



TERN OF EVENTS



Presque Isle Audubon Society Membership Newsletter

November 2008

Issue 08:09

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

Paul Burroughs, member of the PA Audubon Board of Directors, Janet Price, President of Presque Isle Audubon, and Mary Birdsong, Vice-President of Presque Isle Audubon, attended the third annual Pennsylvania Audubon Chapter Assembly which was held in Harrisburg the weekend of October 17, 18, and 19th. The purpose of the assembly is to share information thereby fostering camaraderie and cooperation among the twenty one chapters in the state of Pennsylvania. The PA Audubon's strategic plan includes the vision that there should be a *"vibrant and active network of chapters, members, and partners"* across the state of Pennsylvania.



LUNCH AT THE CHAPTER ASSEMBLY
(NOTE MARY BIRDSONG AND PAUL BURROUGHS)

Each chapter is invited to send three or four members from their organization to participate in the three day event. The reason for the limited number is that there is no charge for the event other than transporting oneself to the site and paying for a hotel room. All in all, it's a great

experience which included a warm reception on Friday evening, birding field trips early in the morning, presentations by the executive director of Audubon PA and the PA Audubon board members, very interesting talks and discussion by members of the various chapters, and delicious and hearty meals each day. An interesting aside to all of this was a visit to the Appalachian Brew Pub and to the Civil War Museum. (I found the museum quite impressive and educational and the brew pub a lot of fun!) (Continued on Page 3)

NOVEMBER THINGS TO DO!

- November 4, Tuesday** - Election Day!
- November 11, Tuesday** - Birding Festival Meeting at 6:00 pm at the TREC
- November 11, Tuesday** - Regional Science Consortium Visiting Science Speaker at 7:00 at the TREC in Room 112. (See Page 5)
- November 12, Wednesday** - Conservation Committee Meeting at 5:00 pm at Quinn Firm
- November 18, Tuesday** - PIAS Executive Board Meeting at 7:00 pm at the TREC
- November 20, Thursday** - PLEWA Annual Public Meeting at the TREC in Room 112. 5:30 Light Supper. 6:00 Meeting followed by a presentation, "Protecting and Restoring the Great Lakes" (See Page 5)
- November 21, Friday** - PIAS Monthly Meeting/Program at the TREC at 7:30 pm, "Helping Bluebirds the Right Way". Social at 7:00 pm. (See Page 2)
- November 27, Thursday** - THANKSGIVING

DECEMBER 20, SATURDAY - Christmas Bird Count at Presque Isle (See Page 2)

2008-09 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

President	Janet Price
Vice-President	Mary Birdsong
Secretary	Bonnie Ginader
Treasurer	Kel McDonald
Immediate Past President	Paul Burroughs

Board of Trustees

2006-2009	Marion Gallivan
2006-2009	Terry Lobdell
2007-2010	Toby Cunningham
2007-2010	Ruth Swaney
2009-2011	Linda Donati
2009-2011	Tracy Graziano

Chairs of Standing Committees

Bird Records	Jerry McWilliams
Conservation	Paul Burroughs
Education	Pat Howell
Field Trips	Mary Birdsong
Grants	Marion Gallivan
Hospitality	Delores & JoaoTaveres
Library	Marion Gallivan
Membership	Ron Intrieri
Nominating	Marian Gallivan
Publications	Janet Price
Publicity	Susan A. Smith
Programs	Tracy Graziano
Sales & Marketing	Jeanne Kern
Sanctuaries	Sue Murawski

PIAS NOVEMBER PROGRAM "Helping Bluebirds the Right Way"

Mark Ritke has been working with bluebirds since 1995 after he moved to western Pennsylvania. He got interested when he saw 20 bluebird boxes at Cross Creek Golf Course near Titusville and noticed that every box was occupied by house sparrows. He sees this wherever he goes, bluebird boxes that only breed the bluebird's number 1 enemy. Ever since, he's become an advocate for bluebirds to anyone who will listen and take the time to learn about them. He has installed almost 150 boxes in western PA and monitors and maintains them himself. He has a PhD in vertebrate zoology from the University of Memphis and has had a lifelong interest in wildlife.



EASTERN BLUEBIRD

The main point of Mark's presentation is how to help bluebirds the right way. Too many people try to help but end up doing more harm than good. In this regard, he'll clear up some misconceptions about bluebirds and what bluebird landlords do wrong or don't do at all. He'll cover the natural history of bluebirds, the problems they face, and tie this in as to how we can best help this species.

