



# TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
OCTOBER 2013 ISSUE 13:08

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

For those of you who were unable to attend the annual banquet this year you missed some wonderful food, camaraderie and an educational and enlightening, if somewhat controversial, presentation by Ephraim Zimmerman of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. As many of you may know, there has been a concerted effort to bring the aquatic and terrestrial habitats of Gull Point and other areas of Presque Isle back to a state in which native flora and fauna are able to return and flourish. One species of particular focus is the Piping Plover, a small shorebird that has been on the federally endangered species list since 1985 and used to nest on Presque Isle five decades ago. With the shoreline and interior ponds nearly taken over by phragmites, knotweed and other non-native plant species the habitat has not been a suitable nesting site for the Piping Plover or other shore and water birds such as the Common Tern that also used to nest at Gull Point for some time now. Mr. Zimmerman also pointed out that because the phragmites stocks are so thick and grow so densely that terrestrial and amphibian wildlife also have a difficult time navigating through it to get to and from the water's edge. The invasive species management project that Mr. Zimmerman spoke about has primarily involved an expansive clearing of many of these invasive species that have created on Presque Isle a habitat/ecosystem of minimal biodiversity that cannot support the varied species that once thrived on the park. His conclusion was that the bulk of the clearing has been done and that we have moved into a

maintenance phase that will require diligent management of the invasive species to limit their resurgence. (Cont. on Page 2)



Ephraim Zimmerman

## OCTOBER THINGS TO DO!



- October 18, Friday** - PIAS General Meeting and Program: Room 112 at the TREC  
7:00 pm - Social; 7:30 pm - Meeting and Program
- October 20, Sunday** - Nature Photo Contest at Erie National Wildlife Refuge (Page 3)
- October 20, Sunday** - Tamarack Open House  
From 1-3 PM (Page 7)
- October 22, Tuesday** - Festival of the Birds  
Committee Meeting at 6:00pm at the TREC
- October 26, Saturday** - Trec or Treat (Page 6)

## 2013-2014 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

The dreaded phragmites, the invasive species best known to those of us that frequent the park, the bane of birders and sight seers alike whose view of ponds and fields are blocked by an up to 16 foot tall wall of green and brown. Although cold comfort, we are not alone in our dealings with this rampantly growing view buster. Phragmites has created an environmental and financial nightmare throughout the Great Lakes as it dominates most ecosystems in which it is found because of its ability to spread so rapidly and produce in its root system a toxic substance that deters the growth of other plant species. The fact that these plants have taken over much of the terrain at Gull Point and other areas of the park is not in question. Most would even agree that something had to be done to eliminate as many of these interlopers as possible and control their spread once the initial clearing efforts have been completed.

What is in question, and the cause of the controversy, is by what means these invasive species should have been initially cleared and now by what means ongoing control should be handled. A question was posed by a banquet guest as to what methods were employed to eliminate the target plants and Mr. Zimmerman's response included the fact that for the harder to eliminate plants, that included woody plants and those hardest to reach, the herbicide Rodeo was used. Rodeo has the active ingredient glyphosate also found in the very familiar herbicide RoundUp but without the surfactant additive which makes RoundUp and similar herbicides so toxic to mammals and aquatic life.

Naturally, concerns were raised about the use of such chemicals on the fragile ecosystems of the park. Asked about alternatives to the use of herbicides to eliminate and control the phragmites and other invasive plants, Mr. Zimmerman replied that given the sheer volume of invasives and their widespread presence, herbicides were the best choice despite even his dislike for herbicides. During my research for this article it became apparent that many people have questions when it comes to the use of herbicides to manage phragmites and other invasive plants.

(Cont. on P. 3)

## THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

Again, we are not alone as we deal with this scourge. I was somewhat relieved to read more than a few articles that described Rodeo and similar herbicides as a safe means of treating phragmites and other invasive plants.



