



# TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
JUNE, 2014 ISSUE 14:04

*To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the enjoyment and benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity in northwestern Pennsylvania.*

## THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

### Spark Bird

*For many adults...the birdlife around them has become something...mundane - something in the background that goes unnoticed.*

*But not for us bird watchers. Somewhere along the way, our childlike wonder and fascination with birds was kindled or rekindled. For many, one defining moment - a special bird, an unforgettable experience - provided the "spark" that ignited our lifelong passion.*

*Bill Thompson, III, Editor,  
Bird Watchers Digest*

I've been interviewed by the media a few times this past month in relation to the Festival of the Birds and each time the reporter has asked, "So, what got you into birding?" I usually give credit to my friends, Julie Leonard and Jerry McWilliams who introduced me to the wonderful birds at Presque Isle. I guess I should add that I sought out their assistance because I had moved to the 'burbs and was excited by seeing so many new and interesting birds and was very curious to find out about them. The bird that really "sparked" my interest was the very exotic looking (to me) male rose-breasted grosbeak. (See below)



I first heard the term "spark bird" from my friend and yours, Mary Birdsong, who told me that her spark bird was a cedar waxwing. She explained that she had seen one early on in her birding career when out on a picnic with her now husband, Mike Plyler. She explained that she was "floored to see a bird so lovely in person". The cedar waxwing retains a very special place in Mary's heart as does, I'm pretty certain, Mike.

**(PRES PERCH Cont. P. 2)**



**CEDAR WAXWING COUPLE**

## JUNE THINGS TO DO!

- June 10, Tuesday** - Festival of the Birds Committee Meeting at the TREC at 6:00PM
- June 11, Wednesday** - Weed Warrior Work Session; Meet at the Stull Center at 10:00AM
- June 12, Thursday** - Strategic Planning Committee Meeting at 6:00PM at the TREC
- June 20, Friday** - PIAS General Meeting and Program: AAUW Education Pavilion  
7:00PM - Social  
7:30PM - Program: Bird Festival Highlights (P. 6)
- June 21, Saturday** - Weed Warrior Work Session: Meet at the Stull Center at 9:30AM
- June 25, Wednesday** - Weed Warrior Work Session: Meet at the Stull Center at 9:30AM

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

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**THE PRESIDENT’S PERCH (Cont.)**

As with probably every birder, that spark bird will forever hold a place of honor in the hearts and minds of the “sparkee”. I know that is true for myself. I wait impatiently each Spring for the strikingly handsome Mr. Rose-breasted grosbeak and his oh, so lovely wife to return from their wintering grounds in Central and South America. I am fortunate that several pairs choose to make their Summer homes in the wooded area around our home.



**MRS. ROSE BREASTED GROSBEEK**

A spark bird is not necessarily an exotic or unusual bird, it can be any bird that causes someone to seek out more information and/or piques someone’s interest in that bird and birding in general. Susan Smith recounted her Spark Bird experience at her presentation during the May PIAS membership program. She described how as a child she heard a bird incessantly singing a beautiful song and was curious and determined to find out what bird was singing that beautiful song. She went on a mission to find that bird. As she discovered, the bird that had captured her interest and sparked her passion to learn more and more about birds was a song sparrow. (Cont. on P 3)



**SONG SPARROW**

## THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

When I asked my friend, Julie Leonard, what her spark bird was she told a story (as she is wont to do) from her childhood. She recounted seeing a bird that she thought was a robin fly across the sky and in front of the sun. It turned a brilliant orange and she thought the sun had somehow caused the robin to turn that beautiful shade of orange. She later learned that the bird she had been observing was actually a Baltimore oriole. She is still infatuated with the orioles and when I spoke with her today she told me about an oriole that has been frequenting her feeder that is so colorful it is nearly red. Could it be??? Nah!



**BALTIMORE ORIOLE**

So, the spark bird is just one more thing that most birders share; another commonality in a not so common pastime. I've read that birding is becoming more popular every year, which I love, but in my world it's still a small but wonderful percentage of all those I know.

I would love to hear all of your spark bird stories! If you have one you'd like to share, feel free to post it on our Facebook page or send it in an email to [editor@presqueislaudubon.org](mailto:editor@presqueislaudubon.org), with your permission, we may publish it in a future Tern of Events.

~Michele Rundquist Franz, PIAS President

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Presque Isle Audubon Society welcomes all of our new members. For those of you that joined National Audubon, you are also a member of our local chapter, Presque Isle Audubon. We hope to see you at one of our monthly meetings.

