Allegheny* and a continuing **Rufous/Allen’s Hummingbird** was in *Erie*.

Sandhill Crane continued to concentrate in the northwestern wetlands of *Butler*, *Crawford*, *Lawrence*, and *Mercer*. The Linesville CBC in *Crawford* set a new high of 186. Elsewhere, it was seen in *Bucks*, *Franklin*, *Juniata* (a flyover flock of 49), and

Montour. **Virginia Rail** was in *Bucks*, *Chester*, *Lancaster*, and *Montgomery*, a frequency similar to the previous winter. However, unexpected were **Sora** in *Berks* and *Bucks* and **Common Gallinule** in *Philadelphia*.

Shorebirds were particularly scarce. There were just one-two **Dunlins** in *Erie*; just two **American Woodcock** reports during December-January (and missed on the CBC for the 2nd time in 36 years); comparatively few **Wilson's Snipe**, with just ten observed on the CBC; and a single **Greater Yellowlegs** in *Crawford*.

Several uncommon gull species did not wander as far this season as in the previous winter. In particular, observers near the forks of the Ohio and in the north-central region saw fewer than the expected number of uncommon gulls.

Black-headed Gull returned to John Heinz NWR, *Delaware/Philadelphia*, for a third consecutive winter, but the Black-headed Gull that wintered in *Butler* for 7 of 10 years did not return. **Laughing Gull** was at Susquehanna R, *Lancaster*, and at John Heinz NWR, *Philadelphia*.

The 36,000 **Herring Gulls** at the Southern Bucks County CBC was again a continent-wide CBC high by a large margin. Among gulls, **Iceland Gull** showed the greatest retraction compared to the previous winter. It was in eight counties (vs. 14 in 2017-18 and eight in 2016-17): in seven southeastern counties, where expected, plus *Erie* (where 9-10 individuals). **Glaucous Gull** was in five counties (vs. six in 2017-18 and seven in 2016-17): *Berks*, *Bucks*, *Erie*, *Lancaster*, and *Montgomery* (a third county record in eBird), but missed in *Northampton* and *Philadelphia*. The 11 Glaucous Gulls on the Southern Bucks County CBC set a new site high. A **Herring x Glaucous** hybrid was observed in *Erie*.

Lesser Black-backed Gull was in 16 counties (vs. 13 in 2017-18 and 17 in 2016-17). It was found in ten southeastern counties; plus, *Butler* (where a probable 3rd county record), *Crawford*, and *Erie* in the northwest; and *Carbon*, *Lackawanna*, and *Luzerne* in the northeast. The CBC included 241 at Central Bucks County, 128 at Bethlehem-Easton, 120 at Southern Bucks County, and 88 at Upper Bucks County, continuing their northward distribution shift from southern *Bucks*. **Great Black-backed Gull** was in 19 counties. Outside of the southeast and *Erie*, it was in *Allegheny*, *Butler* (where a probable 2nd county record), and *Crawford* in the west; *Lycoming* in the upper Susquehanna Valley; but missed in the northeast.

Red-throated Loon was found in seven counties, which is about average: in the west at *Butler* and *Erie* (high of 56); in the southeast

at *Bucks* and *Philadelphia*; plus, *Somerset*, *Montour*, and *Wyoming* (where uncommon). **Great Cormorant** was found in *Bucks*, *Delaware*, and *Philadelphia*, primarily along the Delaware R., where annual.

Among uncommon herons, **American Bittern** was at *Berks* and at John Heinz NWR, *Delaware/Philadelphia*, while **Great Egret** was at *Bucks*, *Lancaster*, and *Montgomery*. No **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were reported; see the WNV article about their steep decline.

Trends for diurnal raptors were generally consistent with prevailing trends. **Osprey** was in *Lycoming* and *Philadelphia*. **Golden Eagle** was found in 22 counties, one more than in the previous winter, continuing their gradually higher frequency of recent winters. **Northern Harrier** numbers were low in both CBC and WRS, consistent with other open-country species. An exception was at Gettysburg National Military Park, where double-digit numbers were reported (see *Adams* report).

Northern Goshawk was found in 11 counties, compared to eight the previous winter, but still few in number. **Red-shouldered Hawk** continued to be found across most of the state, being found in 59 counties (vs. 56 in 2017-18 and 51 in 2016-17). The 181 Red-shouldered Hawks in the WRS set a new high (previous high was 144 in 2018). **Rough-legged Hawk** was found in 48 counties, compared to 44 the previous winter. The CBC (total=17) and WRS (75) indicate similar low densities to other recent years.

Among the owls, **Barn Owl** was in *Centre*, *Berks/Schuylkill* (Hamburg CBC), and *Franklin*. **Snowy Owl** did not irrupt, as it was found in only four counties: *Crawford* and *Erie* where more likely, plus *Lackawanna* and *Philadelphia*.

Short-eared Owl was a scarce open-country species, a year after the highest numbers in some time. It was reported from 20 counties, compared to 34 counties in 2017-18, with three tallied in the CBC, compared to 29 the previous year. **Long-eared Owl** was in nine counties: *Adams*, *Bucks*, *Chester*, *Crawford*, *Huntingdon*, *Lancaster*, *Montgomery*, *Somerset*, and *Philadelphia*, compared to eight the previous winter.

Red-headed Woodpecker was in 25 counties, compared to 27 the previous winter, and the CBC tally of 52 was average. A low CBC count of two at Gettysburg, but 18 at nearby York Springs, indicates a possible distribution shift within *Adams*, one of their winter strongholds (see the *Adams* report). The level of variation observed in **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** numbers during the last two winters is unprecedented. The 281 in the CBC was about half the average, one year after the 850 tallied was about double the

average. Something unexplained has occurred.

American Kestrel numbers were low in both the CBC and the WRS. The CBC indicated that wintering **Merlin** numbers continue to increase, while **Peregrine Falcon** numbers appear to have leveled off. A dark gray **Gyr Falcon** wintered near the Delaware River, *Northampton*, for the second consecutive season.

An **Empidonax sp.** was in *Cumberland* and seen on the Newville CBC, the eighth empid to be seen on a Pennsylvania CBC. Previous empid IDs in the CBC have included Pacific-slope Flycatcher (1991, 1992) and Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher (2001), western species to consider when identifying winter empids.

Northern Shrike was found in 15 counties, the same as in the previous winter, mostly in the northwest and central, plus *Adams*, *Carbon*, *Lehigh*, *Schuylkill*, and *Somerset*. This modest showing is typical of recent years. Reminiscent of several decades ago, a **Loggerhead Shrike** was at Gettysburg National Military Park, *Adams*. An uncommon **Blue-headed Vireo** at Middle Creek WMA, *Lancaster*, on the Lititz CBC helped that site attain the top site for species numbers in the Pennsylvania CBC.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow was again present at the NE Philadelphia Treatment Plant in *Philadelphia*, through at least February 23, with a high of 130 January 12. Smaller groups were also reported at two water treatment plants in nearby *Montgomery* and at the Trenton, NJ, sewage ponds across the river from *Bucks*. **Tree Swallow** was present at two *Philadelphia* locations, including throughout most of the period at the NE Philadelphia Treatment Plant.

A modest-sized **Red-breasted Nuthatch** irruption into Pennsylvania occurred; the 470 Red-breasted Nuthatches tallied in the CBC were much higher than in a non-irruption year, but fewer than tallied two years before and many fewer than tallied six years earlier. **House Wren** was in *Delaware*, *Dauphin*, and *Erie*; **Marsh Wren** in *Centre* and *Chester*; and **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** in *Philadelphia*, typical frequencies for all three.

Much less common were two thrushes: **Townsend's Solitaire** found on the Indiana CBC, *Indiana*, for only the second time on a Pennsylvania CBC. **Varied Thrush** stayed in busy Bethlehem, *Northampton*, for several weeks.

Four finch species irrupted in small to modest numbers: **Evening Grosbeak**, **Purple Finch**, **Common Redpoll**, and **Pine Siskin**, as northern cone and birch seed crops were poor to low (Pittaway 2018).

Evening Grosbeak was in 34 counties. In most, a few individuals were briefly seen.

However, in *Centre*, *Clarion*, and *Monroe*, up to 30-40 individuals continued at particular feeders, but the highest concentrations were in *Forest*, as in other recent winters, particularly at the Yeany residence in Marienville (up to 55) and at Tionesta Lake (up to 47). The 81 Evening Grosbeaks in the CBC was the highest tally in six years.

Common Redpoll was in 24 counties. As for the grosbeaks, most reports were of brief looks at a few individuals. However, in *Luzerne* and *Tioga*, high counts were 32 and 40, respectively. The most persistent flocks fed in birches in *Erie* (high of 58) and *Carbon* (high of 44). The 53 Common Redpolls in the CBC was also the highest tally in six years.

There were modest irruptions of **Purple Finch** and **Pine Siskin**. Both were fairly widespread, reported from 60-70% of CBC sites. Purple Finches tended to be most common in the southeast. Pine Siskin wasn't as abundant as it was four years earlier (CBC total of 707 vs. 1823 in 2014). Siskin high counts included 125 in *Erie* and 85 in *Juniata*. No crossbills were reported in Pennsylvania this winter, though a few **Red Crossbills** were observed nearby in New York, New Jersey, and Maryland.

Lapland Longspur was found in 20 counties (vs. 28 in 2017-18 and 12 in 2016-17), but seldom more than a few in any county. It was missed in the CBC for only the second time since 1972. **Snow Bunting** was recorded in 27 counties (vs. 41 in 2017-18 and 27 in 2016-17), but hard to find in the southeast. Highs included 120 in *Lawrence* and 78 in *Lebanon*. The CBC tally of 16 was low.

Among sparrows, **Grasshopper Sparrow**, rare in winter, was in *Montgomery*, **Clay-colored Sparrow** in *Bucks*, and **Harris's Sparrow** at a *Dauphin* farm during February. Two **Vesper Sparrows** were at an

Allegheny feeder. A **LeConte's Sparrow** was in *York* and seen on the York Springs CBC, the fourth report in a Pennsylvania CBC. **Lincoln's Sparrow** was in *Bucks* and at the same *Dauphin* farm as the Harris's Sparrow.

Yellow-breasted Chat was at *Chester* and seen on the West Chester CBC. **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was in *Chester* and *Lancaster*, where at least four were picked out among millions of blackbirds (see *Lancaster* report).

Eastern Meadowlark was in 18 counties (vs. 26 in 2017-18). Where found, few individuals were reported. The CBC total of seven was the fewest since 1929. In comparison, 20-47 were reported in the previous five CBCs. This scarcity may have been influenced by the conditions that resulted in many fewer open-country birds, but it could also reflect the steepness of their decline (see the *Adams*, *Berks*, and *Bucks* reports).

Rusty Blackbird was in 31 counties (vs. 35 in 2017-18), but numbers were low. The 80 tallied in the CBC was the lowest in nine years. **Baltimore Oriole** was in *Bucks*, *Montgomery* and *Philadelphia*, but missed on the CBC for just the second time since 2002. Three orioles were at Middletown Twp. feeders, *Bucks*, where seen annually in recent winters.

Most unusual was the abundance of warblers, not only the 14 species seen, but also the numbers of individuals reported. In addition to the five annual warblers: **Common Yellowthroat**, **Orange-crowned Warbler** (now annual in the southeast), **Palm Warbler**, **Pine Warbler**, and **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, nine additional species ranged from uncommon to quite rare.

Ovenbird was in *Blair*; **Black-and-white Warbler** was in *Blair*, *Delaware*, and *Lancaster*; **Nashville Warbler** was in *Erie*, where a first winter record, and *Philadelphia*;

Cape May Warbler was in *Allegheny* (two individuals), *Berks*, *Cumberland*, *Lancaster*, and *Philadelphia* (two individuals), it being very unusual to have so many; **Northern Parula**, rare in winter, was in *Crawford*; **Blackpoll Warbler**, rare in winter, apparently continued from the fall in *Montgomery*; **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, was in *Delaware* and *Montgomery*; and **Yellow-throated Warbler** was in *Centre*.

Most unusual were the three **Black-throated Gray Warblers**, in *Adams*, *Centre*, and *Lancaster*, the latter two being the first Black-throated Gray Warblers to be observed on the Pennsylvania CBC. These were the only Black-throated Gray Warblers shown in eBird as eastern vagrants this winter (also one in IL), illustrating how events with very small probabilities sometimes happen.

In a change from recent winters, only one uncommon *Cardinalidae* species (tanagers, grosbeaks, and buntings) was reported this winter period. That species was **Dickcissel**, in *Bucks*, *Chester*, *Franklin*, and *Snyder*. In contrast, six uncommon *Cardinalidae* species were reported in each of the winters of 2015-16 and 2017-18.

References

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25 Years Ago in Pennsylvania Birds



Volume 7, No. 1.

Tom Dick related how the Whitetail/Dunnings Creek Wetlands in Bedford County was created

The fourth state record of Townsend's Solitaire was reported in Bucks County.

In the Pennsylvania Birdlists report, 26 birders had 300 or more species on their state life list (there are now 91!).

This issue can be read at pabirds.org.

Birds of Note – December 2018 through February 2019

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.

Brant – *Perry*: one at Juniata R. 1/24-25 (Steve Schmit, Tiffany Willow) and one near Elliottsburg 2/5-6 (Steve Schmit, Bob Koontz); *Snyder*: one at a small Middleburg lake 1/6-14 (Jason Weller, m.ob.).

Barnacle Goose* – *Bucks*: one at Peace Valley Park several times 11/30-12/17 (m.ob.), *doc submitted*; *Chester*: one at Coatesville Reservoir 12/27-1/1 (Jeff Wahl, m.ob.); *Lancaster*: one at Greenfield Ponds 1/26 (Roger Stoner), one at Brenner Quarry 1/27-28 and 2/17 (m.ob.); *Schuylkill*: one at Sweet Arrow Lake and nearby fields 12/4-16 (m.ob.), *doc submitted*.

Eurasian Wigeon – *Armstrong*: a male at Kittanning Lock and Dam 2/17-21 (Alan Buriak, Michael David, Sam Guthrie, Theo Rickert, m.ob.).

Blue-winged Teal – *Blair*: one on Culp CBC 12/15; *Clinton*: one on Susquehanna R. 1/13 (Jo Ann Bowes); *Franklin*: one at Antrim Common Pond 12/1-2 (Josh Donaldson, Susan Donaldson, Gavin Anderson).

Eurasian Green-winged Teal (Common Teal) * – *Bucks*: male at Peace Valley Park 2/7-8 (Eric Zawatski, m.ob.), *doc submitted*; *Lebanon*: one at Middle Creek WMA 2/17-24 (Stan Stahl, Fritz Heilman, m.ob.), fourth county record.

Harlequin Duck* – *Armstrong*: immature male at Kittanning Lock and Dam 2/22 (Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, m.ob.).

Surf Scoter – *Bucks, Butler, Erie, Huntingdon, Luzerne, Lycoming, and Philadelphia*.

Black Scoter – *Bucks*: 2 at Penn-Warner Tract 12/15 (Devich Farbotnik); *Dauphin*: one on Susquehanna R. at Front St. 2/28 (Ian Gardner, Steve Schmit); *Erie*: several throughout period; *Montgomery*: one at Green Lane Park 2/28 (Paul Driver).

Barrow's Goldeneye* – *Bucks*: a female at Nockamixon State Park 1/22 (August Mirabella), reappeared 2/22 there (Devich Farbotnik) and presumably the same bird appeared nearby on Delaware R 1/23 (Devich Farbotnik, m.ob.), *doc submitted*; *Monroe*: on Delaware R. 1/4-13 (Jonathon DeBalko, Jason Horn, m.ob.).

Eurasian Collared-Dove – *Berks*: one at the Shartlesville colony 1/12 (Ken Lebo); *Cumberland*: one at Meadows Rd and Rt. 997 on 2/6 (Bob Koontz); *Franklin*: at multiple locations in southern part of county (m.ob.).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird – *Allegheny*: one continued at a feeder in Coraopolis from fall to 12/16 (fide Mark Vass).

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird – *Erie*: one continued at Harborcreek from fall to at least 12/1 (Sharon Brandt, fide Katie Andersen).

Virginia Rail – *Bucks*: one on Upper Bucks CBC 12/16 (Robert McGarry) and 2 on the Central Bucks CBC 12/30 (Devich Farbotnik), continuing through Feb, with 3 on 1/8 (August Mirabella); *Chester*: 4 at ChesLen Preserve 12/12 and one there 2/10 (John McNamara); *Lancaster*: 2 overwintered at Wood's Edge Park; *Montgomery*: one at Lower Moreland Twp. 1/1 (Paul Driver).

Sora – *Berks*: one at restored Angelica Park wetlands 2/23-27 (Ken Lebo, Russell Hoffman, Matt Wlasniewski, m.ob.); *Bucks*: one at undisclosed site 2/5 through season (August Mirabella, Richard Smith).

Common Gallinule – *Philadelphia*: one at John Heinz NWR 12/1-3 (Joel Rurik, Katlyn Rurik).

Dunlin – *Erie*: 1-2 at Gull Pt 12/18-20 (Steve Schmit).

American Woodcock – *Montour*: one at Montour Preserve 12/5 (Andy Keister); *Washington*: one at Finleyville 12/24 (Gigi Gerben), plus many during the second half of Feb as expected.

Greater Yellowlegs – *Crawford*: one at Pymatuning SP 12/4 (Isaac Field, Steve Rotkovecz).

Black-headed Gull* – *Delaware*: one strayed into the Delaware part of John Heinz NWR 12/4 (Al Guarente), 12/24 (Neil Heinekamp) and 1/9 (Jason Horn); *Philadelphia*: one at John Heinz NWR to 1/8 (m.ob.).

Laughing Gull – *Lancaster*: one along Susquehanna R. 2/6 (Meredith Lombard); *Philadelphia*: one at John Heinz NWR 12/2 (Geoff Veith).

American Bittern – *Berks*: one at Rodale Experimental Farm during Lehigh Valley CBC 12/15 (Todd Watkins) for third county record; *Delaware/Philadelphia*: one at John Heinz NWR 12/2-15 (Geoff Veith et al.) and seen for Delaware County CBC.

Great Egret – *Bucks*: one at Giving Pond-Uhlerstown 12/1-4 (David Brandes, Jane Barker-Hunt); *Lancaster*: one at Middle Creek WMA 12/8-1/11 (Mike Epler, Ted Nichols II, m.ob.) and seen on the Lititz CBC; *Montgomery*: one at Green Lane Park 12/1-9 (Wendy Sykora et al.).

Osprey – *Lycoming*: one on Williamsport CBC 12/15; *Philadelphia*: one at Pennypack Park 12/15 (Holger Pflücke) and seen for the Pennypack Valley CBC.

Barn Owl – *Centre*: one near Spring Mills 12/15 (Joe Gyekis); *Berks/Schuylkill*: one on Hamburg CBC 12/30; *Franklin*: one in Edenville area 2/2 (Bill Oyler).

Snowy Owl – *Crawford*: one at Pymatuning SP 2/5 (Ron Leberman); *Erie*: 5 or 6 at Presque Isle SP and elsewhere to 1/15 (m.ob.); *Lackawanna*: one at Marshbrook Rd 1/20 (Madison Bershefsky); *Philadelphia*: one in the city 2/4 (Jessica Im).

Gyr Falcon* – *Northampton*: a dark morph wintered for second consecutive winter.

Empidonax sp. – *Cumberland*: one on Newville CBC 12/27 (Vern Gauthier, Bill Oyler, Tiffany Willow).

Loggerhead Shrike* – *Adams*: one at Gettysburg National Military Park 12/15 (Nancy Locher, Callan Murphy).

Blue-headed Vireo – *Lancaster*: one at Middle Creek WMA 12/30 (Mike Epler, Cameala Freed, Ted Nichols II) for Lititz CBC.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow – *Montgomery*: a continuing group of up to 11 at Heuser Park water treatment through 1/14 (m.ob.) and 12-14 at Oaks water treatment 12/9-10 (Steve Grunwald, Michael Rosengarten); *Philadelphia*: up to 130 at NE Water Treatment Plant through at least 2/23 (m.ob.).

Tree Swallow – *Philadelphia*: one at John Heinz NWR 12/3 (Eric Zawatski), one at NE Water Treatment Plant 12/9-2/23 (Holger Pflücke, m.ob.).

House Wren – *Delaware*: one on the Delaware County CBC 12/15; *Dauphin*: 2 on Curtin CBC 12/27; *Erie*: one at Gull Pt. 12/18 (Steve Schmit) was a first winter record for the county; *Lancaster*: one at Chestnut Grove NA 12/1 (Mike Epler).

Marsh Wren – *Centre*: one at Muddy Paws Marsh 12/15-20 (Joe Gyekis et al.); *Chester*: one at ChesLen Preserve 12/26 (Richard Candler).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – *Philadelphia*: one at NE Philadelphia Water Treatment Plant 1/12-15 (Keith Russell, Patrick McGill, Shawn Towey, m.ob.).

Townsend's Solitaire* – *Indiana*: one at Yellow Creek SP 12/26-1/11 (Ed Donley, Mark Strittmatter, John Taylor, m.ob.) and seen for Indiana CBC, *doc submitted*.

Varied Thrush* – *Northampton*: one in Bethlehem 2/19 through period (Billy Weber, m.ob.), second county record, *doc submitted*.

Grasshopper Sparrow – *Montgomery*: one at Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust fields 2/20 (Paul Driver).

Clay-colored Sparrow – *Bucks*: one at Solebury Twp 12/30-2/23 (Devich Farbotnik, Richard Smith).

Harris's Sparrow* – *Dauphin*: one at a farm between Berrysburg and Gratz during Feb (Chester Zook), *doc submitted*.

Vesper Sparrow – *Allegheny*: 2 at feeders in Pine Twp. 8/22 (Pat Lynch, Sherron Lynch).

LeConte's Sparrow* – *York*: one at SGL 243 from 12/27-1/1 (Jarrod Derr, David McNaughton, Steve Walthius, m.ob.), and seen for York Springs CBC, *doc submitted*.

Lincoln's Sparrow – *Bucks*: one at Peace Valley Park 2/5-6 (Vicky Mahmoud, August Mirabella, ph); *Dauphin*: one at same farm as the Harris's Sparrow.

Yellow-breasted Chat – *Chester*: one at West Chester 12/15 (Patricia Johansen, Holly Merker, Keith Hall) and seen for the West Chester CBC.

Yellow-headed Blackbird – *Chester*: one at Atglen 2/16 (Ross Gallardy); *Lancaster*: at least 4 near Little Britain 1/27-28 (m.ob.), associated with very large blackbird flock.

Baltimore Oriole – *Bucks*: 3 in Middletown Twp, a male continuing from fall and 2 females 2/6 to end of period (David Pentland); *Montgomery*: one at Mondauk Common Park 12/25 (Steve Grunwald); *Philadelphia*: one at Croasdale Manor 12/1 (Tony Croasdale).

Ovenbird – *Blair*: one near Irish Flats 1/15 (Mark Nale).

Black-and-white Warbler – *Blair*: one near Penn State Altoona 2/17 (Sandra Michael); *Delaware*: one at Bryn Mawr 12/5

(Lathrop Nelson); *Lancaster*: one in Ephrata 12/30-1/6 (Frank Haas) and seen for Lititz CBC.

Orange-crowned Warbler – *Centre*: one at Spring Valley Rd. 12/16 (Matt Rockmore); *Cumberland*: one at Mechanicsburg 1/12 (Stefan Karkuff); *Lancaster*: one at Akron feeder 12/31 (Bruce Carl); *Montgomery*: one at Mondauk Common Park 12/23-29 (Steve Grunwald, m.ob.), one at Valley Center Park in Lower Moreland Twp. 12/23 (Jake Glassman), and one in Oaks 1/12-13 (Steve Grunwald, Paul Bernhardt); *Philadelphia*: at 6 locations, to 2/19 (m.ob.).

Nashville Warbler – *Erie*: one at Coast Guard station 12/23 (Justin Welch), first winter record for county; *Philadelphia*: one at NE Water Treatment Plant 12/9-2/23 (Holger Pflücke).

Cape May Warbler – *Allegheny*: one at feeder in Upper St. Clair 11/28 and 12/4-8 (Karen Meley) and one at a feeder in O'Hara Twp. 12/17-18 (*vide* Brian Shema); *Berks*: one at Lake Ontelaunee 12/26-28 (Chris Hugosson, Rudy Keller); *Cumberland*: one at Boiling Springs Children's Pond 1/21-22 (Ted Nichols, Jason Horn); *Lancaster*: one continuing from fall at Marietta feeder through period (m.ob.); *Philadelphia*: 1-2 at NE Water Treatment Plant 12/15-2/2 (Martin Delwo, m.ob.).

Northern Parula – *Crawford*: at Pymatuning 12/30-1/4 (Michael Williams, Jim McConnor).

Blackpoll Warbler – *Montgomery*: apparently continuing from fall, at Heuser Park 12/9-10 (Steve Grunwald, Scott Stafford).

Black-throated Blue Warbler – *Delaware*: one continuing at a Springfield feeder to at least 1/21 (John Zygmunt); *Montgomery*: male at Tylersport 12/8 (Zach Richard).

Yellow-throated Warbler – *Centre*: one along Bald Eagle Creek at Milesburg 12/31 (Julia Plummer).

Black-throated Gray Warbler* – *Adams*: female on 12/23 (Anon.); *Centre*: one at Centre Furnace Pond 12/12-20 (Jen Lee, Carrington Stephenson ph, m.ob.), seen for State College CBC, *doc submitted*; *Lancaster*: one continuing from fall at Noel Dorwart Park, rediscovered 12/21-1/6 (m.ob.) and seen for Lancaster CBC, *doc submitted*.

Dickcissel – *Bucks*: one at Bensalem Twp. 12/31 (Sierra Hanson) and one at Penn-Warner Tract 1/13 (Devich Farbotnik); *Chester*: one at ChesLen Preserve 12/11 (John McNamara); *Franklin*: one at Montgomery Twp. 1/15 (Stefan Karkuff); *Snyder*: young male at a farm south of Port Trevorton 1/22-2/3 (Charlene Wenger, Irene Wenger, Alvin Wenger).

Photographic Highlights

Color printing sponsored by BirdScreen.com.



A few of the tens (hundreds?) of thousands of **Snow Geese** at Middle Creek WMA; captured beautifully in flight in the *Lebanon* section 16 February. (*Christyan Gilbert*)



One **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at Middle Creek WMA beginning 8 December; this pair (perhaps including the earlier individual) was recorded for the Lititz CBC 30 December. (*Pamela Fisher*)



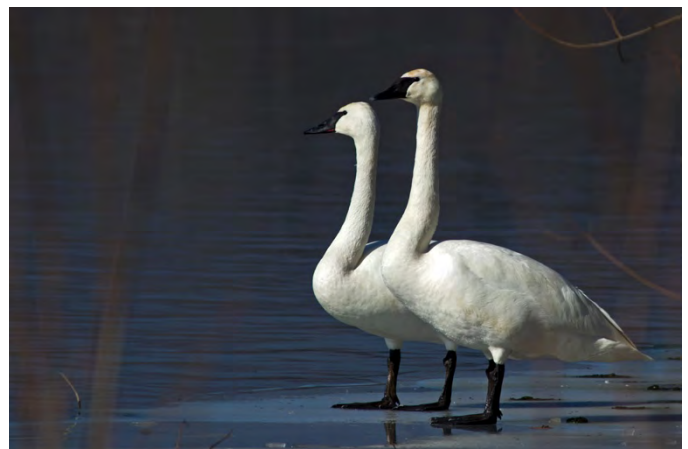
Single **Barnacle Geese** were found in at least four locations in three counties, including this bird at Coatsville Reservoir, *Chester* 27 (here 29) December-1 January; others in *Lancaster* and in *Schuylkill* and *Bucks*, with date ranges suggesting at least two individuals. (*Barry Blust*)



Now that a “countable” species, **Cackling Goose** reports (if not necessarily actual numbers of the birds themselves) continue to increase, seen in at least 26 counties, including this bird at Gateway Hanover Ponds, *York* 7 January. (*Dean Newhouse*)



The tagged **Trumpeter Swans** that nested successfully in *Jefferson* last summer (a state first - Vol. 32, No. 4), hung-out at a small pond with open water at Yellow Springs, *Blair* 16-24 (here 16) February; still accompanying the adults was the one offspring from last year, seen here. (*Pam Illig*)



Three **Trumpeter Swans** at Newton Hamilton, *Mifflin* provided the second county record, present 3-4 (here 4) February. (*Rob Dickerson*)



This hybrid **Mallard x Gadwall**, also know as **Brewer's Duck**, was at Lake Arthur, *Butler* 1-2 (here 1) December. (*Martin Carlin*)



This **Mallard x Northern Pintail** hybrid was found at Rochester, *Beaver* 19 January and continued there for about a month. (*Mark Vaas*)



Canvasback at Weir Lake, *Monroe* 17 February (*Nancy Tully*)



This **Common Goldeneye** at Green Lane Park, *Montgomery* 3 February was of many that sought open water when the season's coldest temperatures hit. (*Christyan Gilbert*)



Common Mergansers at Green Lane Park, *Montgomery* 3 February. (*Christyan Gilbert*)



A true winter rarity, this **Sora** was found and photographed at a private location in *Bucks* 5 February and remained through the end of the season. (*August Mirabella*)



One of two **Sandhill Cranes** that arrived at Pine Lane Dam, *Bucks* 22 January and stayed through the season, seen here 15 February; perhaps the same pair present last winter. (*Donna Kruszewski*)



Red morph **Eastern Screech-Owl** at Seneca, *Venango* 8 January. (*Meg and Nick Kolodick*)



Horned Lark at Pennsylvania Furnace Rd., *Huntingdon* 16 February. (*Debra Grim*)



Black-capped Chickadee populations appear to be decreasing because of West Nile Virus (see page 2); this bird was on the campus of Penn State, *Centre* 16 February. (*Zoe Rauscher*)



One of a pair of **Winter Wrens** that continued from the fall through 3 January (here 4 December) at Victory Park on the Juniata River, *Mifflin*; searching along river banks is the best way to find the tiny wrens during winter in central Pennsylvania. (*Rob Dickerson*)



This **Townsend's Solitaire**, a species occurring less than annually, was found during the Indiana CBC 26 December at Yellow Creek SP, *Indiana* and remained through 11 January (here 27 Dec), providing a first county record and a second Pennsylvania CBC record. (*Michael David*)



Relatively few **Lapland Longspurs** were reported and they were missed entirely on Pennsylvania CBCs for only the second time since 1972; this longspur was at Dover, York 13 February (*Dean Newhouse*)



A **Lincoln's Sparrow**, rare but nearly annual in winter, was in *Dauphin*, and singles (possibly the same individual) were found a week apart in two locations in Peace Valley Park, *Bucks* where this Lincoln's Sparrow was found 5 February and photographed the next day. (*August Mirabella*)



Male **Eastern Towhee** at William Kain County Park, York 14 February. (*Dean Newhouse*)



Probably unprecedented in the state for one season were three **Black-throated Gray Warblers**, in *Adams*, *Centre*, and *Lancaster*, the latter two providing first Pennsylvania CBC records; the *Centre* bird, at Centre Furnace Pond was present 12-20 (here 13) December and represents the third county record. (*Zoe Rauscher*)

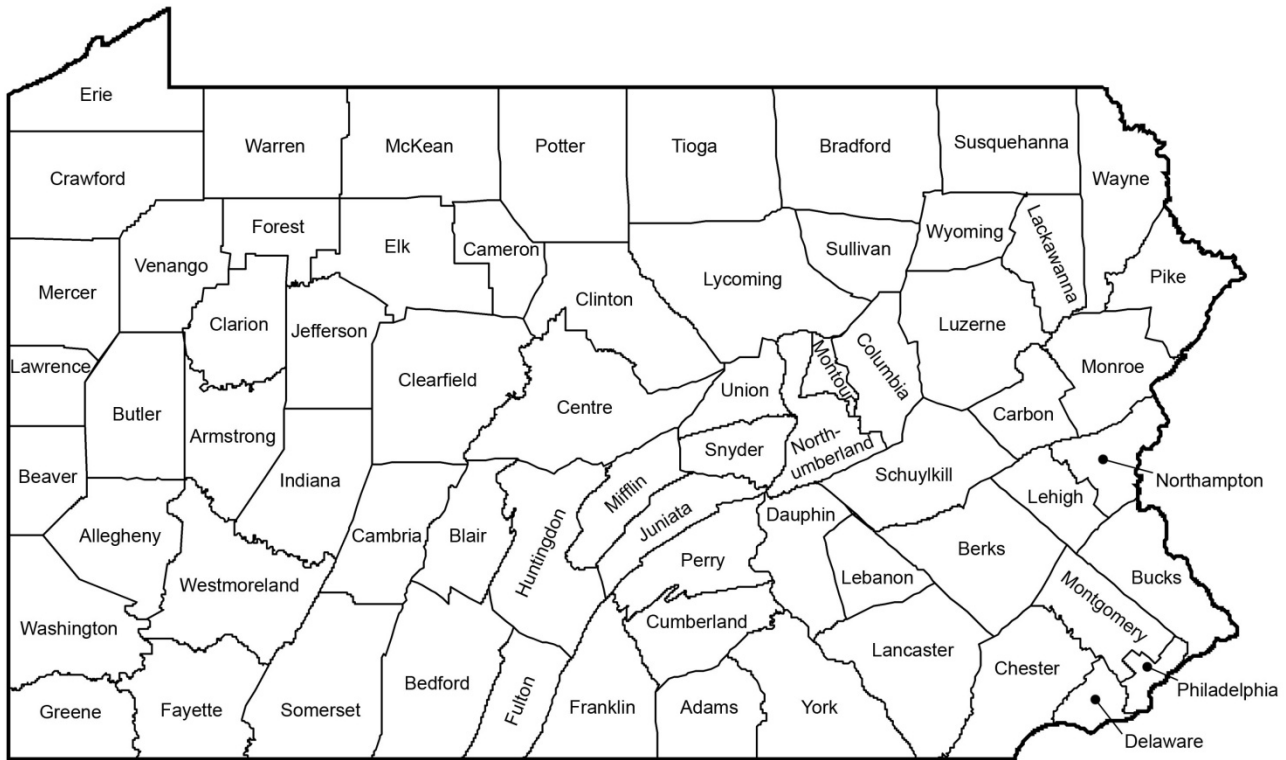


A **Northern Cardinal** exhibiting bilateral gynandromorphism attended a feeder in *Erie* from January into March; a similar cardinal was in *Bucks* last winter. (*Shirley Caldwell*)

Find more photos on the IN FOCUS page – inside back cover

Statement on Photo Plagiarism

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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).	juvinal [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)

The following counties need a compiler: Bradford, Forest, Fulton, Luzerne, McKean. Carol Light will take over Elk beginning with the spring issue.

Adams County

Locations: Freedom Township Grasslands (FREE), Gettysburg Christmas Bird Count (GCBC), Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP), Lake Heritage (LH), Lake Kay (LK), Lake Meade (LM), Ridge Rd – Cumberland Twp (RRCT), York Springs Christmas Bird Count (YSCBC)

The list of warbler species Adams birders might hope to see in a winter period is extremely short and **Black-throated Gray Warbler** would not be on the list. However, one visited a Gettysburg backyard 12/23 producing a county first and taking highlight of the season honors. Species count of 112 is on the high side for this reporting period. The 12/15 GCBC found 58 species and the 12/27 YSCBC detected 64 species in the Adams portion of that count. Both those numbers are below average. Winter Raptor Survey results highlighted the county's position as a stronghold for overwintering **Red-shouldered Hawk** and **American Kestrel**. The period's weather had no significant extremes. The three-month period showed temperatures 2F above

average. The trend for higher than normal precipitation levels continued with rainfall 4" above normal and snowfall near average levels for the period.

Overall, waterfowl reporting continues to be a positive during this period but, strangely, the grebe family went unreported. Typically limited in the county, a flyover of 11 **Snow Goose** at Ski Liberty 11/8 (JS) was the only report. Recent years have produced multiple **Cackling Goose** reports but this year there was only one, a single bird at Gettysburg College 12/8 (CM). High count of the five locales reporting **Tundra Swan** was a flyover of 150 birds at FREE 2/27 (MS).

Up to 2 **Wood Ducks** were found at LK all period while a trio was at FREE 2/28 (MS). Three **Northern Shovelers** at LK 2/7 (IC, AW) produced the only report. **American Black Duck** saw 6 reports with better counts of up to 10 at LK (m.ob.) and up to 12 at LH (m.ob.). A **Mallard x American Black Duck** was found at LH 1/23 (CM). One was at this same site 1/10-16 of last year. **Northern Pintail**, **Canvasback**, and **Redhead** all had above average reporting frequency with high counts of 14 at FREE 2/7 (MS), 10 at LH 1/28 (CM), and 7 at LK 2/17 (GA), respectively. The sole **Green-winged Teal** report was a single at Crooked Creek Wetlands 2/18 (PK). Scaup were found at LK; 3 **Greater Scaup** 2/2 (JSD) and up to 11 **Lesser Scaup** 2/3-14 (BK, CM, AW). Long Pine Run Reservoir held a **Long-tailed Duck** 12/7-1/10 (EH,

BK, CM, BO). **Common Goldeneyes** were at LM 1/27 (AD) and up to 3 at LH 1/1-2/4 (CM). The only report of **Red-breasted Merganser** was of 15 at Lake Mae 12/16 (GA). A **Common Loon** visited the sliver of Long Arm Reservoir in the county 12/15 (RG) for the only report.

Ring-necked Pheasant singles were found along Big Rock Rd 12/17 (PM) and Race Horse Rd 2/8 (JG). Five locales reporting **Wild Turkey** produced some nice counts; 81 on the GCBC, 51 along Emmitsburg Rd 1/23 (AW), 20 along Germany Rd 12/31 (EH), and 19 at MTN 12/2 (RDS). A trio of **Wilson's Snipe** were found along Red Rock Rd 1/22 (JH). Up to a dozen **Herring Gulls** 2/16-24 (JV) and a single **Great Black-backed Gull** 2/24 (JV) visited LH.

Pennsylvania birders are rarely treated to double digit counts of **Northern Harrier** outside of fall migration sites. GNMP produced two such instances with the first being a 10-bird count 12/27 (CM) and, the second, a pre-roost observation of 12 birds 2/8 (AW) with the added bonus of sky dancing and vocalizations. Up to 2 **Rough-legged Hawks** were at FREE 1/25-2/10 (m.ob.) and GNMP produced a single 1/22-2/9 (CM, AP, PRW). The GCBC typically reports a noteworthy single **Long-eared Owl** so this year's count of 3 added to the highlight. A single **Short-eared Owl** was found at GNMP 12/10 (CM) and 1/15 (DT) while Pumping Station Rd held up to 2 birds 2/2-4 (JSD, AW). Eleven reports of **Red-headed Woodpecker** suggest a slightly reduced level of overwintering reporting frequency. However, a 17-count on the YSCBC indicates a strong presence in the northeast corner of the county in late Dec. Single **Merlins** were at GNMP 1/27 (GA) and 2/9 (AP) and Pumping Station Rd 1/13 (BP). **Peregrine Falcons** were found at Possum Hollow Rd 12/26-1/11 (PK), along Five Points Rd 1/27 (PK, RP), and along Pumping Station Rd 12/25 (DJG).

A **Loggerhead Shrike** put in a visit at GNMP 12/16 (NL, CM) and a distant shrike at GNMP 1/23 (JeS) was recorded as a *shrike sp.* The well documented range expansion of **Common Raven** was in full view during a 10-minute observation of a flock of 24 northbound at Bigham Rd 2/4 (AW). Largest grouping during the movement was 9 birds. Ten reports of **Horned Lark** were paced by 80 along Possum Hollow Rd 1/2 (PK) and 45 birds along Brough Hill Rd 1/14 (PK); that flock demonstrated ground level, high speed murmuration type *peep sp.* shorebird behavior, possibly in response to a perched Peregrine Falcon about 300-400 yards away.

The noted regional trend of reduced **Carolina Chickadee** and **Tufted Titmouse** reporting was evident in *Adams* as well. Carolinas seemed to see a greater reporting reduction than titmouse. Additionally, although typically limited to 2-3 reports during this period, there were no credible reports of Black-capped Chickadee, either. It will be interesting to hear possible explanations for this hopefully short-term reduction. Ten sites reporting **Red-breasted Nuthatch** spanned 12/8-2/26 (m.ob.). **Brown Creeper** was reported 11 times throughout the period (m.ob.) with a high count of 7 at GNMP 12/23 (ME, TN). Single **Winter Wren** were found at Lake Mae 1/1 (CM) and Gettysburg College 1/22 (AW). The 14 reports of **Golden-crowned Kinglet** spanned the period while **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was limited to 3 Dec reports (DS, MS, YSCBC).

A **Gray Catbird** was a good winter find at a Thomas Drive home 12/22 (LB, JW). **Brown Thrashers** were at RRCT 2/1 and 2/25 (CM) and Gettysburg 2/16 (KD). A sole **American Pipit** at Barlow Rd 2/4 (CM) was the only report. Another species that experienced reduced reporting was **Cedar Waxwing**. Of the 7 reports spanning 12/1-1/15 (m.ob.) the high count was limited to a very pedestrian 13 birds at East Berlin 12/4 (PK).

Not one, but two *Adams* birders were lucky enough to encounter an **Evening Grosbeak**. A Gettysburg backyard held one 12/8 (PKB) and there was a single bird flyover at RRCT 1/3 (CM). Five locales reporting **Purple Finch** were paced by a remarkably long stay, 12/4-3/20, at an East Berlin backyard (PK). High count was 17 birds 2/18 and there were never more than 2 males present. Unexpected, and a nice surprise, a **Common Redpoll** was found along Red Rock Rd 1/22 (JH). **Pine Siskins** were present at 4 sites with highs of 25 at GNMP 12/23 (JWi) and 40 at MTN 1/2 (RDS).