Phragmites

This excerpt from Environmental Scientist, M. Stephen Ailstock, from his "Summary of Common Questions Concerning Phragmites Control" is representative of other articles I read regarding the safety and efficacy of glyphosates: *At present, the only practical method for controlling moderate to large populations of Phragmites is the use of the EPA approved herbicide Rodeo, active ingredient glyphosate. When used according to the manufacturer's (Monsanto) label instructions, this product has been shown to be safer and more effective than other alternatives... Abundant toxicological data exists showing glyphosate to be safe when used according to label instructions. In brief, the compound does not bioaccumulate in aquatic food chains and exhibits very low toxicity to achlorophyllous organisms including bacteria, fungi, and animals. Glyphosate is non-volatile, immobilized in most oils, and is rapidly removed from the environment by chemical bonding with soil particles and microbial degradation.*

Yes, it would have been preferable to have dealt with the incursion of phragmites and other invasives prior to this when, perhaps, they could have been dealt with without the use of chemicals, but unfortunately, here we are. And yes, it would have been less frightening if the manufacturer of the herbicide chosen, Monsanto, had not been labeled by many as the "most hated" and "most

evil" company in the world. I am not here to say it isn't. What I do want to say is that it seems to me that the fight to control phragmites and other invasive species on Presque Isle comes down to choosing the lesser of two evils: Fighting to improve the ecosystems on the park by controlling invasive species using all the tools we have at hand that are safe when used properly (even if they would not be our first choice) or risk losing the park to the overgrowth of non-native species by limiting our arsenal. It would be wonderful if we could return Gull Point to its former glory as a refuge and nesting area for the Piping Plover and other wing'd and wild things, but that's just how it looks from my Perch.



Piping Plover

~Michele Rundquist Franz, PIAS President

## 2013 ERIE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE 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 Fourteenth Biennial Nature Photo contest to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week. Judging will occur on Sunday, October 20th. An open reception at the Refuge 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 then. For more information and complete rules see the contest flyer: [2013 ENWR photo contest flyer.pdf](#)

~Sue Murawski, Sanctuaries Committee

## BIRD SIGHTINGS

The following birds of note were reported from Erie County from Aug. 19 to September 23, 2013.

**Least Bittern**—2; Aug. 24; head of Presque Isle Bay; M.V. 1; Aug. 31; Presque Isle; R.S.



LEAST BITTERN

**American Golden Plover**—total of 33; Aug. 25 to Sept. 22; mostly Gull Point; R.D.

**American Avocet**--1; Aug. 31; Gull Point; R.D. up to 5; Sept. 2; Gull Point; R.D., S.T.

**Whimbrel**—up to 3; Sept. 16; Sunset Point (2 birds Waterbird count) and Gull Point (3 birds); J.M., R.D.

**White-rumped Sandpiper**—1; Aug. 28; Gull Point; R.D.

**Stilt Sandpiper**--total of 7; Aug. 22 to Sept. 4; Fairview Business Park and Gull Point; J.M., D.S., R.D.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper**—2; Aug. 21; Fairview Business Park; S.C. 1; Aug. 22; Gull Point; R.D.

**Red-necked Phalarope**—1; Aug. 25; Gull Point; R.D.

**Nelson's Sparrow**—1; Sept. 23; Gull Point; R.D.



NELSON'S SPARROW

**Hudsonian Godwit**—1; Sept. 22; Gull Point; R.D.

**Dickcissel**—1; Sept. 15; Gull Point; T.L. (fide M.V.).

Flight call heard



DICKCISSEL

**Yellow-headed Blackbird**—1 imm. male; Sept. 15; Gull Point; T.L. (fide M.V.). Photo by T.L.



YELLOW HEADED BLACKBIRD

Contributors: S.C.-Shawn Collins, R.D.-Roger Donn, T.L.-Tim Lenz, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, D.S.-Don Snyder, R.S.-Randy Stringer, S.T.-Sannon Thompson, M.V.-Mark Vass

~Jerry McWilliams, Birds Record Chair  
3508 Allegheny Rd.  
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814-240-8594

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Organizations that have a long history like PIAS go through growth cycles that periodically require us to analyze our mission and goals. Now is just such a time for Presque Isle Audubon Society and the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) was formed to help foster and guide us into a focused future.

