



# TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
MAY 2013 ISSUE 13:04

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

"Lifer", "Life Bird": Foreign terms to my non-birding friends (yes, I, like many of you, have quite a few of those). In fact, "birder speak" is like a foreign language to those not blessed to partake in the "birding" pastime. Some of you may be familiar with the YouTube video called "S\*\*\* Birders Say" which parodies our hobby and that seemingly foreign language we speak and its equally hysterical sequel "S\*\*\* Non-Birders Say to Birders". If you haven't seen them, you should. I was reminded of them today when one of my co-workers asked me how I had spent my long weekend. I enthusiastically explained that in the five days I had been off I had gotten 3 *life birds*. I saw in my co-workers face that quizzical glassy-eyed look that I have come to expect when I talk about birds and birding to those less fortunate. This time, however, instead of just nodding her head and walking away, as I've also come to expect, she asked me what I meant with genuine interest. I explained that a life bird is a bird that one has never seen before. Another co-worker had overheard our conversation and thanked the initial inquirer for asking for the explanation because he too, being unfamiliar with our foreign language, was curious as to what I meant.

I elaborated that the first life bird I got was a type of sparrow, "A sparrow? I see those all the time." I went on to explain that there are many types of sparrows, stopping short of adding that there are about 35 species of sparrows in North America. I added that the sparrow I saw was a Fox Sparrow.

I then told them that the second life bird that I had seen was yet another type of sparrow, a Vesper Sparrow, stopping short of adding that it gets its name for its penchant for singing at evening twilight. "Baby steps", I tell myself, "Baby steps." (Vesper Sparrow - See below)



The last life bird I told them was about the Long-eared Owl that Mary Birdsong, Mike Plyler and I trekked out to see off B Trail. It was my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and I was pleased to complete the hat trick with an owl. I noted that it was a lifer for all of us which made it all the sweeter. They asked how we birders find out about the rarer birds and I explained that the birding community is very generous with information either posting information about interesting birds on Facebook or through the PABirds email listserv. I added that in the case of the spotting of a very rare birds people make phone calls and send texts often creating a domino effect. (Cont. on P. 2)

**MAY THINGS TO DO ON PAGE 2**

## 2012-2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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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Erie, PA 16505

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**Website:** [www.presqueisleaudubon.org](http://www.presqueisleaudubon.org)

## THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

I used the example of the Say's Phoebe that was first seen by new PIAS member, Drew Mortensen, who posted his find on Facebook after a confirmation of the ID of his great find. This prompted an ever widening web of texts, calls and e-mails being distributed across the state and further. I didn't tell them about the PA Rare Bird Alert network, I think they were already starting to become overwhelmed. *Baby steps.*

~Michele Franz, President of PIAS



SAY'S PHOEBE

### MAY THINGS TO DO!

**May 8, Wednesday** - Conservation Committee Meeting at Quinn Firm at 5:00

**May 11, Saturday** - Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk at 8:30 AM (See P. 3)

**May 12, Sunday** - Spring Migrants and Wildflowers, Presque Isle (See P.3)

**May 17, Friday** - PIAS General Meeting and Program: Room 112 at the TREC

7:00 Social and Meeting (**Elections**)

7:30 Program: **Members' Night** (Page 6)

**May 21, Tuesday** - PIAS Board Meeting at 7:00 in the Board Room at the TREC

**May 25, Saturday** - Birding at Jamie Hill's Waterford, PA Wetlands, 7:30 AM (See P. 3)

**May 26, Sunday** - Reptiles and Amphibians on Presque Isle, 6 PM (See P. 3)

## FIELD TRIPS FOR MAY

### Oil Creek State Park Warbler Walk

**Saturday, May 11 at 8:30 a.m.**

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Blood Farm day use area. This is a joint trip with Seneca Rocks Audubon Society and will be led by one of their members. But if you need more information, contact Lee Ann Reiners at [larch@zoominternet.net](mailto:larch@zoominternet.net) or 814-282-1512 (email preferable).