The YSCBC produced a **Chipping Sparrow** report and a rare Jan observation came from GNMP 1/28 (JH). The YSCBC produced the only **Fox Sparrow** report. Up to 6 **Savannah Sparrows** were at Red Rock Rd 1/22 (JH), a pair at GNMP 1/28 (JH), and 5 at FREE 2/2 (CB). Five reports of **Swamp Sparrow** spanned 12/10-1/28 (m.ob.) with a high of 12 at GNMP 12/10 (AW). **Eastern Towhee** was reported 5 times with one locale, RRCT, holding birds all period (CM). **Eastern Meadowlark** was another species

seeing reduced reporting this period. There was regular reporting at the reliable FREE and GNMP sites 12/17-2/18 (m.ob.) but no count exceeded 4 birds. The only other report was an interesting trio perched high in a tree along Fleshman Mill Rd 1/27 (PK, RP) that fluttered/floated to the ground. **Red-winged Blackbird** and **Common Grackle** were found in all months; **Brown-headed Cowbird** was absent in Dec. Nine **Rusty Blackbirds** were found along Black Horse Tavern Rd 1/25 (PRW) and 30 were in a mixed flock with Red-wings at RRCT 12/2 (CM). Yet another species with reduced reporting was **Yellow-rumped Warbler**. There were only 5 reports compared to 20 last year and high count was limited to 3 birds on the GCBC.

This period's narrative started with the 12/23 (ANON) **Black-throated Gary Warbler** sighting and with the taxonomic reorder it also gets the honor of closing the narrative. The observer noticed the bird was different and a close study produced this western warbler identification. A number of photos were taken and although blurry, were diagnostic for a female. The photos also suggest the bird was in it's first winter. The bird apparently put in a very short stay and there were no other observers noted. Interestingly, the bird was flitting about in a juniper, coinciding with Sibley's Western NA Guide habitat notation - "common in dry oak and juniper woodlands." This was one of three 2018-19 winter reports for the state with others found in *Centre* 12/12-20 and *Lancaster* 12/21-1/6. Adding to the significance of the three state reports is the fact that there was only one other winter period e-bird report for this species east of Texas, a bird near Peoria, IL 12/30.

Observers: **Phil Keener, 198 Jacobs Street, East Berlin, PA 17316, (717) 259-9984, pittche74@yahoo.com**, Anonymous (ANON), Gavin Anderson, Chuck Berthoud, Leanna Bonds, Peggy Keating-Butler (PKB), Ian Clarke, Alisa DeGeorge, Eli DePaulis, Josh & Sue Donaldson (JSD), Kristin Driscoll, Mike Epler, Jim Flowers, Ron Freed, Janis Gadow, Vern Gauthier, Ross Geredien, Don & Jennifer Gilbert (DJG), Sarah Gustafson, Elaine Hendricks, Jason Horn, Cathy Knorr, Bob Koontz, Josh Lefever, Nancy Locher, Henry McLin, Linette Mansberger, Peter Martin, Peter Morgan (PMo), Callan Murphy, Ted Nichols II, Mike O'Brien, Bill Oyler, Ann Pettigrew, Randy Phillips, Bonita Portzline, Michael S, Thomas Sanago, Jeremy Schievert (JeS), Jason Schultz, David Shealer, Ralph & Deb Siefken (RDS), David Taylor, Jason Verdier, Joel Wagner, Patricia & Richard Williams (PRW), Andy Wilson (AW), James Winklemann (JWi).

Allegheny County

The winter season was rather calm with only a brief period of frigid weather and no major snowfalls. The lack of an extended cold spell prevented the local rivers or lakes to the north from completely freezing or remaining frozen for any extended time. The result was a lack of rare gulls and waterfowl on the trio of county rivers. A minor invasion of Pine Siskins occurred with small numbers during the season.

Five **Tundra Swans** were spotted flying over the Greenfield section of Pittsburgh 12/5 (KSJ). A flock was heard over Duck Hollow but not seen 1/30 (JE) and another flock was heard over Verona after dark 2/27 (SK). A white morph **Snow Goose** was in Hampton Twp. 12/12-13 (DN). What was thought to be the same bird was relocated at Allegheny Cemetery in the Lawrenceville section of Pittsburgh 12/21 (LS) where it remained until at least 1/19 (m.ob.). It was also noted on the nearby Allegheny River 1/25 and 2/2 (JVAS, OL, TH). Perhaps the same bird was at North Park 2/21 (LS). Interestingly, there are several records of Snow Goose from Allegheny Cemetery. Local Canada Geese regularly feed there so they could draw in a Snow Goose that happens to stop by.

A **Gadwall** was in Findlay Twp. 12/15 (MV) and up to 3 were in Harmar Twp. Jan-Feb (m.ob.). Four were at Duck Hollow 2/3 (MJ, RT, JHa). **American Wigeon** is never common in the county; 4 were on the Allegheny River in Cheswick 2/10 (BMu, JHa). Seven **American Black Ducks** in Findlay Twp. 12/9 was the high count for the season (MV). A **Northern Pintail** was a nice find in Findlay Twp. 12/9-13 (MV). **Redhead** was reported from 8 locations in ebird; most were single birds. Five were at Six Mile Island on the Allegheny River 1/31 (SA, AP). A few **Canvasbacks** were present for most of Feb with a high of 8 at Duck Hollow 2/2 (TM, NM, AP). Two **Ring-necked Ducks** were at Wood's Run 1/31-2/1 (AP, m.ob.) and one at Duck Hollow 2/19 (TM, NM). There were 3 other ebird reports during the season. At Duck Hollow 2/2, 2 **Greater Scaup** and 3 **Lesser Scaup** were identified (TM, NM).

Seven scaup sp. were at Wood's Run in late Jan (LF, JF, AP), not identified to species due to distant views. A **Long-tailed Duck** was at Cheswick 2/10 (BMu, JHa). **Red-breasted Merganser** is the least common merganser here. One was at Duck Hollow 1/1 (JHa), 2 were there 2/3 (JHa, RT, MJ) and 3 were on the Ohio River at Bunots Island 2/10 (JP, JF, MJ, MM) and 2/16 (RT). Single **Ruddy Ducks** were at Findlay Twp. 1/11 (JF, JP) and East Deer Recreational Park 1/21 (AH). Three reports of **Horned Grebe** included 6 at Duck Hollow 12/6 (RT), one there 2/22-24 (*fide* TM), and one at Brunots Island on the Ohio River 2/27 (ebird).

A late **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** first discovered at a feeder in Coraopolis in Nov remained up to 12/16 (*fide* MV). The last Nov record was in 2006. A flock of up to 25 late **Killdeer** was at South Park 12/31-1/5 (MJ, JP, m.ob.). This is quite a high count for this time of year when usually singles are found lingering.

Wintering **Turkey Vultures** have been noted here in recent years and this year they were reported regularly from a number of locations and in high numbers for *Allegheny*. High counts include 36 in Jefferson Borough 12/22 (JHa) and 27 in Franklin Park 12/29 (OM). The county ebird map is dotted with many entries for the season. Despite increasing development, **Northern Harriers** can still be found in the Imperial area and were present during the season (m.ob.). An adult **Northern Goshawk** was a surprise sight, perched in a tree in Natrona Heights 2/5 (PH). The bird only remained for a few minutes before flying off. A light morph **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen in Findlay Twp. 1/19 to at least 1/26 (MV, m.ob.). Two were there 1/22 (JP, JF).

Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded at Sewickley Heights Park in the fall with a total of 28 captured (BMu). Two **Short-eared Owls** were at Imperial 12/5 (JF) and one was reported into early Jan (m.ob.). Single **Barred Owls** were at Franklin Park 12/18 (OM) and Fox Chapel 12/29 (CBC). Two **Merlins** were at Schenley Park 12/8 (KSJ) and remained through the season. Three were seen 2/9 (KSJ). An ebird entry with a photo came from North Park 2/5 and the bird was seen regularly through the season. Two were at Mt. Royal Cemetery in Shaler Twp. 2/9 (JH) and one was seen in flight in Bethel Park 2/13 (GG).

A late **Eastern Phoebe** was at Boyce-Mayview Park 12/13 (AN, FK). A **Northern Shrike** was found at Imperial 2/3 (MV) and relocated 2/18 (MV). The last occurrence in the county was at Imperial in 2015. **Fish Crows** were daily visitors in a Verona neighborhood during the season (SK), a new location for this localized species. The numbers of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** observed in the fall appeared to be an indication they would be widespread during the winter but that turned out not to be the case. A few remained tied to feeding stations through the season. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** are not winter residents here so 2 reports were unusual. One was in Hamar Twp. 12/29 (CBC) and one visited a yard in the East End of Pittsburgh in mid-Feb (MD).

Single **Hermit Thrushes** were reported in Mount Lebanon 12/23 (DH) and at Beechwood Farms 1/23 (LC). A rare winter **Gray Catbird** was in Monroeville 1/13-2/18 (RH). **Purple Finches** were found during the CBC at Fox Chapel (1) and Indiana Twp. (5). They were present throughout February in Pine Twp. (PL, SL) and North Park (m.ob.). **Pine Siskins** visited feeders in small numbers during the season. The highest number were at North Park where 12 were tallied (m.ob.).

Eastern Towhees are uncommon in winter, but a number were reported including 3 at Harrison Hills Park 12/13 (SG), 4 in various locations during the CBC 12/29, and 2 at Harrison Hills Park 2/10 (AH, PM). **Chipping Sparrows** are rare in winter so reports are unexpected. Six were in Cheswick 2/10 to at least 2/22 (MJ, MM, JP, JF, et al.) and one visited a feeder in Hamar Twp. 2/23 (JV). **Field Sparrows** are uncommon in winter. Up to 2 were in Pine Twp. most of Dec and again in early Feb (PL, SL), a great count of 8 were in Indiana Twp. 12/29 (CBC), one was at Frick Park 12/29 (CBC), 2 were in Jefferson Borough 12/15-1/6 (JHa), and 2 were at North Park 1/6 (AH). A **Swamp Sparrow** was found during the CBC in Fox Chapel 12/29 (BSh). Very unusual in winter, 2 **Vesper Sparrows** visited a feeding station in Pine Twp. 2/8 (PL, SL). Four **White-crowned Sparrows** were at Imperial 12/8 (TRh) and the wintering spot on Strouss Road in Findlay Twp. hosted this species again (m.ob.), with a max. of 8 on 1/1 (AP).

Unusual for December, 5 **Red-winged Blackbirds** were in Pine Twp. 12/25 (PL, SL). Reports of arrivals and migrants occurred for most of Feb. An **Eastern Meadowlark** was a surprise at Imperial 2/2 (MF, MVV). There have been late fall reports and a few winter reports in recent years, so this species

may winter at the site. That may change as development continues to consume the grasslands. A flock of 10 **Brown-headed Cowbirds** was in Findlay Twp. 2/24 (MV). Almost every winter there are a few reports of a small flock that appears at a location briefly, then moves on. Sixty **Common Grackles** were with them, a bit early for this species to return.

Amazingly there were 2 reports of **Cape May Warbler**. One that visited a feeder in Upper St. Clair 11/28 and 12/4-8 (KM) was photographed, confirming the identification. Another was photographed at a feeder in O'hara Twp. 12/17-18 (*fide* BSh). The only reports of **Yellow-rumped Warbler** were of one at Cheswick 2/22 (AP, LC, SA, TRh) and from ebird report from the Point in Pittsburgh 12/28.

Observers: **Mike Fialkovich**, mpfial@verizon.net, Sameer Apte, Dave Brooke, Alan Buriak, CBC (Pittsburgh Christmas Bird Count), Lauren Chronister, Linda Croskey, Karyn Delaney, John English, Lessley Ferree, Patience Fisher, John Flannigan, Gigi Gerben, Steve Gosser, Jim Gray, Rebecca Hart, Jim Hausman (JHa), Amy Henrici, Paul Hess, Todd Hoee, Don Hopey, Joyce Hoffmann, Matthew Juskowich, Fred Kachmarik, Debbie Kalbfleisch, Scott Kinzey, Judy Lesso, Oliver Lindhiem, Pat Lynch, Sherron Lynch, Pat McShea, Michele Mannella, Steve Manns, Karen Meley, Oscar Miller, Nancy Moeller, Tom Moeller, Bob Mulvihill (BMu), Lauren Nagoda, Alyssa Nees, Dick Nugent, Joe Papp, Kevin Parsons, Brian Shema (BSh), Sam Sinderson (SSn), Aidan Place, Tessa Rhinehart, Kate St. John (KSJ), Liz Spence, Jim Valimont, Mark VanderVen (MVV), John Vassallo (JVAS), Mark Vass, David Yeany (DYE).

Armstrong County

Locations: Armstrong Trail no. of Dam 8 (AT), Crooked Creek Lake (CCL), Dayton (DT), Ford City (FC), Garrett's Run Road (GRR), Keystone Lake (KL), Kittanning (KT), Logansport (LP), Mahoning Creek Lake (MCL), Manorville (MV), Parks Bend Farm (PBF), Worthington Area (WT).

A handsome male **Eurasian Wigeon** first discovered at the KT L&D 2/17 (ABu, MD, Sgu, TRi) was observed until 2/21 (RB, LC, PF, MH, RHi, RHa, TRi, MVT). This was a first record of this species in the county. The dam provided another rare but nice surprise as an immature male **Harlequin Duck** was discovered 2/21 (MH, RHi) then observed by quite a few birders 2/22 (SA, ABu, JB, LCh, LCr, BD, LF, JF, SGU, RHa, MH, RHi, DK, MAK, GK, MMC+, TRh). Many other duck species were scattered throughout the county in small numbers. The only **Tundra Swans** were seen at KT L&D, where one was reported 1/31 (JS), and 4 were observed 2/1 (ABu, SGU, TRi).

Northern Harriers were widely scattered, with a singleton reported first in WT 12/10 (DB), one on 526 near Mayport 12/31 and 1/5 (AK, JK), 2 in DT 1/23 (AD), one in WT 1/28 (MVT), one near CCL/FC back roads 2/4 (JK, TK, MMc), and one as far as Brady's Bend Twp. on Seybertown Rd. 2/17 (DMc). Quite a few **Bald Eagles** were noted (both immature and adults) most likely due to many nests in the county. Several birders observed the pair at CCL court and bond as well as the **Red-shouldered Hawk** pair at CCL. First **Rough-legged Hawk** was noted in WT 1/26 (DB, ph.) and again 1/28 (DB, MVT, ph.); 2 were observed in DT 1/28 (MH, RHi) and one 1/31 (AD, ph.).

Short-eared Owls did not make an impressive showing but one was noted in DT 1/27 (MH, RH). In WT, on both 2/4 and 2/5, one was flying over a field on Green Acres Rd., one was seen 2/7 (SGU), 2 were observed 2/9 (MD+), a fine video clip and photos were posted from WT 2/19 (DB), and a lone owl was noted 2/27 (TRi). There was an abundance of **American Kestrels**, many in WT, but a few in other locations. A few **Merlin** reports included singles at CCL 12/29 (JLS), DT 1/29 (ABr, MH, RHi), Elderton 2/19 (JS), and FC 2/22 (JLS). A **Northern Shrike** on Ankenny Road near Elders Ridge was a nice find 1/26 (ABr, ph.).

Horned Larks were plentiful in WT and seen by many birders with the highest count of 380 (DB). Foraging with the larks most of the time were 2 **Lapland Longspurs** (ABu, DB, JB, MD, SGU, AP, TRh, TRi) and one or 2 **Snow Buntings**, observed 1/30 (MH, RH), 2/1 (ABu), and 2/2 (DB, JB, MD, Sgu, TRi). A **Hermit Thrush** was a nice find 1/5 at SGL 247 (TR). Only a few **Winter Wrens** were reported - 12/20 and 2/22 on the AT no. of Dam 8 and 2 at LP 12/14 (JB). Five **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were noted on Thomas Rd. near KL 1/1(ABu, SGU) and 5 on the AT 2/22 (TRi).

The most notable highlight of the season was the overwintering of an immature **Golden Eagle**, a rare occurrence for this area. One was found on a farm on Ardale Rd. near Garretts Run Rd. on November 20th by Sam Guthrie, and observed the following day interacting with 2 **Bald Eagles** by Alan Buriak and Sam Guthrie. The bird was not observed again until December 6th when it was photographed soaring above the Graff Bridge several miles northwest near the mouth of Garretts Run (SGu). Then on 1/29 it was recorded again back at the original location near Ardale Rd. during a Winter Raptor Survey, interacting with a Red-shouldered Hawk, by Mark McConaughy. As Alan points out, the observations most likely involved the same individual due to the rarity of a Golden Eagle being present here through the winter and also because each incidence provided photographs and/or observations that appear to represent a subadult transitioning to full adult plumage across the over 2-month period.

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Beaver County

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

Two **Cackling Geese** were found: one along Brush Creek Road 1/5-8 (MV, et al.) and one at New Brighton 2/1-2 (MV, GR, DR). Despite the considerable increase in sightings of this species across Pennsylvania in the past decade, Cacklers are still quite rare in *Beaver*. A rare Jan **Gadwall** was at RCH 1/4-28 (MV). **American Wigeon** was present there as well 2/9-15 (MV), a bit more on time. An interesting-looking **Mallard x Northern Pintail** was photographed at RCH 1/19 (MV) and was seen by several observers off and on for the next month. Pure-bred pintails were at RCH 1/4 (MV) and IND 1/18 (MV).

High single-digit counts of **Canvasback**, **Redhead**, **Greater Scaup**, and **Lesser Scaup** were made on most birding attempts at RCH in Feb (m.ob.). A **White-winged Scoter** appeared with them 2/9-18 (MV, et al.), and single **Long-tailed Ducks** were reported 2/9 (MV) and 2/25 (JMo). Quite impressive for *Beaver* were the numbers of **Common Goldeneye** at RCH 1/28-2/27 (m.ob.) that peaked at 30 during that time (JMo). A **Common Merganser** at RCSP 12/29 (GG) was a bit of a surprise for that date and location, although the species did breed nearby RCSP in the spring of 2017.

A **Killdeer** at a farm in Independence Twp. 1/18 was followed up by 2 standing on snow and ice there 2/2 (both MV). Another winter that seemed somewhat promising for a gull invasion passed by as a non-event; for example **Ring-billed Gull** at RCH peaked at just 170 on 2/8 (MV), and no rarities were found.

A **Red-shouldered Hawk** in Independence Twp. 2/9 (MF) was a nice mid-winter find for that area. Little Blue Lake was decommissioned as a wet-basin fly ash disposal site as planned in 2016, and now shows enormous promise for grassland species. **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen there 12/30 (MV), but unfortunately it did not receive enough attention this winter for other grasslands specialists like Short-eared Owl. Another Rough-legged Hawk in nearby Findlay Twp., *Allegheny* spilled over into Independence Twp. 1/22 (JF, JP). A **Merlin** was seen 3 times in Ambridge 12/1-24 (MV).

A single **Common Raven** that wintered around RCSP was joined by a second bird 2/22 (DC); they were reported in 3 other county locations this season. The most exciting finds of the season were **Evening**

Grosbeaks. A group of 3 were well-described at a feeder in New Brighton 12/8 (NH), birds that were probably on the tail-end of the southbound push of the species through the state last fall, and which were not seen again. Much more interesting were the 2 that settled in at a feeder in Hanover Twp. from 1/7 through the end of season (JMo), providing the county with its first wintering Evening Grosbeaks probably in decades. They were still present well into spring. Up to 4 **Purple Finches** attended the same feeders in Hanover Twp. for much of the season (JMo). A flock of **Pine Siskins** wintered in Economy Borough, where numbers were usually in the single digits, but occasionally up to 14 were seen (KD). A **Chipping Sparrow** attended a feeder 1/24-2/1 (BK, BaK), a species still quite unusual in Jan here in western Pennsylvania, even as they are on the increase in winter on the other side of the state. **Fox Sparrow** was at RCSP 2/14 (DK), and a late **Swamp Sparrow** was near IND 12/23 (MJ).

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Bedford County

Locations: Shawnee State Park (SSP), Jackson Property (Mountain Meadows) near Everett (MM), Aimee Benitez Home (ABH) near Bedford, Bedford Springs (BS), Berry Farm Fields (BFF), Bedford Christmas Bird Count (BCBC), Brent and Jan Chippendale property near Centerville (C), Dutch Corner (DC), Foor Farm (FF), Frosty Hollow Road near Woodbury (W), Rte. 96 north of Hyndman (HN), L. Gordon (LG), Narrow Lane (NL), Piney Creek/5 Forks Rd Area (PC), Whitetail Wetlands (WW).

The *Bedford* CBC, held on 12/29, tallied 52 species totaling 3339 birds. The relatively mild day with open water made for good birding, although the species total was on the low side. **Gadwall** made its usual appearance for the CBC with 8 reported at BS (JMP). An **American Black Duck x Mallard Hybrid** was seen with 3 **Mallards** on a small pond just north of Bedford (MLJ). **Common Mergansers** were indeed common at SSP with a total of 61 for the count. Both vulture species were located with a total count of 4 **Black Vultures** and 8 **Turkey Vultures** in Friend's Cove (JD). **Bald Eagles** are now commonly seen in *Bedford*, with 3 reported for the CBC. All species of woodpeckers were tallied, except Red-headed Woodpeckers. One **Hermit Thrush**, 12 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, and 6 **American Tree Sparrows** (WSP) were counted at SSP. An unusual sighting for the CBC was 75 **Red-winged Blackbirds** chattering in a large snag along Dunning Creek (MLJ). As is typical, the high count was a conservative 1500 **European Starlings** located in towns and the numerous agricultural fields in the count circle.

Information for the rest of this report was obtained primarily from eBird data. Seven **Tundra Swans** were seen on the last day of the report period 2/28 (TJK) at SSP. A group of 5 **Wood Ducks** was at DC 12/23 (AB), with more sightings of 4 on 2/10 and 2 on 2/15 at SSP (AB). Small numbers of **Gadwall** were noted from mid to late Feb at SSP with 2 seen 2/17 and 2/23 (AB), just one 2/24 (DB, MD) and 2 on 2/24 (AB). Numerous sightings of **American Wigeons** occurred at SSP during Feb: the high count was 16 on 2/9 (AB), with a drop to just 6 on 2/10 (AB) and a total of 4 were seen at SSP 2/24 (AB, DB, MD). SSP also had **Northern Pintails**: 12 on 2/9 and 2/10 (AB), dropping to 5 on 2/23 (PRW) and then just 2 on 2/24 (DB, MD). **Canvasbacks** were also seen at SSP 2/9-28. Just one was observed at SSP 2/9 (AB), but on 2/16 a total of 8 were seen (AB), with numbers dropping to just 4 on 2/28 (TJK). Low numbers of **Redheads** were reported at SSP throughout Feb, with the high of 6 on 2/17 (AB). **Ring-necked Ducks** peaked at 18 on 2/28 at SSP (TJK).

Just 2 **Buffleheads** were reported at SSP 2/9 (AB), followed by 6 on 2/15 and 2/16 (AB) with sightings ending on 2/24 with 5 birds (AB). **Common Goldeneye** was present at SSP 2/9-24, with max of 4 on 2/17 (AB). **Hooded Mergansers** were seen at SSP from mid-Feb to the end of the month with 12 reported 2/16 (AB), and 8 on 2/28 (TJK). **Common**

Merganser numbers peaked at 105 on 12/29 (AG) – even more than what was reported on the CBC. Just 2 were at LG 1/11 (RM). Two **Ruddy Ducks** were seen at SSP 2/9 and one 2/16 (AB).

Flocks of **Wild Turkeys** were sighted across the county. A flock of 50 was seen in DC (AB) 1/6 with slightly smaller flocks seen in BFF on a regular basis (AB). A small flock of 11 on 2/23 (PRW) was seen just west of Schellsburg and another of 10 on 1/23 at C (JBC). The farm fields of *Bedford* supported **Mourning Doves** - 28 were seen 2/17 at the FF (EB), 17 at MM 12/23 (MLJ), and 22 at C 2/15 (JBC). Eight **Killdeer** were seen near W in a flooded field along Yellow Creek 1/13 (PI). A high count of 125 **Ring-billed Gulls** were at SSP 2/17 (AB). Only one **Common Loon** 12/2 (EH), one **Great Blue Heron** 2/10 (AB), and one **Black Vulture** 2/10 (AB) were observed for this period, all at SSP.

Turkey Vultures were more numerous, but sightings were few and scattered: one 2/16 near C (JBC), 2 at ABH 2/17 (AB), and 3 at SSP 2/24 (DB, MD). Only 2 **Northern Harriers** were seen – one at NL 12/16 (KF) and the second one in DC 2/16 (AB). Just 3 **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were reported – singles at HN 12/1 (ND), at LG 1/11 (RM), and MM 2/18 (MLJ). SSP produced one **Cooper's Hawk** 2/9 (AB), one in DC 1/26 (AB), and one at HN 12/9 (ND). Single **Red-shouldered Hawks** were observed at LG 1/11 (RM), DC 1/26 (AB), and SSP 2/24 (DB, MD). **Red-tailed Hawks** continue to be reported consistently across the county.

Two **Great-horned Owls** and a **Barred Owl** were reported at C 1/7 (JBC). Two **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were seen 1/20, 2/1, 2/20, as well as 2 **Pileated Woodpeckers** during the period at MM (MLJ). **Northern Flickers** were seen at SSP 12/2 (EH), at FF 2/12-17 (EB), and at MM 1/20, 2/17, 2/18 (MLJ). **American Kestrels** were regularly recorded in southern *Bedford* in late Jan and throughout Feb at C (JBC). One was reported at WW 1/6 (LG) and a high count of 4 at DC 1/6 (AB).

Just one **Eastern Phoebe** was reported, at SSP 2/24 (AB), while another was spotted at HN 1/14 (ND). Only one **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was seen at SSP 12/2 (EH), but the FF yielded sightings of one 2/16 and 2 on 2/1 (EB). **Brown Creepers** were spotted at PC 12/7 (BK), one at LG 2/4 (RM), and one at FF 2/15 (EB). The only **Winter Wren** was reported 12/7 at PC (BK). **Carolina Wren** sightings were more numerous across the county, with a high count of 6 in DC 1/26 (AB).

Three areas reported single sightings of **Golden-crowned Kinglets**: one at SSP 12/2 (EH), one at PC 12/7 (BK), and one at C 1/2 (JBC). Two **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** and one **Hermit Thrush** were found at PC 12/7 (BK). **American Robins** were scarce, but a flock of 50 was at HN 2/28 (ND). A high count of 3 **Northern Mockingbirds** was recorded in southern *Bedford* at C 2/5 (JBC). **European Starlings** continued to dominate areas in *Bedford*, with 80 counted at BFF 2/8 (AB), and 170 sighted at SSP 2/9 (AB). **House Finches** were scattered across *Bedford*, with 25 observed at DC 12/23 (AB) and 28 at SSP 2/9 (AB). **Purple Finches** were regular feeder visitors at MM 1/20-2/20, but numbers were low (3 was the highest count) (MLJ). Two were sighted in DC 12/23 (AB) and just one was seen at WW, on 1/10 (LG).

An early **Field Sparrow** was seen in southern *Bedford* on 2/7 at C (JBC). **American Tree Sparrows** were in low numbers with a few reported at SSP: 2 on 12/30 and 4 on 2/9 (AB). More consistent sightings were at HN 12/31–2/28, but just one or 2 individuals each time (ND). Four **White-crowned Sparrows** were spotted in DC 12/23 (AB) and a high of 8 was seen at ABH 1/27 (AB). Other sightings yielded only one or 2 birds: at NH 12/4 (ND) and C 1/16 (JBC). The only sighting of a **Swamp Sparrow** was at WW 1/10 (LG).

Early Feb brought snow and an influx of **Red-winged Blackbirds**. The earliest was on 2/9 when 82 were seen at SSP (AB). A flock of 32 was at C 2/12 (JBC). High count for the month was 100 at ABH (AB). Five **Common Grackles** also appeared at SSP 2/9, with one counted 2/17 at ABH (AB). **Northern Cardinals** were a consistent yard bird at several places: a few were reported almost every day in Jan and Feb at C (JBC) and MM (MLJ). A high of 25 was recorded at MM 2/17 (MLJ) when a wintry mix hit the area. Eighteen were seen in DC 1/26 (AB).

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Berks County

Locations: Blue Marsh L. (BML), E. J. Breneman Quarry (BQ), Hawk Mt. Sanctuary (HMS), L. Ontelaunee (LO), Christmas Bird Counts: Reading (RCBC), Hamburg (HCBC), Bernville (BCBC).

December and much of January were a wet, fairly mild continuation of fall. The coldest weather came in late Jan and early Feb, when temperatures approached zero F on a few nights; BML and LO froze, and there was a brief period of continuous snowcover. By mid-Feb, there was strong migration of waterfowl, gulls, and some passerines such as Fish Crows and blackbirds, as usually occurs. Waterfowl diversity was again highest at BQ, a sheltered quarry that rarely freezes solid.

In a familiar pattern, hundreds of **Snow Geese** from the wintering Lehigh Valley population foraged in *Berks* in Dec and Jan, increasing to many thousands in Feb as birds began staging at Middle Creek WMA, Lancaster. After three winters of double digit counts, **Greater White-fronted Geese** fell back to the low numbers seen in most winters since the mid-1990's. Two were at BQ 12/5 (RK, PJW) and one was seen in eastern *Berks* on the HCBC 12/30 (AK). One to 5 **Cackling Geese**, annual in small numbers, were intermittently reported at BML and BQ 12/5-2/2 (m.ob.). One to 4 **Mute Swans** were reported at various lakes and ponds all period. Some of these may be domesticated, but many are feral wanderers. **Tundra Swans** migrated well into Dec, such as 45 over HMS 12/8 (LG), but few were seen later in the period.

A few **Wood Ducks** toughed it out till 2/3 (RK), then left till Mar. Small wintering flocks of 20-30 **Gadwalls** wintering around LO were joined by migrants in Feb, when the high count was 103 at LO 2/17 (RK). **Northern Pintails** and **American Wigeons**, scarce in early winter, increased as migrants arrived in early Feb, with seasonal high counts of 130 **American Wigeons** at LO 2/22 (RK) and 105 **Northern Pintails** at LO 2/17 (RK). The very low winter counts of **American Black Ducks** noted in recent years were even lower this year, with a seasonal high count of only 80 at LO 12/9 (AR). One to 5 **American Black Duck x Mallard** hybrids were occasionally seen with the parent species through the period. The hybrid males most often reported strongly resemble Mallards, but one drake at BQ this winter was a dead ringer for **American Black Duck** except for curled tail feathers and a very narrow white neck ring that was not always visible (RK).

Small numbers of **Canvasbacks**, usually scarce and quickly gone after they appear, settled in for weeks this winter, such as 4-9 birds at a small pond near LO 2/8 till well into Mar (RK). As last year, 5-8 **Redheads** wintered at BQ. No more than 5 **Greater Scaup** and one to 15 **Lesser Scaup** were fairly regular at BQ and other lakes all season. There was a good showing of **Long-tailed Ducks**, with 2 at LO 12/7 (RK), 3 at BQ 12/19 (RK, PJW), and singles at BQ, BML and LO on many dates in Jan and Feb (m.ob.). One to 5 **Common Goldeneyes** were frequently seen at BQ 12/15 through Feb (m.ob.). Four **Red-breasted Mergansers** were at LO 12/11 (RK) and singles were seen later in winter, mostly among **Common Mergansers**, which reached a seasonal peak of 2000 at BML 2/22 (JS). Counts of the annually wintering flock of **Ruddy Ducks** at BQ were usually of less than 20 birds, but there was one spike to 60 on 1/26 (m.ob.).

A **Ruffed Grouse** unexpectedly seen in a residential part of Hamburg 1/27 (MW) had probably wandered off the nearby Kittatinny Ridge, where the last of the county's grouse live. One to 8 **Pied-billed Grebes** again wintered at BQ and one to 3 were at a pond in Morgantown most of the winter. Single **Horned Grebes** were at LO 12/1-1/8 (RK), BML 1/5-12 (m.ob.) and LO 2/23-25 (M-TG). A **Eurasian Collared -Dove** was seen at Shartlesville 1/12 (KL), the season's only confirmation that the tiny but apparently stable colony persists. A **Sora** (photo) in the restored wetland at Angelica Park, Reading 2/23-27 (m.ob.) was the county's first winter record. This year's counts of the wintering **American Coot** flock at BQ were mostly of less than 13 birds, but a few were higher (m.ob.). **Killdeer** were fairly well reported in wet fields and pastures, but

Wilson's Snipe were hard to find.

Gulls were more common than in the last three winters, with seasonal high counts of 5000 **Ring-billed Gulls** and 830 **Herring Gulls** made at BML in late Dec (RK). So-called "white-winged gulls" appeared in the coldest period of winter. Two first winter **Iceland Gulls** (species last reported in 2016), a dark bird close to the *thayeri* form and a much lighter bird, were at BML 2/3-11 (RK, KL, DP). A first winter **Glaucous Gull** (species last reported in 2015) was at BML 1/28-2/22 (RK, KL, et al.). Normal winter numbers of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** (high count of 8 at BML 1/28) and **Great Black-backed Gulls** (high count of 9 at BML 1/27) were regularly reported, especially in late winter (RK). A lingering **Common Loon** was at BML on four dates 1/2-24 (m.ob.). One or 2 **Double-crested Cormorants** held out at LO, BML and BQ till 1/28, when most waters froze. An **American Bittern** (photo) found at Rodale Experimental Farm in Maxatawny Twp. during the Lehigh Valley CBC 12/15 (TW) provided the third winter record.

Four locations, all of which maintain permanent grassland or old field habitat, intermittently hosted one to 3 **Northern Harriers** during the period. The barren winter stubble left by modern intensive agriculture does not support the prey base of open country raptors. Two **Northern Goshawks** were remarkable finds on the HCBC 12/30 (LG). Two **Golden Eagles** were seen near the Kittatinny Ridge on the HCBC 12/30 (LG). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was found at Green Hills Preserve in southern Berks 12/9 (HH, CL) and another was near HMS 12/19 (KL) and 2/2 (Dkr). **American Kestrels** were more frequently reported in Dec than later in the season, when cold and snow cover probably caused an exodus. Numbers here as everywhere remain low compared to 20th century levels. **Merlins** were consistently reported only at BML (JS) and Hamburg (M-TG). Reading's **Peregrine Falcons** were in residence. Perhaps the wanderings of this pair accounted for a few sightings elsewhere during the season.

Lingering **Eastern Phoebes** were at Shillington Park 12/12 (NW) and at Green Hills Preserve 12/14 (AZ) and LO 12/31 (RK). **Black-capped Chickadees** were reported along the Kittatinny Ridge, where the species still breed in the Carolina/Black-capped hybrid zone. A few irruptive Black-caps moved past HMS in fall, but there was no evidence of irruptive birds elsewhere in *Berks* this winter.

A few **Red-breasted Nuthatches** settled in at feeders, but most of the fall birds moved on. **Winter Wren** and **Hermit Thrush** reports usually decline after Dec, as they did this year. By Feb, Winter Wrens were still being reported at four locations and **Hermit Thrushes** at seven. The season's only reported **Gray Catbird** was at SGL 110 on 1/4 (KG). A much rarer **Brown Thrasher** was at Kernsville Dam 1/17 (KG). The only reported **American Pipit** was near Mertztown 1/30 (JH), emphasizing the scarcity of field birds other than **Horned Larks** this winter.

Like **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, most **Purple Finches** had moved on by late Dec. They could most consistently be found at the HMS visitor center feeders, where 1-12 were seen daily through Feb (M-TG). The winter's only **Common Redpoll** was nicely photographed at a Reading feeder 12/1 (RL). **Pine Siskins** were concentrated at a few feeders, mostly in southwest *Berks*, and were rarely reported anywhere else. Some lucky feeder watchers counted 10-20 siskins daily, and the season's high was 62 at a feeder near Knauers 1/4 (MSI). One to 3 **Snow Buntings** near Topton 1/25-2/3 (JH, SB, EK) and 2 **Lapland Longspurs** at the same farm 1/31 (JH) were the only manure birds reported besides Horned Larks.

Chipping Sparrows sometimes winter and are then usually reported at feeders. This year 2 visited a feeder near Leesport 2/11-12 and one returned 2/20 (ES). Continuing a trend of more regular wintering by **Fox Sparrows**, one occasionally visited a feeder near Leesport all season (DK), one was seen at Rodale Experimental Farm 2/3 (TP), and one at Hopewell Village NHS 2/15 (S&F). There were also Dec reports. **Eastern Towhees**, apparently following the same trend as **Fox Sparrows**, were seen on all three CBC's and 10 were reported at nine locations later in the winter. The only reported **Rusty Blackbird** was on the RCBC 12/16. There were no reports of Eastern Meadowlark, underlining its drastic decline. A **Cape May Warbler** was seen at Peters Creek, LO 12/26,28 (CH, RK) foraging for insects along the edge of the lake, where midges were flying. There are at least two previous winter

records. **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were even more uncommon than usual in their preferred wintering habitat in the Schuylkill R. valley (RH).

During the thirty years in which these seasonal reports have been written, **Tufted Titmouse** has been a reliably common, neighborly bird about which there has been nothing to say. That changed in late summer and fall of 2018, when local birders began commenting on the scarcity or absence of titmice on field trips and at feeders. The narrative grew through early winter. Were anecdotal impressions merely reinforcing themselves or was the decline real? CBC results provided an answer. The following are 2018 Tufted Titmouse counts on the three CBC's located mostly or entirely in Berks, followed in parentheses by the averaged titmouse counts from 2008-17: Reading 17 (206.2), Hamburg 28 (317.8), Bernville 16 (92.6). The Tufted Titmouse decline was and is real. What is the cause? Carefully researched data in an article by Nick Bolgiano in the current winter issue of *Pennsylvania Birds* strongly implicates West Nile virus.

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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), Reese Pond (RP), State Game Lands #278 North (SGLN), Watts Pond (WP), Yellow Springs Pond (YSP).

Information for this report was obtained primarily from eBird data. Additional information was pulled from the 50th Culp CBC, held 12/15. A nice increase of 23 species from last winter's total as a 94 species were observed in *Blair*.

The most notable sighting was of 3 **Trumpeter Swans** found at YSP (PI), which is now a hotspot location on eBird. The two tagged adults, Z675 and Z603, were confirmed nesting in *Jefferson* in 2018. Joining the pair was their presumed untagged offspring from last summer. The swans were present 2/16-24.

The winter weather brought lots of snow accumulation and cold temperatures causing many bodies of water to freeze over. Fortunately, several waterfowl species were discovered during the Culp CBC including 10 **Common Goldeneyes** hobnobbing with 6 **Long-tailed Ducks**, 11 **Lesser Scaup**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Blue-winged Teal**, and 4 **Mallards** at CC (m.ob.). Other areas of open water outside CC held more Mallards for a total of 208, as well as 393 **Canada Geese**, a single **Gadwall**, 2 **American Black Ducks**, 10 hybrid Mallards, one **Northern Pintail**, 2 **Green-winged Teal**, a single **Blue-winged Teal**, and 2 **Buffleheads**.

There were numerous uncommon wintering birds spotted across the county. An **Eastern Phoebe** wagged its tail above Maryanne's Creek at CC 1/6 (JC, LC). A lone **Ovenbird** was found near the Irish Flats 1/15 (MN) and a **Black and White Warbler** was spotted near the PSU Altoona campus 2/17 (SM).

Turkey Vultures were reported across the county in decent numbers. A group of 4 **Black Vultures** were gliding near Hollidaysburg 2/16 (JC, LC), 4 more were found on Golf Course Rd 2/24 (JK), and 3 were photographed eating an opossum carcass near Fort Roberdeau 12/13 (MN). Other Raptors include single **Northern Harriers** on Crawford Rd 2/17 and cruising through an open field near Williamsburg 2/10 (JC, LC, MN). There were 4 separate reports of lone **Sharp-shinned Hawks** and 7 of single **Cooper's Hawks** across the county. Single **Bald Eagles** were noted (SB, SM, SP), 2 were spotted at the Bald Eagle Sportsman

Cooperative Nursery 1/18 (MN), and 2 more off of Crawford Rd 2/17 (JC, LC). A single light phased **Rough-legged Hawk** was perched near RP 1/26 (JC, LC, MN). **Red-tailed Hawks** continued to be reported consistently across the county, especially along the I99 corridor. A lone **Merlin** was perched near the beach at CC 1/6 (JC, LC).

A single **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard on Hoover's Lane 1/18 (JC, LC). Two **Great Horned Owls** called back and forth on Hoover's Lane on a few occasions (m.ob.), and 2 were heard just outside of Altoona. Three separate **Eastern Screech-Owls** were documented during the LR-CBC along with 2 **Barred Owls** 12/28 (DB). A single Eastern Screech-Owl was heard at Reservoir Park 12/18 (JC).

A **Wilson's Snipe** was noted along Golf Course Rd. 2/24 (JK, AP), and an uncommon **Lapland Longspur** and 21 **Snow Buntings** were near Crawford Rd. 2/17 (JC, LC).

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Bradford County – no compiler

Bucks County

Locations: Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Central Bucks CBC (C-CBC), Southern Bucks CBC (S-CBC), Upper Bucks-Montgomery CBC (U-CBC), Churchville Park (CVP), Core Creek Park (CCP), Delaware River (Del. R.), Giving Pond-Uhlerstown (GVP), Morrisville Levee (MVL), Nockamixon State Park (NSP), Peace Valley Park (PVP), The Penn-Warner Tract (PWT), Pine Run Dam (PRN)

The mean temperatures were: Dec 3.8°F above normal, Jan 0.7°F above, and Feb 3.2°F above. Dec precipitation was 1.58 inches above normal, Jan 0.45 above, and Feb 0.06 above. There were several light snow falls that quickly melted. Most lakes and the Del. R. froze to varying degrees for a few weeks in Jan and Feb. In general, waterfowl made for some good birding at area lakes, irruptive species were in low to modest numbers, and there were a few rarities. If the CBC is a good measure, half-hardy species were concentrated in the lower county at least in Dec, but overall numbers were low or average. The rarest species included Ross's Goose, Barnacle Goose, Green-winged Teal (Eurasian), Barrow's Goldeneye, Virginia Rail, Sora, Sandhill Crane, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Dickcissel. The county tally of 138 species was close to the five-year average of 136.