THE 109TH CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, December 20, 2008 for this year's Christmas Bird Count. This is the 109th Christmas Bird Count and according to the Audubon website the Presque Isle count has been conducted since 1972. Help us to make this year's count our most successful yet. This is a great learning experience for beginning birders because they will be paired with advanced birders to help with identification. LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION IN THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER.

~Chuck Gehringer, Count Compiler

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.

Address: 301 Peninsula Dr., Suite 8
Erie, PA 16505

Phone: 814-860-4091

Website: www.presqueisle.org/audubon

PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Continued)

The point I'd like to make is that Presque Isle Audubon is not its own entity. We are a part of a greater organization, first of the PA state Audubon and second, of the National Audubon Society. I think in the past there was little communication and support between these two organizations but, I must say, things have improved a lot lately due to the efforts of the administrators on both levels but especially at the state level.

PA Audubon has a new executive director, Phil Wallis. He is one of the most dynamic and interesting persons I've met at one of these gatherings and I think that he will take our state and local chapters in the right direction by providing information and resources to those who need and request them.



ANNE CROWLEY, GLOBAL WARMING COORDINATOR
PHIL WALLIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PA AUDUBON

Joe DeMarco, Chairman of PA Audubon Board of Directors, presented PA Audubon's Strategic Plan to begin our two days of meetings. He stated the following:

MISSION: BIRDS AND HABITAT GOALS:

- **AT RISK SPECIES**- stabilize and increase Watchlist species
- **COMMONS SPECIES**- protect common vulnerable birds
- **ESSENTIAL SITES** - improve programs at existing IBA sites
- **LANDSCAPE HEALTH** - designate new IBA sites, network IBA sites, reach and

educate key audiences about landscape health (e.g. Audubon at Home)

Joe emphasized that these are not the only goals that chapters would or should focus on. There are other issues that arise that need our immediate attention, but the goals are to help guide the state and local chapters in establishing long term goals and setting priorities. I am a firm believer in establishing goals and plans if a group wants to make any progress toward its mission. But, it is up to each person in each chapter to take it upon himself or herself to help establish those goals and to then participate in the various actions and activities that are the focus of the chapter to which he or she belongs.

Other areas of emphasis during the assembly were Conservation Issues (Paul Burroughs talked about "Reducing Pesticides in the City of Erie"), Education and Outreach Issues (Janet Price talked about The Festival of the Birds at Presque Isle), Audubon at Home, Global Warming and Wind Power.

In the future, we hope to have Anne Crowley, Global Warming Coordinator, and Steve Saffier, Audubon at Home Coordinator, here to speak to us regarding their respective issues. If you remember, one of our goals for 2008-2009 is to promote Audubon at Home so Steve's visit is part of our plan to accomplish our goal. The global warming issue is of ongoing concern to all our members even if it's not a stated goal for the coming year.

While I'm mentioning our goals, I would like to add one more for this year:

11. Participation in the Pennsylvania Lake Erie Watershed Rivers Conservation Plan.

Paul Burroughs and the members of the Conservation Committee will be planning our involvement in this project so if anyone is interested, please contact Paul at pburroughs@quinnfirm.org.

Well, that's the message from my perch for this time. I hope to see many more of you working on the issues and projects that we have adopted for this year.

~Janet Price, President

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

BIRD SIGHTINGS

The following unusual birds were reported for October 2008 from Presque Isle State Park unless noted otherwise.

Peregrine Falcon—1; Oct. 1; Sunset Point (Waterbird count: WC); J.M. 1; Oct. 1; Gull Point; B.C.

American Golden Plover—1; Oct. 1; Gull Point; B.C.



AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER

Pomarine/Parasitic Jaeger—1; Sunset Point (WC); Oct. 16; J.M.

Little Gull—1; Sunset Point (WC); Oct. 16; J.M.

Orange-crowned Warbler—2; Oct. 1; Leo's; B.C.

Pine Warbler—1; Edinboro; Oct. 15 (late); D.S.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow—1; Oct. 1; Leo's; B.C.

Lapland Longspur—1; Oct. 7; Gull Point; M.V.