### Spring Migrants/Wildflowers, Presque Isle

**Sunday, May 12, 8:00 a.m.**



**Wood Violets**

Meet at 8 a.m. in the first parking lot on the right after you enter Presque Isle State Park. We'll spend about 2 hours looking for spring migrants and checking out the wildflowers. Bring your binoculars and a field guide. For information, contact Lee Ann Reiners at [larch@zoominternet.net](mailto:larch@zoominternet.net)

### Birding at Jamie Hill's Waterford, PA Wetlands

**May 25, Saturday, 7:30 a.m.**

Jamie offered this trip last June and all 9 participants had a great time! Many folks even added some bird species to their Life Lists! Participants will (hopefully) get to see Jamie's nesting Osprey and get to look in on his nice colony of nesting Purple Martins. Also included is an easy walk through multiple habitats which promises to reveal about 60 species of birds. Bring rubber knee boots.

Contact Jamie Hill in advance to let him know if you plan to attend. RSVP to 814-323-2001 or [jhill@purplemartin.org](mailto:jhill@purplemartin.org).



**Osprey platform with male osprey at Jamie Hill's wetlands**

### Reptiles and Amphibians on Presque Isle

**May 26, Sunday, 6 p.m.**



**Spring Peeper**

Meet at 6 **PM** at the Ranger Station on Presque Isle. This will be a great chance to learn more about the herps of the peninsula with Mark Lethaby from PIAS Audubon and the Natural History Museum at the TREC.

For information, contact Lee Ann Reiners at [larch@zoominternet.net](mailto:larch@zoominternet.net)



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## BIRD SIGHTINGS

Bird sightings: The following birds of note were reported from March 19 to April 22, 2013 from Presque Isle S.P., unless noted otherwise.

- Snow Goose**—55 (47 white, 7 blue); March 26; Presque Isle Hawk Watch (12<sup>th</sup> & Peninsula); J.M.
- Eurasian Wigeon**—1; to March 28; Horseshoe Pond and off Vista 1; F.C.M., et al.
- Surf Scoter**—up to 15; through the period; off Beach 11 and in Presque Isle Bay; J.M.
- White-winged Scoter**—up to 5; to early April; off Beach 11 and Perry Monument; J.M.
- Black Scoter**—up to 2; to early April; off Niagara boat launch; J.M.
- Long-tailed Duck**—250+ (high count); March 21; Presque Isle Bay; J.M.
- Red-throated Loon**—1; April 19; off Beach 10; J.F.
- Red-necked Grebe**—1; April 9; Presque Isle Bay; M.W.
- Great Egret**—up to 6; March 31 through the period; throughout the park; D.K., et al.
- Black Vulture**—1; April 14; Presque Isle Hawk Watch (12<sup>th</sup> & Peninsula); J.M., R.D.
- Golden Eagle**—1 adult; April 13; Presque Isle Hawk Watch (TREC); R.D., J.M.
- Black-crowned Night-Heron**—total of 5; April 8 to 18; Graveyard Pond and Thompson Bay; J.M., et al. (See below)



- Sandhill Crane**—total of 8; April 4 to 18; Presque Isle Hawk Watch (12<sup>th</sup> and Peninsula and TREC); M.W.
- Spotted Sandpiper**—1; April 7 (record early); Beach 11; A.L.

- Black-legged Kittiwake**—1; March 24; Thompson Bay; M.W., G.M.. First spring record in Erie Co. (See below)



- Franklin's Gull**—1 adult breeding; March 24 & 25; Thompson Bay; B.C., et al.
- Little Gull**—as many as 52+; to April 7; mostly Presque Isle Bay and Thompson Bay; M.W., D.M., J.M., et al.
- Black-headed Gull**—at least 2; March 16 to 26; Misery Bay and east of Leo's landing, Gull Point, and off Vista 1; M.W., D.M., J.M. First March Erie County record.
- Bonaparte's Gull**—40,000 to 50,000 (high count); March 21; Gull Point; J.M.
- Thayer's Gull**—1 or 2; March 16 to 26; Misery Bay; M.W., G.M., J.M. 1; March 25; head of Presque Isle Bay; M.W.
- Iceland Gull**—total of 5; to April 14; mainly off Beach 11; D.M., J.M.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull**—total of 10; to April 11; mainly off Beach 11; J.M.
- Glaucous Gull**—up to 10+; to March 31; mainly off Beach 11; J.M.
- Long-eared Owl**—total of 4; March 25 to April 16; east of B-trail; R.D., J.M.
- Short-eared Owl**—1; April 16; near Sunset Point; J.F.
- Northern Saw-whet Owl**—1; March 31; east of B-trail; J.M. 1; April 18; Erie; fide S.S.
- Say's Phoebe**—1; April 14 to 17 & 20; Thompson Bay and Sidewalk Trail on the latter date; D.M., et al. New Erie County record.
- Eastern Kingbird**—2; April 18 (record early); Thompson Bay; M.V. (Cont. on P. 5)

