



TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
JUNE 2011 ISSUE 11:05

Our mission is to promote the conservation and protection of wildlife, plants, soil, and water in relation to human activity, to initiate and carry out plans and activities which would contribute to the conservation and protection of these natural resources; and to provide opportunities to become more aware and appreciative of our physical and biological environment.

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

Au revoir. Auf wiedersehen. Ciao.

Nah, none of those really apply. I may be stepping down off this Presidential Perch, but you're still stuck with me. I'm not going anywhere.

I don't have to be president to do things and there are still plenty more things to do. I stand ready to help out Janet Price as she, once again, very generously takes on the mantle of president. One thing that I hope to do for years to come is work toward mitigation of invasive plant species at Presque Isle. And while eliminating them, especially phragmites, seems like a daunting task, I have no trouble with trying.

We will get started on this mission this month as the new "Weed Whacker" project gets underway. On June 11, from 9 am- 3pm, we hope to marshal 30 volunteers to start cutting away invasive bittersweet and honeysuckle in the area around the bird banding station at the Niagara Boat Launch. Then, on July 16 we will once again take on the invaders at the Fry's Landing banding station.



Bittersweet

It is a very small start, but then, what daunting task didn't start with a few small steps? Get involved—read more about this project on page 5.

Why try to tackle the invasive plants? Simply put, it will improve habitat. Native plants can regain a foothold. Birds and other wildlife may find Presque Isle more habitable, more welcoming. That makes them more likely to stop by or stay and nest.

So it's really a selfish desire. I want to see even more warblers and shorebirds in the spring and fall. I want to see the piping plover nest here. I want to see rare native plants thrive in the rich habitat that is our Presque Isle. I want it to be the best habitat it can and I want nothing less for it. (Cont. on P. 2)

SUMMER THINGS TO DO!

June 9-12 - Roger Tory Peterson Bird Festival in Jamestown, NY (See P 5)

June 11, Saturday - Weed Whackers at Niagara Boat Launch from 9 am - 3 pm (Details on P 5)

June 17, Friday - PIAS Monthly Meeting and Program: Portugal: the Country and the Birds
7:00 Social 7:30 Meeting and Program

July 13, Wednesday - Conservation Meeting at Quinn Firm at 5:00 pm

July 15, Friday - Information for the August Tern of Events due to Editor

July 16, Saturday - Weed Whackers at Fry's Landing from 9 am - 3 pm (Details on P 5)

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The *Tern of Events* is published by the **Presque Isle Audubon Society**, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of Audubon Pennsylvania serving northwestern Pennsylvania including Erie and Crawford counties.

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THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

Before I bid you adieu I must thank the wonderful board members who have served with me. We've had some thoughtful conversations around the table and a little fun, too.

I can't thank Paul Burroughs and Janet Price enough. As past presidents, they both were always there with counsel when I needed it. Together, as the conservation committee, we planned and executed the Landscaping for Wildlife workshop which was a great success. In fact, someone at the workshop contacted me about speaking to her garden club. So, our hopes of improving habitat, one backyard at time may well be on its way to fruition.

Michele Franz has served as both secretary and education chair and I applaud her dedication to not only taking board meeting minutes and producing a final document, but also organizing the raptor events and backyard bird count events and making countless other presentations to local groups. Not to mention blogging on our website and posting to our Facebook page. And she still manages to find time to bird and take fabulous photos.

I'd like also thank Jeanne and Chuck Kern for their years of dedication to our sales & marketing efforts and organizing the annual banquet. It's been so many years that I don't even know how long they've been at it. How many organizations do you know that can boast that kind of loyalty? And Jeanne is such a good sport when we tease her about not having a computer.

The rest of the board members are equally valuable, even if they didn't get a mention here.

One that must be thanked though is Trustee (and my husband) Mike Plyler, who probably didn't know what he was getting into when I signed on for this gig. His help over the past two years has been immeasurable and I am deeply appreciative of his understanding, without complaint, that when his wife is devoted to something, he is too.

(Cont. on P. 3)

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

The last person I need to thank is Jean Stull Cunningham. She gave me a gift membership to Audubon years ago which is what led to my involvement. I admire Jean tremendously, both as an artist and naturalist. I can only hope that I managed to fill her shoes as president, as well as all the other great presidents who have come before.

Presque Isle Audubon is at a great spot right now. The Festival of the Birds saw record attendance, a huge crowd showed up for the Raptor Experience in May, we scrambled to accommodate everyone who wanted to register for the Landscaping Workshop in February, the First Responders rescue team is growing exponentially, and 400 people showed up to see an eagle at a Friday program. This represents a clear increase in the number of people interested in the natural world, and, more importantly, in preserving it.