The 51st U-CBC 12/16 had rain and wind contributing to a low 18,664 individuals and low 82 species. Four normally common species had record low counts, and four others had the lowest counts going back decades. These caused concern that the compiler felt could not be solely blamed on the weather. The 53rd C-CBC 12/30 had very cold temperatures in the low teens, calm winds, frozen still water and partly frozen moving water, with 22,606 birds of 84 species. The 72th S-CBC 12/15 had temperatures from 45°F to 52°F, with light rain in the morning. There were 99 species of 70,124 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 highest report for **Snow Goose** was from near Riegelsville 1/2 when thousands were seen heading southwest (DB). Random flyover flocks of counts in the low hundreds were reported from at least 10 sites through the period (m.ob.). The adult **Ross's Goose** that was at PVP 2/10

(SGr, LF ph.), may have been the same one that was detected the exact same date last year as an imm. It was probably there the next morning, but no reports were received after the initial date. **Greater White-fronted Goose** was scarce, with reports from CCP 2/16 (DD) and GVP 2/21 (JB) 2/23 (DF, KL). The fall **Barnacle Goose** found 11/30 at PVP was seen again 12/1, 12/4, and 12/17 (m.ob. ph.). **Cackling Goose** was reported from 13 sites, with reasonable supporting photos from nine sites (m.ob.). PVP had the highest single site count, with a group of 10 on 2/14 (AM ph.). A female **Canada Goose** with an orange collar and white letters X8A6 frequented NSP, PVP, and Bedminster Twp. area in Jan and Feb (AM). It was banded 370 miles away as an adult on 7/6/2015 near Pointe-Aux-Trembles, Québec, Canada. The highest single site report of 44 **Mute Swans** was at PWT (MG), but many other sites reported low single digit counts (m.ob.). A flyover flock of 22 **Tundra Swans** 12/3 at PVP was the high count (AH). Three at PVP 12/11 (m.ob.) and 2 at NSP 1/13 (PC, DF, SGr ph.) were the only other reports.

Twenty-four duck species were reported. Some diving ducks seemed more regular and lingered longer at lakes possibly due to high fast running water at the Del. R. **American Wigeon** was widely reported. High site counts were: 38 on 2/8 at PVP (KK); 29 on 2/19 at CVP (KL); 26 on 2/23 at PRN (DH); 22 on 2/23 at NSP (SGo); and 25 on 2/23 at Bradford Dam (GJ). **Northern Pintail** made a good showing with high counts 2/8 of 113 at NSP and 55 at PVP (EZ). Historically, one and sometimes 2 **Green-winged Teal (Eurasian)** were regular in winter at PVP between 1987 and 1996. An intergrade with **Green-winged Teal (American)** was also present at least in 1991. They were probably the same birds returning each year. Otherwise, it has been rarely reported in the county. One male was spotted 2/7-8 at PVP (EZ ph., m.ob.). In general, historically in low numbers for many years, a high count of 198 **Canvasbacks** on the Del. R. at Neshaminy State Park 2/11 (AH) far surpassed all the historical eBird data for the county. However, the area is known for larger flocks in winter usually on the New Jersey side of the river. Six other sites had numbers in mostly low single digits, with unusually long staying birds or newcomers passing through (m.ob.). Unfortunately, **Redhead** had only 14 total birds reported from four sites (m.ob.). The high count was 6 at PVP 2/3 (LH ph.).

A **Surf Scoter** at MVL 12/15 (MG et al.) was a first for the S-CBC. A **White-winged Scoter** was at NSP 12/2 (DF), 5 were at PVP providing a good Dec count 12/15 (EF ph.), and 3 were at MVL 2/10 (HD). Two **Black Scoters** at PWT 12/15 (DF) provided a first for the S-CBC and a rather rare winter report. A total of 11 **Long-tailed Ducks** was noted from four sites, with 6 the high count 1/1 at PWT (DF). **Common Goldeneye** was unusually regular at NSP and PVP in higher numbers. There were historically lower counts on the Del. R. Some high counts were 39 at NSP 1/22 (BH), 27 at the Del. R.-Uhlerstown 1/23 (SGo), 36 at the MVL 1/26 (BG, MH, SK), and 11 at PVP 2/21 (SA). A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** at NSP 1/22 (AM ph., doc.) provided the county's eighth occurrence and reappeared there 2/22 (DF). Considering the NSP bird was seen leaving to the northeast on 1/22, it is assumed the same bird was found 1/23 nearby on the Del. R. at Tinicum County Park (DF). The standout high count for **Hooded Merganser** was 62 at one site at Bristol 12/15 (BM et al.). This contributed to the total of 99 on the S-CBC, where the average count is 36. The standout high site count for **Common Merganser** was estimated between 2500-2800 at PVP 2/21-27 (SA, AH, RMa). That the 365-acre lake can support over 1000 birds for a period of over six weeks, plus more weeks with hundreds, is hard to believe but is now annual.

Two years in a row 18 **Wild Turkeys** were tallied on the S-CBC, where they have only been found 10 times in 72 years. Two **Red-necked Grebes** at PWT 12/15 (EZ, BV) provided only the second occurrence on the S-CBC. Singles were north of Mud Island 1/12-14 (MG ph., JH), PWT 1/13 (DF), Neshaminy State Park 2/11 (AH ph.), and PVP 2/19 (AM ph.). Although partially or mostly freezing, high water levels in suitable habitat resulted in unusual reports of **Virginia Rail**. One provided the eleventh occurrence and first since 2008 for the U-CBC 12/16 (RMc), and 2 on the C-CBC provided a first for that count (DF). Reports from the latter site continued through Feb (RS), with 3 there 1/8 (AM). A winter **Sora**, rare anywhere in the state, was a total surprise at the latter site 2/5 (AM ph.). It continued through the season (RS). Probably two of the same **Sandhill Cranes** that were present last winter at PRN were first reported there

1/22 (LG). They continued through the period there and at a corn field north of PVP where they also visited last year (m.ob.).

Reports of displaying **American Woodcock** were few, with only 4 birds at three sites starting 2/22 (PT,BH, KH, BS). A **Wilson's Snipe** at PRN 1/23 (JH) was the only one reported. A **Bonaparte's Gull** at NSP 12/16 provided the second occurrence for the U-CBC (SGo). One at PVP 12/1 (BQ) and one at PWT 1/24 (JH) were the only other reports. **Iceland Gull** continues to be regular at PVP with a high count of 3 12/1 and 2/11 (AM, RMc), and NSP with a high count of 4 2/24 (DF). A count of 817 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** 2/24 at NSP (DF) far surpassed our previous high, and may be a single site high for the state and North America. At least two had satellite transmitters, which were part of the 9 that had them mounted by the Pennsylvania Game Commission in March 2018 at NSP. One transmitter failed soon after, 5 spent the summer in Greenland, and one each went to Newfoundland, Labrador, and Quebec. Another transmitter failed in the summer, but by fall/winter 2018-2019, 6 returned to southeastern PA and one to Virginia. Besides NSP, travels while in our area include PVP, Green Lane Reservoir, Round Valley Reservoir, Spruce Run Reservoir, and the New Jersey shore. The 11 **Glaucous Gulls** on the S-CBC was a new record high.

CBC GULL COUNTS

SPECIES	U-CBC	C-CBC	S-CBC	TOTAL
Bonaparte's Gull	1			1
Ring-billed Gull	1112	365	1089	2566
Herring Gull	17	68	36,156	36,241
Iceland Gull			13	13
Lesser Bl.-backed Gull	88	241	120	449
Herring x Lesser Bl. Bk.			6	6
Glaucous Gull			11	11
Herring x Glaucous Gull			1	1
Great Black-backed Gull		39	920	959
TOTAL	1218	713	38,316	40,247

An unusually long staying **Red-throated Loon** was at NSP 12/1-1/6 (m.ob.). A second 12/7 (PH) was only reported once. No others were reported. One to 2 **Common Loons** lingered at NSP until 1/21 (m.ob.) and PWT until 1/1 (DF, MG). **Great Cormorant** was on the lower Del. R. as usual, with 16 being the tally for the S-CBC. The **Double-crested Cormorant** S-CBC tally was 66, a new high. All other reports during the period were in the low single digits, with none in eBird after 1/26 (DD, m.ob.). A late **Great Egret** was reported at GVP 12/1-4 (DB, JB).

An adult **Golden Eagle** was spotted in Bedminster Twp. 2/5 (MR) for a rare winter report. Rarely reported, an adult **Northern Goshawk** was at CCP 12/1 (RMe). Not surprising, all three CBCs had record **Bald Eagle** tallies with S-CBC 92, C-CBC 21, and U-CBC 12. Seven **Red-shouldered Hawks** on the C-CBC matched a previous high from 2012 compared to the average of 2. The 39-mile Winter Raptor Survey south of NSP produced a record 69 **Red-tailed Hawks** compared to the 19-year average of 33 (DF, AM). The **Barred Owl** reported in late fall at PVP, where historically rare, continued through the winter season (IB, DF). The crash in numbers of **Long-eared Owl** at PVP continues, with only one reported wintering and was first reported 1/4 (AH). One was at Bedminster Twp. (DF) for the only other report. At least 9 **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were reported including 2 roadkill in Tinicum Twp. (DA, BC, DF, JH, RS). Three of the 9 provided a new record high for the C-CBC.

One **Red-headed Woodpecker** was reported at a known breeding site in Haycock Twp. in early Jan. (DF) for the only report. A tally of 50 **Hairy Woodpeckers** on the C-CBC versus a previous 10-year average of 24 provided a new record. One might assume the emerald ash borer has helped woodpeckers in general. The success of the **American Kestrel** nest box effort in the upper and central county has not resulted in a significant increase in winter. A check of the 77 nest box sites along a 175-mile route produced only 10 birds in mid-Feb (DF). The CBC total was only 13. As stated in last year's summary, the pre-2003 CBC average was 120.

Single **Eastern Phoebes** were late or wintering at Washington

Crossing Park 12/1 (SA, MN), CVP 12/1 (BB), Upper Makefield Twp. 12/19 (MN, SA), Solebury Twp. 12/30 (MR), and west of CCP 1/28 (KL). Reports of **Common Raven** came from 22 sites, with sightings at one or more sites on 34 days (m.ob.). Thus, not surprising, record highs of 8 on the U-CBC and 5 on the C-CBC were reported. **Horned Lark** was a common winter species wherever there were dairy farms, but now is tough to find as these farms are all but gone. There were only two sites reported, and flock size was smaller. Maple Knoll Farms as usual had a wintering flock, with a high count of 57 (RS). A flock of 75 was noted in Milford Twp. 1/30 (DF) and 2 were seen there on 2/21 (PH).

Carolina Chickadee was widely reported as low in numbers and even absent from feeders (m.ob.). If the CBC is a measure, the counts compared to the previous 10-year average were 20% for the U-CBC, 51% for the C-CBC, and 74% for the S-CBC. The U-CBC total of 49 was the lowest since 1991. At that time Black-capped Chickadee was still the majority, so Carolina Chickadee was normally low. Similarly, the 117 for the C-CBC was the lowest since 1993. **Black-capped Chickadee** was noted in the fall season as having only a minor irruption. Reports this season were from only 11 sites and most counts were one (m.ob.). The **Tufted Titmouse** was similar to Carolina Chickadee compared to the 10-year average. The CBC counts were 10% for the U-CBC, a record low 32, 38% for the C-CBC, and 80% for the S-CBC. Only the U-CBC was below the 10-year average for **White-breasted Nuthatch** at 65%. The C-CBC was at 129% and the S-CBC 99%. The moderate **Red-breasted Nuthatch** fall irruption resulted in birds throughout the winter in modest numbers. There were 33 sites reported in eBird, but only about a third were reported regularly in eBird at feeders. Counts were mostly one, with a small number of reports of 2 (m.ob.).

Brown Creeper apparently was very common this winter, with over 60 sites reported in eBird, with individual reports ranging from one to 5 (m.ob.). The CBC total of 55 was 1.5 times the long term average, with the S-CBC contributing 29, which was almost three times average. **Winter Wren** CBC total was high again with 47. This year the S-CBC 24 set a new high record. **Carolina Wren** apparently had a good year, with a CBC total 532, including a record high 272 on the S-CBC and 158 on the C-CBC being close to the previous record.

The 72 **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, 25 **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**, and 361 **Eastern Bluebirds** were all in the ball park of the long term averages. The total **Hermit Thrush** CBC count was 14, less than half the long term average. In eBird there were only reports from eight sites (m.ob.). **American Robins** totaled 2164 on the CBCs, about one quarter of last year's tally. **Gray Catbird** was reported from 14 sites but at only four sights after Dec. The 15 on the CBCs was due to the far above average 13 on the S-CBC. The only **Brown Thrasher** reported continuously in eBird through the season was at PVP (m.ob.). There were none on the CBCs. The total on the CBCs of 93 **Northern Mockingbirds** was less than one-third the long term average and continued the recent depressed numbers. The 24 on the U-CBC was a record low.

One **American Pipit** flew over PVP 12/1 (JH, SBu), for the only report. The **Cedar Waxwing** total for the CBCs was 102, almost one sixth of last year's tally and less than one fourth of the long term average. There were none in eBird for the month of Jan. Most of the **Purple Finches** from fall apparently continued south leaving few here. There were 22 sites reported in eBird, but almost all counts were in the very low single digits (m.ob.). Only four of those sites had regular eBird reports for at least part of the period (m.ob.). A Doylestown Twp. yard was an exception with 10 or more through the period (LW). The CBC total was 35, but 32 were all from the U-CBC. Similarly, **Pine Siskin** was reported at only 11 sites in eBird, of which four had regular sightings for a period of time (m.ob.). The highest site reports were a single flock of 17 at NSP 12/16 for the U-CBC (DA, EB, PH), 14 near Newtown 2/14 (BS), 21 near New Hope 2/16 (RE), and 30 at New Britain Borough 2/18 (TP). All other sites had counts in the single digits (m.ob.). The three CBCs totaled only 39 birds.

If **Chipping Sparrows** are increasing in winter, it is a very slow advance, when the CBC total only 11 birds. Only 10 sites reported them in eBird (m.ob.). The only site having more than one or 2 was Buckingham Springs, with a high count of 6 on 12/30 (BK). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** first reported 12/30 at Solebury Twp. (DF) provided the second ever for

the C-CBC and was seen through at least 2/23 (RS). The disappearance of **American Tree Sparrow** as a wintering species may be approaching. The total CBC count was 10 compared to the long term average of 345. All three CBCs had record low counts. Only 13 sites had reports of mostly one individual and none higher than 2 (m.ob.). As mentioned last year, the historical three CBC sum of the highest counts is 1465! Often distributed more in the lower county, 15 of the 16 **Fox Sparrows** on the CBCs were found on the S-CBC. A rare winter **Lincoln's Sparrow** was detected at PVP 2/5 (VM) and photo documented 2/6 (AM). The same or another at a different site at PVP 1/14 (JH) was not documented. Another half-hardy species, 17 of 21 **Eastern Towhees** on the CBCs were on the S-CBC.

Although scarce all year now, **Eastern Meadowlark** is another species that is vanishing as a winter species. There were none reported. The tale of the annual **Baltimore Orioles** at feeders in Middletown Twp. continued. The male that arrived 10/28 continued through the winter season, but surprisingly 2 females appeared 2/6 and remained the rest of the month (DP). As last year, there were no other reports. There were no **Rusty Blackbirds** on the CBCs and reports in eBird came from only five sites (m.ob.). As usual, Silver Lake Park was the most reliable site, but the high count was only 7 on 12/13 (DD), with only one eBird entry there 1/12 in Jan (SBo). The only other sites with more than low single digit counts was CVP with 5 12/1 (CW) and GVP with 11 2/14 (PC).

Single **Common Yellowthroats** were found on both the S-CBC and C-CBC, with another at NSP 1/2 (DF). A wintering male **Pine Warbler** continued through the period at Lower Makefield Twp. feeders where one has wintered for 12 years in a row (CF ph.). It has provided three of seven total occurrences in the long history of the S-CBC. Others were at Silver Lake Park 12/15 (SBo), PVP 12/17 (FR ph.), Doylestown Twp. 12/31 (KI ph.), and CVP 1/12 (BW). The CBC total of 23 **Yellow-rumped** Warblers was very low. There were eBird entries for only 15 sites, with all counts in the low single digits (m.ob.). The only site with more was PVP, where the high report was 15 on 1/8 (AH). Single **Dickcissels** at Bensalem Twp. 12/31 (SH ph.) and PWT 1/13 (DF) were rare winter season reports.

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Butler County

Locations: Lake Arthur (LA), Lake Oneida (LO), McDanel's Boat Launch (MBL), North Shore (NS), South Shore (SS). Previous locations are all in Moraine State Park except Lake Oneida.

A few surprises entertained birdwatchers including rare *Butler* sightings of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and **Great Black-backed Gull**. Winter visitors from the far north included many **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, a few **Common Redpolls**, **Pine Siskin**, and **Evening Grosbeak**.

Very unusual for *Butler*, a **Snow Goose** was photographed at Lake Oneida 2/17 (KB), remaining until early March. A search of eBird and PABIRDS listserv revealed less than a dozen reports of Snow Goose in *Butler*. **Tundra Swan** was reported only twice in Dec but near the end of Feb several flocks estimated around 200 birds arrived at Lake Arthur

topped by 381 at North Shore 2/28 (MC).

Cold nights in Dec caused Lakes Arthur and Oneida to partially freeze over earlier than usual, perhaps hampering birders seeking waterfowl. Duck sightings were rather unspectacular compared to some years, with relatively few reports of large flights or rafts in the hundreds. Exceptions included 200 **Mallards** and 100 **Canvasbacks** at South Shore 2/27 (DK), 300 **Redheads** at McDanel's Boat Launch 2/28 (DK, RN), and 223 **Common Mergansers** at Bear Run Boat Launch 2/28 (OM). **American Black Duck**, **Canvasback**, and **Common Goldeneye** were both more abundant than in recent years. Overall 20 species of ducks were seen including one **Northern Pintail** at Hartman Road 2/26 (RN) and 4 at McDanel's Boat Launch 2/28 (DK, RN). A **Surf Scoter** was at LA 12/13-14 (MV, MC, MH, RH) and 2 **White-winged Scoter** were there 12/1 (KB). A lone White-winged Scoter was at Lake Oneida 1/29 (KB).

A **Northern Bobwhite** was struck by a car near Portersville 12/29 (MC). Remarkable were 7 **Ring-necked Pheasants** at West Cruikshank Road 12/16 (BB, MC). **Ruffed Grouse** populations seem to be at rock bottom, following a fall season with no reports, only 2 sightings came in the winter season - one at Burton Road 12/15 (BB, MC) and one at NS 1/11 (BB). The only grebes reported were 3 **Horned Grebes** at SS 12/1 (KB) and 2 at LA 12/7 (TR). The tail-end of the **American Coot** migration saw 42 at SS 12/1 (KB) after which numbers decreased to singles at LA until 12/24 (m.ob). Early **Killdeer** arrived in 4 different locations 2/20-28 (m.ob).

Ring-billed Gulls usually number in the several hundreds and **Herring Gulls** normally in single digits at LA but during the Dec gull fest, Ring-bills were tallied at over 600 and 75 Herring Gulls were counted, a very high number for LA. Lake Arthur continues to attract interesting and uncommon (in *Butler* anyway) gulls. Unfortunately, the celebrated Black-headed Gull of past winters did not return. Two **Great Black-backed Gulls** were part of a very notable day that included 5 gull species seen at LA 12/31: **Bonaparte's Gull**, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, **Lesser Black Backed Gull**, and Great Black-backed Gull (GW). The Great Black-backed Gull was probably the second county record. A search of eBird, PA Listserv and Todd bird club records revealed just one record, from 2004 (MV). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was discovered off Pleasant Valley Beach Area 12/20 (DD *fide* MV) and subsequently seen by many. Three were photographed at SS 12/26 (GK, MAK, MD, MV). These birds represent the probable third county record.

A **Red-throated Loon** was at LO 1/31 until at least 2/9 (KB, GK, MAK). The bird was beautifully photographed eating a sucker 2/6 (KB). **Common Loon** appeared at LA 12/1 and 12/7 (m.ob). **Sandhill Cranes** foraged in the vicinity of West Liberty through Dec until 1/2 (m.ob) but were not reported again until 2/28 (MC).

Northern Harrier was seen regularly in the same area and also frequented the grassland area near Johnson Road (MC). A **Cooper's Hawk** was seen inside the Butler Agway 1/13 and employees reported that they had seen the bird catch a pigeon a few days earlier (KB). Also interesting was a pair of **Red-shouldered Hawks** photographed feeding on dead alewives on the ice at LA 2/25 (MC). Fields along Route 19 and Johnson Road west of I-79 are getting more attention as **Rough-legged Hawk** and **Short-eared Owl** are being observed. Three Short-ears were first seen there 1/26 and 4 on 2/2 with 2 or 3 remaining through the end of Feb (MC). Only one **Red-headed Woodpecker** was reported, a single photographed at Claytonia Road 2/18 (BAS). **Merlin** was seen at Powell Road 12/16 (BB, MC) and one was at Franklin Twp. 1/8 (BB).

Common Raven was reported from 5 locations (m.ob) and one provided very interesting photographs as it protested while a **Bald Eagle** fed on a deer carcass at LO 2/1 (KB). The regional irruption of **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was exceptional in *Butler*, with birds being seen almost every day. High counts included 8 at Pleasant Valley Road 1/3 (MC), 8 at SS 1/8 (BB), and an exceptional 11 at Sunken Garden Trail 1/5 (GK, MAK). **Cedar Waxwings** were numerous and widespread during Dec with great gatherings of 325 at Tinker Road 12/21 (BB) and 53 near Route 8 at Route 308 12/23 (KB).

The uncommon **Common Redpoll** was seen twice: 2 at a feeder near East Butler (RY) and 11 at McDanel's Boat Launch 1/11 (BB). Even though **Pine Siskin** was widespread in nearby *Allegheny* they were noted in only 3 locations in *Butler* (KB, RN, GK, MAK). Rarely seen in *Butler*, **Evening Grosbeaks** appeared at LA with 3 seen and heard flying over

during the Butler CBC 12/15 (GW, BB et al) and 2 photographed at a feeder near SGL 95 (JH). Delightful was a flock of 38 **Snow Buntings** photographed at Reichert Road 1/28 (MC). Also unusual was a late **Chipping Sparrow** seen at Wildlife Observation Area 12/15 (BB et al). The lone report of **Rusty Blackbird** was of 18 at LA 12/15 (OM).

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Cambria County

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

Waterfowl was sporadic throughout the period, depending upon the amount of open water. First **Tundra Swans** were flyovers 2/14. On 12/16, 21 **Canvasbacks** and 6 **Long-tailed Ducks** were at PG (TA). A late **Killdeer** was seen at PA 12/30 (DG). Large numbers of **Ring-billed Gulls** moved through during late Feb.

Unusual was the appearance of a juvenile **Red-shouldered Hawk** at my feeders during late Feb. At first it sat above the feeding area and the birds seemed unalarmed. Apparently it took a few birds before they got the message (DG). **Horned Lark** numbers were way down. I suspect that modern farming which leaves the fields barren of leftover weeds and seeds contributed to the low numbers. **Red-breasted Nuthatches** and **Carolina Wrens** were more common than usual at feeders this winter. A **Gray Catbird** on 12/10 near PG was a first winter record for me (DG). Mostly single **Pine Siskins** were seen at feeders.

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Cameron County

Locations: Emporium Christmas Bird Count 12/23 (PAEM), Cameron (CA), Driftwood (DR), Emporium (EMP), Hicks Run (HR), Sinnemahoning State Park (SSP), Sterling Run (SR), West Creek (WC).

The information for this report was gathered mostly from Ebird and the Emporium CBC (PAEM) held 12/23, with 20 participants compiling 42 species.

Seventeen leg banded **Canada Geese** were found at CA 1/8 (MJ). Three **Gadwalls** were at SSP 1/27 (MJ), a **Northern Pintail** at CA 1/3 (MJ), and a **Bufflehead** at SSP 1/5 (SM). Six **Common Goldeneyes** were at SSP 12/2, 1/5, 2/17 (SM, MJ). A high count of 37 **Common Mergansers** were at SSP 1/5 (MJ). Five **Ruffed Grouse** were found on at HR (PAEM) (BH). Forty-six **Mourning Doves** were at a feeder at SR 2/15 (BH). A **Golden Eagle** and 2 **Bald Eagles** were at SR (PAEM) (SV, MJ). A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was at SR 1/19 (MJ). Three **Eastern Screech-Owls**, a **Great Horned Owl**, and a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** were counted at SR (PAEM) (MJ). A late **Belted Kingfisher** was at WC 1/22 (MB). A rare **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at HR (PAEM) (BH).

One **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was at SR 1/26 (BH). **Evening Grosbeaks** occurred at at least five feeding stations. Twenty-three spent one day at a feeder at SR 12/5 (MJ), 13 were seen regularly at CA 2/7 (BK), and approximately 25 were seen almost daily at EMP 12/3-2/28 (SZ). Nine **Purple Finches** were found at HR (PAEM) (BH). **Pine Siskins** at WC numbered 3 on 1/7 and one 2/20 (MB). Eight rare **Snow Buntings** were at EMP 2/28 (PB). A wintering **Fox Sparrow** was at SSP 2/10 (MJ). A **White-crowned Sparrow** and 37 **White-throated Sparrows** were at a feeder at SR 1/30 (MJ). A lone **Swamp Sparrow** was found at SR (PAEM) (MJ). Two early migrant (or wintering?) **Red-winged Blackbirds** were found at DR 1/10 (MJ).

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Carbon County

Locations: Beltzville S.P. (BSP), Mauch Chunk L. (MCL), Penn Forest Res. (PFR), Phifer Ice Dam (PID), Strohl Valley (SV), Wild Cr. Res. (WCR).

It was an excellent winter for waterfowl in *Carbon*, with 27 species reported, thanks mostly to significant open water at BSP almost throughout the period. A flock of at least 250 **Snow Geese** passed BSP 2/26 (RR, BR). **Snow Geese** are virtually absent from *Carbon* in midwinter, with the Kittatinny Ridge functioning as a sort of electric fence containing the tens to hundreds of thousands in the Lehigh Valley. Even when present over *Carbon*, they rarely put down, so an early spring sky-watch is the most dependable way to observe them. Single **Cackling Geese** joined modest numbers of **Canadas** at BSP 1/24 (RR, BR, BE) and 2/26-27 (RR, BR). A group of 13 **Tundra Swans** were discovered roosting on the ice at BSP 2/24 (RR, BR et al.), and 7 remained (or 7 more arrived) 2/28 (RR, BR).

Seven of the 9 regular dabbling ducks were reported. **Wood Ducks** were found in small numbers at MCL 1/4 (RR) and PFR 2/15 (RR, BR). Up to 4 **Gadwalls** were present at PID in Franklin Twp. beginning 1/1 (DH et al.). **American Wigeon** appeared at Twin Crest Dr. in Mahoning Valley 2/10 (BW) and at BSP 2/23 (RR). The private pond complex on Twin Crest has been known to host nearly 50 **American Black Ducks** at a time, but was drained at one point this winter and was consequently less productive. A single **Northern Pintail** was recorded at BSP 2/25 (RR). One **Green-winged Teal** was on a farm pond off Smithlane Rd. in West Bowmans 12/11 (RR), while 3 visited BSP 2/21-22 (RR, BR).

The diving duck show at BSP was arguably the season's highlight. One **Canvasback** arrived 1/25 (RR, BR, m.ob.) and was joined by up to 8 more (LH) that lingered through the period, with 4 drakes alternating between the lake and nearby PID. **Redhead** was originally detected 1/23 (BW, JHor, m.ob.) and up to 3 (JF) remained through Jan. Max counts of other *Aythya* included 100 **Ring-necked Ducks** 2/28 (RR, BR), 19 **Greater Scaup** 2/22 (RR, BR), and 18 **Lesser Scaup** 1/22 (RR, BR). Both scaup were enjoyed throughout the period, with the scales tipped generally in favor of Greater, although the respective totals varied by observer and situation. Eleven **White-winged Scoters** 12/2 (RR, BR et al.) were followed by singles 12/4-18 (male with injured left wing; RR, BR et al.), 1/15 (BE), and 1/30 (JHor). One **Long-tailed Duck** 12/4 (JM) preceded a different bird 1/26 (RR, BR, m.ob.), which was joined by up to 4 more (MC) through 1/30. Also on 1/30 came a remarkable report of approximately 90 **Long-tailed Ducks** passing through with a storm (JHor). **Common Goldeneye**, max 36 on 1/22 (RR, BR), and **Common Merganser**, max 232 on 1/29 (RR, BR), were fixtures at the lake through the winter. Finally, **Red-breasted Merganser** was represented by two 12/1-2 (RR, BR), two 1/16 (RB), and one 1/25-31 (JF, m.ob.).

Two female **Ring-necked Pheasants**, indubitably free-spirited and fully naturalized (or not), flushed from a hilltop off Dayne Dr. near BSP 1/27 (BW). Less expected was a **Ruffed Grouse** flushing from BSP's Pine Run Boat Launch and proceeding across the lake 12/12 (AM). One to 2 **Pied-billed Grebes** at BSP 12/1-8 (RR, BR et al.) were replaced by an equivalent number of **Horned Grebes** 1/26-28 (RR, BR). Two **Red-necked Grebes** delighted BSP visitors 12/2-3 (MS, CCS, RR, BR); the sole subsequent sighting was one at the north end of Beltzville Dam, viewed distantly in fading light 1/15 (BW).

Perhaps the period's most stirring ornithological achievement was a tally of exactly 300 **Rock Pigeons** in SV (BW), on a day when not much else, presumably, was happening. That the power lines at this location could support almost 170 pounds of *Columba livia* is a fact both inspiring and completely useless. **Killdeer** returned to BSP 2/24 (RR, BR). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** investigated Beltzville L. 2/17 (BW) but did not tarry. Up to 2 **Common Loons** remained on the lake through Jan

(RR, BR). Unseasonal was a **Double-crested Cormorant** there 12/15-19 (AM et al.), apparently the third winter record for *Carbon* (all Dec singles at BSP).

There were a scant 4 eBird entries of vultures (both species) during the period. **Bald Eagle** nested again near Lehigh (RR, BR). An adult **Golden Eagle** at BSP 1/3 (RR, BR) was a great find, as was an imm. on WRS #134 on 1/25 (CH). **Rough-legged Hawk** sightings in the BSP vicinity 1/23-27 (RR, BR et al.) likely involved one light imm. roaming between the spillway to the west and Station Rd. to the east, although the hypothesis is difficult to prove from the submitted photographs. Owling efforts failed to produce Short-eared or other uncommon winterers, but a **Barred Owl** made a daytime appearance near WCR 12/5 (JB). **Merlin** was evident at the beach and boat launch areas of BSP throughout (m.ob.), with perhaps a second individual occupying the area from Dayne Dr. east (BW). **Peregrine Falcon**, in contrast, was recorded only 12/28 (RR, BR). A soaring bird over SV 1/1 (BW), initially assumed to be a raven, turned out to be a large falcon, left unidentified since no dark "helmet" was observed, conceivably but not necessarily due to the overcast sky.

Northern Shrike is currently less than annual in *Carbon*, so a brown imm. seen well in the rain at BSP's Pine Run Boat Launch 1/5 (BW) was fortuitous. Despite extensive searching, the bird was reported only once thereafter (DH). **Horned Larks** were relatively hard to come by, with the largest flock, along SV Rd., numbering about 20 (RR, BR). **Red-breasted Nuthatch** proved similarly scarce, after an invasion fall, with sightings from two backyards (JB, MY) and at WCR 1/16 (RR, BR). Late **Gray Catbirds** were located along BSP's Christman Trail 12/9 (DA) and at one of the SGL access points east of the main BSP entrance during the Wild Cr./Little Gap CBC 12/23 (TS). The lone **American Pipit** report was of 10 flybys at BSP 12/5 (EK).

Winter finches were not abundant, but stragglers from the large autumn movement were noted by lucky observers. A group of 7-15 **Evening Grosbeaks**, described 1/13 as having occurred "the last several days" (EH), continued in the SGL 40/Lehigh Tannery vicinity until at least 2/3 (BW). **Purple Finch** was at BSP through Dec and again 1/10 (TS). **Common Redpolls** drawn to the birches around BSP's environmental interpretive center drew birders in turn, 12/9-12 (DA et al.; max 44) and 1/26-27 (BW et al.; max 16 [MS, CCS]). **Pine Siskin** numbers peaked at 18 at BSP 12/26-27 (JM, RR, BR), 40-plus at a private feeding station nearby 1/10 (DH, TS), and 9 at another local feeder 1/18 (RR, BR).

As implied above, field birds were (and often are) at a premium in *Carbon*, but 2 **Snow Buntings** stopped by BSP 2/14 (JB, ph.), admittedly on a snow pile instead of in a field. **Field Sparrows**, on the other hand, had a good season at BSP, with 7 counted 12/19 (MS) and 1/3 (RR, BR). **Dark-eyed Junco** does not make the winter highlight reel frequently, but 110 visible from one vantage point in SV (BW) seemed a respectable congregation. **White-crowned Sparrow** (possibly one continuing imm.) was noted at BSP 12/2 (BE), 12/18 (RR), 12/26 (JM), and 1/3 (RR, BR). Another **White-crowned** visited a Mahoning Valley feeder 12/7 (MY), while several were present 1/12 and thereafter at a hedgerow on Round Head Dr. west of Hudsondale (BW). A female **Eastern Towhee** first encountered at BSP's Pine Run Boat Launch 12/15 (JM) took advantage of seed spreads throughout the period. Icterids were mostly absent prior to the return of **Red-winged Blackbirds** in Feb, although 4 **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported in Mahoning Valley 1/20 (MY). Finally, in a strikingly poor winter for **Yellow-rumped Warblers** in eastern Pennsylvania, the only sighting was one on Germans Rd. 1/19 (JHop).

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Centre County

Locations: PSU Arboretum (ARBOR), Bald Eagle S.P. (BESP), Buffalo

Run Rd. and pond (BRR), Cold Spring Dam Recreation Area (CSDRA), Colyer L. (COL), Duck/Centre Furnace Pond (DCFP), Millbrook Marsh Nature Center (MMNC), Scotia Barrens and pond (SCO)

Information for this report was 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 GG, 2010 (B&G, 2010). Several migrant species attempted to winter in the area, including several warbler and sparrow species. The following rare species were reported in five or more locations and will not be discussed further in this report: **Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, Turkey Vulture, Golden Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Eastern Phoebe, Hermit Thrush, Pine Siskin, Snow Bunting, White-crowned Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird.**

A **Snow Goose** flew over BESP 2/13 (SP, CB), and a dark morph bird was observed 2/3-19 at a pond on Robinson Ln. (JP, JCa, RR). The only **Cackling Goose** was present at the DCFP 2/27 (BS, SH, JV). Many, although not all, duck observations were probably of late fall and early spring migrants, although a few were present all winter. A male **Northern Shoveler** was noted at BESP 2/27 (JP). **Green-winged Teal** were also present with one reported 1/6 and again 1/16 at MMNC (JV), and another noted 2/2 at the Robinson Ln. pond (CE, KE). A couple were found 2/20 and 2/28 at BESP (JL, BS, SH). One **Greater Scaup** was present at the DCFP 12/4 (DeR), and one was there 2/16 (AJ). Another was seen 2/1-6 at the Axemann Rd. pond (JCa, et al.). Single birds were also spotted 2/16 in Bald Eagle Cr. in Milesburg (JP) and 2/17 at the BRR (DO, JV). Up to 12 **Lesser Scaup** were identified 12/7-30 at BESP (BSn, EG, BS), while as many as 4 were present there 2/15-28 (JP, et al.). Singles were noted 2/13 at the BRR 2/13 (CB, SP, JCa), 2/14 at the DCFP (DeR, et al.), and 2/28 at the CSDRA (MN). One **White-winged Scoter** was in Bellefonte 12/12 (BM), and as many as 14 **Long-tailed Ducks** were spotted at BESP 12/1-15 (JG, et al.). A **Red-breasted Merganser** wintered at BESP (JP, et al.). One, likely the same bird, was spotted 2/17 at Howard Park (AM), and 4 were seen 2/24 BRR (JV). Four **Ruddy Ducks** were observed at COL 12/1 (AM), and 5 were noted at BESP 12/7 (BSn).

One **Horned Grebe** chose to winter at BESP (JG, et al.), while another was observed at COL 1/5 (SH, SB). A couple were present at CSDRA 2/28 (MN, NW, LC). An area birder described a rare **Red-necked Grebe** at BESP 12/2 (JL). A **Common Loon** lingered at BESP 12/1-18 (JP, et al.), as did a **Double-crested Cormorant** 12/1-13 (JG, et al.). A rare **Barn Owl** was spotted at a known location near Spring Mills 12/15 (JG). A **Northern Shrike** returned to BESP, as usual in late fall/early winter, observed 12/1 (JG, DeR). Another was spotted along I-80 near Hubersburg 2/3 (KrK).

Several birders observed a **Marsh Wren** at Muddy Paws Marsh 12/15-20. It was "in company with **Song Sparrows** and **Swamp Sparrows**" (JG, et al.). ARBOR hosted a **Gray Catbird** 1/19 (JG) and a **Brown Thrasher** 1/19 (JG). Another was seen "feeding on fallen suet" in State College 1/26 (CG). Forty **American Pipits** were spotted flying over BESP 1/13 (BSn), while one was observed "walking around in ... [a] manure strip" off Tadpole Rd. 2/2 (CE, KE).

It was an irruptive winter for **Evening Grosbeaks**, rarely observed here. Two were in Pine Grove Mills 12/2 (RoF). On 12/3, another was spotted on Beaver Dam Rd near Spring Mills, and one was bathing near the intersection of Lingle Valley Rd and Penns Creek Rd. Two were heard at the Penns Cave Airport 12/8 (all DeR). The showcase spot was along Animal Dr in the Rebersburg area where up to 41 grosbeaks were admired by many birders 1/1-2/23 (DeR, et al.). The only **Common Redpoll** was in Aaronsburg 1/21 (StH). A **Lapland Longspur** was noted on Airport Rd/Garbrick Rd 1/27 (JP, JL) and a second in Rock Springs 2/2 (AM).

A **Chipping Sparrow** was photographed in Boalsburg 1/12 (TP). A scattering of **Fox Sparrows** was present, with singles on Sinking Cr. 12/6 (LR), in Lederer Park (CE), and at Shingletown Gap 2/9 (JG). Two were spotted 2/12 in Pleasant Gap (JH). A **Savannah Sparrow** was observed on S. Nixon Rd. 1/24 (JG, ZR). **Eastern Towhees** were also present, with one reported in Spring Cr. Canyon 12/16 (NiB) and a male was heard

calling 1/4 at the Haugh Family Preserve (CE), relocated 1/15 (JG). Two possible early migrants were seen with a flock of **American Robins** at ARBOR 2/24 (GP). An **Eastern Meadowlark** was reported 1/24-25 on Feidlor Rd. (JP, JL).

A "first winter female" **Orange-crowned Warbler** was located 12/16 along Spring Valley Rd. (MR). A first year **Common Yellowthroat** was spotted at MMNC 12/10 (NiB). On 1/1, a "dull, female type bird", probably the same one seen on 12/10, was also observed there (CE, KE). Two **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were identified at Dowdy's Hole 12/1 (JG), and one was seen 1/1 at BESP (CE). A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was identified along Bald Eagle Cr. in Milesburg 12/31 (JP).

A real rarity, a **Black-throated Gray Warbler**, was spotted "foraging along ... [a] stream leading into the pond" at DCFP and cooperated with birders 12/12-20 (JL, et al.). There are 2 previous *Centre* records – a dead bird in State College in 1972 and one in SCO in 1974. The number of state records varies depending on the source, but there has been roughly a dozen prior to this year (B&G, 2010). A 2/28 email to the State College Bird Club list indicated this "was a new species for the Pennsylvania CBC" (NiB).

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Chester County

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

The season was unremarkable weather-wise. Snowfall amounts were low, and only a few below average temperature trends occurred, leaving water bodies mostly unlocked from ice. Seasonal avian highlights including the standout Barnacle Goose found at the end of Dec., three Trumpeter Swans that spent a several-week layover in Feb., Evening Grosbeak seen in flight, and a moderate irruption of both Red-breasted Nuthatches and Pine Siskins. A Yellow-breasted Chat found during a CBC in Dec was a good find, and a Dickcissel was an unexpected discovery during some pre-CBC scouting in Embreeville.

The exciting discovery of a **Barnacle Goose** found 12/27 at CORES (JWa) brought in birders from near and far, offering a nice holiday season bonus to the end of year birding. This unusual visitor from afar continued sporadically there through 1/1, and while was counted by some as a 2019 bird, was not relocated thereafter (m.ob.). This species has had several occurrences in the county through the years, typically within Dec-Jan, and among the larger goose concentrations at local lakes. Other regional counties reported Barnacle Goose within weeks of this observation, and it was wondered if there were multiple individuals in the eastern part of the state, or just one. A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was found 12/1 at Kurtz's Fish Hatchery (SS, NF). Possibly the same bird was spotted in the same location 12/23 (LL, SS, NF), and also seen at the nearby Cnebella Farm Pond (SS, NF). A new county high-record of **Trumpeter**

Swans was established with the find of 3 in Elverson 2/17 (SS, NF). The trio was seen bouncing between a field on Brick Ln., and a pond close to Honey Brook on Bollinger Rd. They remained present through the end of reporting period. Trumpeter Swans are irregularly found in the county, and the previous high count was of 2.

It was a good winter for **Canvasbacks** at local ponds and lakes. Some years, reports are scarce, but this salt water duck was found repeatedly this season, usually in small numbers. One collection of Canvasbacks at Wedgewood Pond held 18 (JDP). No scoters were found, which is not unusual. **Long-tailed Ducks** made sporadic appearances, one 12/9 at CORES (AC), another 2/2 at Atwater Quarry (DB), and one at Kurtz's Fish Hatchery 2/24 (SS, NF), but the most notable occurrence was of 30 reported from MCSP 1/25 (DH), which is a significant high count. MCSP also hosted the seasonal high count of 11 **Common Goldeneyes** (BB), another uncommon but expected visitor. A drake **Red-breasted Merganser** was a nice find at MCSP 12/19 (BB), and the only report of this merganser species during winter.

Horned Grebes are always scarce in winter, and were only found on a few occasions during Dec and Feb. Reported from both MCSP and SL, in each case, only one was detected (m.ob.). Two **Red-necked Grebes** were discovered at Atwater Quarry 2/16 (CH). This species is irregular in winter, but always sought after. Remarkably, 4 **Virginia Rails** were discovered at CP 12/12 (JMcn). This find marks a new county seasonal high count, as they are only irregularly found in winter in Pennsylvania and *Chester*. A solo Virginia Rail was detected there again 2/10 (JMcn).