## BIRD SIGHTINGS (Cont.)

**Northern Shrike**—1; March 19; Franklin Center;  
J.D.

**Yellow-throated Warbler**—1; April 19;  
Conneautville, Crawford Co.; A.T.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird**—2; April 14; Lake City;  
E.G. (See below)



**Baltimore Oriole**—1; April 19 (record early);  
Harborcreek; fide K.A.

**White-winged Crossbill**—7; March 31; Presque  
Isle Hawk Watch (12<sup>th</sup> and Peninsula); J.M., M.W.

**Common Redpoll**—up to 26; to April 5; mainly the  
east end of the park; J.M., E.K. and at feeding  
stations throughout the county; m.ob.

**Contributors:** K.A.-Katie Andersen, B.C.-Ben  
Coulter, J.D.-Julie Dell, R.D.-Roger Donn, J.F.-  
Jason Fedora, E.G.-Elaine Gackowski, D.K.-Diane  
Kallor, E.K.-Ed Kwater, A.L.-Alex Lamoreaux, G.M.-  
Geoff Malosh, F.C.M.-Fred & Carol McCullough,  
J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, D.M.-Drew Mortensen,  
S.S.-Susan Smith, A.T.-Andrew Troyer, M.V.-Mark  
Vass, M.W.-Mike Weible, m.ob. many observers

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Records Chair  
814-240-8594 [jerrymcw@aol.com](mailto:jerrymcw@aol.com)

### NEW MEMBERS

Well, Spring is getting here, slow but sure.  
Migration is in full swing, so now is the time to be  
bird watching. As always, we acknowledge our new

members, as well as our renewals. Once you are a  
member of National Audubon, you are also  
included as a member in our local chapter, the  
Presque Isle Audubon Society.

**Erie:** Cathy MacGregor, Richard Andrews, Danie  
Ganzer

**Cambridge Sps:** Andrea Wyman

**Corry:** Mary Deyarmin

**Edinboro:** Donald Sheehy

**Guys Mills:** Kelly Mattocks

**Hartstown:** Kathy McKenzie

**North East:** Jeraldine Luke, Carl Rupp

**Warren:** Marilyn Dahlgren

Thanks to the following members who joined or  
renewed as Chapter only members; Nancy Rung,  
Nancy Lamanna. Christine Avery, Cheryl Hodges,  
Andrea Wyman, Terry Lobdell, AnnMarie Yezzi-  
Shareef, Jack & Kay Ingalls

~Ron Intrieri, Membership Chair  
[membership@presqueisleaudubon.org](mailto:membership@presqueisleaudubon.org)

### ADOPT A HIGHWAY CLEANUP

We had our Adopt A Highway cleanup on Sunday,  
April 21. The weather cooperated with lots of  
sunshine. We start at 9 AM and collected 13 bags  
of trash from our stretch of highway, which  
extends from 8th and Peninsula to Shenk Ave.  
Thanks to Ruth Swaney and Paul Burroughs for  
helping to make the highway cleanup a success.

**Ruth and I have decided to retire from the  
Adopt A Highway cleanup. We have been doing  
this for 20 years or more, and all good things  
must come to an end.** If anyone wants to take  
over the highway cleanup, just contact me at  
[membership@presqueisleaudubon.org](mailto:membership@presqueisleaudubon.org). or we can  
discuss it at our next Board meeting.

~Ron Intrieri, Highway Cleanup Coordinator  
[membership@presqueisleaudubon.org](mailto:membership@presqueisleaudubon.org)

**Editor's Note:** On behalf of all members of the  
Presque Isle Audubon Society I want to say thank  
you to Ron and Ruth for their faithful commitment  
to the above project.