LAPLAND LONGSPUR

Contributors: B.C.-Ben Coulter, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, D.S.-Don Snyder, M.V.-Mark Vass

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

THE PLIGHT OF SMALL SONGBIRDS DURING MIGRATION

In one of his reports, Jerry McWilliams indicated that a number of small passerines were being killed by the Ring-Billed and Herring Gulls that we see at Presque Isle. The paragraph that Jerry wrote relating these incidents follows but before you read that, I want to make you aware of the differences in the sizes and weights of the gulls and especially of the kinglets that were possibly a large number of the birds killed by the gulls.

The kinglets are about 4 inches in length and weigh approximately 6 grams or .21 oz.



GOLDEN CROWNED KINGLETS

The Herring Gull is 25 inches in length and weighs approximately 2.5 pounds while the Ring-billed Gull is 17.5 inches in length and weighs approximately 1.1 pounds. You can see that the small songbirds have no chance against these predators.

~Janet Price, Editor



HERRING GULL



RING-BILLED GULL

JERRY'S REPORT

It is very treacherous for small songbirds to migrate across large open bodies of water during migration. Many songbirds use the cover of darkness to migrate as protection from diurnal predators. However, sometimes birds never make it across Lake Erie from Canada before daylight. This can be very risky for their survival.

(Continued on page 5)

JERRY'S REPORT (Continued)

This is witnessed every October from Sunset Point on Presque Isle State Park when the waterbird counter records wrens, warblers, and especially kinglets being attacked and eventually eaten by Ring-billed and Herring gulls. From first light to about 9:00 AM a person can actually see these small birds flying as fast as they can towards the peninsula only to be taken down by gulls, often within a few feet of making landfall. The gulls will try and catch the small birds in flight, but eventually the small birds tire and fall into the water where they are easily snatched up and eaten by the gulls. This can be tragic to watch, but never-the-less, very fascinating to see how the natural world works.

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Records Chair

YOU ARE INVITED TO: PLEWA'S ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING

Please invite the members of your organization and other colleagues to PLEWA's Annual Meeting. Pat Lupo, OSB

Below is a description of the program that will be presented by Jill Ryan, Executive Director of *Freshwater Future*. Her talk will take place following a light supper and a meeting!

Protecting and Restoring the Great Lakes

Information will be provided about the Freshwater Futures organization and programs to help communities protect and restore the lakes, rivers, wetlands and shorelines of the Great Lakes Basin. Jill will also cover some of the major initiatives underway for the Great Lakes such as implementing the Great Lakes Water Resources Compact, Great Lakes Restoration initiatives and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

The interactive session will not only provide information and highlight successes, but also give you a chance to give input on programs and let Jill know what you think is important in protecting and

restoring local water resources. Freshwater Future was formerly called the Great Lakes Aquatic and Habitat Network Fund.

If you have any questions, contact:

Pat Lupo, OSB, Program Director
Lake Erie-Allegheny Earth Force
814-835-8069 or plupo@lea.earthforce.org

REGIONAL SCIENCE CONSORTIUM VISITING SCIENTIST SPEAKER

Dear RSC Friends,

Please join us for our next Visiting Scientist Speaker on November 11 at 7:00 PM in Room 112 of the Tom Ridge Environmental Center. We will be featuring Dr. Greg Andraso of Gannon University. Dr. Andraso will be discussing the "Sexual and Predatory Behavior of Round Gobies in Presque Isle Bay".



A ROUND GOBI

For more information please phone the Regional Science Consortium at 814-835-6975. Available for ACT 48 Credit. No reservations necessary. Free and open to the public.

Jeanette L. Schnars, Director
Regional Science Consortium
814-835-6975
www.RegSciConsort.com

State Farm®
Providing Insurance and Financial Services
Home Office, Bloomington, Illinois 61710

Mathew D Phillips, Agent

1703 West 28th Street
Erie, PA 16508-1233
Bus 814-456-6138
Fax 814-456-3650
www.mathewphillips.net

24 Hour Good Neighbor Service®



PROJECT FEEDERWATCH BENEFITS BIRDS AND PEOPLE

Connection with nature promotes wellness

Ithaca, NY - More than 100 studies have shown that getting closer to nature reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being in children and adults. So, filling feeders and counting the birds that visit may be just what the doctor ordered! For more than 20 years, participants in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch have been benefitting themselves and the birds.

"It is a great winter time activity for the whole family," says Alaska FeederWatcher Nancy Darnell. "If you have children, they will come to love watching the birds. All of this is fun and a chance to contribute to scientific studies, too!"