American Woodcocks were found in Feb, in Downingtown 2/15 (ZB), Waterloo Mills Preserve 2/25 (KF), and Coventry Woods 2/28 (SS, NF). This is the expected window, when their presence becomes more readily detected with peent calls heard at dusk in advance of the spring courtship rituals and sky dances. **Wilson's Snipe** can linger during milder winters, but are not easily found. This season, birders found individuals of this hardy shorebird at Upper Uwchlan WTP 12/16 (HM), Bryn Coed Preserve 2/16 (SS, NF, PW, JW), Longwood Gardens 2/21 (JF), and Herb Pennock Park 2/27 (JA). Irregular in winter, only one **Bonaparte's Gull** was noted, at MCSP 12/9 (AC). A **Common Loon** was reported from MCSP 12/22-1/10 (m.ob.).

There was an uptick in reports of wintering **Red-shouldered Hawks** in the region, and this year's Winter Raptor Surveys held the highest ever counts for two routes, with 6 on a survey in the central part of the county (HM, JC), and 9 from one in southern *Chester* (KS). This increase is notable, and seems to flow with the overall trend of increasing numbers of this species statewide. **Long-eared Owls** are cryptic in nature, and irregularly found in winter. Historically, the county had a communal roost site which was well-known and regularly monitored. But that location has not hosted owls for well over a decade. Therefore, notable was one Long-eared spotted in flight at Hibernia CP 12/7 (LL) and another seen in northeastern *Chester* 1/7. A lone **Short-eared Owl** was detected in the Doe Run region 2/13 (LL), but not thereafter. This species has become scarce in the region in recent years, which likely reflects an overall decline in population. A wintering **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was found at Hibernia CP during the Western Chester CBC 12/30 (LL), and remained through at least 2/22 (RR).

An immature **Red-headed Woodpecker** was spotted near St.Peter's Village 2/3 (JW, PW). This area of the county seems best for finding this least common of our expected woodpeckers. **Eastern Phoebes** are half-hardy flycatchers and typically sparse in winter, but this season saw more reports than in recent previous years (m.ob.). Notable was one that took up winter residence in Coatesville 12/15- 2/17 (JS).

There was not a strong irruption of **Black-capped Chickadees** into the region, and only one was reported, from a feeder near Kimberton 12/1 (KC). A more noticeable irruption was that of **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, which was in better supply, appearing in multiple locations throughout the county, particularly feeding stations (m.ob.). A **Marsh Wren** found at ChesLen Preserve 12/26 was a great find, as this species is irregular in all seasons, and has only been discovered in winter one other year, 2018 at the same location (RC).

An **Evening Grosbeak** was reported from a yard in West Chester 12/20 (NP) after a decent irruption of this species into the state during the

past fall. **Purple Finches** were in good numbers, and frequented feeders around the county throughout winter (m.ob.). This species is not always in good attendance, but this year's irruption allowed for some to take up winter residence. A high count was of 30 at a feeder in Glenmore 1/29 (BB). There was a smattering of reports of **Common Redpoll**, an irregular species that appears occasionally in irruptive years. Reports began in Dec with one heard at Longwood Gardens 12/9 (LL), and another 4 from a yard in West Chester 12/10 (NP), neither relocated. One attended a feeder 1/12-1/14 in Phoenixville (VS). **Pine Siskins** settled into feeders around the county after a moderate irruption, and were detected in decent numbers (m.ob.). The high count was of 44 siskins, counted twice from a yard in Downingtown 1/9 and 1/29 (HM). These hungry feeder visitors persisted through the end of the season.

A **Lapland Longspur** combed out of a flock of 75 **Horned Larks** in Honey Brook was a good find 2/21 (RR). This species is probably annual but hard to find in vast farmland areas where larks congregate. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was a surprise find during a CBC in West Chester 12/15 (PJ, HM, KH). While this species has been logged during the count historically, it's been many years since one was recorded, or known to be in the county at all during Dec. A female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was in farmlands in Atglen 2/16 (RG) among a mixed flock of over 75,000 blackbirds. Small numbers of **Rusty Blackbirds** were found in locations with habitats where expected, with wet woodlands and muddy shorelines (m.ob.).

Two **Common Yellowthroats** persisted into Dec, which is not expected, but also not unprecedented for this semi-hardy warbler species. One was at CP 12/11-12 (JMcn) and another at BCP 12/12 (LL). Likely the same individual at CP was relocated 12/26 (RC) after which reports ceased. An unexpected find 12/11 in the wetlands at CP was a lone **Dickcissel**, a species irregularly reported at any time of year, especially winter, and marking a first record of that species for that location (JMcn).

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Clarion County

Locations: Curlsville (CV), Kahle Lake (KL), Mount Airy (MA), Mount Zion/Piney Tract/SGL 330 (MZ), New Bethlehem (NB), Redbank Valley Trail (RVT), Rimersburg (RI), Strattanville (ST).

Green-winged Teal continue to be regular winter residents at NB on Redbank Creek, where they have been present for at least the last 3 seasons. Up to 4 were noted there 12/8-2/26 (J&AK). A more unusual species was also at this location, a single **Long-tailed Duck** 12/1-12/7 (AD, JH, J&AK). This species was also noted during the same migration period at KL, with one seen 12/4 (SG).

Ruffed Grouse have become more difficult to find, and this again was the case this season with only a single report of one in southern *Clarion* 1/11 (DR, MW). For the second year there were also no grouse found on the *Clarion* CBC 12/15. **Ring-billed Gulls** are not really an unusual species for the county but a count of approximately 200 on the rather small waterway of Redbank Creek is worth noting. Likely taking

advantage of open water during the colder end of Feb, they were present in NB 2/27 (J&AK).

Just a few **Northern Harriers** were noted, as their population continues to be difficult to predict with the severity of winter and likely declining numbers. A single was noted at MZ 12/6 (MH) and another at MA 1/6 (DF, BG), both strongholds for this species. A female was also noted at a reclaimed strip mine area near Blairs Corners 2/10 (CW). There are 3 known nesting sites for **Bald Eagles** in the county, and 2 adults were present at one of those nests along Redbank Creek near Climax 2/3 (MH, CW). Unfortunately this nest appeared to be in poor shape. In contrast, the nest along the Clarion River near Callensburg appears in excellent shape, with both adults present and active there 2/5 (DM). In line with findings from the state-wide WRS, **Red-shouldered Hawks** seem to be staying around more through the winter with an increase in reports. An immature bird was noted near CV 12/9 (CW), and 3 were found on a WRS route near Callensburg 1/16 (PC, ML). Two Red-shoulders were also seen near East Brady, with one feeding on carrion on the roadside 2/3 (DR). Near ST, one was heard calling already 2/18 near a known nesting area (RM). With such extensive grasslands, *Clarion* continues to be one of the more regular areas in the state for **Rough-legged Hawks**, and the northern Amish farming communities are becoming the most reliable location. Four light birds were found here near Lake Lucy on a WRS 1/14 (FM), and a dark morph was noted in the same area 1/28 (DD, CW). One light bird was again seen in the area 2/23 (JK, TK). In the south, one light bird was seen on a WRS near Callensburg 1/16 (PC, ML), and 2 light birds were found at MA on a WRS 1/30 (DD, CW).

More effort was expended this year in the search for **Short-eared Owls** and so higher numbers were found, all in the south on stretches of reclaimed strip mine fields. One was found near Callensburg 12/2, one at MA 12/4, and another at MZ 12/6 (MH). Two were seen near CV on Rankin Rd 12/7 and 12/8 (TS, CW), and for the *Clarion* CBC, one was found near Callensburg 12/15 (MH, LT). Later in the season, one was still present at MA 1/26 (DM), and also one near CV 1/31 (CW). A single **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was reported, heard calling from hemlocks in a yard in Knox 12/27 (ML).

Northern Flickers are occasionally present in winter, and a species map from Cornell's eBird site shows the large area of northcentral Pennsylvania largely missing this species for the season.; therefore, any reports are notable. This year one was seen sporadically at feeders near CV mostly utilizing suet and also frequently seen on larch trees nearby, present 12/6-2/28 (CW). Two flickers were noted early in the season along the RVT 12/14 (J&AK). Another winter visitor that *Clarion* is fortunate to host yearly is **Northern Shrike**. This year was no exception, with one first found at MA 12/4 (MH), and another in shrubby field habitat near CV 12/7 (CW). In Jan one was found in overgrown strip fields near Blairs Corners 1/6 and again in this location mid-Jan (DM). In the same type of reclaimed strip field habitat, one was also found near NB on a WRS 2/3 (MH, CW).

It was a good year for **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, with sightings from multiple locations, including feeders in RI, ST, CV, and *Clarion* through the season (MM, RM, LT, CW, TS). One was also seen at MA 1/27 (NC) and 2 near NB 2/4 (AD). **Brown Creepers** are not always reported, but 2 spent the entire season at a suet feeder near ST (MH) and one was at a feeder in RI 12/12 (MM). One was also found near CV with a small flock of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** 1/28 (CW). As with the flickers, **Northern Mockingbirds** are sporadic in winter, with this pattern also visible in species maps from eBird showing large areas of absence from northwest and central Pennsylvania. Only 2 were found this year, one near CV 12/11 and another not far from here at a known breeding location 1/28 (CW). Both areas are reclaimed strip mine fields with large areas of multiflora rose.

By far, the most interesting event this year was the influx of **Evening Grosbeaks**, the first in many years. First reported in late fall, they were regular winter visitors at a feeding station near ST throughout the entire season, with numbers reaching at least 40 (LT, RN, CW). At least 3 banded birds were noted at times, which were marked as part of research being done through the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and Powdermill Avian Research

Center at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. These birds were first banded at a site in Marienville, *Forest*, as part of a regular flock and it will be very interesting to see over time what this shows about their movements. Twenty birds were also noted at a feeder within a mile of here 1/12 (MH), and at a second feeder also within a mile, up to 15 were seen, mostly females, starting 2/19 and continuing through the end of the season (RM). At the second feeder, a banded bird was also reported. Without specifics known, there was a third feeder in this same area that had some birds present as well (*fide* RM). There were just 2 reports of **Pine Siskins**, with one at a feeder near ST 12/4 (RM) and 4-5 seen at nyger feeders in Clarion 12/8-2/17 (TS).

Snow Buntings were only found at one location, with a small flock present at farm fields near Tylersburg 1/20 (MH). The only sparrow of note is a species for which the report is about relative scarcity rather than abundance - **American Tree Sparrows** hit a new low total of 15 on the CBC 12/15. The average number over the past 10 years is 127 (GE). At a feeder near CV surrounded by large, weedy fields, numbers over the last 16 years show a steep decline, especially in the last 5 years (CW). This species that was often the most numerous feeder bird, with totals up to 60 during snow events, had a high count this year of 9. A scattering of other sightings were also noted, with 4 at KL 12/31 (MD), 6 at Foxburg 1/13 (KC), 6 at CV strips 1/16 (RN), and 2 in RI 2/20 (MM). The reasons for the decline seem uncertain at this time.

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Clearfield County

Locations: Bimini Lake (BL), DuBois Country Club (DBCC).

The DuBois Christmas Bird Count tallied 54 species included several unusual winter species for the northern plateau: **Trumpeter Swan**, **Common Goldeneye**, **Turkey Vultures**, **Northern Mockingbird**, and **Swamp Sparrow** 12/15 (MA, EE).

A blue morph **Snow Goose** was seen with a flock of **Canada Geese** at DBCC 1/5 (KS, NV). A **Trumpeter Swan** with wing-tag P42 spent some time in the area being seen at BL and DBCC 12/10-1/10 (MoB). According to the USGS, the bird was a 2-1/2-year-old female, banded 12/28/16 in Ontario, Canada. Three drake **Common Goldeneyes** were seen at BL 12/15 (DR, DiR). **Turkey Vultures**, normally absent from the northern plateau during winter, have been noted in increasing numbers the past three years, seen throughout the county this season 12/27-2/27 (MoB). **Barred Owls** were observed during daylight along Troy Hill Road 12/26 (CE, KE) and along Drain Lick Road 2/2 (DG, DB).

Clearfield was included in the state-wide irruption of **Evening Grosbeaks**, with individuals reported 12/4-2/16 at various locations including Frenchville (PK), McGeorge Road (CY), and near SGL #77 (DR). **Pine Siskins** were observed near Frenchville 12/7-2/20 (PK) and near DuBois 2/16 (MA). A flock of 3 to 4 dozen **Snow Buntings** along with several **Horned Larks** were seen along Kirk Road near Luthersburg 1/10 (DR). An early male **Red-Winged Blackbird** showed up at a bird feeding area near DuBois 2/9 (MA). A **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was at Beaver Meadow Walkway in DuBois 1/29 (BM).

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Clinton County

Locations: Dunnstown (DT), Lock Haven (LH), Mackeyville (MV), Mill Hall (MH), Rauchtown (RT), South Avis (SA), Susquehanna River (SR).

A **Snow Goose** and a **Greater White-fronted Goose** were observed 12/31-1/5 on River Rd. east of LH in a flock of **Canada Geese** (m.ob.). Three **Tundra Swans** were recorded on the local CBC near RT 12/15 (DK, DR). **Canvasbacks** were seen at LH on the SR 1/5 (CCH) and on Fishing Creek in MH along with **Redheads** 1/31 (BS). **Long-tailed Ducks** were reported on the SR 1/5 (CCH).

Fourteen **Black Vultures** were tallied during the CBC near RT 12/15 (DK, DR). **Merlins** were regularly reported in much of the county throughout the period. Sighting were made near LH, SA, MH, DT, MV, and Lockport (m.ob.). Hope was rekindled for the return of nesting **Peregrine Falcons** when up to 2 were regularly reported throughout the period at a McElhatten site where falcons had nested from 2008 to 2013. In 2014 and 2015 falcons nested at another site farther downriver on the SR. No further nesting was reported in the area since.

Reports of **Eastern Phoebe** included one in DT on the CBC 12/15 (RH), and one near MV 1/5 (CCH) and again 1/26 (BS). *Clinton* was not left out of the **Evening Grosbeak** irruption. A lone bird was reported in Woolrich 12/3 (CCH). A flock that varied from about 20-50 birds was reported from 1/5 through the period at a hunting camp in West Keating Township (BS, PG, WL, DP). Several grosbeaks were seen near Loganton 12/14 (JW). A flock of about 20 was seen at a residence also near Loganton from about 12/21 through the period (m.ob.). A **Pine Siskin** was reported near Avis 12/16 (LB).

Snow Buntings were few during the period. One was near Rote 1/31 (BS), 3 at SA 2/15 (CCH), and 4 west of LH 2/18 (WL). Unusual during the 12/15 CBC, a well described **Common Yellowthroat** was found near RT (DK, DR).

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Columbia County

Locations: Bloomsburg (BLBG), Catawissa (CAT), Crow Hill Sanctuary (CHS), Deussen Drive (DD), Fort McClure Boulevard (FMB), Jamison City (JC), Montour Township (MT), Weiser State Forest (WSF).

The winter season was very slow across the county with the most notable sightings being winter finches, which pushed south in moderate numbers. Up to 5 **Purple Finches** were reported daily visiting a feeder in MT throughout the entire season (AK). A group of 4 **Common Redpolls** was heard and seen in flight at WSF 2/3 (AK). **Pine Siskins** were observed in small numbers including 2 at CHS 12/7, 12/9, and 12/25 (DG), and one at a feeder in CAT 1/10 (JSL). **Evening Grosbeak** was observed in two locations, including CHS where one was noted 12/2 (DG) and then 3 on 12/4 (DG), and at JC where a group of 16 was reported 12/8 (JL).

Red-shouldered Hawks are not regularly reported in *Columbia* - this season's lone report was of a single bird in BLBG 2/17 (JS). Unusual in winter, a **Chipping Sparrow** was observed at a feeder in MT 1/8 (AK). **Field Sparrows** are likely present in most winters but seldom reported. This year, 2 were noted at CHS 12/2 (DG) and one along DD on 12/16 (AK). A **Rusty Blackbird** was observed with a mixed blackbird flock in MT 12/30 (AK). **Yellow-rumped Warblers** regularly overwinter, but are rarely reported. This season they were found in several locations, including up to 2 at CHS 12/21-27 (DG) and one at the same location 2/4-27 (DG). Along FMB, 2 were reported 1/23 (EH) followed by 3 on 2/6 (KP).

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Crawford County

Locations: Conneaut Lake (CL), Pymatuning S.P.- Causeway (P S.P.- C),

Pymatuning S.P.- Hartstown Marsh (P S.P.- HM), Pymatuning S.P.- Miller's Ponds (P S.P.- MP).

Observations of **Snow Goose**, infrequently observed in *Crawford*, included 2 seen in the CL area 12/11 (SC) and one at Geneva Marsh-The Wells 1/11 (JH). **Greater White-fronted Goose** is infrequently observed in *Crawford*, so sightings of 36 birds in the P S.P.- MP area 2/15 (JM, MW), up to 31 seen in the same area 2/16 (AH, CN), and up to 16 there again 2/17 (JB, SB, JF, TNo, KP) are notable. Notable observations of **Cackling Goose** included a single seen at P S.P.- C 2/9 (MW) and 2/18 (MH, JM, MW). A good count of 8007 **Canada Geese** were observed throughout the Pymatuning area during the Linesville CBC 12/16 (m.ob.). **Trumpeter Swan** is an excellent bird for the county, so the observation of 3 flying and calling over P S.P.- HM 1/31 (MW) is notable. An excellent count, 685 **Tundra Swans** were observed at CL 2/27 (CN). A good count of Tundras were seen at the same location the following day 2/28 (BW).

Observations of **Wood Duck** are scarce during the winter season, so sightings of 2 at Conneaut Marsh-McMichael Road 2/25 (GAK, MK) and 6 at P S.P.- HM 2/25 are notable. A good count of 39 **American Black Ducks** were observed at Geneva Marsh 1/16 (MW). Good counts of **Canvasback**, all at CL, included 202 seen 2/14 (RL), 97 on 2/23 (KP), and at least 95 on 2/24 (PF, RH, KP). Notable counts of **Redhead** included 138 at CL 2/14 (RL) and 100 at the same location 2/24 (PF, KP). **Greater Scaup** were reported in higher frequency than expected in the Pymatuning and Conneaut Lake areas (m.ob.). High counts included 27 at CL 2/18 (JM), 30 at P S.P.- C 2/18 (MW), and 30 in the Pymatuning area 2/23 (RS).

There were several notable observations of **White-winged Scoter**, including a single at CL 2/19 (JM, MW), 2/20 (TNo), 2/22 (CN), and 2/24 (PF, RH, KP), and one at P S.P.- C (SS). **Long-tailed Ducks** were seen throughout the season in the Pymatuning and CL areas (m.ob.). A good count of 222 **Common Goldeneyes** were seen in the Pymatuning area 2/5 (RL). There were several high counts of **Common Merganser**, including 950 at Pymatuning S.P.- Nature Center 12/27 (MAK, GK), and several high counts at P S.P.- C including 1540 1/1 (RT), 1290 on 1/3 (GB), and 800 on 2/23 (MH).

Ruffed Grouse observations are increasingly rare in *Crawford*, so sightings of singles along Boghollow Road near Titusville 12/18 (JM, MW), along Old Grande Road near Centerville 12/18 (MW), and near Brooks Road 1/5 (IF, SR) are notable. There were several notable reports of **Horned Grebe**, including 2 seen at Pymatuning S.P.- Espyville Marina 12/2 (TNo), a single at CL during the Linesville CBC 12/16 (CN), a single at CL 2/27 (CN) and one at P S.P.- C 2/27 (CN). A **Red-necked Grebe**, a notable bird for *Crawford*, was seen at CL 12/5 (RL).

A notable count of 521 **Mourning Doves** were observed in the Pymatuning area during the Linesville CBC 12/16 (m.ob.). **American Coot** numbers were lower than expected, with a high of 80 at CL 1/1 (RT). **Sandhill Crane** were recorded in expected locations, primarily in the Pymatuning and Conneaut Marsh areas (m.ob.). A notable total of 186 were observed in the Pymatuning area during the Linesville CBC 12/16, a new high for that count (m.ob.). Observations of **Killdeer**, expected but scarce during winter, included singles at Woodcock Lake 12/28 (RL), Pymatuning S.P.- Fish Hatchery 12/30 and 1/4 (MW), and P S.P.- MP 2/18 (MH), and 3 seen at Pymatuning S.P.- Fish Hatchery (MW). A late **Greater Yellowlegs** was at P S.P.- MP 12/4 (IF, SR).

A notable count for *Crawford*, 155 **Herring Gulls** were observed at Pymatuning S.P.- Dam during the Linesville CBC 12/16 (RH, TNo, KP). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, notable for the county, was at Pymatuning S.P.- Dam 12/13 (JM). **Great Black-backed Gull** is rare for *Crawford*, so one at Pymatuning S.P.- Jamestown SP 2/15 (RL) is notable. Observations of **Double-crested Cormorant**, notable in winter, were all from Pymatuning S.P.- Dam, including one seen 1/13, 1/16, and 1/19 (MW).

An early **Turkey Vulture** was observed east of Springboro 2/23 (HC). An amazing count of 90 **Bald Eagles**, including 41 adults and 49 immatures, were observed in the Pymatuning area during the Linesville CBC 12/16 (m.ob.). A **Northern Goshawk** was reported in the Pymatuning area at the Linesville CBC 12/16 (RL). **Rough-legged**

Hawks were observed in their expected locations and numbers (m.ob.). They arrived later than normal to the county, with the first observation occurring at P S.P.- MP 1/10 (MW). The only **Great Horned Owl** was observed off of Highway 618 on 2/17 (HB). **Snowy Owl** is an excellent bird for the county, so the observation of a one at P S.P.- C 2/5 is especially notable (RL). A **Long-eared Owl**, an excellent bird for *Crawford*, was observed sitting near Greytown Hill Road east of Cambridge Springs 2/27 (KZ).

Red-headed Woodpecker, a notable bird for the county and season, was observed in expected locations in the Pymatuning area, including at Tuttle Beach/Manning Boat Launch area and the Jamestown Campground (m.ob.). A notable total of 6 birds were recorded in the Pymatuning area during the Linesville CBC 12/16 (RH, JM, TNo, KP). A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, an excellent observation for the season, was at Pymatuning S.P.- Dam 1/19 (MW). Notable observations of **Merlin**, expected but rare in *Crawford*, included one in the Meadville area 12/2 (KP), 1/17 (RH), and 2/7 (KP), and 2 seen at Pymatuning S.P.- Fish Hatchery 2/3 (ME). A **Peregrine Falcon**, notable for the county, was observed at Pymatuning S.P.- Ford Island 12/19 (IF, RL).

A **Eastern Phoebe**, notable during winter, was observed along Limber Road 2/9 (IF). Observations of **Northern Shrike** included singles at Geneva Marsh- The Wells 1/13 (MW), in the Pymatuning Goose Management Area 2/14 (RL), and at a private residence along Pettis Road 2/25 (RL). Notable observations of **Common Raven** included singles seen during Winter Raptor Survey #203 on 2/10 (ML) and along Seiler Road 2/15 (AL). **Horned Lark** were observed throughout the county in expected numbers and locations (m.ob.). A good count of at least 30 were seen along Wolf Road in southeastern *Crawford* 2/25 (IF).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were observed in expected numbers and locations throughout the county (m.ob.). An excellent count of at least 10 were observed at Pymatuning S.P.- Tuttle Beach Campground 12/24 (KZ). The only observation of **Winter Wren** was of a single seen at P S.P.- HM 1/31 (MW). **Carolina Wren** were observed in expected numbers and locations throughout the county (m.ob.). **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** is infrequently observed during the winter season, so sightings of one at SGL 277 12/2 (RS), one at Pymatuning S.P.- Espyville Marina 12/2 (TNo), and 2 at P S.P.- H M during the Linesville CBC 12/16 (CN, TNi) are notable.

Observations of **Hermit Thrush** included singles at a private residence in the Meadville area 1/2 (TNo), and at Pymatuning S.P.- HM 1/24 and 1/31 (MW). There were more reports than usual of **American Robin** this season, but in expected numbers and locations (m.ob.). A good count of 26 were at P S.P.- HM 1/24 (MW). **Northern Mockingbird** is notable and infrequently found here. Observations included singles in the Conneaut Lake area 1/14 (SC), and along Gravel Run Road 2/12 (JF), 2/14 (JF), and 2/17 (TNo, KP). A good count of 38 **American Pipits** were seen near a private residence along Pettis Road 12/16, a late date (RL).

Purple Finch were reported throughout the county and season (m.ob.), with a good count of 9 observed at a private residence on N. Richmond Road 2/16 (RS). Notable observations of **Common Redpoll** included one seen at a private residence on N. Richmond Road 1/5 and 1/20 (RS). **Pine Siskins** were reported at several locations throughout the county (m.ob.) with a high of 25 at Woodcock Lake- Dickson Road Trail 1/19 (KP). **Snow Buntings** were reported at P S.P.- C throughout the season (m.ob.), including a notable count of 45 there 1/19 (MW).

An **Eastern Towhee**, notable during winter, was seen near the Meadville Area Recreation Complex 12/26 (KP). A **Fox Sparrow**, also notable during winter, was seen under the feeders at a private residence along Pettis Road 12/16 (RL). There were a higher than average number of observations of **Swamp Sparrow** throughout the county, especially in the Pymatuning area (m.ob.). A good count of 7 were seen at P S.P.- HM during the Linesville CBC 12/16 (CN, TNi) and 8 were at the same location 12/20 (MW). An early **Eastern Meadowlark** was at P S.P.- MP 1/27 (KZ). A good count for winter, 93 **Red-winged Blackbirds** were observed at Geneva Marsh- The Wells 1/13 (MW). **Rusty Blackbird** is rare bird in winter, so the observation of 2 near West Vernon Road 1/1 (RT) is especially notable.

The most incredible sighting of the season was a **Northern Parula**

seen and photographed in the Pymatuning area near the Pymatuning Laboratory of Ecology Housing Site 12/30 (MW). Presumably the same bird was seen again in the same area of Pymatuning near Hartstown Road 1/4 (JM, MW) and 1/5 (MH, JM). There are no other confirmed Jan observations in eBird of **Northern Parula** in Pennsylvania so the sightings is certainly significant. Observations of **Yellow-rumped Warbler** included a single in the Pymatuning area 12/15 (JM). Two were at P.S.P.-HM during the CBC 12/16 (CN, TNi) and a single was there 12/20 and 2 there 1/24 (MW).

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Cumberland County

Locations: Boiling Springs Children's Pond (BSCL), Laughlin Millpond on the Big Spring also known as the Cool Spring Pond (LMBS), Mud Level Road (MLR), Newville CBC (PANV), State Game Lands 169 (SGL 169)

The winter period had normal temperatures and less than average snow, but the unusually wet weather continued with more than the usual amount of rain. Please note that unless otherwise stated occurrences and the number of prior occurrences of the 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 County Birds as the county line is the west shoreline of the river. This report is using the 58th Supplement of the 7th Edition of the AOU Check-list of North American Birds.

The following waterfowl were of note as they tend to be among those that are less reported during the winter in *Cumberland*. **Snow Goose** was reported more than usual with one at LMBS 12/14-17 (VG, DB, SB, KJ, TJ), a flyover flock of 13 during the PANV 12/29 (DM), one on the Letort Creek 2/12 (HW), a flock of 12-15 at BSCL 2/15-16 (EV), and one at Stoughstown Pond 2/28 (VG, DB, SB). **Cackling Goose** made a less than annual appearance with one at LMBS 1/17 (VG), and then 2 at that location 2/25, with an additional one on the Dykeman Road Ponds in Shippensburg 1/30 (BK). There was one report of **Tundra Swan**, a flock of approximately 100 birds in a flooded field on MLR 2/28 (MW). Two **Wood Ducks** were at LMBS 1/31-2/2 (VG, BK, BP, PY), with 2 others at the Propagation Pond area of SGL 169 on 2/23 (VG). There were up to 15 **Canvasbacks** 2/3-27 (TS, m.ob.), an unspecified number in Camp Hill 2/12 and 2/15 (BB), 3 on the Green Spring near Bullshead Road 2/1 (BK), and one at LMBS 2/17 (VG). One **Red-breasted Merganser**, a winter vagrant in *Cumberland*, was present at the Lisburn Road Quarry 1/26 (SK).

One **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was seen at the intersection of Meadows Road and Route 997 on 2/6 (BK). This location remains the only area in *Cumberland* where this species is found in a continuous, albeit very limited, basis. Rare here in winter, an **American Coot** was reported at the Pennsy Supply Quarry in Mechanicsburg 1/12 and 1/25 (DH), and just about 6 miles away as the coot flies at SCI Camp Hill 12/15 (KM) and 2/12-15 (BB). Perhaps the same bird? There was also a

confirmed sighting of one **Great Black-backed Gull** at West Fairview. It was noted in the eBird report that this rare winter species was seen on a light pole on shore and not in the river 12/9, thus a *Cumberland* bird (JM).

Raptors of interest included a **Golden Eagle**, a winter vagrant, identified on a WRS at SGL 169 on 2/4 (RF, DG). A light phase **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen at SGL 169 on 1/24 and 2/16 (BK, JM); this species is a rare winter visitor in *Cumberland* except in invasion years. The only reports of **Red-headed Woodpecker**, rare in winter, were of one at Zion Road Pond 12/7 (TJ) and 2 at the SGL 169 Propagation Pond Area 2/23 (VG). This is the second year in a row that this species has been found over-wintering at this area of SGL 169 where it also breeds. An **Empidonax** flycatcher was reported on the PANV 12/27 (VG, BO, TW), the first empid ever on this count. Unfortunately, there was no way to determine with certainty a particular species.

Red-breasted Nuthatch was found quite regularly in what turned out to be a pretty good invasion year. The only **Gray Catbird** was found on the PANV 12/29 (VG, BO, TW). There was one report of a vagrant **Evening Grosbeak**, seen at a Carlisle feeding station 12/5 (SS). There were a few reports of **Pine Siskin**, with the only reliable location being at the same feeder station that had the grosbeak. There were up to 8 siskins reported there 12/3-2/10 (SS). There was an outstanding total of 34 siskins reported at King's Gap Environmental Center (AD). Five **Snow Buntings** were seen at the Keystone Arms housing area of Middlesex Township 2/20 (DK). This was the only winter report for the species, which has been difficult to find the last two winters.

In a down year for overwintering **Rusty Blackbirds**, there was only one report, a flock of 33 from the Huntsdale area 12/29 (AM, RK, SS). Three warbler species of note were reported. A vagrant **Orange-crowned Warbler** was seen in a Mechanicsburg community 1/12 (SK); there had only been 2 previous winter records in *Cumberland*. A rare **Common Yellowthroat** was reported on the Big Spring during the PANV 12/29 (DM, SW), the seventh report of this species on the PANV in the 27-years history of the count. Providing a first winter record for *Cumberland*, a **Cape May Warbler** was at BSCL 1/21-22 (TN, JH).

Observers: **Vern Gauthier, 11 W. Big Spring Ave., Newville PA 17241, (717) 385-9526, verngauthier14@gmail.com**, Benjamin Boon, Doris Brookens, Steve Brookens, Andrew Dapkins, Ron Freed, Dave Grove, Daniel Hinnebusch, Jason Horn, Karen Johnson, Tim Johnson, Stefan Karkuff, Dave Kerr, Bob Koontz, Ramsay Koury, Annette Mathes, Dave McNaughton, Kevin Mock, Jennifer Moore, Joshua Moritz, Ted Nichols, Bill Oyler, Bob Peda, Thomas Sanago, Susan Strassner, Eric Vorodi, Steve Walthius, Herb Weigle, Tiffany Willow, Martian Wilson, Perry Yinglin.

Dauphin County

Locations: Blue Mountain Parkway (BMP), Clark's Ferry Bridge (CFB), Former Harrisburg State Hospital (HSH), Fort Hunter (FH), Fort Indiantown Gap west corridor (FIG), Hershey Important Birding Area (HIBA), Highspire Reservoir (HR), Middle Road, Lykens Township (MR), Old Hershey Factory-Hershey (OHF), Peter's Mountain Road (PMR), Rachel Carson State Office Building-Harrisburg (RCSOB), State Game Lands 290-Haldeman Island (SGL290HI), State Game Lands 246 (SGL246), Susquehanna River Front Street (SRFS), Susquehanna River Millersburg (SRM), Susquehanna River West Fairview (SRWF), Wildwood Lake (WL).

The two Christmas Bird Counts that include *Dauphin* resulted in 95 species for the Harrisburg Count (DHo) and 76 species for the Curtin Count (S&SB).

Snow Geese began arriving in the area mid-Feb with large flocks reported in the Hershey area (m.ob.). A pair of **Trumpeter Swans** was discovered on MR 1/27 (AM) and was still there by the end of Feb. **Tundra Swans** began to be observed in large numbers beginning the week of 2/17 in eastern *Dauphin* (m.ob.). All common species of ducks were seen this winter on the Susquehanna River, either from SRFS or SRWF (m.ob.). A **White-winged Scoter** spotted on the river north of Halifax 2/1 (SS) and a **Black Scoter** at SRFS 2/28 (IG, SS). A **Ruddy**

Ducks was reported at WL 12/30 (SB) and 4 at HR 12/17 (DH). **Wilson's Snipe** was found at SGL290HI on 12/02 (S&SB). Of the loon species, only **Common Loon** was reported, at SRWF 12/9 (JM) and possibly the same individual at FH 12/15 (ME, P&DW).

Golden Eagles were spotted in two locations - one near Halifax 1/21 (S&SB) and one in Klingerstown 1/30 (IG). **Northern Harriers** was seen north of Millersburg 2/21 (S&SB) and at HIBA 1/15 (P&DW). A high number, 13 **Bald Eagles** were reported during the Curtin CBC 12/27 (S&SB) and a good total of 12 during the Harrisburg CBC 12/15 (DHo). **Red-shouldered Hawks** were observed more frequently this winter - a pair was at WL all winter (m.ob.) and a single at SGL246 on 1/15 (P&DW). **Rough-legged Hawks** were spotted at FIG 1/28 (DM, JD, SW), on 2/14 at PMR (S&SB), and 2/20 in Grantville (AY).

Seen infrequently in *Dauphin*, a **Red-headed Woodpecker** was spotted in the area north of Halifax 1/14 (S&SB). A **Merlin** was identified in the Hershey area 12/22 and 12/24 (AL) and one in the Linglestown area 12/19 and 1/17 (PL). The **Peregrine Falcons** on the CFB have been sighted throughout Jan and Feb, being photographed together at SGL290HI on 2/16 (S&SB) and one on CFB 1/27 (TW). Peregrine Falcons in Hershey at the OHF have been seen regularly during Jan and Feb and one at the RCOB was reported 2/7 (RS) with nesting rituals soon to begin.

Eastern Phoebes were spotted in Halifax on 1/4 (S&SB), at the I-83/I-81 split 1/26 (IG), and in Hummelstown 2/10 and 2/16 (AM). **Common Raven** is being seen further south of Blue Mountain in *Dauphin* with sightings in the city of Harrisburg 12/15 (AMcG), 1/15 (EC), and 1/17 (RS). Further east, one was in Hummelstown 1/1 (HW) and 2/10 and 2/16 (AM). A **Hermit Thrush** was seen at WL along the Towpath Trail 12/24 (JS) and also 2/13 (NY), and at the HSH 12/6 (TA). A **Gray Catbird** was observed along the Towpath Trail at WL through the season (m.ob.).

Two **Evening Grosbeaks** made their appearance in *Dauphin* at feeders in Halifax 12/4 & 12/15 (S&SB). Twenty **Pine Siskins** were photographed on the BMP 1/19 (MB). An Amish farm between Berrysburg and Gratz hosted *Dauphin's* first **Harris's Sparrow** during Feb (CZ). The flock visiting the farm's feeding station also included **Lincoln's Sparrow**, **White-throated Sparrow**, and **White-crowned Sparrows**.

Observers: **Sandy Lockerman, 3830 Lexington Street, Harrisburg, PA 17109, (717) 329-8040, sandylockerman@yahoo.com**, Tony Arnold, Scott & Stephanie Bills, Mary Brenner, Timothy Bruner, Ed Chubb, Jarrod Derr, Mike Epler, Ian Gardner, Daniel Hinnebusch, Deuane Hoffman (DHo), Alex Lamoreaux, Peter Lusardi, Annette Mathes, Andy McGann (AMcG), Dave McNaughton, Joshua Moritz, Ted Nichols II, Steve Schmit, Rosemary Spreha, Steve Walthius, Howard West, Pat & Dick Williams, Tiffany Willow, Angie Yingst, Nelson Yoder, Chester Zook.

Delaware County

Locations: Barrett's Meadow (BM), Bethel Springs Elementary School (BSES), Brinton Lake (BL), 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), Marcus Hook (MH), Newtown Meadow Preserve (NMP), Philadelphia Airport (PHL), Bridle Trail (BT) at Ridley Creek State Park (RCSP), Ridley Township Marina (RTM), St. Peter and Paul Cemetery (P&P), Springton Reservoir (SR), Tyler Arboretum (TY).

It was not a snowy winter. December produced small rain events on 12/2, 12/15, 12/21, and 12/28 accounting for about 4.6" of water. It snowed January 13 and 18 with accumulations over a half-inch, but monthly totals were under 4". February had only three snow events greater than a half-inch and totaled 3-6" depending on location. Temperatures averaged near normal to slightly above for all three months.

The 99th annual Glenolden CBC was held 12/15 with 69 field

observers and 8 feeder-watchers. Although rain hampered the count, 87 species were reported, which is just slightly below the 10-year count average of 88.5 (DE). An **American Bittern** at JHNWR was the most unusual bird found. The most notable miss was **American Tree Sparrow**, previously reported on every count since the 1930's.

Snow Geese were on the move 12/19 with 800-900 reported over TY (AG, CL, SBN). Other flocks were noted over Haverford 1/15, 1/31, and 2/9 (all LH), and HC 2/1 (Karl Johnson). There was a **Cackling Goose** at SR 1/31 (RG) and one at Liseter 2/17 (AG) observed that day and the next (m.ob.) and again 2/28 (KG). **Tundra Swan** reports were occasional at river locations including 26 at CB 12/8 (AB, DB) and at GP and MH on multiple dates with a high count at MH of nearly 60 on 1/19 (m.ob.).

It was a good season for ducks with frequent encounters of 19 species. The one that made the local news was a drake **Mandarin** that showed up at Ridley Lake and was observed for a couple of days until 1/19 (m.ob.). Obviously a showstopper, it garnered some media attention. The best dabbling duck locations were BL and JHNWR where **Gadwall**, **American Wigeon**, and **Green-winged Teal** were often reported (m.ob.). Seventy **Northern Pintails** at JHNWR 2/7 (RF) was a high count. The first report of **Canvasback** was from RTM 1/31 (AG, RF). Beginning 2/5 for about a week, **Canvasbacks** were observed daily on the DR at FM in higher than normal numbers, peaking at near 50 on 2/8 and 2/9 (m.ob.). **Greater Scaup**, reported 12/5, 12/6, and 12/17 from the DR at FM (RF), returned to this location during Feb on multiple dates (m.ob.) with high counts of 12 on 2/5 (RF) and likely the same birds (11) at RTM 2/9 (AG). Among this group of scaup was a single **Lesser Scaup** noted those same two days. Lesser Scaup also used the pond at DCCC and Liseter throughout Feb where they were often in the company of **Ring-necked Ducks** (m.ob.).

A **Long-tailed Duck** was reported on the DR at FM 12/13 (AG), at CB 12/19 (RF), and at RTM 1/31 (RF). **Common Goldeneyes** did not choose CCR this year, but one was at SR 12/14 (WS), one at JHNWR 12/1 and 12/8 (JMc), 2/5 (RZ), and 2/7 (RF), and one on the DR at FM 2/6 (RF). A **Red-breasted Merganser** was at RTM 2/3 (AB, DB) and the DR at FM 2/5 (RF). There were 7 *Delaware* reports of **Ruddy Duck** (m.ob.). The only **Pied-billed Grebe** report came from SR 12/14 (WS). **Horned Grebe** was noted on the DR at FM 1/23 (AG), and at RTM (AB, DB) and JHNWR 2/3 (Dorothy Bedford).

Tinicum's **Black-headed Gull** strayed into *Delaware* territory at least a few times during its seasonal visit. It was reported from JHNWR 12/4 (AG), 12/24 (NH) and 1/9 (JH). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was at RTM 1/3 (AG). The only **Common Loon** report came from the DR at FM 2/8 (AB). **Great Cormorant** was reported on 4 dates from the CBB: 12/10, 1/8 and 1/19 (all RF), and 1/20 (BB).

A **Northern Harrier** was hunting along an I-95 on ramp in Ridley Park 1/21 (SR). Other harriers were reported on 4 dates from JHNWR and 12 dates from DR at FM (m.ob.) where a maximum of 3 individuals, including a grey ghost, were seen 2/10 (DB). **Bald Eagles** are now so commonly seen from locations across the county that the eBird map for this species is densely packed: a nice visual of success. A **Rough-legged Hawk** was noted hanging out near the fire-training center at PHL approximately 2/18-25, as reported to the *Philadelphia* compiler by the wildlife biologist there. This location is in *Delaware*.

Eastern Screech-Owl reports were up from usual, noted at 10 different locations (m.ob.). **Great Horned Owls** were reported at 7 locations. A resting **Barred Owl** was nicely photographed in Newtown Square 2/20 (AL). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** at the BT 12/3 (AG) was a reminder of the fall incursion. Falcons generated more reports than usual, with the surprise being that **American Kestrel** outpaced **Merlin** (14 reports to 12 reports) and **Peregrine Falcon** (8 reports).

An **Eastern Phoebe** was found at P&P 2/9 (SJ) and one at JHNWR 2/13 (AG). Two **Horned Larks** were found 12/8 at NMP (SJ, KJ), and 2 were foraging in fields along Cheney Rd in Glen Mills 12/18 (RF). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** that arrived in the fall continued at a few scattered locations with a high of 25 reported from TY 12/19 (AG) where they were feeding in the Virginia Pines. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were observed at RCSP 12/3 (CS) and JHNWR (5 dates, m.ob.). One visited a suet feeder in North Wayne through 12/8 (JR Paolantonio), and one was at GP 2/27

(LH).