Almost the entirety of our first meeting was spent in deliberating the core purpose of our organization. In order to create a plan for the next three to five years, we knew we would need to start with having a clear definition of the organization. To accomplish this we examined our existing mission statement by comparing it with the mission statements of local environmental organizations and ten other Audubon societies (National and chapters.) We wrestled deeply with defining our role as a unique organization that stands apart from EnvironmentErie, Western PA Conservancy, and others that also seek to promote wildlife and environmental goals. We recognized that our current mission statement is broad and lacks a specific focal point upon which we fulfill a unique need. That openness in our mission has allowed us to accomplish many wonderful things in years past, but has also opened the doors for some ambiguity in our purpose. It was also worth noting that there are many environmentally focused organizations that did not exist or were not operating in our area in decades past, but are now thriving and doing good work. Knowing that there are others serving the environment in general, we agreed that our uniqueness is, and should be, directly connected to birds.

When we started with birds as our focus, it became clear that we had a lot to gain from the mission statement of the National Audubon Society, of which we are a chapter. Their statement, which is echoed by the Pennsylvania Audubon Society, is clear, concise, focused on birds, but inclusive of other wildlife and the environment. In short, it was nearly a perfect fit. Nearly. Upon reflection we felt that, besides a change from the global perspective (National Audubon) to a regional geography (northwestern

PA), a sense of intrinsic joy was missing from the declaration. In the end we were able to refine and agree upon the following as our proposed new mission statement:

*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.*

We spent a considerable amount of time examining various words in that statement and came to the conclusion that it is an accurate representation of PIAS's accomplishments historically, as well as a solid foundation for providing focus in the years to come. Having the priority be on birds, we can better prioritize strategies, goals, projects and funds. Rather than seeing a wide range of environmental issues as fitting within our mandate, we will now highlight and stay focused upon those environmental concerns that primarily affect avian populations.

Natural ecosystems are fascinating in their complexity and interconnectedness. Knowing that insects, waterways, flowers, fields, weather and pollution all affect the birds we intend to support, the SPC clearly voiced a desire to promote collaborative stewardship. Our goals will be bird focused, but that does not mean that we will ignore issues that are not directly avian centric. When topics arise that are not within our directed focus we will thoughtfully reach out to, and work in concert with, other organizations.

Our proposed revised mission statement is now being brought to you, the membership, for your consideration and feedback. We will actively discuss your thoughts at our October 2nd SPC meeting, revise if appropriate, and then ask the PIAS Executive Board to approve the new mission at their November 19th meeting. We welcome your ideas and thoughts and hope that you will submit them to us before October 2<sup>nd</sup> by email to [presqueisleaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:presqueisleaudubon@gmail.com)

Respectfully,  
The Strategic Planning Committee

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

### MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASE

The PIAS Board has found it necessary to raise the dues for Chapter only members from \$10.00 to \$15.00. Unfortunately this move had to be made.

Please use the form on the last page of the newsletter to send in your new or renewal payment.

### NEW AND RENEWAL MEMBERS

The following people are members of Presque Isle Audubon Society. Feel free to come to one of our monthly membership meetings.