Our mission is to promote the conservation and protection of wildlife, plants, soil, and water in relation to human activity; to initiate and carry out plans and activities which would contribute to the conservation and protection of these natural resources; and to provide opportunities to become more aware and appreciative of our physical and biological environment.

I think we're nailing it! Thanks for the opportunity to contribute to this mission and serve the organization. I consider myself blessed. Now—with no goodbyes—on to the next thing.

~Mary Birdsong, President of PIAS

THANK YOU TO A BIRDER FEEDER DONOR

The Festival of the Birds committee wants to apologize for the omission of acknowledging the donation of two delicious cakes by Christine Avery. All the birders appreciated her culinary abilities. Mea culpa. Thank you, Christine!

~Joao Tavares, Bird Festival Hospitality Chair

POST MEMBERS' NIGHT 2011

1) Dennis Kitchen - The Flora and Fauna of Florida including "George," the alligator, an 18 footer, 800+ pounder fish snatcher, if the fisherman delays in removing the fish from his hook.

2) Bob Grubbs - The Birds of Presque Isle including the Piping Plover, and the Greater and Lesser Yellow Legs.

3) Bob Gallivan - Springtime in Yosemite National Park - Majestic mountains and waterfalls.

4) Michelle Rundquist Franz - The Birds of Florida including the Laughing Gull, the Wood Stork and Michelle's favorite bird, the Reddish Egret.

5) Marci Rahner and Jim Smith - Hummingbird Mask Bird Feeder Worn Over One's Head.

6) Chuck Kern - The Case of the Spotted Banana

Comments made: "I laughed so much, my mouth hurts," "You out did yourself."

My sincere thanks to all of our presenters. Due to limited space, my article had to be shortened.

~Jeanne Kern, Coordinator of Members' Night

THIRD ANNUAL BIRDFEST AT ROGER TORY PETERSON INSTITUTE June 9 - 12

The Third Annual Birdfest at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, NY, is a four-day celebration of birds and birding, June 9-12. Register early to assure your first choice in field trips! <http://birdfest.rtpi.org>



BIRD SIGHTINGS

Below are the most noteworthy of all the unusual bird sightings I received within the past month from Presque Isle State Park unless noted otherwise.

Surf Scoter—1 pair; May 7 (late); Edinboro Lake; M.V., 1; May 8 (late); Gull Point; J.M.

Northern Goshawk—1 imm; May 8 (late); Presque Isle Hawk Watch (old Tracy school property); M.W., J.M.

Common Raven Red-tailed Hawk (imm. Dark morph); April 23; Presque Isle Hawk Watch (old Tracy School property); M.W., J.M.

Rough-legged Hawk—2 light morph; May 13 (late); Presque Isle Hawk Watch (old Tracy School property); J.M.

Golden Eagle—1 imm.; April 26; Erie Bluffs S.P.; T.W.

Purple Gallinule—1 adult; April 30 to at least May 14; head of Presque Isle Bay; B.B.; second Erie County record. (See below)



Piping Plover—1; April 26; Gull Point; S.S. This bird had multiple colored bands on its leg.

Golden-winged Warbler—1; May 5; Gull Point Trail; M.W., 2; May 11; Presque Isle S.P.; R.S. 1; May 14; Presque Isle S.P.; B.V. (See below)



Orange-crowned Warbler—1; May 3; Fry's landing; M.W., 1; May 7; Fry's landing; J.M.

Yellow-throated Warbler—1; April 29 & 30; Fry's landing; M.F.

Cape May Warbler—1; April 26 (early); Fry's landing; J.M.

Prothonotary Warbler—1 (heard singing and calling only); April 29; Sidewalk Trail; J.M., M.W. 1; May 8; Long Pond; no name for the discoverer

Worm-eating Warbler—1 (heard singing only); April 26; Fry's landing; J.M.

Connecticut Warbler—1 (heard only); May 13; Fry's landing; M.W.

Clay-colored Sparrow—1; May 6; Fry's landing; M.W., 1; May 12; near Coast Guard Station; M.W.

Lark Sparrow—1; May 14; Leo's landing; B.V.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow—1; May 11; Gull Point; J.M. First spring record in Erie Co., since 1934.

Common Redpoll—several still present until at least April 25; Erie; Bob and Pam Zelenak

Iceland Gull—1; May 1 (late); channel; J.M.

Glaucous Gull—1; May 6 (late); Gull Point; J.M. 1; April 24; near Lowville; M.W.