There were at least 16 different reports of **Hermit Thrush**, 8 of **Gray Catbird**, and 9 of **Cedar Waxwing** (m.ob.). The much-anticipated **Evening Grosbeak** invasion did not materialize. A single bird was reported from DT 12/9 (AG) and 2 from NMP (RF) the same day. **Purple Finches** were reported from less than a half-dozen locations, but 2 of those were notable for their consistency. NMP held multiple birds 12/9-26 with a high of a dozen on the CBC 12/15 (m.ob.). In Feb, large groups were seen at BM with 22 females 2/10 (AG) feeding on crabapples, 42 on 2/14 (RF) feeding on plane tree seeds, and an estimated 25 on 2/22 (LH). **Pine Siskins** were scattered, scarce, and reported mainly in Dec. Four visited a Bryn Mawr yard 12/5 (LN) and one a Glen Mills' yard 12/9 (BH). One was reported 12/18 from NMP (LH), a half-dozen flew over JHNWR 12/25 (DS), and one visited a Haverford yard 2/2 (LH).

Ten **Chipping Sparrows** were along Harvey Run in Chadds Ford 12/7 (RF) where one remained as of 1/15 (RF). One was at TY 12/5 (SBN, CL), one at the DT 12/12 (NK), and 2 at P&P 12/15 (SJ, KJ). Other than JHNWR where they were reported on 6 dates (m.ob.), **American Tree Sparrow** was only reported from TY 12/5 (SBN, CL), and NMP 12/18 (LH) and 2/16 (JC). During this winter period, **Fox Sparrows** were reported at least 20 times, with most reports from the DT, RCSP, and the JHNWR stronghold. A **White-crowned Sparrow** was found in Aston on the CBC 12/15 and an adult was at EA 1/11 (WS). An adult at JHNWR 12/14 (JMc) was also reported there on the CBC 12/15 (RM). **Eastern Towhee** reports were fairly numerous with about 15 different sightings. **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported from JHNWR 12/23 (Wms) and 12/25 (DS, HB) and from near PHL on the CBC 12/15 and 1/23 (RF).

Winter warbler reports consisted of a **Black-and-White Warbler** that showed up in a Bryn Mawr yard 12/5 (LN), a **Common Yellowthroat** at TY 12/26 (AG, SBN, CL), a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** that continuing visiting a Springfield feeder through at least 1/21 (John Zygmunt), a **Palm Warbler** in Aston 1/5 (AG), and **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at the Brandywine Battlefield 12/27 (GT) and one in a Rose Valley residential area 1/4 and 1/22 (KB).

Observers: **Sheryl Johnson, 453 Duck Pond Lane, Haverford, PA 19041, (610) 649-4621, sbjohnso@haverford.edu**, Karen Beeman, Debbie Beer, Adrian Binns, Sarah Boucas-Neto, Sara Busch, Helen Butts, Brian Byrnes, John Custer, David Eberly, Rob Fergus, Ross Gallardy, Kate Garchinsky, Al Guarente, Liam Hart, Neil Heinekamp, Bryan Henson, Jason Horn, Kristen Johnson, Sheryl Johnson, Noel Kelly, Andrew Larson, Christopher Lawler, Jim McConnell, Robert Megraw, Lathrop Nelson, Damon Orsetti, Brian Quindlen, Scott Reynolds, Win Shafer, Daniel Sloan, Cindy Steven, Gerald Teig, Patricia and Richard Williams, Rich Ziegler.

Elk County – no compiler

Erie County

Snow fall was closer to normal this winter, but periods of extremely cold weather arriving in mid-January put ice on Presque Isle Bay, and Lake Erie shortly thereafter. Very late passerines were noted well into the winter, especially **Eastern Phoebes**, when several were reported through Dec and into early Jan. It was not a winter of northern finches or **Snowy Owls**, with no more than 6 of the latter reported. A flock of **Common Redpolls** were around until mid-Jan. Despite the reports of Evening Grosbeaks in late fall, none were found during the winter season.

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

The single **Greater White-fronted Goose** spotted along Edinboro Lake 12/16, was a good find (JH). Two **Snow Geese** were with **Tundra Swans** at SGL #109 on 2/27 (RS). Five **Cackling Geese** were present along Edinboro Lake 12/5-8 (JH). Up to 5 **Cackling Geese** were at the Fairview Business Park 12/27-1/7 (MD, et al.) and one was at Edinboro Lake 12/27 (DS). They have become expected visitors in the region within the last few years. A **Wood Duck** was seen for a single day at PISP 1/17 (MW). A high count of 1450 **Long-tailed Ducks** was recorded off Sunset Point during the waterbird count 12/4 (JM). A high

total of 56 **Red-throated Loons** flew past the mouth of Walnut Creek access during the waterbird count 12/6 (JM). Single **Red-necked Grebes** were around PISP 12/4-1/2 (JM).

A **Rough-legged Hawk** was observed over a field near the Lake View Landfill 2/2 (JM) and an early migrant was seen over Erie 2/15 (JM). Nine or 10 **Iceland Gulls** were around PISP, or the Lake View Landfill from 12/19 through the period (SS, J.M.). Four or 5 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were around PISP from 12/15 through the period (JM). A total of 7 or 8 **Glaucus Gulls** were recorded through the period (ST, JM). Annual, but still quite rare, was a **Herring Gull X Glaucus Gull** that flew past Sunset Point during the waterbird count 12/8 (JM).

Five or 6 **Snowy Owls** were reported from PISP and various sites in the county to 1/15 (m.ob.). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was in the pines at PISP 12/2 and another 1/6-29 (RD). The **Short-eared Owl** being chased by 2 **Peregrine Falcons** 2/24 was quite unusual at Gull Point (RD). The **Rufous/Allen's hummingbird** reported visiting a feeder in Harborcreek during the fall season continued to at least 12/1 (SB, fide KA).

Quite unusual were numerous reports of **Eastern Phoebes** from PISP and areas mostly along the Lake Erie shore (m.ob.). At least 5 different phoebes were reported through Dec with one lingering to at least 1/10 (SW). A total of 6 **Northern Shrikes** were reported from PISP and various sites in the county through the period (m.ob.). The shrike at the Fairview Business Park is likely the same individual that has been there for the last several years. One or 2 **Common Ravens** were seen near Edinboro periodically during the first half of Dec (JH). On one day they were seen feeding on a roadkill (JH).

The **House Wren** at Gull Point 12/18 was the first winter record for the county (SS). **Gray Catbirds** were reported on PISP through Dec with one still present in Edinboro 1/2 (JH). A **Brown Thrasher** made a rare winter visit at PISP 1/17 (MW). Totally unexpected was a **Nashville Warbler** photographed near the Coast Guard station 12/23 for the first winter record for the county (JW). The **Chipping Sparrow** in Erie through Feb was one of the few late winter records of this sparrow in *Erie* (NA). A **Savannah Sparrow** was with a flock of **American Tree Sparrows** in North East for a rare late winter record 1/21 (MP). Up to 58 **Common Redpolls** were in the birches at the east end of PISP 12/10-1/14 (DS et al.) and a flock of 24 was at the Fairview Business Park 12/12 (JT). A few **Pine Siskins** were reported at feeding stations throughout the county, but the 125 counted at a feeder in Edinboro through Jan and Feb represented a very high winter count (AS, fide JH).

Observers: **Jerry McWilliams, 3508 Allegheny Rd., Erie, Pa. 16508-2129, jerrymcw@aol.com.**, Katie Andersen, Nancy Andersen, Sharon Brandt, Michael David, Roger Donn, Jamie Hill, Mike Plyler, Steve Schmit, Robert Scribner, Annette Smith, Don Snyder, Joao Taveres, Shannon Thompson, Justin Welch, Michael Williams, Suzanne Winterberger.

Fayette County

Up to 3 **Mute Swans** were at Nemaocolin Woodlands Lake all season (DB, et al.); apparently resident and ornamental birds at this mountain resort. Twelve **Tundra Swans** were photographed flying over Confluence 2/17 (DB). There was a good assortment of ducks this season with most reports from the Youghiogheny River and the lake at Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort near Farmington.

Five **Gadwalls** were at Greenlick Run Lake 1/19 (MJ). Out of season, a **Northern Pintail** was found just south of Farmington 1/1 (DB) and 9 were at Greenlick Run Lake 2/23 (MJ, KB). Fifteen **Canvasbacks** and 8 **Redheads** were at Nemaocolin Woodlands 2/16 (DB). Two **Lesser Scaup** were in Confluence 2/17 (DB) and one was at Greenlick Run Lake 2/23 (MJ, KB). Five **Buffleheads** were at Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort 12/23 (DB), 3 were at Heritage Scout Reservation 1/6 (DB), 2 were near Connellsville 2/3 (KB), and 15 were on the Youghiogheny River at Confluence 2/17 (DB). Ten **Common Goldeneyes** were near Connellsville 2/3 (KB) and one was at Greenlick Run Lake 2/23 (MJ, KB). Twenty **Hooded Mergansers** were at Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort 1/20 (DB) and 2 at Deer Lake in Chalkhill 12/30 (MJ). **Common Merganser**

reports include 9 at Ohio State Park 1/5 (John Flannigan, Michele Mannella), 17 on the Youghiogheny River at Confluence 1/10 (RT), and 13 at Greenlick Run Lake 2/23 (MJ, KB). Four **Red-breasted Mergansers** were at Greenlick Run Lake 2/24 (KB). A **Ruddy Duck** was at Nemaquin Woodlands 2/23 (DB, MD).

Two **Ruffed Grouse** at Hidden Lakes 2/3 provided the lone report (DB). A small flock of 50 **Herring Gulls** stopped at Greenlick Run Lake 2/23 (MJ, KB). Gulls are usually brief visitors to the lake during migration, quickly moving on. A **Northern Harrier** was a nice find at Greenlick Run Lake 2/23 (MJ, KB). There are agricultural fields around the lake that provide habitat for this species, however I can't remember a report from this location. A red morph **Eastern Screech-Owl** was found near Broad Ford 2/1 (KB). Another red morph was reported in Connellsville 2/23 (KB, MJ). They are a resident in the county but rarely reported. A **Merlin** was a nice find for the county near Mount Pleasant 1/9 (MS, GS). Merlins are rarely reported here; however, it's likely due to lack of coverage.

Up to 2 **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were seen and photographed during the season at Nemaquin Woodlands Resort (DB). Two early **Red-winged Blackbirds** were at Greenlick Run Lake 2/23 (MJ, KB). Four **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were found along the bike trail outside of Connellsville 1/2 (KB). One was seen just to the north near Broad Ford 2/1 (KB).

Observers: **Mike Fialkovich**, mpfial@verizon.net, David Bureson, Kerry Bell, Matthew Domer, John Flannigan, Matthew Juskowich, Michele Mannella, Georgia Shalek, Mike Smith, Ryan Tomazin.

Forest County – no compiler

Franklin County

Locations: Antrim Commons Ponds (ACP), Bender's Farm (BEFA), Conococheague Audubon Society CBC (CASCBC), Greencastle Reservoir (GRRE), Kriner Road Ponds (KRP), Mountain Lake Fannettsburg MLF).

The winter reporting period, unlike last winter, had much to offer here in *Franklin* for waterfowl. A newly reported site, Antrim Commons and its retention ponds, which held some good shorebirds last fall, became a haven for winter waterfowl. Other sites regularly monitored contributed as well. Waterfowl were well represented in both species and numbers.

Single **Cackling Geese** were reported at a Mountain Road pond near Roxbury 12/8 (BO), with multiple reports 1/11 (CG), 1/14 (CG), 1/18 (CG), and 1/29 (BKtz) at KRP, and another report at Falling Spring East Branch behind NAPA Auto 1/30 (BO). Five **Greater White-fronted Geese** were discovered at ACP 2/3 (JD, SD, BO, CG) and remained into the next morning (BKtz). Two **Mute Swans** of unknown origin (not planted by the property owner) showed up 12/26 at a pond at the north end of Findlay Road between Upton and Mercersburg and remained through the end of the reporting period (BO, CG). A **Tundra Swan** was found at Mountain Road pond near Roxbury 12/8 (BO), and 2 were at BEFA 1/12 (BO).

The high count of **American Wigeon** was 34 at ACP 2/16 (CG), and of **Northern Pintail** 44 at ACP 2/26 (CG). A late staying **Blue-winged Teal** was at ACP 12/1-2 (JD, SD, GA). **Canvasback** reports were numerous beginning with 2 on 12/16 at MLF (BO), up to 4 during 1/28-2/16 at KRP (CG, BKtz, m.ob.), 2 at Mill Race Fayetteville 2/27 (DD), and up to 29 during 2/3-28 at ACP (CG, m.ob.). **Redhead** reports were also numerous with one at a Campbell's Run Road pond 2/2 (BO), 2 at GRRE 2/28 (GA), 4-6 at KRP 2/2-28 (BO, m.ob.), and up to 31 at ACP 2/3-28 (CG, JD, m.ob.). Both **Lesser Scaup** and **Greater Scaup** were reported from various spots including MLF 2/9 (BO, LN), ACP 2/10-28 (CG, m.ob.), and KRP 2/13-28 (GA, m.ob.). A high count of Greater Scaup at ACP was 8 (CG). **Common Goldeneye** reports, not at all common here, included a male at Letterkenny Reservoir 12/9 (BO), a long staying female 12/30-2/24 at ACP (GA, CG, m.ob.), and a male at KRP 2/3-7 (BO, BKtz, m.ob.). A **Ruddy Duck** made a long winter stay at GRRE 12/9-1/15 (GA, CG, m.ob.).

A **Ruffed Grouse** was observed crossing a road in Bear Valley 2/9 (BKtz). **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were reported from locations in the southern part of the county including Clay Hill (GA), Marion (BO), Zarger Road (BKtz), and Route 16 from Grindstone Hill Road to Shady Grove (GA, BO, CG). A **Sandhill Crane** was found feeding in a cut corn field along McDowell Road near Wayncastle 12/4-5 (BC, MC, DG, CG, BO, BKtz). The first report of **American Woodcock** was of a flushed bird at Antietam Meadow Park 2/16 (GA). The first report of **Wilson's Snipe** was of 2 birds 2/3 at KRP (GA).

A **Golden Eagle** flushed from its perch along Licking Creek in Little Cove during a Winter Raptor Survey 2/3 (BO, KH). A **Northern Goshawk** was observed flying and perching at a clearing during a hike in a mountain valley near Timmons Mountain 12/30 (BO), and one was reported near Doylesburg in Path Valley 2/11 (MW). A **Rough-legged Hawk** was observed in flight along Mowersville Road 1/9 (BKtz). A **Barn Owl** was found in the Edenville area 2/2 (BO). Up to 3 **Short-eared Owls** were found hunting fields along Mowersville Road 1/17 (SK) and 1/23-2/14 (BKtz, BO, m.ob.). There were a number of reports of **Merlin** during the period in various locations 12/15, 12/31, 1/6, 1/10, 1/11, 1/19, 2/5, 2/16, and 2/20 (JD, SD, GA, BO, BKtz, LN, CG, DG). **Peregrine Falcon** sightings from downtown Chambersburg were continuous through the entire period (NM, VB, BO, m.ob.), and there were numerous other reports in the greater area around Chambersburg (BO, BKtz, DB, SB, KK).

An **Eastern Phoebe** was found at Falling Spring Greenway 12/14 (DC). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were found regularly throughout the period. A **Gray Catbird** was found along the Falling Spring in Chambersburg 12/1 (BO, DB, SB) and at Heisey Road 1/1 (BO). A **Brown Thrasher** was on the ground around feeders at a home along West Creek Road 2/3 and 2/20 (BKtz). Hopes for frequent **Evening Grosbeak** sightings faded away as the winter moved along with the only known sightings being a male at CSP feeders 12/8 (CM) and 14 at Stillhouse Hollow Road 12/22 (BKnr). Small numbers of **Purple Finches** and frequent reports of **Pine Siskins**, sometimes in big numbers, occurred throughout the period.

Chipping Sparrows were found during CASCBC 12/15 (VG, BO) and at Antietam Meadows Park 1/5 (GA). **Fox Sparrows** were reported from 2 locations during CASCBC 12/15 (VG, BO), and from a cabin near Caledonia 12/17-2/28 (DP, HS). **Eastern Towhee** were found during CASCBC 12/15 (VG, BO), at Bear Valley Road 1/22 (FL), and Wilson College 2/24 (BO). Three **Rusty Blackbirds** were at Burkholder Road 2/16 (DG). A **Palm Warbler** was found at ACP 12/2 (BKtz), and 5 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** during CASCBC 12/15 (VG, BO). A well described female **Dickcissel** was reported from Montgomery Twp. in southeastern *Franklin* 1/15 (SK).

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Fulton County

Locations: Haines-Seville wetland (HS), Needmore (ND), Warfordsburg (WAR), Wells Tannery (WT).

Fulton needs a compiler – contact the editor if interested.

Perhaps early migrants, although flying southeast, 31 **Tundra Swans** were over the WAR area 2/4 (PK). Six Winter Raptor Surveys were conducted (4 on former CREP routes), totaling over 9 hours of effort, with the following tallied: **Turkey Vulture** 3, **North Harrier** 2, **Bald Eagle** 3, **Cooper's Hawk** 2, **Red-shouldered Hawk** 2, **Red-tailed Hawk** 29, **Rough-legged Hawk** 2, **American Kestrel** 13. The Rough-legs were on Black's Mt. Rd. 1/29 and near ND 2/9. (GG, DG, PK).

Winter finch reports were few. Ten **Pine Siskins** were near WT 2/17 (Florence Pyle) and 3 **Purple Finches** at ND 12/24-25 (AE). **American**

Tree Sparrow reports were limited to 2 birds on North Hess Rd. and 6 near WT, both 1/29 (GG, DG). One **White-crowned Sparrow** was on Wooden Bridge Rd and 2 at WT 1/29 (GG, DG). A **Swamp Sparrow** was at HS 12/8 (Elaine Hendricks).

Correction to summer 2018 Fulton report: Swamp Sparrow has been reported only twice during summer, not year-round as stated in that report.

Observers: **Greg Grove**, gwg2@psu.edu, Amy Evans, Deb Grove, Phil Keener.

Greene County

Locations: Claylick (CL), East View (EV), Last Chance Ranch (LCR), Sycamore (SY), Washington Twp. (WT).

Snow Goose was observed in WT 2/17 (AP). Among ducks, **American Wigeon** was sighted in Morgan Twp. 2/14 (JK), **Hooded Merganser** in WT 2/17 (AP), and **Common Merganser** along the creek at EV 1/19 (MH). **Wild Turkey** (52 in all) was found at SGL 223 on 2/16 (CH). **Killdeer** was in Franklin Twp. 2/27 (KK) and **Ring-billed Gull** in WT 2/17 (AP). A **Great Blue Heron** was sighted at CL 1/1 (LA).

Among diurnal raptors, **Turkey Vulture** was at LCR 2/21 (MLP), **Bald Eagle** in Cumberland Twp. 2/13 (BK, DK), and **Red-shouldered Hawk** in Aleppo Twp. 12/29 (MH, RA, LA). Owls included **Barred Owl** heard in Morgan Twp. 2/14 (JK), **Great-horned Owl** seen at CL 1/24 (RA, LA) and **Northern Saw-whet Owl** seen in Cumberland Twp. 2/11 (BK). **Belted Kingfishers** were at LCR 12/7 (MLP) and CL 1/12 (LA). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was found in Richhill Twp. 12/29 (LH).

Eastern Phoebe was observed at LCR 12/26 (MLP), **Red-breasted Nuthatch** in Jackson Twp. 2/9 (AC), and **Brown Creeper** at EV 12/15 (MH). **Golden-crowned Kinglet** was reported in Morgan Twp. 2/14 (JK). **Hermit Thrush** was in Monongahela Twp. 1/2 (SM). **Purple Finch** was found in Morgan Twp. 12/22 (KB). **American Tree Sparrow** was in SY 1/21 (JC) and **Fox Sparrow** at Bell Farm in Morgan Twp. 1/22 (LB). **White-crowned Sparrow** was reported at SY 12/10 (JC) and **Eastern Towhee** in WT 2/15 (AP). **Red-winged Blackbird**, **Rusty Blackbird**, and **Common Grackle** were present at EV off and on throughout the period (MH).

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Huntingdon County

Locations: Aitch Access at Raystown Lake (AA), Brumbaugh's Access at Raystown Lake (BA), Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Ennisville (ENN), Enriken Overlook (ENT), Greenwood Furnace SP (GF), Huntingdon (HU), Juniata River (JR), Marklesburg waterfowl area-SGL 420 (MAR), Old Crow wetland (OC), Peace Chapel/Juniata College campus (PCJC), Raystown Branch of JR (RBJR), Raystown Lake (RL), Seven Points Rec Area at Raystown Lake (SP), SGL 322 at Petersburg Pike (SGL322), Shaver's Creek Environmental Center (SCEC), Stone Creek Ridge (SCR), Stone Mt. hawk watch (SMHW), Stone Valley (SV), Tussey Mt. Hawk Watch (TMHW).

Prevailing weather seemed to divide the season into two parts – a relatively warm first half, with almost no snow, followed by a rather harsh second half. December was 3F above average; January and February were both within one degree of average, but with some extreme cold, especially in late Jan. On four days, the low temperature at Huntingdon was below zero, with a low of -6F on 1/30. On New Year's Day, the thermometer hit 58F. Dec saw an excess of rain but no snow; official

snow totals in Jan and Feb were 10" and 11", respectively.

Two CBCs fall mostly within *Huntingdon*. The Huntingdon CBC, compiled by Deb Grove, was conducted 12/16. The species count was 69, above the average of 65. Highlights included record highs of **Bald Eagle** (10), **Common Raven** (30), **Carolina Wren** (100), and **White-throated Sparrow** (446), and the first **Evening Grosbeak** since 1999. The Lake Raystown CBC, compiled by Jon Kauffman, was conducted 12/28. The species count of 59 was well below the long term average of 66. Records high counts were **Mourning Dove** (289) and **Brown Creeper** (19).

Waterfowl reports were average or below. A **Cackling Goose**, presumably the same bird in all cases, was recorded at OC and a nearby retention pond 12/8 (LF, DO, AG), 12/24 (LF), and 1/9 (TK, DK). **Mallards** and **American Black Ducks** were scarce, as seems the case statewide (see CBC report in this issue). The most notable event was a modest influx of **Redheads** in Feb, accompanied by smaller numbers of **Canvasbacks** (m.ob.). Unusual in mid-winter and uncommon anytime, a **Surf Scoter** was photographed on RBJR 2/3 (DO, LF). **Common Goldeneye** was fairly well reported, with a max of 11 on RBJR 2/7 (AP). The most abundant winter duck here is **Common Merganser**. Beginning 2/8 and through the end of the season, many counts of 150-250 were made on RL (AP, LF, AG, DO, Annemarie Sciarra). Two early **Red-breasted Mergansers** were at ENT 2/23 and 2/28 (LF, DO).

Huntingdon Winter Raptor Surveys recorded 11 **Bald Eagles**, 6 **Red-shouldered Hawk**, 117 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 5 **Rough-legged Hawks**, 26 **American Kestrels**, and one **Merlin**. **Ruffed Grouse** remain scarce; there were 7 widely scattered reports, all of just single birds (m.ob.). A few **Pied-billed Grebes** usually winter on open water at the docks at SP; the high count was 7 on 1/25 (TK, DK, m.ob.). Reports of the 3 regular owls were fairly routine – with 6 of **Eastern Screech Owl**, 10 of **Great Horned Owl**, and 7 of **Barred Owl**. A **Long-eared Owl** was found at MAR, a location from which there are no previous eBird reports (DO, AG, LF).

Two **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were at SGL322 on 12/23 (DG, GG) and one there 2/17 (AG, DO, LF). Single Red-heads were at Mooresville 12/16 (JK, AP), Alexandria 2/15 (Mark Potter), and in HU 1/28, 1/30, and 2/22 (CM, Greg Wilver, Don Wilver). **American Kestrels** have become a species of interest because of reported declines. For that reason, and because they are easily seen perched conspicuously on utility lines along roads, many eBird reports are made – over 50 for this season in *Huntingdon*. There were 7 reports of **Merlin**, widely scattered around the county and through the season. A **Peregrine Falcon** was seen in HU 1/24 (LF) and one at TMHW 2/26 (NB).

Eastern Phoebe was reported from RBJR 1/17 (LF) and 1/21 (KT); perhaps the same bird. There are only 2 previous eBird reports for Jan in *Huntingdon*. A swallow, not firmly identified to species, was seen coursing over the JR near the HU water treatment facility during the HU CBC 12/16 (DK, TK). As elsewhere, **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were widely reported; this species nests sparsely in the county. Single **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were in HU 12/16 and 1/8-9 (LF), and at GFSP 12/7 and 1/4 (RD). **Hermit Thrush** reports numbered about 20, mostly from SV and MAR. A **Gray Catbird** was found during the HU CBC 12/16, near Mill Creek (GG).

Twelve **Evening Grosbeaks** were photographed at GFSP 12/6 (Carrington Stephenson) and on the same date 4 were photographed at Pennsylvania Furnace (Alison Cook). Ten **Common Redpolls** were photographed at SMHW 12/8 (NB), 3 were at SCEC 12/11 (LF, DO), and one in HU 12/26 (LF, ph.). Small flocks of **Pine Siskins** were at feeders at SCEC, SCR, and HU (m.ob.) - the only flock numbering more than 12 was one of 40 at SCEC 12/13 (Andrew Penn).

Chipping Sparrow reports were more than usual, following a possible trend statewide. Two were at PCJC 16 (LF), 2 at Mooresville 12/16 (JK, AP), one at OC 12/24 (LF), and one at Warrior's Mark 1/26 (NW). There were more than 30 reports of **American Tree Sparrow**, but only in low numbers, generally single digit counts, continuing a downward trend in winter numbers. The only **Fox Sparrow** was at ENN 2/17, presumably an early migrant (DW). **Swamp Sparrows** are regular but uncommon winter residents; there were at least 11 reports, from 9 locations, with a high of 4 at BA 12/28 (DW). The only **Eastern Towhee**

report was of 2 at PCJC 12/16 (LF). Sparse in winter **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were more so than usual – the only reports being of 2 at RBJR 12/28 (DG, DM) and one at AA 1/4 (TK, DK).

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Indiana County

Abbreviations: Barclay Road Pond (BRP), Elders Ridge (ER), Two Lick Reservoir, Yellow Creek State Park (YC).

Last **Tundra Swans** at YC were 8 on 12/9 (JaP, JP) with 2 remaining through 12/11 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK); a nocturnal flock passed overhead near SH 1/31 (MH, RH). With only 10 previous Feb. reports since 1990, it is interesting that **Wood Ducks** have been noted in Feb the past 4 years with most reports at YC. The only ones reported in 2019 were 2 near ER 2/9 (TB, MH, RH) and one at Blue Spruce 2/16 (HB). First **Gadwalls** noted were 2 near ER 1/27 (MH, RH). Twenty **American Wigeons** near Tunnelton 2/17 (NM) were first returnees. The ER area also yielded the first 3 **American Black Ducks** 2/29 (TB, MH, RH). A female **Northern Pintail** lingered at YC 1/2 (LG) and another turned up near ER 1/27 (MH, RH); 2 appeared near Tunnelton 2/17 (NM).

Three **Canvasbacks** and a **Redhead** lingered at YC through 1/6 (RHa, SM, LN); a farm pond near CD yielded another Redhead 2/9 (TB, MH, RH). The first returning **Ring-necked Ducks** were 2/26 with counts of 7 at YC and 6 at the BRP (MH, RH). First 2 **Lesser Scaup** were found near CD 2/9 (TB, MH, RH) and a flock of 137 arrived at YC 2/26 (MH, RH). Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were a nice find 1/2 (KB, MAK, GK) at YC where 2 **Buffleheads** and a **Common Goldeneye** remained through 1/8 (LC, TG, MH, RH, DK). First returnees were 3 Buffleheads 2/26 (MH, RH) and 2 goldeneyes 2/16 (LC, TG, DK).

Hooded Mergansers were still noted 1/3 (EH, JH) at YC; 2/16 (LC, TG, DK) marked the return of the first 2 there. Elsewhere in the county, one was at the BRP 2/26 (MH, RH) and 2 at Smicksburg 2/27 (NS). Twenty-four **Common Mergansers** were at TL 1/1 (MH, RH); this is the second highest tally on record for TL. A raft of 17 **Red-breasted Mergansers** graced YC Lake 2/26 (MH, RH). Two **Ruddy Ducks** were last spotted at YC 12/30 (TR).

The only **Ruffed Grouse** noted was one at Blue Spruce 2/16 (HB). The season's last **Pied-billed Grebe** and the last 9 **Horned Grebes** were noted, respectively, at YC 1/1 (MH, RH) and 12/4 (MH, RH). A **Herring Gull**, an infrequent visitor to our county, was sighted at YC 1/3 (JH). The only 2 wintering **Killdeer** reported were found on WRS #2 on 1/22 (MH, RH, GL, LM).

Becoming more commonly reported during the colder months, first **Turkey Vultures**, all singletons, were listed on 2/15 near Locust (NSh) and southeast of IN (SD) 2/18 (BK) near Creekside, and 2/19 both at IUP (JT) and southwest of IN (MH, RH). **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were noted at 8 locations and **Cooper's Hawks** at 14. Dark morph **Rough-legged Hawk** sightings included individuals at West Lebanon 1/21 (TB), near Smicksburg 1/22 (MH, RH, GL, LM), and near Homer City 1/25 (ED, MH, RH, GL). YC hosted a rough-leg 1/2 (LG) and again 2/16 (LC, TG, DK).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was noted only at YC 12/29,30 (m.ob.). **Merlins** were seen at YC 12/9 (JaP, JP) and on the IN CBC 12/26 (ED, TS, JT). A late **Eastern Phoebe** lingered at the Waterworks Conservation Area 1/3 on 13 (SD); this is only the second Jan record with the other noted 1/29/2007 (MF) at Conemaugh Dam. **Horned Lark** maxima included 100 near Dayton 1/12 (EL), 80 near CD 1/25 (ED, MH, RH, GL), and 61 at WL 2/11 (SM).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were more widespread than in previous years with all reports of only one or 2 individuals, and most sightings were clustered around IN (m.ob.). A **Winter Wren** at YC 12/27 (MH, RH, AK) and 1/5 (RS, VS) comprised the entire report for this species. **Ruby-**

crowned Kinglets had a winter presence with sightings on the CBC 12/26 (CW, PW), at YC 1/3 (EH, JH), at the Waterworks Conservation Area 1/8, 13 (SD).

The highlight of the season was the CBC find 12/26 (ED, MS, JT) of a **Townsend's Solitaire** at YC on the north shore; this bird was seen by many 12/27-1/11 (JM). The only **Hermit Thrush** was also on the north shore between 12/27 (MD, DY) and 1/3 (EH, JH, FK, AN); it was found again 1/29 and 2/26 (MH, RH).

One to 2 **Pine Siskins** were present at a home near LV 12/1-3 (MC); one stopped at Nolo 12/31, 1/5 (CL, GL); up to 5 were counted at another feeder southeast of IN 1/22-2/28 (SD); during the solitaire's visit one was also listed at YC 12/30 (JV) and 1/3 (JH). Single **Fox Sparrows** stopped at Nolo 12/3 (CL, GL) and visited a feeder near Shelocta irregularly 1/9-2/25 (MH, RH); another was heard singing at YC 2/17 (JaP, JP). The only **Rusty Blackbirds** noted were 8 on WRS #3 on 1/25 (ED, MH, RH, GL).

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Jefferson County

Locations: Big Run Prescottville Road (BP), Cloe Lake (CL), Fordham Lake (FL), Galusha Road (GR), Mahoning Shadow Trail (MS), Old Cumberland Cemetery (OC), Reed Road (RR), Redbank Valley Trail (RB), Ringgold (RG), Sprague Road (SP).

Data from eBird was used to help create the report. Recorded observations for *Jefferson* were low for the period. One highlight was the highest count ever of 210 **Canada Geese** on FL 2/27 (AK, JK). Other waterfowl included observations of 2 **American Wigeons** on the RB 2/8 (AK, JK), one **Ring-necked Duck** on FL 2/27 (AK, JK), and 2 **Common Goldeneyes** also on FL 1/1 (AK, JK). Six **Common Mergansers** recorded on RB 2/7 (AK, JK) proved to be the high for the season.

An observation of 15 **Tukey Vultures** on SP 1/2 (JS) was interesting. **Northern Harriers** were seen on 2 occasions - one in OC 1/4 (AK, JK) and one on RR 1/10 (AK, JK). The resident pair of **Bald Eagles** were seen a number of times during the season in the nest area on the MS. An **Eastern Screech Owl** was in RG 1/16 (AK, JK), and a **Great Horned Owl** was there 1/4 (AK, JK).

Belted Kingfishers were observed twice - one at CL 1/4 (AK, JK), and one on the MS 1/5 (JG, TG). A morbid observation was 7 **Common Ravens** attacking an injured deer on BP 1/20 (DR). Single **Evening Grosbeaks** were seen 12/3 and again 12/4 in RG (AK, JK); and on GR 12/24 (EK). Two **Pine Siskins** were seen 12/3, 12/4, and 12/9 in RG (AK, JK).

Observers: **Thomas Glover**, tomnglover@comcast.net, Jud Glover, Avis Keener, John Keener, Eric Keith, Dan Richards, Josh Sanko.

Juniata County

Locations: Casner's Crossing - Juniata River (CC), Juniata River (JR), Kratzer's Ponds (KP), Licking Creek Valley (LCV), Lost Creek Shoe Shop (LCSS), McAlisterville (MA), Mifflintown (MIF), Mifflintown River Access (MRA), Oakland Mills (OM), Thompsontown (TT).

Fifty **Snow Geese** and 150 **Tundra Swans** were flyovers at MIF 12/8 (CK). A **Redhead** was photographed at MIF 2/11, and 2 there 2/22 (CK). Two Redheads were at Parson's Pond 2/2 and 2/5 (CK, RH). A remarkable sight in *Juniata*, 49 **Sandhill Cranes** flew over Flint Rd. near TT 12/4 (Adam Renno). Up to 4 **Wilson's Snipe** were at the Fogleman

farm near MIF 1/26-28 (CB, CK, TW, David McNaughton).

Three Winter Raptor Surveys totaled 29 **Bald Eagles**, 91 **Red-tailed Hawks**, and 16 **American Kestrels**. **Northern Harriers** were scarce – the only one was near MIF 2/2 (RD). There were only 2 **Rough-legged Hawk** reports, both at MIF, 1/26 and 2/1 (CK AT). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was seen along Flint Rd. 12/15 (CK). Up to 3 **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were at the established location at the Juniata Saddle Club property, seen 12/6 (CS), 1/12 (Jim Dunn, Scott Lewis), and 2/2 (CK). Single **Merlins** were photographed in Fayette Twp. 2/10 (CK, JG) and at OM 2/14 (CS).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported only near MA 1/23 (CK) and 1/29 (Cindy Lucas); and in LCV 5 times, all in Jan (DB). A late-staying **Gray Catbird** was found during the Lewistown CBC 12/15 (GG). Three **Evening Grosbeaks** were photographed in LCV 12/2 and one 2/3 (DB). A single **Common Redpoll** attended a feeder at MIF 1/17-2/12 (CK, CB, Richard and Patricia Williams). Another was seen only 12/8, on Texas Hollow Rd. (Jacob Petersheim). A flock of **Pine Siskins** was present through the season in LCV, reaching high counts of 85 on 2/13 and 78 on 2/19 (DB). Forty siskins were at a MIF feeder 2/2, where a large flock continued all winter (CK). **American Tree Sparrows** were hard to find. Twelve were near OM 1/12 (CK, JG); otherwise there were just 3 scattered reports of only 1-2 birds.

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Lackawanna County

Locations: Chapman Lake (CL)

Frigid temperatures froze *Lackawanna's* water bodies by early Jan, a factor that impacted waterfowl totals. Wintering **American Black Ducks** were recorded throughout the county where open water was available (m.ob.). **Common Goldeneyes** frequented CL from late Nov through 1/9 (m.ob.); the high count was four 12/27 (MM). Also at CL were a drake **Northern Pintail** 12/16, 2 **Redhead** drakes 1/7, and a leucistic **Canada Goose** 1/4 (MM), all of which are uncommon county visitors. **Bufflehead** sightings were scarce with a high count of just 2 at CL 12/2 (MM).

A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was a great find at Lake Scranton 12/23 (TD). Four of the state's 8 owl species were reported with the highlight being a **Snowy Owl** on Marshbrook Rd. 1/20 (MB). Despite the season being irruptive for northern finches, winter sightings here were limited to just 2 records. A **Pine Siskin** was discovered at a feeder along Lehigh Rd. near Gouldsboro 2/9 (RJ) followed by the observation of a second individual along East Mountain Rd. in Scranton 2/17 (NA). **American Tree Sparrow** sightings were higher than expected considering this species decline; the high count was 7 at Lackawanna SP 2/2 (TD). **White-crowned Sparrows** are not believed to be in decline like other sparrow species, but are rarely observed in *Lackawanna* outside of migration season. However, one bird was located in Springbrook 2/15 (AE).

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Lancaster County

Locations: Alcoa Marsh (AM), Beechdale Rd Farm Pond (BRFP), Brenner Quarry (BQ), Chestnut Grove Natural Area (CGNA), Chickie's Rock County Park (CRCP), Conewago Recreation Trail & Wetlands (CRTW), Ephrata Twp Community Park (ETCP), Greenfield Ponds (GP), Groffdale Farm Field (GFF), Lancaster Airport (LA), Lancaster County Central Park (LCCP), Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area (MCWMA),

Muddy Run Reservoir (MRR), Noel Dorwart Park (NDP), Octoraro Reservoir (OR), Prescot Rd (PR), Riverfront Park (RFP), Safe Harbor Dam (SHD), Speedwell Forge County Park (SFCP), Speedwell Forge Lake (SFL), Shenk's Ferry Wildflower Preserve (SFWP), 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), Susquehanna SP (SSP), SGL 52, SGL 156, SGL 220, Susquehanna W.T.P Washington Boro (SWTPWB), Wood's Edge Park (WEP).

Average low and high temperatures were 26/45° F in Dec (26/42° F historical average), 19/40° F in Jan (22/38°F), and 22/41°F in Feb (24/41° F). Any distribution notes (were more abundant, less common, etc.) are compared to that species' 5-year eBird data trend. A total of 138 species were recorded during the period.

Unfortunately, 2 of 3 CBCs held in Lancaster failed to reach 90 species due to poor weather conditions. However, the Lititz CBC was held under beautiful skies and achieved 102 species, which broke the previous high by 4 and corresponded to 1st place state-wide!

Snow Goose built at MCWMA to a peak of 85,000 on 2/25 (*fide* LM). Only one **Ross's Goose** was reported at MCWMA, on 2/18 (BC). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was observed from 12/8 at MCWMA (ME, PF, TN), and a pair was photographed there 12/30 (ME, PF, m.ob.). **Barnacle Goose** reports were high in the region during the period, and one was found 1/26 at GP (RS). It was also seen 1/27-28 at BQ (ME, ZM, RS, EW, m.ob.), and again there 2/17 (BC). **Cackling Goose** reports were average, with a nice high count of 11 at BQ 1/28 (RG). An excellent juv **Trumpeter Swan** at Pilgrim's Oak golf course 12/16 (BH, FH ph.) was a first for the Solanco CBC, but unfortunately disappeared by the next day. The official MCWMA survey reached 3500 **Tundra Swans** 2/25 (*fide* LF).

Exceptional estimates of 3000 **Mallards** and 800 **American Black Ducks** were made at MCWMA 12/8 (ME, TN). It was an excellent winter for **Canvasback**, with a high flock count of 126 birds 2/23 (DH, m.ob.). However, the real story on this species came out of the Conowingo Reservoir at Peach Bottom, where 9 were first noted 1/27 (BS). The flock quickly swelled in size, reaching 515 on 2/17 (ZM, RM, BS)! By the end of the period numbers were back below 100. **Redheads** were uncommon as usual, with the best count being 5 on SRLC 1/22 (ML). Of 8 reports on the Susquehanna R. Jan-Feb, the best count of **Long-tailed Duck** was 4 on 1/6 (LB). **Common Mergansers** staged their traditional wintering congregation at OR, with the highest estimate being 2700 on 2/17 (ZM, RM). Small groups of up to 4 **Red-breasted Mergansers** were recorded around the county (m.ob.).

A **Pied-billed Grebe** was at CGNA 12/1-3 (ME, DH, JH), and another at MRR 12/13 (MG). A pair of **Horned Grebes** was at MCWMA 12/8, and singles on SRLC 1/5 and 1/12 (ME). The first **Red-necked Grebe** appeared 2/28 at MCWMA (BB). At least 2 **Virginia Rails** overwintered at WEP as they have for years (m.ob.). **American Coot** reports in Jan consisted of just one at MCWMA 1/28 (FB). A healthy count of 16 **Killdeer** was observed during the Lititz CBC in a wet field (ZM). **Wilson's Snipe** reports were oddly low, with lone birds at RFP 12/26 and 1/14-16 (BL, FZ). Fields around New Holland held one bird 2/3 (ZM) and 4 on 2/17 (BC). This species was not recorded for any CBC, but hopefully this simply points to a coverage issue rather than one of wintering.

Notable **Bonaparte's Gull** sightings came on SRLC 12/26 (PB, LB) and 1/17 (CR), and 2 birds 1/19 (ME, ML, ZM). **Ring-billed Gulls** were estimated at a high-water mark of 12,000 on SRLC 1/2 (ME). Different first-winter **Iceland Gulls** were noted on SRLC 1/5 (JHe) and 2/7 (ML, ZM), and an immature was seen 1/19 (CB, ME, ML, ZM) and 1/27 (JL). Numerous single adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** reports from SRLC began 12/26 (m.ob.), with a first winter bird 2/15 (BC). Additionally, on CBCs, 2 were observed 12/16 and another 1/5 (m.ob.). A petite **Glaucous Gull** was photographed nicely on SRLC 1/27 (CM). A **Common Loon** was viewed at SHD 12/27 (LB), and a **Double-crested Cormorant** on SRLC 1/2 (ME). A late **Great Egret** wintered at MCWMA until 1/10 (m.ob.) after being recorded on the Lititz CBC.