**Erie:** M. Gleason, Robert Hoetzel, J. Stebnisky, Lawrence Jobses, Rynda McCray, Nancy Meyer, Helen Singer, Carolyn Sturtevant, Donald Krause, and Mary Payha

**Conneaut Lake:** G. Adsit

**Corry:** Tiana McChesney, Dirk Simonsen

**Fairview:** Kevin DeMarco

**Girard:** Gina Allgeier

**Meadville:** Mary Whitney, Carole Tobin

**Titusville:** Audrey Renn

**Townsville:** Delores Williams

**Warren:** Charles MacKenzie, Mary Straight

Renewals for our Chapter only members:

Janet Kisiel, Richard Markiewicz, William Green, John & Lisa DePaul, Linda Donati

~Ron Intrieri, Membership Chairman

email: [membership@presqueisleaudubon.org](mailto:membership@presqueisleaudubon.org)



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Sat 10-5, Sun Closed

## IT'S CALENDAR TIME!

The P.I.A.S. full-color calendar has just arrived. Selling for \$4.00 to our members and \$5.25 for the public, it will be available at the Asbury Woods Nature Center, Fairview Hallmark on Avonia Road and the TREC Nature Shop. It will also be available at the Banquet and our meetings. Please keep in mind that this quality all-bird calendar is a useful and inexpensive gift for all occasions.

## CHRISTMAS IN OCTOBER

Start your holiday shopping early. As a non-profit, PIAS is in receipt of merchandise donated by Fairview Hallmark. Come on out to our October meeting to see what we have, and please bring your shopping bag to take home your goodies. All items have been reduced for sale.

~Jeanne Kern, Chair of Sales & Marketing

## TREC OR TREAT!



**Tom Ridge Environmental Center, Erie PA**

**Sat Oct 26, 2013**

**10am - 2pm**

All ages welcome!

\*Put on your best family-friendly costume for a fun Halloween party!

\*Visit treat stations

\*Enjoy a free show of Super Buddies sponsored by First Energy Corp. at noon or 2 pm on the Big Green Screen

\*Enter the Nature Shop's costume contest!

No fee or registration. We'll have a spirited good time!



**TAMARACK WILDLIFE REHABILITATION  
AND EDUCATION CENTER'S**

**OPEN HOUSE**

**Sunday, October 20, 2013, 1-3p.m.  
21601 Stull Road, Saegertown, PA**

Come meet our staff and volunteers, tour the center, commune with our resident owls, falcons, & hawks, and learn how you can help wildlife and our wildlife programs.



**Eastern Screech Owl**

Family fun ~ Refreshments ~ Kid's Crafts ~ Silent  
Auction

<http://www.tamarackwildlife.org/>

**TIPS AND REMINDERS FOR A HEALTHY  
YARD**

**OCTOBER**

1. Stock up on bird seed and suet for the winter months.
2. Keep your hummingbird feeders full until two weeks after the last migrant has left.
3. Rake fallen leaves under shrubs and into garden beds as a protective mulch layer and as foraging areas for birds.

Or, shred fallen leaves with a mower and let them remain on the lawn as mulch.

Another option is to simply place collected leaves into your compost along with other garden debris.

4. Leave certain garden cleanup chores for the spring. Remove rotted debris to prevent the harboring of pests and diseases, but allow spent grasses and other seed bearing plants to remain standing throughout the winter as a food source for the birds.



**Cone Flowers in Seed**

5. Add organic matter to the soil by tilling in the summer mulch and adding compost or manure.

6. Sign up for Project Feeder Watch and become a citizen scientist by counting the birds that come to your feeding station from November to April.

[http://store.birds.cornell.edu/Project\\_FeederWa  
tch\\_s/42.htm](http://store.birds.cornell.edu/Project_FeederWatch_s/42.htm)

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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**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 \$15.00/year

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter only members, both new and renewal, will receive the online version of the *Tern of Events* unless they specifically request the paper copy. **Please provide your e-mail address for the online version of our newsletter.**

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Do you require a paper copy? \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Presque Isle Audubon Society  
Ronald Intrieri, Membership  
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 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.**

Introductory membership \$20.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter Code C3ZU150Z**

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

**National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
P.O. Box 422250  
Palm Coast, Fl. 32142-2250**

Renewal members will receive a coupon mailed to them by National. Please write the code number **C3ZU150Z** on your renewal application.