The 2008-09 season of **Project FeederWatch gets underway November 8 and runs through April 3**. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges - a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

"Being a FeederWatcher is easy and fun, and at the same time helps generate the world's largest database on feeder-bird populations," says project leader David Bonter. "We are grateful for the contributions our participants have made for the birds and are proud of the joy they say it brings to their busy lives. Since we started in 1987, more than 40,000 people have submitted observations, engaging with the wildlife beyond their windows."

"Project FeederWatch opened up a whole new world for me," says participant Cheri Ryan of Lockport, Kentucky. "It's so interesting to watch the activities of the birds. I learn something new each time I participate."

Scientists learn something new from the data each year, too, whether it's about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of rarely-seen species. Highlights of the most recent season include the largest southward movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the history of the project - part of an expected influx of northern birds that fly farther south when their food supplies run short.



RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH

Other northern species showing up in record numbers included Common Repolls and Pine Siskins. Among the rare birds reported was a Streak-backed Oriole in Loveland, Colorado-the state's first report of this bird, native to Mexico. A December nor'easter deposited a Dovekie in Newton, Massachusetts, the first time this North Atlantic seabird has ever been reported to the Project.

Long-term data show some species increasing in number, such as the Lesser Goldfinch in the Southwest. Other populations continue a downward trend, such as the Evening Grosbeak throughout their range. Grosbeaks were the most common species once seen at feeders in the northern half of the continent. They are now found to be declining for some unknown reasons.

Beyond the benefits to birds and science, however, is the benefit to participants. "Nature is not merely an amenity; it is critical to healthy human development and functioning," says Nancy Wells, Cornell University assistant professor of design and environmental analysis. Her studies find that a view of nature through the window or

access to the environment in any way improves a child's cognitive functioning and reduces the negative effects of stress on the child's psychological well-being. Wells also notes that when children spend time with nature early in life it carries over to their adult attitudes and behavior toward the environment.



Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors. To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the *FeederWatcher's Handbook*, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, *Winter Bird Highlights*.

Many FeederWatchers echo this comment from Mary Strasser of Wisconsin: "The greatest reward for me as a participant in Project FeederWatch these many years has been observing birds and behavior that I might have missed had I not been part of this project."

I encourage any of you who have a some time one day a week from November 8 to April 3 to join this effort. Go to the website for directions and if you have any questions or are hesitant about getting involved, I'll be glad to talk with you.

~Janet Price, Editor

jrplkm@aol.com or 825.8394



"WIND, SAND AND SONG: PRESQUE ISLE'S HABITATS"

Our DVD will be for sale at the concession stand of the Big Green Screen Theatre very soon. Look for the sign in the lobby for details. Copies are also sold at Wild Birds Unlimited and at Asbury Woods Nature Shop as well as at our monthly meetings. There is also an order blank on our website for those who cannot make the meetings.

Wild Birds Unlimited
Your Backyard Birdfeeding Specialist

Come visit and take a nature break with us!

Birdseed • Birdfeeders • Birdbaths • Nature Gifts

Store Hours:
Village West # 17 • 3330 W. 26th St. Mon-Thurs 10-6, Fri 10-8
Erie, PA 16506 • (814) 838-5145 Sat 10-5, Sun Closed

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 jrplkm@aol.com 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
TOM RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
301 PENINSULA DRIVE, SUITE 8
ERIE, PA 16505

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Erie, PA
Permit No. 238

**Presque Isle Audubon Society
Chapter Only Membership Application**

Chapter only membership includes membership in the Presque Isle Audubon Society ONLY and the chapter newsletter *Tern of Events*.

Individual membership \$10.00/year

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Please indicate your preference:

_____ Paper copy of *Tern of Events* OR

_____ On-line *Tern of Events* with email notification

Please return this form with your check payable to the Presque Isle Audubon Society to:

Ronald Intrieri, Membership
Presque Isle Audubon Society
Tom Ridge Environmental Center
301 Peninsula Drive, Suite 8
Erie, PA 16505

National Audubon Society Membership Application

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*.

Introductory membership \$20.00

Renewals \$35.00

Students and seniors \$15.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Chapter Code U157XCH

Please mail this form with your check payable to the National Audubon Society directly to:

National Audubon Society
Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 51101
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

Renewal members will receive a coupon mailed to them by National. Please write the code number U157XCH on your renewal application.