Golden Eagles were once again seen around MCMWA, with multiple single sightings 12/8-2/2 (JB, ME, RF, TN) and an adult and imm 12/22 (BC). Another imm was recorded at RFP 2/22 (IG, JL). A light juv

Rough-legged Hawk was at MCWMA 2/2-18 (JB, BC, ME, TN, RW, PW). On 12/30, 5 **Long-eared Owls** were found in traditional cedar groves at MCWMA (TN, FB, MC, m.ob.), and a pair roosted in a spruce stand at a Warwick park (BC). Single **Short-eared Owls** were noted at MCWMA 12/19 (JF) and 12/30 (PF, TN), and at CGNA 12/19 (KL) and 1/3 (FZ). Around 10 different **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were found at various locations 12/10-1/15 (LB, BC, TN, PF).

Eastern Phoebe reports were numerous, with 7 individuals in Dec, 4 (2 continuing) in Jan, and 3 (one cont.) in Feb (m.ob.). A **Blue-headed Vireo** feeding on Burning Bush berries was an excellent CBC checkmark at MCWMA 12/30 (ME, CF, TN). It was a big irruption year for **Red-breasted Nuthatch**; in the last 5 years these irrupted previously in 2016-17. A late **House Wren** was noted at CGNA 12/1 (ME). A **Gray Catbird** at NDP (SM, m.ob.) plus 5 more scattered sightings were reported through the entire period (SB, BC, DH, DK, BS). Lone **Brown Thrashers** were near MCWMA 12/30 (MC, JHe), and 2/18 (BC).

Purple Finch reports trailed off after fall, with totals in the mid 40s reported to eBird through the period. Highly exceptional were 3 reports of **Common Redpoll**, including 2 on the Solanco CBC 12/16, one of which was a flyover at OR (AM). Another calling individual passed overhead at SFL 2/4 (BC). An excellent high count of 58 **Pine Siskins** was tallied at Tanglewood Golf Course 12/16 (ZM, m.ob.). Incredibly, despite consistent observer effort, Lapland Longspur was a complete miss this season. Similarly, **Snow Bunting** were very depressed, with only one in a Paradise farm field 1/29 (RF) and 3 at SFL 2/4 (BC). **Chipping Sparrow** showed up each month, with birds at a Gap feeder 12/17 (PF), NDP 1/6 (GA), and a Buck feeder 2/6 (TA).

Late on Christmas day, a massive blackbird flock streaming to the south near Little Britain was closely estimated to number around 10 million birds (DW), which likely sets a state record by a wide margin. **Red-winged Blackbird** and **Common Grackle** estimates were 2 million and 4 million, respectively. Mega blackbird flocks continued in this area for at least a month, estimated in the low millions several times to also include hundreds of thousands of **Brown-headed Cowbirds**. A rash of **Yellow-headed Blackbird** reports occurred 1/27-28 around Little Britain, encompassing a minimum of 4 birds but likely more (JHo, CG, RG, ML, SBu, ZM). A flyover **Rusty Blackbird** was described at Willow Valley 2/17 (WY).

An impressive 8 warbler species were recorded during the period. A first-winter **Black-and-White Warbler** was found on the Lititz CBC in Ephrata 12/30 (FH), and continued to 1/6 (EW, ZM, RM). An **Orange-crowned Warbler** briefly visited an Akron suet feeder 12/31 (BC), and a **Common Yellowthroat** lingered in the reeds at AM 1/5 (DH). Continuing and seen throughout the entire period was the adult male **Cape May Warbler** at a Marietta feeder (ML, m.ob.). A Western subspecies, **Palm Warbler** was discovered during the Lititz CBC 12/30 (BC), and an adult male **Pine Warbler** was observed at LRP 12/17 and 1/9 (FB). At least 20 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** overwintered at SWTPWB, among numerous other reports around the county. (CBe, ML, ZM, m.ob.). But foremost of all, the continuing first county record adult male **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was rediscovered at a new position in NDP 12/21 (SM, m.ob.). It appears that once its kinglets petered out it switched to trailing juncos which opened up its range. This charismatic bird joined the Lancaster CBC 1/5, and was last documented 1/6 (m.ob.). Over its nearly 3-month stay this bird niched a special place into the hearts of many Lancaster birders, who wished it the best of luck as it journeyed off into the unknown.

Observers: **Zach Millen, 101 Bridle Path, New Holland, PA 17557, (717) 723-1279, zjmillen@gmail.com**, Tom Amico, George Armistead, Fern Bauman, Joe Beatrice, Larry Bernhardt, Paul Bernhardt, Chuck Berthoud (CBe), Sabrena Boekell (SBo), Brendan Burke, Sarah Busch (SBu), Bruce Carl, Mary Coomer, Mike Epler, Lauren Ferreri, Pamela Fisher, Cameala Freed, Ross Gallardy, Ian Gardner, Michael Gardner, Carlton Groff, Barb Haas, Frank Haas, Fred Habegger, Dennis Harnly (DHa), Jonathan Heller (JHe), Daniel Hinesbusch (DH), Jason Horn (JHor), Josh Houck (JHou), Darlene Kershner, William Kunze, Josh Lefever, Bill Libhart, Meredith Lombard, Ervin Martin, Carolyn Mathur, Seth McComsey, Andy McGann, Holly Merker, Rebecca Millen, Ted

Nichols II, Christopher Rowe, Bob Schutsky, Brian Shade, Derek Stoner, Roger Stoner, Drew Weber, Richard Williams, Patricia Williams, Eric Witmer, Fred Zimmerman.

Lawrence County

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

Lawrence was very lightly birded this period. Single **Tundra Swans** bookended the season with one at Black Swamp 12/2 (MC) and one at EL 2/19 (MV). Rare for New Year's Day was a **Gadwall** at SR (JF, LF). A nice collection of dabblers at EL 2/17 included 45 **American Wigeons** and 47 **Northern Pintails** (MV). The wigeon count increased to 52 on 2/19 (MV). **Canvasback** is somewhat unusual in *Lawrence*; singles were at SR 12/22 (BB, MC) and throughout Feb (m.ob.), and the count of 12 there 2/10 (GK, MAK) was notable. Also quite unusual for the county, 3 **Common Goldeneyes** were at Mason Road 12/22 (BB, MC).

A **Ruffed Grouse** at Black Swamp 12/2 (MC) was the first one reported in *Lawrence* in many years. After a slow start in late fall, **Sandhill Cranes** finally showed up in numbers in Jan, peaking at 52 on 1/27 (CW), but they dispersed rather quickly thereafter. As usual a **Wilson's Snipe** or 2 wintered in the NW area (GK, MAK, et al.), *Lawrence* was again the go-to spot for open-country raptors, with several sightings of **Northern Harrier** and **Rough-legged Hawk**, particularly around NW and VSM, along with a few (rather fewer than normal) sightings of **Short-eared Owl** at VSM (m.ob.). A **Merlin** in PGT 1/31 (MH, RH, LW) was the only one reported.

The Glaciated Northwest is just about the only region left in the state where **Common Raven** is still uncommon, but they are making inroads here too. One was spotted in the far southwestern corner of *Lawrence* along the Pennsylvania Turnpike 1/12 (MD). Lake Road near Volant was the hotspot for field birds this winter. Top counts there included 376 **Horned Larks** 1/17 (GK, MAK) and 120 **Snow Buntings** 1/15 (MC). As many as 75 Snow Buntings were still there though the end of Jan. At least 3 **Lapland Longspurs** were present in the second half of Jan as well (AH, MH, RH, LW), and an **American Pipit** noted there 1/13 and 1/17 (AH, GK, MAK) was rare for Jan.

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Lebanon County

Locations: Cornwall Area (CA), Fort Indiantown Gap (FIG), Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority (GLRA), Lion's Lake (LL), Marquette Lake (ML), Memorial Lake State Park (MLSP), Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area (MC), Millardsville Quarry (MVQ), Mt Gretna Area (MG), Quittipahilla Educational Wetlands (QEW), SGL 145, SGL 156, SGL 211, Short and Birch Roads (S&BR), Shuey Lake (SL), Spangler Road Pond (SRP), Stover's Dam Park (SDP).

Up to 4 **Ross's Geese** were found at MC 2/9-12 (JE, JH, P&RW). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen at LL 1/22 (SW) and again 2/17-19 (TB, KB, JF, TN). One was also found at S&BR 1/27 (P&RW, JH). Single **Cackling Geese** were reported at QEW 12/10 (TBu), SDP 12/14 (P&RW), LL 1/25 (CB), and S&BR 1/27 (P&RW). Up to 2 were seen at LL 2/11-28 (TB, MC, P&RW, RS, TK, m.ob.).

A **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** provided a fourth county record at MC 2/17-24 (SS, FH, m.ob.). It was an unusually good year for **Canvasbacks**. One was seen at SRP 12/22 (JH), and at MLSP 1/26-28 (JD, SW, HW). Up to 7 Canvasbacks were at S&BR 2/3-11 (P&RW, TB) and up to 14 at MVQ 2/2-23 (JH, TB, P&RW). Three **Redheads** were at SRP 1/12 (JH). Three were also found at MVQ 2/23 (JH). Two **Greater Scaup** were at MVQ 2/3-11 (JH, P&RW, TB). A **Lesser Scaup** tied the county early date at QEW 1/11 (P&RW). A female **Long-tailed Duck** was

at MVQ 2/4-10 (TB, DK, JHo, JH). **Common Goldeneyes**, which are normally scarce, were found at a number of locations throughout much of the period. They were regular visitors in small numbers to MLSP 12/22-2/28 (JH, TB, KB, MC, SW, m.ob.). Eight were there 1/12 (JH), which provided the highest count for any *Lebanon* location this winter. Up to 3 Common Goldeneyes were at MVQ 1/21-2/23 (JH, TB, JE, P&RW). Singles were found at Lake Strause 12/29 (JLo, FH), and QEW 1/11 (P&RW). Three were at a quarry along Ridge Rd, north of Palmyra, 1/19 (MC).

The first **American Woodcock** of the year was found at MLSP 2/22 (SW). A first-year **Iceland Gull** was photographed at LL 1/15 (P&RW). Single **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were sporadic at LL 12/14-1/15 (P&RW, JH, AK) and 4 were reported there 12/22 (JE). Two Lesser Black-backed Gulls were in a field south of Lebanon 12/16 (JH), and one on 12/22 (JH).

A **Golden Eagle** was seen at MC 1/21 (JH). A juvenile **Northern Goshawk** was found on SGL 145 near Colebrook 12/23 (JH). Two light-phase **Rough-legged Hawks** were reported at FIG 12/16 (DM). Single Rough-legs were also seen at MC 2/3 (JL, P&RW) and at CA 2/8 (JF). Three **Barred Owls** were heard at SGL 211 on 1/12 (JH), with 4 heard there 1/26 (JH). A **Short-eared Owl** was found at MC 2/28 (TN). **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were plentiful this year. One was found at SGL 156 on 12/19 (P&RW), and SGL 145 on 1/13 (JFe, EF, NF, BB, CC, SB). The rail trail in the Goldmine area of SGL 211 was a hotspot, where 5 Saw-whets were heard during a three-mile hike early on 1/12 (JH); and 3 were heard there 1/26 (JH).

Single **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were reported throughout the period in the ML area of FIG (JH, ST, TB, KB, R&PP, m.ob.). **Merlins** were found at CA 1/12 (P&RW), and near Jonestown 2/7 (TB). **Peregrine Falcons** were seen along Louser Rd 1/19 (JH), and at GLRA 1/20 (JH). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were plentiful in the fall, but found in much lower numbers in scattered locations throughout the winter (m.ob.).

An **Evening Grosbeak** was at a feeder near Lebanon 12/4 (S&JC). **Purple Finches** became fairly scarce this winter, following their fall abundance. Singles were seen at SGL 145 on 1/11 (PB), 2/1 (JHo), and 2/18 (JH). One was also found at MLSP 2/27 (SW). Up to 25 **Pine Siskins** visited feeders at CA 1/12-2/11 (P&RW). Along Union Rd, south of Fredericksburg, up to 6 **Lapland Longspurs** and 78 **Snow Buntings** were found 1/19-2/3 (JH, P&RW, TBu, SW, DK, m.ob.). Thirteen Snow Buntings were along Range Rd near SL 12/15 (SW). A **Rusty Blackbird** was at MLSP 12/15 (JH).

Observers: **Timothy Becker, 10283 Jonestown Rd, Grantville, Pa 17028, tjbecker81@aol.com**, Kathy Becker, Stefani Bernardo, Chuck Berthoud, Brandon Brown, Brian Brown (BBr), Paul Brubaker, Thomas Buehl Jr (TBu), Sara Busch (SBU), Cory Clawser, Mary Coomer, Susanna and John Cooper (S&JC), Jarrod Derr, Jarrod Evans, Emily Felty, Justin Felty (JFe), Nate Felty, Jim Fiorentino, Fritz Heilman, Jonathan Heller, Josh Houk (JHo), Ted Keen, Andy Keister, Darleen Kershner, Josh Lefever, Jim Logan Jr (JLo), Rick and Peggy Price (R&PP), Dave McNaughton, Ted Nichols, Rosemary Spreha, Stan Stahl, Jen Szekeres, Scott Thomas, Steve Walthius, Howard West, Pat and Richard Williams (P&RW).

Lehigh County no report

Luzerne County – no compiler

Lycoming County

Locations: Indian Park-Montoursville (IP), Mill Street (MS), Rose Valley Lake (RVL), West Branch Susquehanna River (SR), Williamsport Dam (WD).

After wrapping up an incredible fall season, and with an irruption of Evening Grosbeaks underway, anticipation was high for the winter to produce some good sightings. For the most part, however, that is not how it played out. There were a few rarities, but they were mostly the more

"expected" species. Many species that are less common winter residents, such as Eastern Towhee and Fox Sparrow, were not present at all. In total, 101 species were reported during the winter, which is 10-15 below average.

The **Snow Goose** at IP continued throughout the entire winter. Five **Cackling Geese** dropped in near WD 1/12 (BB, DB, et al.). Generally uncommon in the winter, a **Wood Duck** was found in Cogan House Twp. 12/29 (BB, DB, BoB, DeB), and one was at IP 1/13-16 (BB, et al.). An **American Wigeon** was at IP 1/13-19 (BB, et al.). A pair of **Green-winged Teal** were found in a pond near Montgomery 1/3 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB), which represents the first Jan eBird record of that species for *Lycoming*. **Canvasback** numbers were above average, with scattered sightings along SR. An unusual Jan fallout event 1/5 dropped 3 **Surf Scoters**, 4 **White-winged Scoters**, and 63 **Long-tailed Ducks** at WD (BB, DeB, BoB, et al.). One White-winged Scoter was also reported at RVL that day (NF).

A **Red-necked Grebe** was seen at WD 2/28 (BiB). The only unusual gull report was a **Great Black-backed Gull** at the Lycoming County Landfill 1/3 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB). A **Common Loon** was reported at Little Pine S.P. 12/6 (JD), and one was on a small pond in Buttonwood 12/9 (BB, DeB, BoB).

A **Golden Eagle** was reported in Cogan House Twp. 12/24 (NaF). Two were recorded for the Northern Lycoming CBC 12/29: one in Cogan House Twp. and one at RVL (BB, DB, DeB, BoB). One was also spotted at Powys Wetland 1/13 (DB, BB, DeB, BoB). It was a very poor year for **Northern Harriers**, with very few reports in normally reliable locations. Mill Hill Rd., which would normally host at least a half-dozen harriers and a similar number of Short-eared Owls, had no reports of either species. **Rough-legged Hawks** were consistently seen in Jackson Twp., along with a sighting near Mill Hill Rd. 1/27 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB) and one near Elimsport 2/3 (BB, DB, DeB, BoB).

There were 5 reports of small flocks of **Evening Grosbeaks** during Dec, which, adding to the Oct and Nov reports, made for 10 total sightings during the irruption. A **Common Redpoll** visited a feeder in Eldred Twp. 12/9 (JD, BB, DeB, BoB) and 12/10 (JD), and one visited a feeder in Ralston 2/12 (NF). It was a poor winter for **Pine Siskins**, with only a few reports that completely dried up after Dec.

An unusual winter **Chipping Sparrow** was recorded at SGL 252 for the Williamsport CBC 12/15 (BB, DeB). A small flock of **Rusty Blackbirds** wintered at the wetland adjacent to South Williamsport Park with a group of **Red-winged Blackbirds**. **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were found in small numbers at a couple spots along SR, with sightings being fairly regular at MS.

Observers: **Bobby Brown, bobbybrown1011@gmail.com**, Bill Bishop (BiB), Bob Brown (BoB), David Brown, Deb Brown (DeB), Jean Dalton, Maddi Dunlap, Wes Egli, Norwood Frederick, Nate Fronk (NaF), Eric Hartshaw, Andy Keister, Steve Pinkerton.

McKean County – no compiler

Mercer County

Locations: Airport Road (AR), Anderson Road (AD), Angel Road (AN), Bowen Road (BO), Bottle Hill Road (BH), Brent Road (BN), Buhl Park (BP), Cannery Road (CA), Clark (CLR), Chestnut Run (CR), East Lake Road (EL), Garret Road (GA), Golden Run (GR), Greenville, (GN), Grove City (GC), Grove City CBC (CBC), Hazen Road (HA), Hermitage (HE), Indian Run Road (IR), Jamestown (JA), Lake Road (LA), Lake Wilhelm (LW), Maurice Goddard SP (MG), New Wilmington (NW), Old Ash Road (OA), Oregon Road (OR), Otter Creek (OTC), Rodgers Road (RO), Shenango Propagation Area (PR), Sandy Lake (SL), South Hazard Road (SH), State Game Lands 130 (S130), State Game Lands 151 (S151), Sharpville (SV), Shenango Reservoir (SR), Spring Road (SP), Tait Road (TA), Transfer (TF), Trout Island (TI), Wise Road (WI) Williamson Road (WR), Wozniak Road (WO).

It was a quiet winter for waterfowl until late Feb when the gates burst open. Two **Snow Geese** showed up at PR 2/22 (MW, JMC) and built to

5 by 2/25 (m.ob.) A single **Trumpeter Swan** was at CR 1/1 (BW), and another at PR 2/22 (BW). A large wide-spread movement of **Tundra Swans** occurred 2/27 with up to 264 at MG (MW). **Wood Duck** was mentioned once at OTC with 2 found 12/27 (KS). **Blue-winged Teal** were at PR where 19 were found 2/15 (SS, JMC, MHo). Other puddle ducks found 2/15 include 24 **Northern Shovelers** at PR (BW), and 7 **Northern Pintails** at PR (SS, JMC, MHo). Pintails built to 150 at PR by 2/27 (MW). The Feb push continued with 13 **Canvasbacks** at CLR 2/17 (BW) and 24 **Redheads** at SR 2/15 (BW). Up to 2 **Long-tailed Ducks** were at MB 2/6 (MW). **Common Goldeneyes** built to 100 at PR 2/26 (MW). The most abundant waterfowl species was **Common Merganser**, with 300 at SR 2/7 (MW), and again at PR 2/26 (MW).

Ring-necked Pheasants are only occasionally reported, thus the 3 at OA 12/2 was a good find (MC). An even better find was the single **Ruffed Grouse** at S130 on 2/8 (MW), documented with a nice photo. **Horned Grebes** were seldom noticed, with 2 at LW 12/4 (NT). **Sandhill Cranes** continue to be found in *Merger* with up to 17 at S151 on 12/22 (MC, BB). Shorebirds were scarce. **Killdeer** appeared 2/15 with 2 at TA (KS, MHo, SAH) and 3 at .RO 2/22 (SS). **Wilson's Snipe** are regular in the area around New Wilmington - 12 were found 2/2 on CA (JMC) and 6 continued through 2/19 (m.ob.). Large numbers of **Ring-billed Gulls** were noted with up to 350 at PR 2/16 (MW). **Common Loons** were seen early in the period with one at LW 12/3 and 2 there 12/4 (NT). Several locations had large numbers of wintering **Great Blue Herons**. Up to 40 were at TI 1/15 (BW).

Bald Eagles continue in good numbers throughout the county. Forty-one at TF was the highest count, recorded 2/22 (MW). **Northern Harriers** are another species that appears regularly throughout the county's large agricultural area. Two were at NW 12/6 (MHo) with singles appearing at various locations (m.ob.). The only 2 reports of **Sharp-shinned Hawk** were singles at OA 12/4 (BW) and WR 1/3 (NT). **Cooper's Hawks** were found throughout the county during the entire period (m.ob.) An interesting find which also showed in the state-wide WRS involved good numbers of **Red-shouldered Hawks**, found throughout the area, with a max of 4 on SH 2/3 (GK, MAK). **Rough-legged Hawks** also winter throughout the county although concentrated in the New Wilmington area. Singles were at AD 1/26 (GK, MAK) and 2/2 (MH, RH), on CA 2/2 (JMC), and on BO 2/4 (JMC). Again, the only owls reported were **Eastern Screech-Owl**, **Barred Owl**, and **Great Horned Owl**, the latter regular at BP during Dec (m.ob.).

Buhl Park also continues to be the best place in the county to see **Red-headed Woodpecker**. They were reported multiple days but only one bird at a time (m.ob.). A single **Merlin** was reported throughout Feb from Greenville (MW). **Common Raven** is not often noted here so one on 2/15 at OC (GDG) and one at Grove City 2/16 (AH) are notable. Normally found in the winter season, **Horned Larks** appeared throughout Jan with a max of 150 at AD 1/26 (GK, MAK). An **Eastern Phoebe** was at AT 12/5 (NT).

The seasons good influx of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** continued with up to 29 at CR 1/7 (MW). Two reports of **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** were received - one on the CBC 12/23 (GK, MAK, NT) and one at TF 1/6 (JM). **Hermit Thrush** was at WR 12/3-1/6 (NT) and one was at JA 1/5 (MW). A hardy **Gray Catbird** was noted at JA 1/26 (MW).

Probably the best bird of the season was **Common Redpoll**. Seven were at OR 12/22 (MC) and one was found during Feb at PR (MW) with nice photos obtained. Surprisingly, only one **Pine Siskin** was found, at SL 2/20 (LM). Grassland birds are usually found throughout the county with the large amount of agricultural land. One **Lapland Longspur** was at AD 2/2 (SS, MHo) and 18 **Snow Buntings** at TF 1/31 (KS).

Sparrows put on a good showing. **American Tree Sparrows** were in good numbers in Dec, with up to 59 at WI 12/23 (MW). **Field Sparrows** included one photographed at TF 1/23 (MW), one at JA 12/24 (MW), one at EL 2/4 (MW), and 2 at PR 1/2 (MW). **Swamp Sparrows** were noted twice with 3 on the CBC (GK, MAK, NT) and 8 at WI 12/23 (MW). The only **White-crowned Sparrow** report was of 6 at GA 1/11 (RN). Blackbirds were scarce with only **Red-winged Blackbirds** noted throughout the period, with up to 100 PR 2/26 (MW). The only warbler was **Palm Warbler** at AR 12/3 (JT).

Observers: **Glenn Koppel**, macatilly@gmail.com, Brendyn Baptiste (BB), Kim and Jeff Brinker (KJB), Suzanne Butcher (SB), Martin Carlin (MC), Bill Drosblaugh (BD), Greg and Deborah Grove (GDG), Sue Ann Herald (SAH), Amy Henrici (AH), Marge Higbee (MH), Roger Higbee (RH), Mimi Hoffmaster (MHo), Mary Alice Koeneke (MAK), Lynne Martin (LM), Jim McConnor (JMC), Jim Mondok (JM), Richard Nugent (RN), Steve Sanford (SS), Ramona Sahni (RS), Debbie Smith (DS), Kim Springer (KS), Jerry Troyer (JT), Neil Troyer (NT), Mark Vass (MV), Linda Wagner (LW), Gene Wilhelm (GW), Chris William (CW), Michael Williams (MW), Bill Winkler (BW).

Mifflin County

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

The winter season concluded with 86 species reported, ten more than the 2017-2018 season.

Twenty species of waterfowl were observed, matching the 2017-2018 season. Most notable was the 3 **Trumpeter Swans** on the Juniata River near Newton Hamilton 2/3 (RH, BF) and 2/4 (RD). Shorebirds were scarce - 5 **Killdeer** were in Belleville 12/11 (JZ), one at VP 2/5 (RD), one on DVR 2/7 (RH), and one in Belleville 2/21 (JZ). Single **Wilson's Snipe** were on BMRM 1/15 (JK) and Cemetery Road 1/31 (RD).

Four Winter Raptor Surveys were conducted totaling 21 hours of observation - Kishacoquillas (Big) Valley 1/26, Milroy 1/31, Ferguson Valley 2/2, and Newton-Hamilton 2/3. Notable numbers included 81 **Red-tailed Hawks**, 2 **Red-shouldered Hawks**, 6 **Rough-legged Hawks**, 20 **American Kestrels**, 10 **Bald Eagles**, 2 **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, one **Cooper's Hawk**, one **Northern Harrier** (14 recorded in 2017-2018), and one **Peregrine Falcon** (BF, et al.). Additional raptor reports included a **Golden Eagle** on DVR 1/27 (RH). **Northern Harrier** sightings were down compared to winter 2017-2018, with only 3 locations reporting individuals. **Rough-legged Hawk** reports all came from the intersection of Salem Cross Road and BMRM throughout the season.

A **Short-eared Owl** on BMRM provided the only sighting 1/27 (RD). For a fourth consecutive year, a **Peregrine Falcon** was at VP, seen 12/4, 1/8, and 2/3 (RD). Other sightings included one on Knepp Rd 12/30 (JZ), one at Highland Park 1/13 (RD), one on Church Lane 1/15 (JK), and one on Front Mountain Road 1/18 (RD). Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur went unreported. An **Eastern Meadowlark** was found on Cedar Lane 2/23 (IB, CY).

Observers: **Jon Kauffman**, 3400 Discovery Road, Petersburg, PA 16669, jvk5019@psu.edu, Ivan Byler, Rob Dickerson, Bob Fowles, Robert Hosler, Christopher Yoder, Jay Zook.

Monroe County

Locations: Delaware River (DR), Weir Lake (WL)

The season started and ended following a pattern similar to the last few years, i.e., mild weather and temperatures in December and early January, followed by more seasonal weather in February. A **Barrow's Goldeneye** was found on the DR 1/4, found by a New Jersey birder, and ultimately seen by many New Jersey and Pennsylvania birders (JD, JH, m.ob.). As the weather turned severely cold in Feb, leaving most if not all the waterways completely frozen, nice finds included **Canvasbacks**, **Redheads**, and **Greater Scaup** found on open water on WL and enjoyed by many local birders (TG, MS, m.ob.). **Pine Siskins** were consistently seen at feeders of local birders, with a high of 146 at an East Stroudsburg residence 1/18 (JC, JM, NT). An average of 15-30 **Evening Grosbeaks** visited a feeder daily from 2/11 to the end of the period, nicely documented by the homeowner (JC).

Observers: **Bruce Johnson**, 26 Fairview Avenue, Mount Pocono, (570)534-2852, brucejohnson207@yahoo.com, Jonathon DeBalko, Timothy Grover, Jason Horn, Jon Cormorant, Jon Mularczyk, Michael Schall, Nancy Tully.

Montgomery County

Locations: Fort Washington S.P. (FWSP), Green Lane Park (GLP), Mondauk Common Park (MCP), Norristown Dam (ND), Norristown Farm Park (NFP), Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust (PERT), Valley Forge National Historical Park (VFNHP).

Winter 2018-2019 featured cold snaps that caused significant icing of our water bodies, but delivered little snow. The season's species total was 128, well above the average value of 120 (based on the past 6 winters), and the highest winter species count of this compiler's tenure. Several new records were set (in eBird, at least), including a first county waterfowl hybrid amalgamation, a third county record of a gull species, two winter warbler county records, and a second state winter record for a skulking sparrow.

Although there was no mass gathering of **Snow Geese**, a big push was noticed in the skies over *Montgomery* 1/30, including flocks of 1700 over VFNHP (SGr) and 950 in Gilbertsville (MA). Seven **Cackling Geese** were found at a pond in Worcester Twp. 12/27 (EF, ph.). Four of these mini-geese were present at GLP 1/26-27 (PD, m.ob.), the largest haul of regular GLP observations through the entire period (m.ob.). A single Cackling Goose was also spied at NFP 12/22 (CH). In addition to these presumed purebred geese, 2 interesting goose hybrids were picked out of the Canada throngs at GLP. An orange-legged **Greater White-fronted x Canada Goose** hybrid was seen a few times 1/16-27 (LH, ph.). A **Snow x Canada Goose** hybrid, a more regularly-occurring mix, followed it at GLP 2/9-11 (LH, PM ph.). **Tundra Swan** numbers were light, with groups of 6 at GLP 2/24 (PD) and 2/27 (RK) representing the period high counts.

High **Gadwall** numbers at GLP's Knight Lake continued through much of the winter, including counts of 74 on 1/12 (WBH) and 61 on 1/14 (AM). A large group, 35 **American Wigeons** were counted at GLP 2/16 (PH). A substantially larger mob of 289 **Mallards** was concentrated at GLP 1/19 (PH). A **Mallard x Northern Pintail** hybrid at GLP 2/10-11 may represent a first county record of this odd generic combo (PH, ph.). **Canvasback** was present many days at GLP 1/3-2/28 (m.ob.), numbering as many as 5 on 2/27 (RK). Five Canvasbacks on the pond at NFP 2/15 (KRu, ph.) were the first of their kind ever spotted at the park. A pair of **Redheads** was at GLP 2/27 (PD, RK, vt.). **Greater Scaup** were more widely distributed. They were detected in small numbers at GLP, several locations along the Schuylkill River, and, curiously, Haverford College 1/16-2/28 (m.ob.). The 3 Haverford scaup, found 2/8 (KJ, ph.), provided a first campus record of any scaup species.

A **White-winged Scoter** was photographed at GLP 1/6 (AD, JF) and a **Black Scoter** was identified in flight at GLP 2/28 (PD). A pair of **Long-tailed Ducks** was at GLP 12/15 (GF, ph.). Single female Long-tails were seen at Norristown Riverfront Park 2/4 (BD, ph.) and again 2/15-26 (MR, m.ob., ph.). There were many reports of **Common Goldeneye** on the Schuylkill, Lower Perkiomen, and at GLP beginning 12/6, but they did not really pick up steam until later in the period, as water bodies froze (m.ob.). The largest goldeneye group encountered, on the river at ND 2/1, contained at least 18 individuals (PB). Single **Red-breasted Mergansers** were found on the Schuylkill in Conshohocken 2/1 (SGr) and VFNHP 2/23-24 (PD, vt.). There were only a handful of reports of **Ruddy Duck** at GLP, none of them numbering any higher than one (m.ob.).

A **Horned Grebe** was observed at GLP 2/28 (PH, ph.). Two **Red-necked Grebes** were present at GLP 2/19 (PD, vt.). A **Virginia Rail** was heard grunting in Lower Moreland Twp. 1/1 (PD). Not a single American Coot was reported; while hardly an abundant winter species, there are typically at least a few coots seen.

Unusual in winter, a **Bonaparte's Gull** was noted at GLP 1/16 (LH, et al., ph.). A single adult **Iceland Gull** was discerned within the gull flock at GLP 1/17 (PH, m.ob., ph.), 1/26 (PD, vt.) and 2/3 (AM), possibly the same individual. The season's top Larid, however, was a **Glaucous Gull**, present at GLP 1/13 (AD, m.ob., ph.). Only two prior Glaucous Gulls had been documented in eBird for *Montgomery*, and the most recent of those was in 1999. Those of us that missed the 2019 Glaucous are hoping it doesn't take another 20 years for the next one to drop by. Loftier counts of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at GLP included 79 on 2/23 (PH), 65 on

2/26 (PD) and 61 on 2/27 (KC). **Great Black-backed Gulls**, rare at GLP, were detected at the reservoir on at least 3 occasions 1/19-2/19, in parties of 1-2 (m.ob.). There were also the usual Schuylkill River Great Black-back sightings, noted from 1/27 onward, concentrated primarily at ND (m.ob.).

Double-crested Cormorants generally vanish from *Montgomery* in winter, and this year was no exception. The only corms to be found were on the Lower Perkiomen 12/12 (BM, ph.) and at ND 1/30 (SG, QG), both solitary birds. Single **Great Egrets** were at GLP 12/1 (WS, ph.) and 12/9 (MC, KH). Seventy-five **Black Vultures** were at Elmwood Park Zoo 2/28 (GS), where efforts to scare the roosting group away have evidently not worked out as well as desired. Another sizable Black Vulture group, tallied at 69, was observed from nearby Barrington Park in East Norriton 12/22 (PB).

An adult **Golden Eagle** was reported from Heuser Park 12/7 (SGr). **Northern Harriers** gathered on the Grand Parade at VFNHP again in the back half of this winter, though not in quite the numbers as in some recent previous winters. Seven harriers were present 1/25 (SGr), and counts of 5-6 were also noted on 4 other evenings 1/27-2/3 (m.ob.). Hatfield's resident leucistic **Red-tailed Hawk** was seen again 2/3 (SG) and 2/15 (AM). Single light morph **Rough-legged Hawks** were found in Worcester Twp. 2/22-24 (VS, PB) and in the farmland around Palm/Hosensack 2/16-18 (MA, m.ob.).

There were a few reports of 1-3 **Long-eared Owls** at GLP in Dec-Jan (m.ob.). A **Short-eared Owl** was sighted at GLP 1/14 (JH), and another was seen at VFNHP 1/25-27 (SGr, m.ob.). Single **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were regularly observed at a day roost at PERT 12/9-2/16 (PD, m.ob., ph.) and at FWSP 2/19 through the end of the period (DB). **Eastern Phoebes** were found at a more-than-typical 5 locations this winter, 12/1-2/15 (m.ob.).

A noisy group of 46 **Fish Crows** flew over Huntingdon Valley 2/10 (CA), the second highest county winter season count of this species in eBird. At a minimum, there were 44 credible reports of **Common Ravens** across the county (m.ob.), including a group of 5 over a rock quarry in East Norriton Twp. 12/21 (ZM). **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** continued at the water treatment facility by Heuser Park through 1/14 (m.ob.), numbering as many as 11 on 12/2 (SGr) and 12/23 (MR, ph.). At another similar facility in Oaks, a group of 12-14 Rough-wings was sighted 12/9-10 (SGr, MR). Whether this was the same group or different is unknown, though with 5 miles of mostly bug-free river separating them, two groups seem more likely.

Many remarked on the relative dearth of **Carolina Chickadees** and **Tufted Titmice** this season. The data seemed to bear this out. The 12/16 Upper Bucks CBC (which includes a portion of *Montgomery*), for example, recorded its lowest Carolina Chickadee total since 1991, and the titmouse detection rate was a shocking 12% of the normal rate. The very minor irruption of **Black-capped Chickadees** resulted in scattered reports, mostly from the northwest part of the county (m.ob.). One in Franconia Twp. through the entire period was one of fairly few consistent feeder-guests (SG). Of this season's irruptive species, **Red-breasted Nuthatch** seemed to be the most obvious and common, though even they thinned out significantly in mid-winter (m.ob.); The largest group was 4, observed at MCP in Fort Washington 12/25 (CD).

Thirty **Eastern Bluebirds** were counted at White's Mill Preserve in the Unami Creek Valley 12/16, a high number for the date (PB). A leucistic, "piebald" **American Robin** was found in Bala Cynwyd 12/14 (NK, ph.). At least 6 overwintering **Gray Catbirds** were uncovered at 5 locations, mostly in the southeast (m.ob.). Single **Brown Thrashers** were found at VFNHP 12/3 (VS) and FWSP 2/19 (DB).

The fall **Purple Finch** irruption quieted in winter, with the species becoming rather scarce (m.ob.). The largest group of Purple Finches contained 27 birds, sighted along the Green Ribbon Trail in Upper Gwynedd Twp. 1/17 (AM). There were only 2 other reports of 10+ individuals, both from a residence near Kulpsville that boasted what was potentially the county's most consistent group of the species throughout the season (JW). Twenty Purple Finches were counted there 2/1 (JW). **Pine Siskin** irruption underwent a similar winter muffling. Siskins were present some places in generally low numbers, but were mostly absent (m.ob.). A report of 31 siskins at Stoneleigh Garden 2/8 (AG, AB) was the

only count of over 10. **American Goldfinches** were abundant at a feeding station in Schwenksville through the period, numbering 38 on 1/28 (MC). Nine **Common Redpolls** in Fort Washington 12/1 were a surprise (DB), and the only redpolls to be recorded. Although they were technically irrupting too, no Evening Grosbeak reports were submitted.

A **Grasshopper Sparrow** found 2/20 in the fields of PERT (PD, vt.) furnished what turned out to be only the second eBird winter record for Pennsylvania, and first since 1998. **Chipping Sparrows** were noted at 11 locations (m.ob.). Most of these were in the southeast, primarily at and/or near PERT, where they were found in good numbers throughout the winter (m.ob.). The highest count came from the defunct Ashbourne Country Club in Cheltenham Twp. where 33 Chippys were found 2/15 (PD, vt.). Although there were few **White-crowned Sparrow** reports in general, some higher numbers were declared: 22 at SGL 234 in Linfield 1/26 (PD) and 17 in the farmland near Palm/Hosensack 1/12 (GF). SGL 234 also hosted a huge concentration of **White-throated Sparrows**, estimated at 300 on 1/26 (PD). There were 5 other reports of 100+ White-throats from this location. Further north, 103 White-throated Sparrows were counted at backyard feeders in Salford Twp. 2/12 (WBH). Twenty-two **Savannah Sparrows** were seen at PERT 1/13 (PD), a strong winter showing for this species.

There were just 2 reports of **Eastern Meadowlark** - 2 at VFNHP 12/22 (MR) and 2 again 1/27 (SGr). A **Baltimore Oriole** was at MCP 12/25 (SGr). Another potential oriole was seen briefly at VFNHP 1/18, but could not be re-found for confirmation (SGr). The sole report of **Rusty Blackbird** came from Bethayres Swamp 12/15, when 7 of these declining blackbirds were seen picking around a wet area (CA, SA, ph.).

Three different **Orange-crowned Warblers** were found: at MCP 12/23-29 (SGr, m.ob., ph.), at Valley Center Park in Lower Moreland Twp. 12/23 (JG), and in Oaks 1/12-13 (SGr, PB), where the species has been found in past winters. A **Blackpoll Warbler**, likely continuing from Nov, was present at Heuser Park 12/9-10 (SGr, SS, ph.). A male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was discovered in Tylersport 12/8 (ZR, ph.). Both the Blackpoll and the Black-throated Blue represent the first *Montgomery* winter records for their respective species in eBird data. More typical for the season, single **Pine Warblers** were at VFNHP 12/6 (KR) and at Groff's Mill Park near Harleysville 12/16 (ZM).

Observers: **W. Brian Henderson, Salford Twp., PA, (610) 505-5571, wbhenderson@gmail.com**, Mary Ache, Cindy Ahern, Scott Ahern, Allison Barnes, Dave Belford, Paul Bernhardt, Marcia Clouser, Kevin Crilley, Andrew Dolan, Beth Domboski, Paul Driver, Curt Dunn, George Franchois, Eliza Fraser, James Funk, Jake Glassman, Quadirah Glover, Scott Godshall, Steve Grunwald (SGr), Al Guarente, Paul Heveran, Karl Hilbert, Len Hillegass, Clifford Hirst, Jason Horn, Karl Johnson, Noel Kelly, Rudolph Keller, Brandon McCracken, August Mirabella, Pedro Miranda, Zack Moyer, Zach Richard, Kenneth Rieker, Katie Ruth (KRu), Michael Rosengarten, Vincent Smith, Scott Stafford, Wendy Sykora, John Ward.

Montour County

Locations: Montour Preserve (MP), Stamm Rd. (SR)

This winter season was characterized by fairly light birder coverage and no major surprises, but there were some seasonal highlights. For waterfowl, a **Cackling Goose** was at SR 1/19 (AK) and a **Long-tailed Duck** was at the MP 1/12 (AK). A **Red-shouldered Hawk**, hard to find in the county in winter, was near the Montour Power Plant 1/5 (AK). Starting in Jan, **Rough-legged Hawks** made a good showing in the northern part of the county, with high counts of at least 3 from single locations (m.ob.). A **Barred Owl**, hard to find at any season, was at the MP 1/12 (AK).

A **Northern Shrike** apparently over-wintered on SR, with reports spanning 12/19-2/28 (EH, m.ob.). Since an individual was also reported here the previous winter, this is likely the same bird returning. **Pine Siskins** reports were not as numerous as in the fall but included 5 in a yard 12/10 (LS) and 2 at the MP 1/12 (AK). During a snow storm, 30 **Snow Buntings** were at County Line Road 1/30 (EH). A seasonally uncommon **Fox Sparrow** was at the MP 1/7 (JH).

This compiler somehow forgot to make a Fall 2018 report, so here are the 2 most notable highlights: A **Trumpeter Swan** was at the MP 11/16 (LS), and an immature **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**, which may be the first record for the county, was at the MP 10/8 (PD).

Observers: **Evan Houston, evanhouston@gmail.com**, Paul Dennehy, Jason Horn, Andy Keister, Lauren Shaffer.

Northampton County

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

It was a wet winter with numerous rainy days, some snow, and a few periods of bitter cold. The birding was very good despite the weather. Highlighting the season was a **Varied Thrush** that found a plentiful supply of crab apple tree fruit. Waterfowl variety and numbers were excellent. There were 2 **Ross's Geese** located on NQ during a CBC 12/29 (DD, JM, SK). **Ross's Goose** was seen at Green Pond 1/5-6 (BE, DD, WG) and flying over Bangor 2/19 (SA). **Greater White-fronted Goose** was at Silver Crest Rd. pond 12/17 (AM, JM) and at Green Pond 12/4 and 1/10 (DS, AM, BE). A lone **Tundra Swan** was seen along Arrowhead Rd. 12/1 (BQ, MH, ZM). A larger flock of 39 Tundra Swans flew over Moore Twp. 12/4 (BE) and 5 stood in a cornfield in Tatamy 2/24 (MS, CCS).