**Erie:** Gertrude Bollinger, Lisa Mattera, Florence Smith, Sheryl McIntosh, Neil Wilson

**Albion:** John Swanson

**Conneaut Lake:** Chris & Scott Herman

**Edinboro:** Dianne Hinkle

**Hartstown:** Lois Pitts

**Meadville:** Tracy Higby, Lawson Smart, Camille Lukasik, Karlin Marsh

**North East:** Naida Hernandez, Sue Perkins

**Warren:** Alfred Moore

**Waterford:** Dick Ragan, Bonnie Himrod

### Chapter only members:

Freda Tepfer, Michael Jewell, Amy Choboy, Jeannine Piotrowski, Julie Hersch, Pat Sexauer, and Nancy Rung.

Happy Birding

~Ron Intriери, Membership Chairman  
[membership@presqueislesudubon.org](mailto:membership@presqueislesudubon.org)

## BIRD TRIVIA CONTEST

There were only two people who entered the Bird Trivia Contest and one of them had all the answers correct, Georgia Wahl, who was one of the birders who attended the Festival of the Birds this year. She will receive the DVD, "Wings, Sand and Song: Presque Isle's Habitats".

Congratulations to Georgia and thank you to her and to Ramona for participating in the contest!

These are the correct answers from A to T:

4, 7, 12, 17, 13, 15, 6, 16, 2, 8, 9, 18, 3, 14, 5, 11, 20, 10, 1, 19.

~Janet Price, Editor

## BIRD SIGHTINGS

The following birds of note were reported from April 1 to May 18, 2014 from Presque Isle State Park unless noted otherwise.

**Red-necked Grebe**—1; April 14; Edinboro; J.H.



**RED-NECKED GREBE**

**Least Bittern**—1; May 18; Niagara Pond, J.M.



**LEAST BITTERN**

**Sandhill Crane**—at least 5 different birds; April 28 to May 10; hawk watch and Gull Point; m.ob.

**Willet**—2 or 3; May 1 & 2, May 9 to 13, and May 17; Gull Point and Beach 10; R.D., M.B.

**Common Tern**—over 200 (high count for this early in the season); to May 13; Gull Point, M.B., R.D.

**Little Gull**—1; April 3; Presque Isle Bay; C.K. Up to 2; April 18; Presque Isle Bay; K.N.A.

**Brewster's Warbler**—1; May 8; Pine Tree Trail; S.C..

**Long-billed Dowitcher**—1; May 13; Gull Point; R.D.



**LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER**

**Worm-eating Warbler**—1; May 8; Fry's landing; S.C. 1; May 13; Fry's landing; A.T. 1; May 16; Sidewalk Trail; R.Sw.



**WORM-EATING WARBLER**

**Golden-winged Warbler**—1; ay 8; waterworks area; B.G. 1; May 8; Presque Isle; S.C. 1; May 13; Pine Tree Trail; A.T.



**GOLDEN- WINGED WARBLER**

**BIRD SIGHTINGS (Cont.)**

**Clay-colored Sparrow**—1; May 8; Fry's Landing; S.C., M.F.



**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW**

**Kentucky Warbler**—1; May 15 & 16; Sidewalk Trail; R.S., R.Sw.



**KENTUCKY WARBLER**

**Pine Siskin**—1; May 2; Union City, D.P.

**Long-eared Owl**—1; May 4; pines; R.D.

**Short-eared Owl**—1; May 3; Gull Point; R.D.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl**—1; May 2; pines; R.D.

**Golden Eagle**—2 imm.; April 20; hawk watch at TREC; R.D., R.St. 1 imm.; May 9; TREC hawk watch; R.D., J.M. 1 adult; May 9; Rt. 5 and Peninsula Drive (Taco Bell); R.S.



**GOLDEN EAGLE**

**Summer Tanager**—2 imm. male; May 5 & 6; Vista 1; S.C. & others 1 imm. male; May 9 to 11; Pine Tree Trail and Graveyard Trail; S.C. 1 imm. male; May 18; Erie; M.W.



**SUMMER TANAGER**

**Orange-crowned Warbler**—1; May 7; Erie; M.W.

Contributors: K.N.A.-Katie and Nancy Andersen, M.B.-Mary Blrdsong, S.C.-Shawn Collins, R.D.-Roger Donn, M.F.-Michele Franz, B.G.-Bob Grubbs, J.H.-James Hill III, C.K.-Craig Kern, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, D.P.-Donna Peters, R.St.-Russ States, R.S.-Randy Stringer, R.Sw-Ruth Swaney, A.T.-Andrew Troyer, M.W.-Mike Weible, m.ob.-many observers

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Records Chairman  
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jerrymcw@aolc.om

**FESTIVAL OF THE BIRDS AT PRESQUE ISLE  
MAY 9, 10, 11 – 2014  
SUMMARY**

**By Janet Price, Committee Chair**

The sixth Festival of the Birds was celebrated this year after a one year pause. The Festival Committee is pretty much the same each year and we all felt that a break was needed so that we could be revived and maybe come up with some new and fresh ideas and recruit some new members. In retrospect, we started planning the sixth event with a few new ideas and a few new committee members.