## GULL POINT WORK DAY ON APRIL 6

By Sarah Sargent, Audubon Pennsylvania



If you make it out to Gull Point this spring or summer, you will discover that it is hard to accidentally wander into the area that is closed to humans between April 1<sup>st</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>. In the past it has been very easy to do so, but now, thanks to 23 volunteers who spent the morning of April 6<sup>th</sup> out there, it is quite clear. Three Presque Isle Audubon members joined two Audubon Pennsylvania staff members and the rest of the volunteers to put up about 85 fence posts, 70 signs and 4500 feet of orange line to mark the closed area. The work day had originally been scheduled for March 23<sup>rd</sup>, but there was still so much ice and snow, not to mention the wind.



The trail out to the new tower location is fenced in and the boundary between the closed area and the rest of Gull Point is also marked with fencing. The fence is actually just a strand of

balancing twine that runs between the fence posts, so it is what is called "psychological fencing". It won't actually keep anything out, but at least you can tell if you are crossing the line or not.



All around the water line of the closed area are fence posts with signs facing outward so that boaters can read them, as shown in the picture. The park also put up several more large signs that say "No Mooring within 100 feet of Shore".

## MAY 17 MEETING - MEMBERS' NIGHT

You still have time to prepare your Members' Night presentation. Remember, this is your night, YOU, are the program. We look forward to seeing your slides and your art, hearing about your exciting trip, interesting experience and adventure and enjoying your music, poetry and other nature-related subjects. Sharing your interests, and talents with your fellow Auduboners is very rewarding. Your adherence to the five (5) minute time limit will be appreciated by all.

To participate in this informative and entertaining evening, please call me at 474-3395 before Tuesday, May 14. If I am not available, please leave your name and telephone number on Caroline Reichel's answering machine, 868-4423, and I will contact you. As always, we appreciate the continued participation of our veteran members and welcome new members and those who have never participated. Come on out and have fun with "Where Is It?" by Michelle Rundquist Franz and enjoy Bob Gallivan's always interesting presentations and Chuck Kern's "Kids' Animal Stories." How about you? Do you have a kids' animal story that you would like to share with us? We'd love to hear it.

I look forward to seeing you

~Jeanne Kern, Coordinator, Members' Night

## THE RAPTOR EXPERIENCE



Well, the **Raptor Experience** was another rousing success this year with an estimated 250 people in attendance! This year the event was held upstairs at TREC which was a nice change of pace and allowed attendees to experience many of the TREC's interesting educational displays. Bob and Martha, volunteers from Tamarack, and their crew did a wonderful job educating those interested about Tamarack's mission and about the wildly popular education birds. In addition to the Tamarack raptors, Emily and Stacy, educators with DCNR, had great hands on displays and activities for kids of all ages. We also had the ever popular owl pellet dissection table and a digital microscope for a really close look at the bones found within the owl pellets.



If you didn't get a chance to join us this year for the Raptor Experience, definitely put it on your "To Do" list for next year.



The 2013 war on weeds had an official start on Saturday, April 27, when volunteers split up into three groups and traveled to designated areas on Presque Isle where garlic mustard plants are prevalent. Plants that survived last year's attack have begun to emerge and some were even beginning to flower. It was imperative that the volunteers pulled these plants up by the roots and bag them so they wouldn't go to seed and undo the work that had begun last year.

Four Presque Isle Audubon Weed Warriors formed one group and proceeded to work along Marina Drive and at Fry's Landing. Carolyn Hammers, Pat Howell, Ron Intrieri and Janet Price filled seven large trash bags with second year plants that were growing from seeds that were dropped from plants two years ago. The other groups worked in areas around the Niagara boat launch.

PIAS Weed Warriors will meet as a group about three times a month on designated Wednesdays at 4:00 pm at the Stull Center and on designated Saturdays at 9:30 am at Parking Lot #1 near the bath house. Anyone is welcome to join the other groups on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Audubon members who want to work as a Weed Warrior should contact Janet Price at [jrplkm@aol.com](mailto:jrplkm@aol.com) for more information. Those who have already volunteered will be notified of dates and times by email.

~Janet Price, Weed Warrior Leader

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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