Canvasback can be difficult to locate some years in *Northampton*. However, this past winter that was not the case as several stuck around. Canvasback and **Redhead** were seen at NQ and MCEP during each month of the period. Canvasback was also reported from Echo Lake 2/14-3/1 (SA, m. obs.). It was not as easy to find **Long-tailed Duck**- singles were at NQ 2/2 (AM) and MCEP 1/26 (MS, MSa). **American Coot** was common at NQ with a high of 35 on 1/1 (AM).

For a second consecutive winter, a **Golden Eagle** made a few appearances at or near NQ. An immature Golden Eagle was seen at NQ on the 12/29 CBC (DD, JM, SK). It made a few other appearances at the quarry through 2/17 and was also seen flying over Nazareth Pike 2/6 (BE). An adult **Northern Goshawk** was reported at MCEP 12/30 (MC). At Seiple's Farm Pond, a dark **Rough-legged Hawk** flew past 2/22 (SA). A dark morph **Gyr Falcon** wintered for a second season in the area. After being seen regularly over a week in Nov, there were just a few scattered reports by a couple lucky birders in Jan and Feb.

A brightly plumaged **Varied Thrush** (second county record) was found feeding on crab apples in a busy business park just north of US 22 in Bethlehem 2/19 (BW). The sighting was kept quiet at first because the original location was not in a good spot to make public. The bird's range expanded to an area along nearby S. Commerce and Brodhead Rd where crab apple trees are plentiful. Word got out and many people were able to see the Varied Thrush which continued into March. A **Brown Thrasher** was at a feeder in Bushkill Twp. 1/24 (GB). The only report of **Evening Grosbeak** during this mini-invasion year was a flyby in Moore Twp. 12/3 (AM). Two **Common Redpolls** were in Danielsville 12/8 (JM). Staying with finches, 9 **Pine Siskins** were at a feeder near Minsi Lake 12/9 (SA). **Lapland Longspur** was seen at Graver's Hill 1/30 (BE) and on Blossom Hill Rd. in Nazareth 2/14 (SA). **Rusty Blackbird** was scarce with the only report being of 2 in E. Allen Twp. 1/29 (BE).

Observers: **Michael Schall, 610-737-5275, mdtjschall@yahoo.com**, Scott Angus, Guy de Bruyn, Michael Cox, Dave DeReamus, Bill Etter, Wade Groff, Michael Hartshorne, Stephen Kloiber, Zach Millen, Adam Miller, Jon Mularczyk, Brian Quindlen, Matt Sabatine (MSa), Corinne Campbell Schall, Billy Weber.

Northumberland County

Locations: Clemens Road (CLEM), County Line Road (CLR), Northumberland (NOR), Old Swamp Road (OSR), Paxinos (PAX), Plotts Road (PR), Pond Road (POND) Riverside (RIV) State Game Lands 84 (SGL84) State Game Lands 165 (SGL165), Watsontown (WAT)

It was a slow winter season across the county. Highlights included some seasonally unusual sparrows and winter finches. **Canvasback** seemed to be more widespread than usual. Up to 21 were observed at a small pond along POND from 2/19-26 (KP). **Wilson's Snipe** are annually reported from a few reliable locations across the county. One was observed at PR 1/17 (AK) and 11 at the same location 1/22 (AK) when cold weather restricted them to open water around the limestone spring. **Black Vultures** were reported twice, including 2 at PAX 1/6 (KP) and one at NOR 1/27 (KP). The only **Rough-legged Hawk** was a single near WAT 1/26 (JG).

Pine Siskin was reported in small numbers. A group of 14 visited a feeder in RIV 12/5 (SF). The only report of **Evening Grosbeak** was an unexpected sighting of one bird photographed along OSR 1/7 (BS). Lack of snow cover made it more difficult to find field birds. The only report of **Lapland Longspur** was of one along CLEM 2/1 (KP). The only report of **Snow Bunting** was of a flock of 30 along CLR 1/30 (EH). **Field Sparrow** reports were more common than normal. One was at SGL84 12/2 (KP), 3 more were observed at the same location 1/27 (KP) and 6 were at SGL165 2/2 (KP). A **Savannah Sparrow** was reported from WAT 1/26 (JG).

Observers: **Andy Keister, 110 Hawk Ridge Road, Bloomsburg, 17815, (570) 337-3802, akeister110@gmail.com**, Steph Fullmer, Joe Gyekis, Evan Houston, Karol Pasquinelli, Bill Snyder.

Perry County

Location: H.C. Shrauder Park (HCSP), Highway 17 Meadows (H17M), Juniata River – Amity Hall Access (JRAH), Little Buffalo State Park (LBSP), State Game Lands 170 (SGL170)

Several uncommon species of waterfowl were seen this winter. A **Long-tailed Duck** was photographed at LBSP 12/9 (SS) and seen again 1/25 at JRAH (SS). A **Brant** was photographed at JRAH 1/24 (SS) and 1/25 (TW). The same bird, or another Brant, was seen 2/5 (SS) and 2/6 (BK) off Cold Storage Rd near Elliottsburg. A **Great Black-backed Gull** flew over land at HCSP 1/27 (SS). Most gulls are seen flying over the river, which is in *Dauphin*. **Short-eared Owls** persisted throughout the winter at H17M, with observations of 3 on 12/12 (SS), 2 on 12/18 (SJ), one on 1/11 (SJ), one on 1/12 (TW), 2 on 2/19 (CK), and 5 on 2/21 (SS).

Several "half-hardy" birds were present, including a **Gray Catbird** at SGL170 on 12/7 (RK), a **Common Yellowthroat** near Ickesburg on the Lewistown CBC 12/15 (CK), and 2 Gray Catbirds and a **Brown Thrasher** at SGL170 on 12/22 (RK).

Observers: **Daniel Hinnebusch, 1021 Preston Rd, Lancaster, PA 17601, 717-856-1565, daniel.hinnebusch@yahoo.com**, Steven Johnson, Chad Kauffman, Bob Koontz, Ramsay Koury, Steve Schmit, Tiffany Willow.

Philadelphia County

Locations: Andorra Natural Area (ANA), Delaware River (DR), Discovery Center - East Park Reservoir (DCEPR), Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park (FDR), Fort Mifflin (FM), Glen Foerd (GF), Houston Meadow (HM), John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum-Philadelphia (TI), Navy Yard (NY), Northeast Water Treatment Plant (NEWTP), Pennypack on the Delaware (POD), Pennypack Park (PP), Philadelphia Mills Pond (PMP), Poquessing Creek Park (PCP), Wissahickon Valley Park (WVP).

After two rather slow years with species numbers in the nineties mostly due to bad weather, Philly birders once again discovered over 100 species during the 33rd annual Philadelphia Mid-winter Bird Census (PMWBC) organized by Keith Russell. This underscores once more the rich diversity of habitat the most urban county of the Commonwealth still has to offer our wintering feathered friends, among them six warbler species this year.

Single **Cackling Geese** were discovered at GF 1/6 (JM) and at PMP 2/17 (HP). Numbers of wintering **Canvasback** have been steadily

increasing over the years at the NY with up to 360 individuals counted this season. Additionally, unusually high numbers were seen in places such as GF and POD along the DR and DCEPR. A female **Surf Scoter** was seen at the NY 1/5 (PM). A **White-winged Scoter** was on the Delaware River at FM 1/12 (RB, WS). **Long-tailed Ducks** were observed at their usual places (NY, POD, GF) along the Delaware River. A **Red-necked Grebe** was discovered during the PMWBC 1/12 and stayed until 1/19 (MD, TF, MG, MW).

Late was an immature **Common Gallinule** at TI 12/1 (JR, KRr) and 12/3 (GV). The **Black-headed Gull** stayed two months at TI and was last seen 1/8 (m.ob.). **Iceland Gulls** were seen at multiple spots along the DR including 2 juveniles at the River Link Ferry dock 1/20 (BH). Up to 3 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were discovered along the DR. One adult at FDR 1/19 was unusual (HP). The only **Red-throated Loon** was seen at the NY 2/17 (PM). One **Common Loon** 12/30 was an unusual sight at TI in winter (RZ). An **American Bittern** was at TI 12/2-15 (AB, GV).

There is less than a handful of winter records of **Osprey** in *Philadelphia*. One was discovered during the Pennypack CBC in PP 12/15 resting along the creek, an odd place for an Osprey in any month (HP). The red-phase **Eastern Screech-Owl** was back at POD in its usual tree from 12/12-2/11 (m.ob.). Twenty-one birds were counted in the northern section of WVP during the PMWBC 1/12 (DB). One of the winter highlights was a **Snowy Owl** in the Port Richmond neighborhood of the city 2/4 that delighted neighbors and school kids alike (m.ob.). The first **Long-eared Owl** in five years was discovered at TI 1/5, but only stayed the day (PM). Up to 5(!) **Northern Saw-whet Owls** spent the winter at TI (m.ob.).

Blue-headed Vireos were observed at TI 12/1 (JM) and at the Boathouse Row along the SR 12/22 (DD). These 2 birds appear to be the first winter records for Philadelphia, at least on ebird. Up to 130 birds were part of the largest congregation of **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** north of Florida at NEWTP until the middle of Jan.; however, two cold spells with nighttime temperatures below 10 degrees might have contributed to the numbers dwindling to a dozen by early Feb. A handful of individuals were found deceased at the site 1/23 (SB). One **Tree Swallow** joined the flock throughout the winter (m.ob.). Seven **Red-breasted Nuthatches** at FDR 12/7 (GA) were a new high count for any single site in *Philadelphia* during this irruption year. Three birds remained at this park until mid Feb. The first Jan record of a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was made during the PMWBC 1/12 (m.ob.). This might have been the same bird that was observed in Nov. Sadly, it was found deceased 1/17.

Expectations were high after Ron Pittaway published his winter finch forecast for the season. And there were a few highlights in late fall that continued through the winter months. A female **Evening Grosbeak** was foraging with **American Robins** at FDR 12/4 (HP). **Purple Finches** were also more numerous than usual with up to 19 at PCP 12/15 (HP), 9 at ANA 2/3 (KJ), 8 at TI 12/2 (EP) and 5 at HM 12/1 (HP). A single **Common Redpoll** was enjoyed by many at HM 1/31-2/3 (DE, et al.). A **European Goldfinch** visiting a Nyjer feeder was quite the surprise in the Bustleton neighborhood in northeast Philadelphia (JE). **Pine Siskins** were not seen after Dec with a max of 6 at FDR 12/4 (GA).

Numbers of **American Tree Sparrows** were low, especially in Dec when none were observed. Up to 6 **Eastern Towhees** were a very unusual sight at Temple University throughout Jan and Feb (MP). A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was a pleasant surprise in WVP at the edge of HM 12/1 (HP). On the same day, a first year male **Baltimore Oriole** visited a backyard in the Roxborough neighborhood (TC).

An **Ovenbird** was in the Spruce Hill neighborhood 12/14. **Orange-crowned Warblers** were reported from 6 different locations with an astounding 4 individuals at NEWTP during the PMWBC 1/12 (KRr, PM, ST). A **Nashville Warbler** was at NEWTP 12/9 (HP) and then again 1/12-19 (KRr, et al.). Another was found together with a male **Pine Warbler** at the Veerle Meadow section of PP 2/17 (HP). Up to 2 **Common Yellowthroats** were at NEWTP 1/14-27 (m.ob.) and one was seen at FDR 12/9 (GA) and 2/10 (AR). Two **Cape May Warblers** were at NEWTP 12/15-2/2 (MD, TF, et al.). An **Audubon's Warbler** was a one-day wonder at - yes, you guessed it - NEWTP 1/14 (JH). Pending acceptance by the records committee this would be the second record for

Philadelphia after one was discovered and well documented at TI in 1980.

Observers: **Holger Pflücke, Philadelphia, PA 19148, pflucke.holger@gmail.com**, George Armistead, Dave Belford, Rob Bierregaard, Adrian Binns, Sara Busch, Tony Croasdale, Desmond O'Donovan, Martin Dellwo, Dan Efromson, John Eskate, Todd Fellenbaum, Mark Gallagher, Brian Hart, Jason Horn, Ken Januski, Jim McConnell, Patrick McGill, Maria Pacheco, Elizabeth Porter, Anne Reeves, Joel Rurik, Katlyn Rurik (KRr), Keith Russel (KRs), Win Shafer, Shawn Towey, Geoff Veith, Michael Walter, Rich Ziegler.

Pike County

The lakes in the Pocono region froze over early in the season. As a result, waterfowl numbers were low and variety was poor. Twelve **Common Goldeneyes** were on the Delaware River in Matamoras 2/2 (MS) and 10 at the Zane Grey Boat Launch (PG). Other wintertime waterfowl included just a couple **Ring-necked Ducks**, a few **Buffleheads**, and **Common Mergansers**. A **Horned Grebe** was found on the river below the I-84 bridge 2/2 (MS). **Ruffed Grouse** encounters are not mentioned often in reports but I have one to report. On 12/1, a grouse was flushed along the Little Bushkill Creek north of Little Mud Pond (DM).

Bald Eagles have become quite common in this county so I hope a trend towards **Golden Eagle** sightings in winter is becoming a regular thing. Golden Eagle has been seen in winter here for 5 consecutive years. An immature Golden was seen circling over the Zane Grey Boat Launch 1/10 (JC) and another flew over Hawley 2/3 (AM, JA). An adult **Peregrine Falcon** was spotted in the Delaware Water Gap NRA south of Milford 1/26 (AL, TD).

Judging from reports I have seen for the state, the winter finch invasion was fair to above average in *Pike*. **Evening Grosbeak** was reported 4 times. Three were at a Lake Wallenpaupack feeder 12/1 (DI), 6 at Promised Land SP 12/2 (SZ), 2 at a Milford feeder 1/1 (PG), and 15 at the Pocono Environmental Education Center 12/4 (MB). **Pine Siskins** were daily visitors at a feeder in the Dingman's Ferry area 12/28–2/28 (BW). A high of 34 Siskins were seen 2/20 (BW). There were scattered reports of **Purple Finch** and Pine Siskin from a few other spots in the county but not regularly like the Dingman's Ferry location.

Observers: **Michael Schall, 610-737-5275, mdtjschall@yahoo.com**, Johnathan Adamski, Matt Barr, John Collins, Tony Desantis, Paul Garner, Dina Inverso, Angela Lambert, Alexandra Machrone, Dennis Miranda, Bradley White, Sue Zitzman.

Potter County

Locations: Coudersport (CO), Galeton (GA), Genesee (GE) and Shinglehouse (SH).

Data were obtained from eBird reports submitted for six locations by six observers. Species reports were few as well as numbers of individuals, which may have been influenced by the 43.16 inches of snow that fell on *Potter* over the winter, mostly during January and February. Most reports were made on eBird in Feb.

All waterfowl, including one **Canada Goose**, 8 **Mallards**, 2 **Buffleheads**, and 2 **Common Goldeneyes** were observed at GL 2/15 (SM). Twenty-four **Wild Turkeys** were seen from a residence south of GE 2/15 (HN). A **Great Blue Heron** was at Little Genesee Creek at SH 1/2 (KE). One **Northern Harrier** was reported at 293 Bingham Center Rd, GE 3/12 (BB). A **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was reported from a residence south of GE 2/15 (HN). Three **Bald Eagles** were reported - one at SH 1/19 (KE) and 2 at GL 2/15 (SM). A **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen over a field from a residence south of GE 2/15 (KE).

Woodpeckers and other small birds were reported in low numbers. A **Downy Woodpecker** was seen at Coudersport 2/16 (KH). Single **Hairy Woodpeckers** were observed at CO 2/16 (KH) and at a residence south of GE 2/15 (HN). Three **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were reported from a residence south of GE 2/15 (HN). A **White-breasted Nuthatch** was

reported from CO 2/16 (KH). **Cedar Waxwings** were abundant, but only seen in one large flock of 100 birds, and were included in the same report as were 15 **Pine Siskins** and 15 **American Goldfinches**, all in SH 1/19 (KE). Ten **Dark-eyed Juncos** were reported from CO 2/16 (KH). Three **Red-winged Blackbirds** were observed in SH 2/25 (KE) and one **Common Grackle** was seen in CO 2/16 (KH).

Observers: **Robert Snyder, (814) 753-2629, birdphotoginpa@gmail.com**, Brent Bacon (BB), Kathy Ebeling (KE), Kathy Heffner (KH), Sean Minnick (SM) and Helen Nawrocki (HN).

Schuylkill County

Locations: Air Products Wildlife Sanctuary (APWS), Deer Lake (DL), Hawk Mountain Sanctuary – North Lookout (HM), Lake Hauto (LH), Landingville Marsh and Dam (LVD), Lebanon Reservoir (LR), Locust Lake State Park (LLSP), Owl Creek (OC), Swatara State Park (SSP), Sweet Arrow Lake (SAL), Tumbling Run (TR), Tuscarora State Park (TSP), West Schuylkill Christmas Bird Count (WSCBC).

Some data for this narrative was gleaned from two Christmas Bird Count's (CBC) that took place in the county. The WSCBC took place 12/23 and the Tamaqua CBC 12/28. Thanks to Dave Krueel and Jonathan DeBalko, 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. Many who posted their sightings to eBird were included in the observer list at the end of this narrative.

With the exception of **Mallards**, a few **Mute Swans**, **Canada Geese**, and **Common Mergansers** (in recent years), waterfowl species and numbers are always low for the county so any postings are considered notable. Except for two short bitter cold periods in late Jan and early Feb, this season's temperatures trended above average so open water was available for most of the winter. The bird of the season was a **Barnacle Goose** seen at SAL and nearby fields 12/4-16 (m.ob.). Two **Cackling Geese** were reported; one in Pine Grove 12/23 (TB, TJ) and another at APWS 12/28 (JoD, JD). A flock of 45 **Tundra Swans** flew past the lookout at HM 12/8 (HMD) and two **Gadwalls** were spotted at LVD 2/17 (DK). **American Wigeons** also spent some time at LVD this season. Three were seen 2/17 (TJ), 10 on the same day (DK), 2 on 2/18 (TB) and 4 on 2/24 (TB). **Northern Pintail** is a rare winter visitor - one was found at SAL 12/17 (RS, JSt) and another at APWS 1/13 (JoD). Four **Green-winged Teal** were at SAL 12/15 (AK). **American Black Ducks** were reported at several locations: SAL 12/15 (AK); 2 at LVD 1/25 (TJ), and 10 more 1/27 (TB); 10 at OC 12/28 (RK, JH, EZ); and throughout the winter at APWS with a high count of 18 on 12/30 (JoD, JD).

Ring-necked Ducks are also rare here in the winter but were reported at two locations in mid-Feb. Four were spotted at LVD 2/17 (DK), and 2 more at DL 2/16 (TB). A handful of **Greater Scaup** were seen around the county: singles were at SAL 12/9 (DH, TB) and 12/15 (AK), 2 were present at LVD 2/17 (DK) and 2/18 (TB), and yet another was at DL 2/24 (TJ). The last 3 waterfowl species are considered uncommon in *Schuylkill*. First, **Buffleheads** appeared at APWS 12/30-1/9 with a high day count of 4 (JoD), at SAL 12/9 (SB, DH) and again 1/3 (TB), and at DL 2/28 (MG). The second was **Common Goldeneye**, seen at SAL 12/4 (R&PP); at LVD 1/25 (TJ), 1/26 (TB), and 4 more 1/27 (TB); and at APWS 12/1-5 (JoD). Lastly, **Hooded Mergansers** were reported at SSP 2/27 (BR), LVD 2/24 (TB), and LH 12/28 (JD, JoD).

Our early **American Woodcock** was heard this year 2/19 at SSP (BR). **Ring-billed Gulls** are considered occasional during the winter in *Schuylkill*, but similar to the last two years, they were found in all three months. Except for one at LVD 1/13 (TB) and another at SSP (BR), all the reports were from SAL and vicinity (m.ob.) with a high of 75 on 12/8 (TB). **Herring Gulls** are considered more common in the winter but the only reports were 12/8-16 at SAL (TB, BG, PG) and LLSP 12/16 (TB).

Individual **Golden Eagles** glided past HM 12/7 (JA) and 12/8 (HMD). Besides HM, where **Northern Harriers** were recorded migrating through on 3 dates 12/3-8 (JA, HMD), individual birds were spotted 12/23 near Hegins (TB), near Hometown 12/28 (JoD, JD) and at SGL 227 on 2/3 (TB). Two individual **Northern Goshawks** were seen at HMS: 12/4

(HMD) and 12/10 (JA). **Northern Saw-whet Owl** reports posted to eBird this winter show an interesting geographic spread along a single ridge running from LR in the west to TSP to the east. Specific locations include LR 12/23 (DK, BC), Black Creek 12/23 (DK), TR 1/26 and 2/14 (DK), Moss Glen Rd 2/16 (DK), and TSP on several dates: 12/2 (DK, TB); 1/26 (DK); 1/27 (JoD); 2/3 (TB); and 2/4 (TJ). The lone report not on this ridge was to the north of Quakake 2/23 (DK). **Merlins** appeared in the county for the fourth straight winter, seen at Meadow View Road 12/17 (CE) and Coal Mountain Road 1/13 (LG). Prior to 2015, there were no winter reports of this bird in the county for 11 years. A **Peregrine Falcon** was seen on Deep Creek Road 1/22 (TJ).

The following birds are notable either because they were present out of season or are hard to predict year to year. Single **Eastern Phoebe**s were seen on the WSCBC 12/23 (BC), at LLLSP 12/25-1/1 (TB, TJ), and at APWS 12/31 (JoD). A **Gray Catbird** was another out-of-season bird found on the WSCBC 12/23 (BC). An **Evening Grosbeak** was spotted at a feeder in McAdoo 12/16 (JoD). **Pine Siskins** were seen around the county in Dec: 2 at SAL 12/15 (AK); 5 on the WSCBC 12/23 (BC); several times at HMS (JA, HMD); one at SGL 227 on 12/29 (TB); and more in early Dec in McAdoo (JoD). A species only seen in winter but hard to find is **Lapland Longspur**; this year a longspur was heard flying overhead at SGL 227 on 2/16 (TB). A couple **Eastern Towhees** stayed around this season. One was found 12/23 on the WSCBC (BC) and 2 others were reported at SGL 227 on 12/2 (TJ) and 12/30 (TB). Early arriving **Rusty Blackbirds** made appearances 2/2 and 2/18 at SSP (BR), and 2/24 (TJ, TB) at LVD.

Observers: **Dave Rieger, 401 Stony Mountain Road, Auburn, PA 17922, d.m.rieger@gmail.com.**, Jesse Amesbury, Dan Brennan, Thomas Buehl Jr, Sara Busch, Bruce Carl, Michael David, John DeBalko (JoD), Jonathan DeBalko (JD), Denise Donmoyer, Carl Engstrom, Kurt Engstrom, Robert Ferguson, Mark Gallagher, Brenda Galvin, Paul Galvin, Ian Gardner, Laurie Goodrich, Hawk Mountain Data (HMS), Paul Heveran, Daniel Hinnebusch, James Hoysen, Tonia Jordan, Andy Keister, Rick Koval, Mark Leeson, Dave Kruehl, Ann Marie Liebner, Dave McNaughton, Rick & Peggy Price, Pete Rattigan, Rich Rieger, Barb Ritzheimer, John Slotterback, Joshua Stone (JSt), Roger Stone, Patricia and Richard Williams, Eric Zawatski.

Snyder County

This January began the *Snyder* eBird 200 Challenge following on the successes in *Perry*, *Mifflin*, and *Juniata*. This attracted a little bit more birding activity to a typically under-birded county, but the real highlights so far have been found by locals who are regularly birding in the area anyway. The first rarity of the season was a **Brant** that hung out at a small artificial lake in downtown Middleburg from 1/6 until about 1/14 (JW m.ob.). Another rare bird was a young male **Dickcissel** that frequented a feeder at the Wenger family farm south of Port Trevorton 1/22-2/3 (CW, IW, AW), first photographed and reported to the wider community 1/26 (CK).

An informal note: The Wengers have also had a recurring chickadee from Jan forward that has been described as being appropriate for a **Carolina Chickadee**, but lack of documentation (some field notes from CK and DH during Dickcissel visits) and concerns about the possibility of a hybrid have delayed confirmation. Many other species that are uncommon but expected were found and reported to eBird. By the end of Feb 95 species (not counting Carolina Chickadee) had been reported, running a bit behind the pace of *Juniata* which reached 99 by the end of February 2018. Getting to 200 will be a challenge, but with the growing number of connections with local birders and the glory that is migration, we just might make it.

Observers: **Joe Gyekis, gyekis9@gmail.com**, Deuonne Hoffman, Chad Kauffman Jason Weller, Alvin Wenger, Charlene Wenger, Irene Wenger.

Somerset County

Locations: Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society CBC 12/16/18 (APAS

CBC), Berlin Area (BA), Bluebird Hill Farm (BHF), Confluence Area (CA), Cranberry Glade Lade (CGL), Flight 93 National Memorial (Flt 93), Laurel Hill State Park (LHSP), Ohiopyle CBC 1/5/19 – (OP-CBC), Payne Property (PP), Somerset Lake (SL), Quemahoning Reservoir (QR).

There were no spectacular rarities for the period, but a smattering of winter finds added some excitement. Weather was decent for the APAS-CBC and the new OP-CBC included a wedge of the county in the lower elevation CA yielding uncommon county wintering birds. Snowfall was below normal and temperatures fluctuated from subzero to 60.

A nice find amidst the 693 **Canada Geese** at L. Stonycreek for the APAS CBC was a **White-fronted Goose** (JM, MM, CP, JP). A **Mute Swan** persists near Jennerstown, seen 2/16 (CP, JP). Very interesting were 2 **Trumpeter Swans** first found at the end of the last reporting period at QR. They were seen by many observers 12/1-1/19, then on 1/27 there was a single bird that persisted through Feb. The other bird apparently perished as they previously acted like a pair – no bands were noted. There were 2 **Tundra Swan** reports with one 2/2-5 at QR (LG) and 11 in CA 2/17 (RC).

A very late **Wood Duck** was at CGL 12/30 (MJ). Puddle duck records included the following. Four **Gadwall** records with the latest fall record being one at SL 12/2 (MD) and the first spring sighting of 5 on 2/16 at SL (CP, JP). **American Wigeon** returned with 12 at SL 2/9-16 and 11 at QR 2/15 (LG). Many **Mallards** were present through the period. Good **American Black Duck** counts were 15 at CGL 12/30 (MJ) and 20 in BA 2/16 (CP, JP). Five **Northern Pintails** were first found at SL 2/9 (BI, MG). A couple **Green-Winged Teal** were around with one at SL 12/17 (CP) and one at QR 1/20 (LG).

Diving duck accounts included one **Canvasback** at 12/2 QR (PH), one on CLB (JM, MM, CP, JP), 4 at QR 2/9 (LG), and 9 on SL 2/26 (CP, JP). **Ring-necked Ducks** were still at QR with 6 on 12/31 (LG) and 4 were back at SL 2/16 (CP, JP). Two **Greater Scaup** were still at QR 12/5 (LG, PL) and one returned there 2/9 (LG). One **Lesser Scaup** was at QR 12/15 (CP, JP) and 4 returned there by 2/9 (LG). A **White-winged Scoter** was found for APAS CBC at QR (IF, TF). Single **Long-tailed Ducks** were found both 12/18 and 1/14 at QR (LG). **Buffleheads** were reported throughout season with a high of 44 at QR 12/5 (LG). A nice high count of 8 **Common Goldeneyes** were at QR 1/19 (PL), with other reports through season. Often reported, the **Hooded Merganser** high was at 36 at QR 12/5 (PL). **Common Mergansers** maxed at 27 also at QR 2/15 (LG). The only **Red-breasted Mergansers** reported were 2 on 1/5 at QR (LG).

Sadly, the only live **Ruffed Grouse** report was one at QR 12/23 with one recent road kill being found for APAS CBC. **Wild Turkey** numbers were about normal with winter flocks of 10-20 birds. **Pied-billed Grebes** were at QR up to the APAS CBC – then absent. There were 3 reports of single **Horned Grebe** at QR in Dec and Jan. A nice bird was a **Red-throated Loon** at QR 12/1 (MD, LG). The only **Common Loon** found was at Youghiogheny Reservoir Spillway 12/16 (MJ). A **Double-crested Cormorant** was at QR 12/1-6 (SC, LG). **Great Blue Herons** were reported through period with 4 at SL 1/4 providing the high count (CP).

The last **Turkey Vulture** was spotted at Addison 1/8 (BO) and the first returning was 2/15 near LHSP (JM, MM). **Bald Eagles** were seen throughout season with a high of 3 in CA (OP-CBC). **Red-shouldered Hawk** reports came from the Somerset area 1/4 (RT), CA 1/5 (CP, JP), and SGL 111 on 2/17 (DB). There were several **Rough-Legged Hawk** reports with one in BA 1/23 and 2/14 (JP), and at Flt 93 1/6 (MA), 2/16 (CP, JP), and 2 there 2/4 (JB, SB). An **Eastern Screech Owl** was reported from Somerset Borough 12/24 (AmH). **Great-Horned Owls** were at QR 12/2 (LG) and CGL 1/5 (CP, JP) and a **Barred Owl** at Flt 93 12/16 (MM, JM, CP, JP). Very exciting were 2 reports of the same **Long-eared Owl** in Jerome area 1/4 (PL) and 1/5 (LG).

Belted Kingfisher was reported 6 times 12/2–1/25, mostly in CA and QR. **Killdeer** were found in CA 2/7, 2/10, and 2/22 (BO), and 4 were at SL 2/16 (CP, JP). A nice early count of 158 **Ring-billed Gulls** was at QR 2/10 (LG). One **Herring Gull** was also found at QR 12/22 (LG). **Northern Flickers** were found a little later than normal with 2 at QR 12/15 and 2 in CA 1/5 (CP, JP). An excellent late sighting was a **Peregrine Falcon** at SL 12/17 harassing a **Great Blue Heron** (CP). The APAS-CBC

turned up a **Northern Shrike** at Flt 93 (MM, JM, CP, JP) that was subsequently seen by many observers until at least 12/21 (LG).

The high count of **Horned Larks** was 150 on Shaffer Road near Shanksville 2/12 (CP, JP). Their winter movements are complicated as they move through the area between Dec and Jan. **Red-breasted Nuthatches** had a decent year with multiples found on the CBC's and records through Feb. **Brown Creepers** were very well-represented with 6 on the APAS-CBC, several in CA for OP-CBC, and singles in Friedens 2/19 (SB) and QR 2/16 (CP, JP). The sole **Winter Wren** report came from QR 2/18 (LG) and **Carolina Wrens** persisted through a couple below zero episodes. **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were well represented, exemplified by 6 at QR 2/16 (JP). Conversely, the only **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** record was 1/5 in CA (CP, JP). **Eastern Bluebird**, **American Robin**, and **Northern Mockingbird** were found in low numbers through the period. A late **Gray Catbird** was at SL 12/2 (MD). The latest **Cedar Waxwing** record was 15 in CA 1/5 (CP, JP).

Evening Grosbeaks made a modest showing with nice flocks of 20 on 12/15 at LHSP (AH) and 15+ at feeders near LHSP 1/4 (MM, JM). **Purple Finches** breed, then usually leave for winter so a 1/3 report of 2 in BA 1/30 was welcome. One **Common Redpoll** was at BHF 2/22 (PL) for the only report. **Pine Siskins** were sparse with 3 on 12/7 and 2 on 1/12 at Glenmoor (LG), and one at PP 12/15 (CP, JP). There were 2 **Lapland Longspurs** and one **Snow Bunting** with numerous **Horned Larks** on Shaffer Road 12/18 (CP, JP).

Late **Chipping Sparrows** included 2 on APAS-CBC 12/16 (DeB). Three wintering **Field Sparrows** at QR were nice 1/3 (LG). **American Tree Sparrows** were present but the high count for any location of only 6 at PP was low. Unexpected was a **Fox Sparrow** in CA 1/5 for the OP-CBC. About 3 **White-crowned Sparrow** records and slightly more **White-throated Sparrow** records were found. **Swamp Sparrows** were present in low numbers in shrub/scrub swamps. The first returning **Eastern Towhee** was in Bakersville 2/20 (BC, SC). BHF had 100 **Red-winged Blackbirds** 2/22 (PL). A small flock of **Rusty Blackbirds** returned to a BA feeding station where they have been present most winters for several years (JC). The first returning **Common Grackle** turned up in Jennerstown for the Great Backyard Bird Count (JaC). **Yellow-rumped Warblers** persisted at QR 12/5 (PL), with 2 still there 1/6 (CP).

Observers: **Jeff Payne 9755 Glades Pike, Berlin, PA 15530 814-267-5718 paynemt@gmail.com**; Mark Alt (MA); Jill Bastian (JB); Scott Bastian (SB); Deb Bodenschatz (DeB); David Burison (DB); Rebecca Carsten (RC); Bill Cline (BC); Sandy Cline (SC); Janet Coleman (JaC); John Coughenour (JC); Janet Gleason (JG); Michael David (MD); Tim Fox (TF); Ian Fox (IF); Melanie Gainey (MG); Linda Greble (LG); Amanda Hersch (AmH); Audra Hixson (AH); Pam Hornick (PH); Bryan Isett; Matthew Juskowich (MJ); Paul Lehman (PL); Tom Miller (TM); Jim Moses (JM); Meg Moses (MM); Becky Ohler (BO); Chris Payne (CP); Jeff Payne (JP) and Rhiannon Thunell (RT).

Sullivan County

Locations: Dutch Mtn (DM), Canyon Vista Trail (CVT), Eagles Mere (EM), Kinsley's Corner (KC), LaPorte (LaP)

The winter season was relatively mild and included no major storm events. Snowfall amounts were not heavy. There were very few checklists entered in eBird for the period. No rarities were uncovered and no large invasions occurred. All observations are by the compiler except where noted.

As expected, waterfowl were not to be found with lakes and ponds frozen. Two mid-winter raptor surveys were run 2/2. A total of 9 **Red-tailed Hawks** were found throughout Cherry, Colley, and Forks townships. A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was in Colley Township and 2 **Rough-legged Hawks** were found near KC. The woodpecker family was well represented. **Red-bellied Woodpecker** was seen near EM 2/17 (PR). A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at LaP 2/17 (HS). Both **Downy** and **Hairy Woodpecker** appeared on multiple checklists. **Pileated Woodpecker** was seen along CVT 1/8 (RH) and in LaP 2/17 (HS). A **Brown Creeper** was along CVT 1/18 (RH). A **Tufted Titmouse** was seen in EM along with 2 **Purple Finches**, 7 **Pine Siskins**, and 2 **Brown-**

headed Cowbirds 2/17 (PR). Two **American Tree Sparrows** were observed on DM 2/2. A high of 11 **Dark-eyed Juncos** were in LaP 2/17 along with 7 **Northern Cardinals** (HS).

Observers : **Rob Megraw**, 131 Butternut Dr, Pottstown, PA 19464, (610) 858-6361 robert.r.megraw@gmail.com Rich Hanlon, Patricia Rider, Henry Street

Susquehanna County

Winter Season 2018-19 was one in which more warm weather species remained through the cold months than has traditionally been the case. Irruptive visitors from the north joined our resident populations and made for some exciting birding. Participation in the Great Backyard Bird Count was good, a new Christmas Bird Count circle was inaugurated, and three Winter Raptor Survey routes were completed. The local birding community actively shared sightings on their Facebook page and dutifully reported their findings to eBird. This in spite of the fact that a number of more active birders vacated the county for portions of the period. They ostensibly were studying local temperate migrants on their wintering grounds in Florida...right.

Two male **Canvasbacks** graced Quaker Lake for a month beginning 12/10 (EM, TN, NV). Another was present on Lake Chrisann 1/6 (JS). A small group of **Buffleheads** spent the first week of Jan on Quaker Lake 12/1-6 (EM). A male **Common Goldeneye** paid an unexpected visit to the Susquehanna River in Hallstead 2/22 (BS, GS). Good numbers of **Hooded Mergansers** remained in the county for all three reporting months, moving from lakes in Dec to the river in Jan, Feb (LN, BS, GS, WS, NV). A large raft of 28 was on Quaker Lake 12/5 (EM). Our fifteen miles of east/west-oriented Susquehanna River remained ice-free and were the winter home for healthy numbers of **Mallards** and **Common Mergansers**.

Wintering **Ruffed Grouse** were reported 9 times at multiple locations around the county (LN, BS, GS, WS, EM). While data suggests a declining population across the northeast, grouse seem to be present here in decent numbers. **Wild Turkey** continued to be found in good numbers, with high counts of 18 on a farm in Silver Lake Twp. 12/1 (EM) and 25 near South Gibson 12/21 (EB). Winter months and gulls don't mix this far north, so locating a group of 10 on a Hallstead parking lot (of course) was a unique find 12/22 (BS, GS). During a CBC scouting foray an overhead **Double-crested Cormorant** near Great Bend was the only sighting for the period 12/3 (BS, GS). **Great Blue Herons** were present in unusually large numbers in early winter. There were reports of the species at multiple locations: 15 reports in Dec, 2 in Jan, and one in Feb (m.ob.).

Three **Northern Harriers** were seen cruising expansive agricultural fields in the southern portion of the county 1/15 (EM), 1/16 (WS), and 2/28 (JS). Accipiters were few and far between. A single **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was present outside of New Milford 1/5 (NV). A lone **Cooper's Hawk** made a strafing run at feeder birds in Silver Lake Twp. 1/10 (EM). A single Coop was spotted on a WRS route 2/3 (EM, JS, JSt) and another was seen 7 times over a three-week period in Bridgewater Twp. 1/3-23 (LT). **Bald Eagle** numbers continue to climb. The Red Rock pair were present at their nest 12/4 (BS) and were subsequently viewed tending the site and defending it from interlopers. A single **Rough-legged Hawk** was fleetingly seen on a WRS route and represented the only report of the period 2/5 (EM, JS).

An **Eastern Screech-Owl** took up winter residence in a Wood Duck box near Friendsville 2/15 (MM). **Great Horned Owls** left 7 wake up calls outside 3 homes (EM, LN, NV). CBC birding produced 3 **Barred Owls**. Two were heard in pre-dawn hours at Salt Springs State Park 12/15 (DA, EM) and another was photographed during the daylight hours of count day in New Milford Twp. Our traditional location for viewing **Short-eared Owls** proved reliable once again. However, most visits netted a single bird seen, with one report of 2 (EM, BS, JS, DT). In the past one could expect to see 3-5 birds per visit. The area has become a hotbed of gas extraction with multiple active well pads proximate to the site. Hopefully we are not losing a favorite location for viewing this magnificent species.

At least 2 hardy **Belted Kingfishers** continued to find food well into Dec and Jan, being seen and heard at Quaker Lake (EM) and SGL 35

(EM, BS, GS). An immature **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was discovered on the exceptionally late date of 12/24, Christmas Eve, in SGL 35 (BS). If the parents had lost track of their youngster, hopefully Santa knew his way to the gamelands. Once a rare bird for *Susquehanna*, **Red-bellied Woodpecker** numbers continue to grow as do the proliferation of reports of the birds at backyard feeders. In fact, it was a great year for all woodpecker species with the 3 common members of the *Dryocopus* genus (**Hairy**, **Downy**, **Pileated**) present in strong numbers. **American Kestrels** were spotted 12 times and in as many locations around the county (m.ob.). A **Merlin** provided a nice view as it flew alongside a traveling vehicle south of Montrose 1/4 (JSt). *Susquehanna* is becoming a **Common Raven** haven as the population continues to grow. Twenty-one birds were reported to eBird during the winter season.

Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers were above average with many remaining to visit feeders through the winter. The master of arboreal camouflage, the **Brown Creeper**, did not escape the keen eyes of a few birders in Jan and Feb. "Wait! Did that tree bark just move?" **Carolina Wrens** were once rare visitors from the south in the warmer seasons. Now a few hale and hearty individuals are surviving our winter weather. **Golden-crowned Kinglets** proved difficult to locate this year but a pair was observed twice at the same location - 12/21 and 12/27 (BS, GS, NV). An **American Robin** posed for pictures in New Milford Twp. 12/13 and 18 (NV); and a small flock of 15 was present in SGL 35 on 2/22 (BS, GS). A **Brown Thrasher** overwintered at a private residence in Great Bend Twp. and was reported during the GBBC 2/18 (anon).

Susquehanna was a destination for irruptive winter finches. A flock of 15 **Evening Grosbeaks** were at a feeder in New Milford Twp. 12/7 and one at the same spot 12/12 (NV). Three more paid a brief visit to a feeder in Great Bend Twp. 12/8 (BS). A group of 17 **Common Redpolls** stopped traffic while picking grit from a dirt road near Milk Can Corners 12/13 (EM). One redpoll was photographed at a feeder near Forest Lake 1/27 (DD) and redpolls were seen 2 additional times in Feb at separate locations (JS, WS). Two species did not join the party. A single **Purple Finch** was at a feeder 12/6 (NV). **Pine Siskins** were only reported twice: 2 at a feeder near Woodbourne Forest Preserve 12/6 (JSt) and six at Salt Springs State Park 12/15 (EM). Our official "Season Opener" was a lone **Fox Sparrow** photographed on the morning of 12/1 (BS). This was the only sighting of the species, and serves as the closer for this report.

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Tioga County

Locations: Asaph (ASA), Bottom Hill Road (BHR), Burg Road (BUR), Canoe Camp Creek Road (CCCR), Corey Creek and Rt 6 (CC), Cowanesque Lake Recreation Area (CLRA), Gas Company Road (GCR), Hills Creek Lake Road (HCLR), Lamb's Creek Road; 41.811204, -77.1374278 (LCR), Lawrenceville (LAW), Marsh Creek Road (MCR), Meaker Road (MR), Nobles Road (NOR), Putnam Road (PUR), Railroad Grade Trail at Ives Run; 41.860662, -77.221324 (RGTIR), Roseville (ROS), Stony Fork (STF), The Muck in Niles Valley; 41.811054, -77.286940 (MNV), Tioga Reservoir (TR), Tioga-Hammond Lakes--Ives Run Rec. Area (THL), Wellsboro (WEL).