Contributors: B.B-Brian Berchtold, M.F.-Michele Franz, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, S.S.-Sara Sargent, R.S.-Randy Stringer, B.V.-Bob VanNewkirk, M.V.-Mark Vass, T.W.-Tom Wasilewski, M.W.-Mike Weible, B.P.Z.-Bob and Pam Zelenak

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Records Chairman
814-868-3059 jerrymcw@aol.com

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROJECT

The **Adopt-A-Highway** project was planned for May 1st but had to be cancelled because of rain. I rescheduled it for Friday, May 6th. The only participants were myself and Ruth Swaney. We collected 10 bags of trash over a 2 hour period. I would like to see this program continue, but it is difficult with only two people. Of course this was the week of the Birding Festival and most people were busy with that. I'll try again for the fall season.

~Ron Intrieri, Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR INVASIVE
PLANT REMOVAL
AT PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK
June 11 and July 16**



Join members of Presque Isle Audubon and Audubon Pennsylvania for removal of invasive plants at bird banding stations on Presque Isle State Park. The "Weed Whackers" will help remove invasive bittersweet and honeysuckle shrubs in the areas where banding occurs. Removing non-native plants will give native ones an opportunity to reestablish and improves habitat for wildlife.

The project is planned for two days: on Saturday, June 11 plant removal will take place at the banding station near Niagara Boat Launch and on Saturday, July 16 work will be at the Fry's Landing banding station.

Hours of activities on both days will be from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Thirty volunteers are needed each day. Volunteers will be fed lunch and water will be available throughout the day.

Presque Isle Audubon has some pruning tools and gloves but participants are asked to bring their own if they have them. The areas where the work will be occurring are shrubby and known to have deer ticks. All participants are strongly encouraged to wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and bring bug repellent if they desire. They are also encouraged to wear footwear appropriate for a wooded and brushy environment as well as socks.

Funding for this project was made possible by a collaborative grant from Audubon PA.

Volunteers must register to participate by calling 814-520-9456 or sending an email to info@presqueisleaudubon.org. Please specify the day(s) for which you are registering.

~Mary Birdsong, Weed Whackers Coordinator

SUMMER FIELD TRIPS TO REMEMBER!

June 11, Saturday

Explore Titus Bog on a joint field trip with the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Be prepared for deep water on the way in. Hip waders are the preferred footwear, but some choose to wear sneakers and hose off the muck at home. Meet at the Corry Drive-in Theater parking lot at the intersection of Routes 6 and 89 on Saturday, June 11 at 1:00.

Contact trip leader Tim Lyonsat (814)-725-5764 or timclyons@verizon.net with questions.

July 23, Saturday

See description and directives above. Meet at the Corry Drive-in Theater parking lot at the intersection of Routes 6 and 89 on Saturday, July 23 at 1:00. Contact trip leader Tim Lyons. See above paragraph.

**ENWR's 13th BIENNIAL NATURE PHOTO
CONTEST**

The **Erie National Wildlife Refuge**, in cooperation with the Friends of Erie National Wildlife Refuge and the Presque Isle Audubon Society, announces the thirteenth biennial Nature Photo Contest to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week. Competition will be held in three major categories: plant life, wildlife and landscape. Awards in each category are as follows:

- \$50 first prize
- \$25 second prize
- Third-place ribbons
- Honorable mention ribbons

(Cont. on P 6)

ENWR (Cont.)

- \$75 cash award given for the best photo taken on the Erie National Wildlife Refuge overall
- \$25 best student (under 18) photo over all

The following are the rules of competition:

- Entry deadline: Friday, September 30.
- May enter up to eight (8) photos.
- Entry fee \$5 per photo—make check payable to Friends of Erie National Wildlife Refuge and mail or deliver entries to Erie National Wildlife Refuge, 11296 Wood Duck Lane, Guys Mills, PA 16327. Call office before delivering to verify open hours.
- Photos maybe digital or film prints in color or black-and-white. No composite photos are permitted.
- Photos must be from 8" x 10" to 12" x 12" and matted, but unframed.
- Must be labeled on back as follows: name, address, telephone, age (if 18 or under), title of photo, entry category and specify if taken on the Refuge.
- Must be amateur photographer (make less than half of their living from photography).

Judging will occur on Sunday, October 16, 2011. An open reception will be held to present awards at 1:30 PM that day. Refreshments will be served. The photographs will remain on display at the refuge until the end of October. Entries may be picked up after that date. For more information, telephone 814-789-3585.

FINDING "ABANDONED" OR INJURED BIRDS

By Katie Pendergrast, Allegheny College Intern

What if you think you've found an injured bird? More often than not, birds found on the ground are not injured. Some bird species leave their nests a week to a month before they are able to fly, and some avian parents even finish the education of their young on the ground. Unless you see signs of injury, it is probably just fine. When in doubt, leave the animal alone. Something that you can do is to make sure your pets stay inside so that they cannot attack it.