The first part of this summary will be spent acknowledging the dedicated committee members who came to the organizational meetings and then went ahead and carried out the responsibilities associated with the committee on which they worked.

I want to personally thank these persons and tell them how grateful, proud and pleased I am with all that they have done regarding the festival.

Chuck Benson	Holly Best
Mary Birdsong	Anne DeSarro
Michele Franz	Marion Gallivan
Pat Howell	Ron Intrieri
Diane Kallor	Toni Kelly
Kel McDonald	Susan Smith
Joao Tavares	

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart! You are the best!!

A big thank you goes out to all the volunteers who helped with registration, to the birder feeders who provided added dishes to our Saturday dinner and to the hospitality volunteers who helped serve breakfast and lunch to our birders. Without you we could not have accomplished what we did.

Others who need to be acknowledged are the field trip leaders and those who presented workshops. What would the festival be without them!

Now for some statistics. We had 135 individuals signed up for the festival at the closing of on-line registration with at least 10 others who registered after that, so we probably achieved our maximum

attendance of 150. Our plan is to limit it to that many people to keep the festival small enough so that everyone feels a part of the events and can get to know one another. An important aspect of limiting the number of attendees is to keep the field trip numbers at a workable size.

The weather was excellent and the foliage was late in blooming and that made for comfortable birding. Altogether we tallied 161 species of birds 26 of which were warblers. Both numbers surpassed the last festival count: 146 species and 25 warblers. I would say that was a successful weekend!



**Michele Franz with her Birding Group**

Birders came from six different states (PA, OH, NY, VA, NH, DE) and from Canada and many of those were repeats from previous years. I know there are some faithful birders who have attended all six of the festivals! That's awesome! We hope they and many of the others will come back for our next one.

About one-fourth of the attendees returned an evaluation form and we appreciate that. It's always good to know what we can do better and what was done in a satisfactorily. I would venture to say that 99% of the responses were very positive. The attendees found the fee to be reasonable, the variety of field trips good, the food good and the variety of workshops good but maybe need to be scheduled differently. All but one said they had a positive experience and had an increased awareness of the value and uniqueness of Presque Isle as a habitat for birds. All but four indicated that they would return for the next festival.

(Cont. on Page 7)

## FESTIVAL OF THE BIRDS SUMMARY (Cont.)

Following are some of the specific comments made on the evaluation forms.

“Wonderfully planned. You even covered the meals well. Your members are very hospitable! Thanks much!!!”

“Excellent Value, Excellent Location, Well Run. Congratulations!”

“We hope to see you next year!”

“Thanks for all your work!”

“The organizers and leaders are the best people in the world.”

“Thanks for all your hard work. Great job you all !”

“I thought the festival would be fun and informative. The festival surpassed all my expectations. Nature people would find this weekend exciting and I found the weekend exciting !!!”

“We drive from New Hampshire for this environment and your festival.”

“Thanks! Enjoyed it very much. This is my third year coming.”

“I expected this event to be fun and interesting but was even better than I had hoped – Good job! “

“I’ve been coming to the festival for five years and it keeps getting better and better! “

“Thanks! Enjoyed it very much. This is my third year coming.”

A few suggestions were made for improving the festival:

- Provide chairs for the reception on Friday evening
- Allow more time for the workshops
- Need fruit or dessert for Friday night
- Spread out the workshops so you can attend more of them
- Have someone who knows birds along for the pontoon boat rides

Our committee will have a wrap up meeting on June 10 and we will make a final decision as to whether or nor we will have the 7<sup>th</sup> Festival of the Birds in May of 2015. We will let you know in the next issue of the Tern of Events.



The Presque Isle Audubon group of the Weed Warrior program has worked for three sessions so far this summer getting rid of garlic mustard plants. Faithful workers include Ron Intriery, Pat Howell, Janet Price and Barb Shannon. Work was done mainly in and around the Fry’s Landing area but some time was spent at the Gas Well Trail area and at the Cookhouse area. Approximately 16 bags of garlic mustard were collected during 30 hours of work by the group. Since a lot of the plants were eliminated in those areas last year, there were smaller patches of the invasive to pull this year. It’s obvious that the work of the Weed Warriors is paying off. We will be focusing on the Oriental Bittersweet beginning on Wednesday, June 11, which is the date of our next work session. Meet us at the Stull Center at 10:00AM if you can help us out!

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

Send submissions to Janet Price, editor, via [jrplkm@aol.com](mailto:jrplkm@aol.com) or 418 E. 36th St., Erie, PA 16504. If you have any questions, call Janet at 814-825-8394.

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Please enroll me as a new member in the National Audubon Society which 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 local chapter newsletter. **Please include your e-mail address to receive the online version of the newsletter.**

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