Data were obtained from eBird reports and the species are ordered according to eBird taxonomy. Data were collected from twenty-one locations by fourteen observers. Though Tioga received 25.41 inches of snow over the winter, open water at the Tioga-Hammond Lakes dam outfall, the connecting channel between the lakes and on several streams attracted 14 species of waterfowl, the most numerous being **American Black Duck** and **Common Merganser**. Three species of gulls, **Bonaparte's Gull**, **Ring-billed Gull** and **Herring Gull**, were reported from Dec through Feb, and one **Double-Crested Cormorant** was present in early Dec. A **Black Vulture** was seen in late Feb, and one **Golden Eagle** was reported 1/1. **Northern Harrier** was present in Dec and again in Feb. Four species of owl were reported: **Eastern Screech**

Owl, **Great Horned Owl**, **Barred Owl** and **Northern Saw-whet Owl**. The falcons were represented by just one **American Kestrel**, but of interest are one **Merlin** and one **Peregrine Falcon**, both which were reported near the city of Wellsboro. Two **Northern Shrikes** were reported from the Wellsboro and the Tioga-Hammond Lakes areas. In reference to the predicted fall irruption, **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was reported from five locations. **American Tree Sparrows**, currently believed to be in decline, were reported in low numbers (5 individuals and under), except at one location where a flock of 13 were seen on different days. One very late, or wintering, **Savannah Sparrow** was reported 1/5.

A large flock of **Tundra Swans** (individuals not counted) passed over a residence on Rte. 3027, one mile northeast of ASA 2/21 (JC). Twenty **American Black Ducks** were at the connecting channel Overlook at THL 2/3 (LD) and one **Canvasback** and one **Redhead** were at the channel at THL 2/19 (LD). A single **Ring-necked Duck** was seen at the connecting channel between the lakes at THL 2/7 (MW). One **Greater Scaup** and 3 **Lesser Scaup** were observed in the dam outflow channel at the TR 2/13 (LD). Four **Long-tailed Ducks** were seen at THL 1/10 (RH) and 4 **Common Goldeneyes** were seen on the connecting channel between the lakes at THL 2/9 (SM). One **Hooded Merganser** was seen from the bridge at SRR 2/18 (JC). **Common Mergansers** were reported from three locations: 95 at the connecting channel at THL 2/3 and 18 on both the Tioga River at MR 2/19 and at the spillway at CLRA 2/19 (LD).

A single **Ruffed Grouse** was reported 4.5 miles NW of Wellsboro on MCR 2/18 (LR). Fifteen **Wild Turkeys** were seen at BUR 2/15 (DY) and 13 at the intersection of Rte. 6 and GCR 2/23 (SM). One **Bonaparte's Gull** was at THL 12/4 (MW). **Herring Gulls** were observed at THL on separate occasions: 6 on 1/10 and 2 on 2/19 (RH, LD). One very late **Double-crested Cormorant** was at the connecting channel near Rte. 15 at THL 12/4 (MW).

An early **Black Vulture** was reported from 24767 Balsam Road, WEL 2/23 (SM). One **Golden Eagle** was seen flying over Marsh Creek between Webster Rd. and Rte. 287 from MCR 1/1 (JC). Three **Northern Harriers** were seen at the north end of the MNV 12/28, and another was seen from a residence on Charleston Rd., 2.3 miles east of WEL 2/19 (SM). Single **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were reported from three locations: LAW 2/17 (CL), MR 2/19 (LD), and off Tears Rd. 0.7mile southeast of ROS 2/24 (BSil). One **Cooper's Hawk** was observed along HCLR 2/16 (LD).

Multiple sightings of **Bald Eagle** included a pair on a nest on MCR 1/1 (JC), 2 at THL 1/10 (RH), 2 immatures and one adult at the connecting channel at THL 2/7 (MW), one immature and one adult at the outflow of TR 2/13 (LD), 3 immatures at the channel overlook at the dam at THL 2/19 (LD), 11 immatures and 2 adults at the spillway of CLRA 2/19 (LD), one immature one mile northeast of ASA 2/21 (JC), 3 adult and 3 immature birds at the lake connecting channel at Rte. 15, THL 2/23 (MW), and one adult **Bald Eagle** observed from Rte. 3027, one mile northeast of ASA 2/28 (JC). One **Red-shouldered Hawk** was observed at RGTIR 2/9 (LD). Multiple reports of **Red-tailed Hawks** came from eight locations including singles at MCR 1/1, Kendrick Rd at STF 1/26, BUR 2/2, the connecting channel at THL 2/3, the Tioga River at MR 2/19, 2 at BHR 2/19, and single birds reported at NOR 2/22 and CCCR 2/24 (JC, RH, LD and LS). Multiple reports of **Rough-legged Hawks** included 2 from MCR 1/1 (JC), one from BUR 2/15 (DY), and a single observation from BHR 2/19 (LD).

One **Eastern Screech-Owl** was heard during a nocturnal observation at CC 2/15 (WE). One **Great Horned Owl** was reported near the bridge at SRR 2/3 (JC), one **Barred Owl** from PUR 1/22 (LD) and one **Northern Saw-whet Owl** at WEL 2/27 (LH). One **American Kestrel** was observed at 859 GCR 2/23 (SM). A single **Merlin** was sighted in WEL 1/12 (LD) and one **Peregrine Falcon** was observed on at coordinates 41.689620, -77.409751 on BUR 2/2 (LD). Two **Northern Shrikes** were found: one at 2476 Balsam Rd., WEL 2/1 (SM) and one at the connecting channel at THL 2/3 (LD).

Horned Larks were reported from three locations: 7 from Kendrick Rd. 1.3 miles north of STF 1/26 (RH), 25 at 233 Lawton Rd., west of STF 2/1 (SM), and 45 birds observed from BUR 2/15 (DY). **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was reported from five locations: 4 along Marsh Creek between Webster Rd. and Rte. 287 via MCR 1/1 (JC), 2 at International Designs, WEL

1/22 (JC), one from BUR 2/2 (LD), 4 from Cowanesque Lake at LAW 2/17 (CL), and one at a residence on Rte. 287, 5.8 miles south of WEL 2/27 (DKP). Forty **Common Redpolls** were seen at THL 12/31 (RH).

One **Lapland Longspur** was seen along Kendrick Rd. near STF 1/26 (RH), and two **Snow Buntings** were observed at 233 Lawton Rd., west of STF. One wintering **Chipping Sparrow** was found at LCR 2/1 (LD). Six accounts of **American Tree Sparrows** were reported, in low numbers: 2 and 5 birds at HCLR 1/22 and 2/16 (LD), one at a residence off Rte. 287, 5.8 miles south of WEL 2/27 (DKP) and two sightings of 13 birds at a residence on Rte. 3027, one-mile north east of ASA 2/21 and 2/28 (JC). A single **White-crowned Sparrow** was present at Cowanesque Lake at LAW 2/17 (CL) and a wintering **Savannah Sparrow** found along Marsh Creek, 1 mile east of ASA 1/5 (JC). A single **Rusty Blackbird** was seen one mile north east of ASA 2/18 (JC).

Observers: **Robert Snyder, (814) 753-2629-cell, birdphotoginpa@gmail.com**, John Corcoran (JC), Lisa Doud (LD), William Earley (WE), Rich Hanlon (RH), Linda Helt (LH), Cynthia Losey (CL), Sean Minnic (SM), Dale and Karen Plumley (DKP), Lori Redell (LR), Barbara Silverstein (BSil), Laura Steele (LS), Matthew West (MW), Monika Wood (MW) and Deb Young (DY).

Union County

A lone **Snow Goose** was reported 2/10 and 2/27 along Sanford Bates Drive, plus a flyby flock nearby at Dale's Ridge Trail 2/27 (MH). A **Horned Grebe** was at Saint Anthony Street Park in Lewisburg 2/14 (CH). Several **Rough-legged Hawks** were found around the Hartleton/SGL 317 area 1/22 through 2/2 (SH, JG, RH, JK, DT), with additional birds west of Glen Iron and around Red Bank 2/2 (RH) and near New Berlin and Vicksburg 2/14 (JG). A pair of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were found at a farm near White Springs 2/15 (RR). A late **Chipping Sparrow** visited a Lewisburg feeder 1/19 (RL). A trio of **Savannah Sparrows** perched on a tree above Zimmerman Road 2/14 (JG).

Observers: **Joe Gyekis, 720 N. Allen St. State College, PA 16803 gyekis9@gmail.com**, Russell Lamb, Matthew Heintzelman, Conor Higgins, Robert Hosler, John Kauffman, Thomas Rippon, David Taylor.

Venango County

Locations: Allegheny River (AR), Buttermilk Hill Nature Sanctuary (BHNS), Franklin (FR), Kahle Lake (KL), Oil City area (OCA), Oil Creek State Park (OCSP).

There were a total of 67 species recorded this season. As is typical many waterfowl species were seen in early December & then again in mid to late February. All waterfowl records are from AR unless otherwise noted. Tundra Swan had no early Dec records, but flocks of them were seen 2/27-28 at OCA and BHNS (RS, JS, KG). The only **American Black Duck** record was 2/23 (JS). **Canvasback** were noted through 12/3 (GE) and from 2/22 (GE), with a flyby miles from any water on our northern WRS route 2/4 (RS, GE, NK). **Ring-necked Duck** were present through 12/6 at KL (GE) and **Greater Scaup** 2/22 through the end of the period (GE). **Lesser Scaup** through 12/3 at KL and 2/22 onward. **Common Goldeneye** had no early records, but were present 1/29 (JS, KG) through the end of the period. There were no early **Hooded Merganser** records, but from 2/8 (NK, MK) were at OCSP through season's end. **Ruddy Ducks** were observed through 12/6 (GE) at KL, but none later in the season.

Killdeer appeared mid-season at KL 1/28 (NK, MK). **Ring-billed Gulls** were seen on AR 2/7 (RS). **Great Blue Herons** were reported through 12/30 and not after that. Spring **Turkey Vulture** observations began 2/23 (JS, KG) BHNS. The **Bald Eagle** nest near AR had the female sitting on the nest by 2/22; other sites were reported on nest soon after that date. There were occasional **Belted Kingfisher** reports through 12/30 from various locations, but no reports after that date.

Red-breasted Nuthatch was reported from a feeder in Seneca all season (GE). **Brown Creeper** reports went through the end of Jan. Our only **Golden-crowned Kinglet** reports for the period were 12/28 (JS, KG)

and on the Pleasantville CBC. **Eastern Bluebirds** were observed through 12/30 and from 2/4 onward. **American Robins** were spotted on occasions throughout the period. Unusual for *Venango* were **Cedar Waxwing** reports all through the season - seen mostly in FR where there are many ornamental crab apples.

American Tree Sparrow was recorded through the period, but always in very small numbers, mostly one or two individuals; we normally have far more of individuals. A **Field Sparrow** was at KL 12/9 (GE). **Fox Sparrow** had few reports: 12/1 at OCA (NK, MK) and 1/1-3 at FR (NB). One **Swamp Sparrow** was near Pithole 12/30 (GE). **Eastern Towhee** was seen at a feeding station at OCA 1/12 (NK, MK). **Red-winged Blackbird** returned to a feeding station at OCA 2/10 (NK, MK). The only **Brown-headed Cowbird** observations were 12/13 and 2/4, both near KL. **Purple Finch** were uncommon, with a few sightings through 12/22, and one 2/4 at OCSP. **Pine Siskins** were at feeding stations in Seneca & FR area all season. *Venango* had one **Evening Grosbeak**, at OCA 12/23 (NK, MK).

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Warren County

Locations: Akeley Swamp (AS), Allegheny River (AR), Big Four Rd (BF), Chapman Dam State Park (CD), City of Warren (CW), Columbus (CO), Eccles Road (ER), Hatch Run Conservation Area (HR), Kinzua dam (KD), Russell (RU); Tidioute (TI)

Waterfowl numbers seemed rather inconsistent this winter. A seasonal high total, 98 **Mallards** were spotted at CP on 12/23 (KT). A nice mixed flock of **Canvasbacks**, **Redheads**, **Common Goldeneyes**, **Common Mergansers**, and a single **Ruddy Duck** was spotted on the AR 2/1 (BB, SS, DLW). A high of 4 Common Goldeneyes were seen near TI 12/19 (EN), and up to 10 **Common Mergansers** at RR 1/14 (SS). Thirteen **Buffleheads** were at RR 12/15 (JB). The *Warren* CBC reported a 25-year low count of 24 **Hooded Mergansers** on the AR (m.ob.).

Three **Ruffed Grouse** flushed at CD 12/14 (MN), 3 others at TI 1/29 (EN), and 3 more at HR 1/11 (MM). A high of 35 **Wild Turkeys** were seen at ER 12/6 (SS). A **Golden Eagle** soared by KD 1/29 (JF). Of note was an adult **Northern Goshawk** at AS 1/3 (IR). The two winter raptor surveys run in *Warren* reported average numbers of hawks. Multiple **Rough-legged Hawks**, of both color phases, were reported from various locations (BB, JF, SS, DLW); none had been seen for the past three winters in *Warren*. Few **American Kestrels** were seen; singles were near CO 1/13 (JH) and near RU 1/14 (JF). **Ring-billed Gulls** were sparse; a mere 5 reported on the *Warren* CBC was the lowest total in 37 years (m.ob.). A **Barred Owl** was spotted sitting on telephone wire in broad daylight at ER 2/27 (SS).

A single **Eastern Phoebe** spotted during the CBC at RR 12/15 (DW) was only the second ever recorded on the *Warren* CBC in its 75 years. A total of 14 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** on the *Warren* CBC was one indicator of their abundance this winter, another flight year (m.ob.). At least 6 frequented a feeder in CW 2/17 (VV). A high count of 4 **Golden-crowned Kinglets** were seen near HR 12/15 (TR). **Cedar Waxwings** stuck around all winter, with as many as 24 seen together at AS 1/3 (IR). The first **Red-winged Blackbirds** of the year just squeaked into the season, showing up at various feeders throughout *Warren* 2/28 (m.ob.).

Although it seemed to be a flight year elsewhere in the Northeast, the only *Warren* report of **Evening Grosbeaks** came from feeders near TI 1/24 (EN). **Purple Finches** were unusually scarce, with none counted during the *Warren* CBC; a pair were spotted in SG 1/2 (IR). Scattered reports of **Pine Siskins** came from throughout *Warren*, with high counts of 12 at BF 12/15 (TR, SS) and 9 near RU 1/14 (JF). **American Goldfinches** remained plentiful, with an amazing count of 80 from TI 1/29 (EN). **American Tree Sparrows** seemed particularly sparse this winter; only 4 were tallied on the CBC, compared to an average count of about

60 (m.ob.); a high count of just 9 were spotted at HR 1/11(MM). In contrast, **Dark-eyed Juncos** were ubiquitous, with as many as 34 seen in TI 1/29 (EN). A single **White-crowned Sparrow** was observed in CW 2/18 (AA). One male **Eastern Towhee** braved the winter weather in TI, seen from 1/29 on (EN).

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Washington County

Locations: Bentleyville (BENT), Canonsburg Lake (CL), Cross Creek County Park (CC), Peters Township (PET), Washington Reservoir #4 (R4).

The only **Tundra Swan** was one at Boone Res. 2/25 (MAP). A nice tally of 6 **Northern Shovelers** was made in PET 12/3 (GG). Handfuls of **American Black Ducks** were reported occasionally throughout the season at BENT (RI, JF, JP, MM), and 4 were at Washington Cemetery 1/17 (RI). A significant fallout at a pond near BENT 2/17 occurred ahead of a rainstorm (RI). Over 600 birds were on the pond highlighted by the following: 100 **Canvasbacks**, 40 **Redheads**, 35 **Ring-necked Ducks**, 3 **Greater Scaup**, 45 **Lesser Scaup**, 2 **Buffleheads**, 5 **Common Goldeneyes**, 25 **Common Mergansers**, 2 **Ruddy Ducks**, at least 300 **Ring-billed Gulls**, and 25 **Herring Gulls**. Despite the lack of rarities (except perhaps goldeneye, which is difficult to find in *Washington* even on the Mon River), any fallout of this magnitude is noteworthy in *Washington*, and the count of 100 Canvasbacks probably represents a new all-time high for the county.

A count 10 Canvasbacks in Fredericktown 1/29 (JF) was itself notable, even as it was dwarfed by the BENT fallout by an order of magnitude. All of the above species were seen in much smaller numbers in a few other locations as well, particularly in Feb. Another Common Goldeneye was at CC 2/16 and 2/27 (RI), and one was in Fredericktown 1/29 (JF). A **Long-tailed Duck** was at the same pond in BENT 12/17 (JF, JP, MM), rare for both the county and particularly the date; the species is more expected here, inasmuch that it is "expected" at all, in late winter (i.e., Feb or Mar). A Herring Gull hung around a pond in Eighty-Four 12/31-1/18 (GG).

Both **Northern Harrier** and **Rough-legged Hawk** were noted at grasslands near Cherry Valley 1/8 (JF, JP). **Short-eared Owl** was reported at its traditional wintering location in Robinson Twp. only on 1/19 (RI), but they were probably present all winter. Several reports of **Merlin** included one in McMurray 12/16 (RT), one at Peters Lake 12/18 (JF) and 2 there 1/21 (GG), one at Washington Cemetery 1/17 (RI), and one in PET 2/13 (GG).

Very little worth mentioning was reported among passerines. Twenty **Horned Larks** were counted in the Buffalo Creek IBA 12/16 (AT) and 40 were on Parkview Road outside of CC 1/12 (RI). A wintering **Hermit Thrush** was detected at CC 1/16 (RI). A massive flock of **European Starlings**, numbering at least 1500 birds, descended on a Washington yard 1/12 (RI), and an **Eastern Towhee** was seen sporadically in the same yard several times throughout the winter. A nice count of 30 **American Tree Sparrows** was made in Robinson Twp. 2/9 (MF). **Fox Sparrow** and several **White-crowned Sparrows** at the Buffalo Creek IBA 12/16 (AT) were also notable on that outing along with the lark flock. Forty **Red-winged Blackbirds** were still at Canonsburg Lake 12/29 (GG).

Observers: **Geoff Malosh, 7762 Maumee Western Road, Maumee, OH 43537-9334, (412) 735-3128, pomarine@earthlink.net**, Mike Fialkovich, John Flannigan, Gigi Gerben, Roy Ickes, Michele Mannella, Joe Papp, Mary Ann Pike, Amy Taracido, Ryan Tomazin, Bill Zinn.

Wayne County

Three **Common Goldeneye** were seen on the Lackawaxen River near Hawley 2/25 (DJ, RJ). Three **Ruddy Ducks** were reported at Lake Genero 12/11 (RJ). Three **Rough-legged Hawk**, 2 dark and one light morph, were nicely photographed along Rte. 652 near Honesdale 2/2 (MS). This location has been reliable for Rough-legs in the past. An adult **Northern Shrike** was spotted along Rutledge Dale Rd. during the WRS 2/16 (DA).

Observers: **Josh Jones, unclchu76@gmail.com**, Dan Altif, Dave Johnson, Ryan Johnson, Michael Schall.

Westmoreland County

Locations: Beaver Run Reservoir Rt. 380 Overlook (BRR-380), Conemaugh River Lake (CRL), Donegal Lake (DL), Ethel Springs Reservoir (ESR, also more commonly known as Derry Lake), Ice Pond/Lady of the Lake east of Ligonier (IP), Kuehl Property – Murrsville (KP), Latrobe Reservoir (LR, also known as Trout Run Reservoir), Loyalhanna Dam (LD), New Stanton (NS), Northmoreland Park (NMP), Ridgeview Golf Course – Wilpin (RGC), St. Vincent Lake (SVL), Westmoreland Heritage Trail through the MAWC property (WHT-BR), Wiser Lane pond - just northeast of the Beaver Run Rt. 380 Overlook (WLP).

Two CBC's were conducted during the season; the 45th Bushy Run count (12/30) and the Rector count (12/23). Thanks to Dick Byers and Luke DeGroote for their compilation work. Their winter therapy between Spring and Fall hawk migrations, Tom and Janet Kuehl conducted four WRS routes in *Westmoreland*.

A single **Snow Goose** originally found at WHT-BR 12/16 (KB) was subsequently reported by several observers with a final observation made 1/28 at BRR-380 (SM). One **Snow Goose** with around 20 **Canada Geese** flew over Rt. 22 just west of Blairsville 2/3 (JK). A species being reported more frequently in state in recent winters, a photograph of 2 **Greater White-fronted Geese** was included in an eBird checklist for SVL 12/22 (AM). Possibly one of those birds was reported in the Ligonier area the next day, and thus made the tally for the Rector CBC. Two Greater White-fronted Geese were last reported at SVL 1/20 (SM). Again, the possibly of same birds was one Greater White-fronted Goose, appropriately (almost) at the Gray Goose Restaurant pond east of Ligonier 1/3 (JK), and apparently continued at that location to 1/6 (RH). A high count, there were 360 **Canada Geese** covering SVL 1/2 (MH, RH). There were several scattered reports of **Tundra Swan**: at IP 3 on 12/3 (SM) and 5 on 12/10 (SM), 10 at ESR 1/24 (JK), and at WHT-BR, one 1/27 (PF/SM) and one 1/28 (SM).

Reports for puddle ducks were mostly made late in the season as open water became more available. An example was that there were no reports of **Wood Ducks** until very late in the season, with the high count then being of 3 WHT-BR 2/28 (KB). Of the well-scattered reports for **Gadwall**, the high count was the 3 at SVL 2/27 (RC). The high count for **American Wigeon** was of 5 at SVL 2/26 (RC), and for **American Black Duck** 15 at ESL 2/15 (SM). The only **Green-winged Teal** was a late-season bird at WLP 2/26 (PF). The only report of the season, 6 **Northern Pintails** were found on a farm pond on Garlando Road near New Alexandria by the Karen Jackson Party, the observation coming before the season's coldest weather set in, and part of the tally for the Bushy Run CBC. There were no reports for Northern Shoveler.

Often found in greater numbers, the high count for any of the diving ducks was the 26 **Ring-necked Ducks** at SVL 2/26 (RC). Reports were provided for **Canvasback** (7 at BRR-380 on 2/23 (KB)), **Redhead** (5 in a photograph uploaded to a 2/27 eBird checklist (RC)), **Greater Scaup** (one at WLP 2/10 (MD)) and one at CRL 2/23 (SM)), **Lesser Scaup** (4 at CRL 2/23 (SS)), **Bufflehead** (widely reported at several location including the high count of 12 on 12/3 at LR (SM)) and **Common Golden-eye** (8 at WHT-BR 2/11 (KB)). BRR-380 was prolific for mergansers for the season – many eBirds checklists but no more than 14 **Hooded Mergansers** 12/30 (RH), and again many checklists for **Common**

Merganser, many of which were of high numbers, including a stunning count of 272 on 1/17 (SM). BRR-380 provided for the only report for **Red-breasted Merganser**, with 2 on 2/26 (SM). The season high count for **Ruddy Duck** was of 6 on the lake at Minnitto Golf Course 12/3 (SM).

Reflecting a decline due to West Nile Virus, the only **Ruffed Grouse** report was of one found by the Chris Sheedy Party near Stahlstown on the Rector CBC. Quite a flock, 71 **Wild Turkeys** were along Ankney Road north of Derry 1/23 (SM). Three grebe species were found; however, very few reports and never more than single birds on any of the observations. One **Pied-billed Grebe** and one **Red-necked Grebe** were tallied during the Bushy Run CBC at the Beaver Run Reservoir (RH, DM, TM). **Horned Grebe** reports were one in an eBird checklist with a photograph 1/2 (TM), one at LD 2/23 (JK) and one at ESR 2/28 (TK). There were many reports for **American Coot** at ESL during the season, with the highest count of 17 at BRR-380 on 12/15 (KB). **Killdeer** were recorded at several locations during the season; 7 were included in a 2/16 eBird checklist for DL (AM). With few reports from elsewhere, 35 **Ring-billed Gulls** were at BRR-380 on 12/9 (SM).

The Ligonier Valley continues as a hot spot for wintering vultures and is often the only location for **Black Vultures** in the western part of the state; the total tally was 21 for Black Vultures on the 12/23 Rector CBC and among several reports for the season was one of 9 Black Vultures seen just south of Ligonier 2/16 (AM). There were many scattered eBird reports of **Turkey Vultures**, and substantial counts for the 12/23 Rector CBC (36) and 34 was a new record-high for the WRS Ligonier Valley route run 1/14 (JLK/TK). Reports for **Northern Harrier** from WRS routes were: one female on Derry Lane (west of Blairsville) 1/15, one stunning Gray Ghost male on Shady Lane near Crabtree (KB, JLK, TK), and a juvenile on Klaka Road near Pleasant Unity 1/21 (JLK, TK, SG). The grassland habitat west of Blairsville provided a report of 2 harriers on Laughlin Farm Road 2/16 (SM). An eBird checklist for Grand View Farm near Wilpin included a photograph of a harrier 2/3 (AM). One **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was tallied during the running of the Kuehl WRS Ligonier Valley route 1/14 (JLK, TK). An irregular hunter at the feeders at the KP, one **Cooper's Hawk** made its first visit 12/2 and was last seen 2/13. Good to note that there were many scattered reports for **Bald Eagle**, which again gathered in significant numbers at the LD location this winter season – 12 were tallied 2/10 (JLK, TK), while eagle-watchers who spent more time there reported a total of 18 seen that day. A small data sample supportive to other reports of increasing wintering **Red-shouldered Hawk** in the state is the new high count of 6 for the Bushy Run CBC, which included 3 in the air together near Mamont (JLK, TK, SG) and a record high WRS count of 5 for the Kuehl Slickville WRS Route run on 1/22 (KB, JLK, TK). Photographs of 2 **Red-shouldered Hawks** were in an eBird checklist for Bethel Church Road 1/19 (AM). The 4 WRS routes run in *Westmoreland* in 2019 document the continuing abundance of the **Red-tailed Hawk** with a combined 0.39 Red-tails per mile.

Eastern Screech-Owl was tallied on both the Rector and Bushy Run CBCs and, representing the first since 2015, a red-phase hung out at its box all day at the Byers property in Stahlstown 12/3 (DB). **Barred Owls** were first heard at the KP 12/23 and were heard periodically during the season to 2/28. On the WHT-Del, 2 **Great Horned Owls** were tallied for the Bushy Run CBC (KB). For the season found only at Rolling Rock for the Rector CBC, were 3 **Red-headed Woodpeckers**. Rare in the winter, but not unexpected, early season reports of single **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were at NS 12/5 (MF) and LH 12/8 (AM).

Providing the only observations of the 2 larger falcons - one **Merlin** was seen near Mt. Pleasant 1/19 (GS, MS) and one **Peregrine Falcon** on a WRS route near the Westmoreland Fairgrounds 1/21 (SG, JLK, TK). Earlier that day the same observers saw a **Common Raven** on the Fairgrounds property, one of a number of reports from west of the Laurel Highlands. The most significant counts of **Horned Lark** were in late Jan: on 1/21, during the running of a WRS route and 21 in farm habitat on Blacksmith Road near Pleasant Unity (SG, JLK, TK); higher counts were made in the grasslands between Blairsville and Derry – 48 on Laughlin Farm Road 1/20 (SM) and then 50 on 1/23 (SM), and at the McBroom Farm. with 68 on 1/25 (PF, SM).

Sometimes missed for the winter season, however not in this mild irruption year, **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was tallied on both the Bushy

Run and Rector CBC's, and other reports were scattered; for example, to the west one at the Moser's home in Murrysville 1/30 (TM) and in the far eastern part of *Westmoreland* 2 at RGC 12/23 (AM). **Brown Creeper** was tallied for both CBC's and was a regular visitor at the KP; one first seen 1/3, 2 on 2/3, and continuing through 2/26 (JLK/TK). In an area where they breed, one **Winter Wren** was reported at LRSP 12/10 (SM). **Golden-crowned Kinglet** is expected and was widely reported during; however, less expected was one late **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, a nice tick for the Bushy Run CBC at the Walters Reserve (JK, TK, SG). Rare in any season at lower elevations, another good addition to the Bushy Run CBC tally was a **Hermit Thrush**, spotted in fruit trees with **American Robins** on Turack Road north of Delmont 12/30 (JLK). One Hermit Thrush in a higher elevation location was reported at RGC 12/23 (AM). Several large flocks of **Cedar Waxwings** were reported: 45 at Tubmill Reservoir 12/8 (AM), 50 for the Bushy Run CBC at BRR-380 on 12/30 (RH), and at the Loyalhanna Watershed Wetland just east of Ligonier, with 50 on 1/3 (JK).

Purple Finch was tallied for both CBC's. One male Purple Finch was at the Byers property 12/3 (DB) and a female first visited the KP feeders 1/13 and continued with occasional visits through 2/27. Eight **Pine Siskins** visited the KP feeders 12/2 (JLK, TK). Also reported early in the season, an eBird Checklist for LH included a photo of one of 3 siskins 12/8 (AM). Dipped on for both CBC's, there were just 3 reports of singles **Fox Sparrows**; including one with a photo in an eBird Checklist for the Moser property in Murrysville 1/3 (TM). Just a few reports were made, and never more than one, of **Eastern Towhee**, which was missed on both CBC's; a female was an irregular visitor to the KP feeders with a first appearance 2/5 and last seen 2/27. **White-crowned Sparrow**, while expected but not widely reported, is often found in farm habitat and occasionally at feeders. Dozens of White-crowns were seen with many **Dark-eyed Juncos** and one rare-in-winter **Field Sparrow** in the farm area along Garlando Road during the running of a WRS route 1/15 (KB, LK, TK). White-crowned Sparrow was reliable at the feeders at the Winner Palmer Nature Reserve in Latrobe - 5 were there 1/19 (MJ). Adjacent to farmland, 12 White-crowns and 3 **Brown-headed Cowbirds** were feeder visitors at a home home near Scottsdale 1/31 (GS). One **Common Grackle** was at KP feeders 12/3 (JK), however the species was missed for both CBC's. A leucistic **Northern Cardinal** discovered at the feeders at Winnie Palmer Nature Center 2/11 was photographed, but not seen again despite efforts to relocate (JLK). Over wintering **Yellow-rumped Warblers** are expected but were rare this year; 2 at Rolling Rock were tallied for the (AC, CL) Rector CBC and 2 at Beaver Run Reservoir made the Bushy Run CBC tally (RH).

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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 CBC, held 12/16, realized the worst results in at least 15 years. The weather was "awful," and we recorded only 56 species. That compares to 69, the average of the previous five years, and 72, the average over the last fifteen. Furthermore, the number of individuals totaled only 3661, compared to a five-year average of 8186 and a fifteen-year average of 8435. Tough birding! However, we did get a great look at an albino **Red-tailed Hawk** just outside of Laceyville.

Other significant results from the CBC and other reports from county birders are shown here, focusing on winter transients, through migrators, and species that breed in *Wyoming* and "should" be gone. As usual, a

few holdovers were recorded.

Ring-necked Duck, a commonly recorded migrant, was reported on only twice: 12/1, when 3 visited OL (JD, MC) and one 2/28 at LC (JS). There were 3 reports of **Bufflehead**, also a common migrant: 3 at LC 12/16 (RK), one at LC 1/8 (MC), and one at SF 2/2 (EZ). **Common Goldeneye** was recorded on 2 occasions: one at LC 12/8 (DT, JT) and 2 at SF 2/2 (JS); my records indicate that these are the first records in *Wyoming* in two years. Another common migrant, single **Ruddy Ducks** were recorded 12/1 and 12/4 at OL (JD).

One highlight for the period is the rare record of a non-breeding **Red-throated Loon** at LC 12/1 (JD). This bird was recorded just one week after an earlier report at the lake (see my fall narrative). To my knowledge these are the first records in *Wyoming* since the spring of 2011. Another highlight is the presence of **Rough-legged Hawks** at SF throughout Jan and Feb and into March; only the second records of the species in *Wyoming* since 2010. Six different birders recorded Rough-legs during the period, from one to 6 in number (RK, DT, JD, EZ, JDB, JSh).

A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was recorded at GF 12/15 (RK). Twenty **Pine Siskins**, a transient in *Wyoming*, were recorded at a backyard feeder 12/16 during the CBC (MB and JJ). **American Tree Sparrow** was recorded at five different locations (JB, LC, GF, EMNC, SF), in numbers from one-15, by four different birders (JD, MC, RK, EZ). The rest of the species of note are breeding season residents of *Wyoming* that normally migrate out of the area during winter. As usual, there were records of these "out of season" birds. Twenty-six **Field Sparrows** were recorded at GF 12/15 (RK). One **Swamp Sparrow** made an appearance during the CBC at GF (RK), when 4 **Red-winged Blackbirds** were tallied at GF (RK). A **Common Grackle** was near Evans Falls 12/7 (SD). Finally, 2 warbler species were recorded: **Common Yellowthroat** was found during the CBC at GF 12/16 (RK). **Yellow-rumped Warblers** were recorded at LC 1/10 and 1/17 (MC).

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York County

Locations: Codorus State Park (CSP), Hopewell Twp Park (HTP), Lake Redman (LR), Long Arm Reservoir (LAR), Spring Grove (SG), State Game Lands #243 (SGL), York Christmas Bird Count (YCBC), York Springs Christmas Bird Count (YSCBC)

The period's 114 species count remains consistent with recent years. Overall waterfowl frequency of reporting and above average flock counts for *York* were noteworthy. The 12/27 YSCBC produced the period's highlight, a county first **LeConte's Sparrow**. The YSCBC found 70 species in the *York* portion of the circle while the YCBC on 1/4 produced 76 species.

Snow Goose reports and counts are usually pretty limited in the county. Six reports and high counts of 60 on the YCBC and an estimated 150 at Valley Acres Rd 2/23 (DK) may suggest a little more westerly drift from their typical movement. Single **Cackling Geese** were found at John Rudy County Park 12/1 (AWg), Gateway Hanover retention ponds 1/7 (DN), and LR 2/27-28 (BR). **Mute Swan** remain year round residents at SG with a high count of 7 birds.

Northern Shoveler and **Gadwall** were each found at 3 locales. Nice Gadwall counts included up to 32 at Lake Lea (m. ob.) and 44 at SG (m. ob.). Seven reports of **American Black Duck** 12/25-2/27 (m. ob.) were paced by a 15-count at SG 1/4 (CB). The strength of the waterfowl reporting was evident with multiple locales (# in parentheses) reporting (m.ob.): **Northern Pintail** (9), **Canvasback** (8), **Redhead** (4), **Greater Scaup** (4), **Lesser Scaup** (7), and **Common Goldeneye** (5). These

sightings produced some nice counts for *York*; 118 pintails at LAR 2/15 (PK), 9 Canvasback at LAR 2/4 (HM, DN), 66 Redhead at CSP 2/2 (CB), 20 Lesser Scaup at SG 2/20 (AM, RS), and 8 Common Goldeneye at LAR 2/4 (HM). The 4 reports of **Green-winged Teal** were in a fairly tight window 12/19-1/4 (m.ob.). Single **Long-tailed Ducks** were found at LR 12/6 (RS) and at a pond along Associates Dr 2/22 (BR). In contrast to the strong reporting for the above species, **Ruddy Duck**, **Pied-billed Grebe**, **Horned Grebe**, **American Coot**, and **Common Loon** were infrequently noted. A Pied-billed Grebe seemed to be out of place on a wooded section of the Codorus Creek 12/3-10 (DHe). The only Horned Grebe report was a pair at CSP 1/5-22 (CB, DH, DNN) while the sole Common Loon was at CSP 12/23 (CB). American Coot winter numbers at CSP usually approach and even exceed 100 birds. This year's high count was only 13 birds.

The 3 **Ring-necked Pheasant** reports (CB, DT, DW, YSCBC) all came from SGL or adjacent property. A strong 19 reports (m.ob.) of **Wild Turkey** included 4 counts of over 30 birds with a count of 90 on the YCBC. Single **Wilson's Snipe** were found at LR 12/21 (KJ) and HTP 2/10 (DF). The Riddle Rd landfill held up to 2000 **Ring-billed Gulls** 1/15 (DN). Six reports of **Herring Gull** were led by an 8-count over Samuel Lewis SP 2/16-17 (FK). The only **Greater Black-backed Gull** report was a single at CSP 2/9 (RJ). **Double-crested Cormorants** were in the county until 1/4-5 at CSP (CB, AP).

A **Black Vulture** roost along Stoverstown Rd 1/4 (CB) held 135 birds and drove a YCBC count total of 318 birds. A mixed vulture roost in a Dover Twp cherry orchard held over 100 birds throughout the period. Other raptor reporting was at typical levels. Three reports (CB, DNN, AWg) of **Eastern Screech Owl**, 10 sites reporting **Great Horned Owl**, and 5 locales reporting **Barred Owl** represented somewhat stronger reporting than normal. HTP provided the only **Short-eared Owl** report, 2 birds 12/10 (RP). As noted in prior narratives, this tract underwent invasive control in late 2017. Hopefully, eventual full growth of favorable grasses will produce a positive outcome and HTP will continue its status as the county's leading grassland habitat. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** at Nixon County Park 2/14 (AWg) provided the only report.

The northeastern corner of the county and the CBCs produced the **Red-headed Woodpecker** reports. SGL held up to 2 birds 12/27-1/2 (CE, DM, SW) and Gifford Pinchot SP held a pair 12/19-2/28 (m.ob.). The YCBC produced 3. Seven reports (m.ob.) each of **Merlin** and **Peregrine Falcon** represent strong winter reporting for *York*. **Eastern Phoebe** singles were at LR 12/19 (BR) and Wrightsville 1/15 (DN). Highest of 10 locales holding **Horned Lark** was 150 along Pinchtown Rd 2/12 (CB).

Some observers noted the lack of **Carolina Chickadee**, **Tufted Titmouse**, and even **American Goldfinch**. These comments are consistent with the region-wide postings on PA Birds concerning the drop in numbers, especially chickadees and titmice. In contrast to the above commentary, 8 plausible reports of **Black-capped Chickadee** were more than normal. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **Brown Creeper**, and **Winter Wren** were present all period, reported frequently, with 22, 28, & 13 reports, respectively. **Golden-crowned Kinglet** high counts were 22 on the YSCBC and 15 on the YCBC. The 8 reports (m.ob.) of **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** were all single birds with the latest being 1/4.

Hermit Thrush put in a strong showing with 9 reports. One frequented a Springettsbury Twp. backyard water feature all period (DHe). Another strong winter showing was **Gray Catbird** with 5 reports 12/18-2/27 (DC, CK, DK, both CBCs). **American Pipit** reporting was limited to single birds in the York Haven area 12/18 (AMc) and Pinchtown Rd 2/13 (CB). A female **Evening Grosbeak** made a feeder visit in Etters 12/19 (BM). Twelve reports of **Purple Finch** and 13 of **Pine Siskin** spanned the entire reporting period. High counts were 5 finches at Sherman's Oak 12/2 (TC) and 15 siskins at Goldsboro 12/16 (BS) and Springettsbury Twp. A **Common Redpoll** was at Airville 1/1 (JWH).

A good find was a **Lapland Longspur** along Pinchtown Rd 1/12-13 (CB, et al). Single **Chipping Sparrows** were found on the YSCBC, at Wellsville 12/29 (DT), and at York Twp 2/21 (AP). A nice 15-count of **American Tree Sparrows** came from SGL 1/5 (CEn). The 3 reports of **Fox Sparrow** spanned 12/5-1/6 (CEn, AWg, YSCBC). The **LeConte's Sparrow** (doc. submitted) was a great find (JD, DM, SW) in an SGL food plot on the YSCBC. It was a cooperative bird with a 6-day stay, 12/27-

1/1, allowing a number of birders to enjoy this county first. Good lighting and the bird's rather confiding nature produced some great photos that captured its striking and bright plumage. Seven **Savannah Sparrow** reports (CB, DH, AMc, DN, DNN) were led by a high count of 6 along Pinchtown Rd 2/14 (DN). Ten sites held **Swamp Sparrow** with a 9-count coming from SGL 1/5 (CEn). **Eastern Towhee** was also found at 10 locales with a surprising winter 5-count at LR 2/14 (DN). A half dozen **Eastern Meadowlarks** were along Diary Rd 2/13 (DH) and the reliable HTP held them all period (CB, DF, DH, DNN) with a high of 17 on 12/22 (DN). **Red-winged Blackbirds** were found in all months while **Brown-headed Cowbird** and **Common Grackle** were present starting 12/15. Two reports of **Rusty Blackbird** consisted of 6 on the YSCBC and 11 at Wellsville 2/2 (Anonymous).

Wendt, Dave Wildasin (DWi), Patricia & Richard Williams (PRW), Andrew Wolfgang (AWg).

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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 — Winter Raptors



Sharp-shinned Hawk and what was formerly a Mourning Dove at a feeder in *Allegheny* 31 January. (*John Flannigan*)



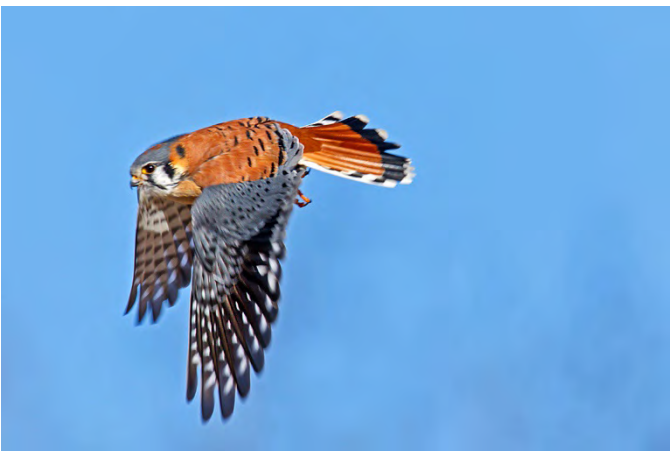
One of a breeding pair of **Bald Eagles** (named Mary and Joseph by local humans) present for seven years around Swatara Creek near Hershey, *Dauphin*, seen here 4 February. (*Bob Hench*)



Red-shouldered Hawks have been increasing on Winter Raptor Surveys, with a record-high 181 counted this year, and were reported widely on CBCs; this handsome adult was spotted on a WRS near McAlevy's Fort, *Huntingdon* 26 January. (*Ron Crandall*)



Red-tailed Hawk in *Northampton* 2 February. (*Steve Lesse*)



American Kestrel in flight, or perhaps hover-hunting as is their style, at Peace Valley Park, *Bucks* 10 February. (*Steve Lesse*)



Merlins were found in *Clinton* throughout the winter; this is one of three found on the Lock Haven-Jersey Shore CBC 15 December. (*Wayne Laubscher*)