If you see a baby bird you believe has fallen out of its nest and does not seem injured, it can be returned to the nest. First make sure you see other babies that look similar in the nest, to ensure you're putting it in the correct nest. Then, if the baby is not warm, warm it by holding it in thinly gloved hands and exhale warm air on the baby for about five minutes. (A common myth is that babies touched by humans will be rejected by their parents is not true.) Once it is warmed, you can replace it in the nest.

If a bird has obvious signs of injury such as blood on its body or a noticeably drooping wing, you can try to contain it for transport to a rehabilitator. Poke holes in a cardboard box and place the box over the animal, then slide a piece of heavy cardboard under the box. Tape the two parts together with duct tape. If the animal is a baby you can pick it up with gloves or a towel and place it in a covered box with paper towels in the bottom. For larger birds of prey wear leather gloves or call for advice. Any eagles should be captured by a Game Commission officer.

If a whole nest has been blown down, you can replace it in the tree. Put the nest in a plastic berry basket or container with drainage holes in the bottom and then wire the nest back up in the tree, or if the original nest tree has blown down, into a nearby tree. If possible, watch the nest continuously for an hour, from inside a house or car, to see if the bird parents return. If they do not, contact a rehabilitator for further advice.

Keep in mind that you should never handle an animal with your bare hands. Once the animal is contained, do not handle or pet it or offer it food or water (especially milk) because birds can't digest the same food we can and some need medical treatment before they can digest food. Put the boxed bird in a warm, dark, quiet, safe place and contact a local rehabilitator.

Tamarack Wildlife Center's phone number is (814) -763-2574. We can arrange to receive the bird at the center if it is a species we treat, or refer you to another rehabilitation facility. (Edited by Janet Price, TOE Editor)

BIRDS AT THE FESTIVAL OF THE BIRDS!

As all bird lovers know, May is an exciting, heady month when every day can bring new migratory birds to our backyards and anywhere weary birds find good habitat to rest and refuel. So it is no surprise that our Presque Isle is used as a stop-over spot for a large number of species. During our recent Festival of the Birds, each registrant received a copy of our Erie County Checklist of Birds to use as a personal checklist. We also had enlarged copies of the charts so that we could keep a group tally of all the species being seen during our festival.

Excitement started immediately Friday afternoon as early arrivals went out birding with leaders to two hotspots - Pine Tree Trail and Fry's Landing. At our Welcome Reception that evening, people began writing in species they had found. It's fun to be the first person to sign in favorite species...a scarlet tanager, a wood thrush, or a Baltimore oriole.



Blackburnian Warbler

The 24 species of warblers observed by many during the week-end impressed us not only with their beauty but the realization of the long hazardous flights these tiny birds made to arrive here.

Along with the birds one might expect to see during a festival at Presque Isle, each festival had

a bird highlight. In 2008 we had a great horned owl's nest with 2 owlets to show everyone. In 2009 a pair of least bitterns built a nest near the road which was visible with the naked eye. 2011 was no exception.

The week before the festival, Brian Berchtold had discovered a very lost purple gallinule at the head of the bay. Although this bird was not as visible as the highlights in other years, it continued to show itself to some lucky people who were at the right spot at the right time to see the bright purplish blue plumage and yellow legs. (See picture on P 4)

At Saturday night's dinner we had around 100 species. This is about what we had last year for the whole weekend when high winds made it a real challenge to see or hear birds. Some birders who still had energy after a big day went out that night to hear the whip-poor-wills calling and see the display flights of the woodcocks. (See below)



At our Sunday lunch, people were still filling in species from the morning's field trips and making sure everything they had seen had been recorded on the charts and on their own checklists. Some folks were pleased to be able to add lifebirds (birds they had never seen before) to their life lists. Our final count was a whopping 141+ species. That was pretty good when you think that about 43% of all possible birds were spotted in one weekend. Can we top that next year?

The Presque Isle Audubon Society's newsletter, the *Tern of Events*, is published monthly, except in July and January. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month preceding publication. All published material subject to editing.

Send submissions to Janet Price, editor, via editor@presqueisleaudubon.org or 418 E. 36th St., Erie, PA 16504. If you have any questions, call Janet at 814.825.8394.

Printed on recycled paper.

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY
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Presque Isle Audubon Society
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Please enroll me as a New member in the National Audubon Society. Membership includes membership in BOTH the National Audubon Society and the local Presque Isle Audubon Society. National members receive *Audubon Magazine* (6 issues per year) and the monthly newsletter *Tern of Events*.

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