



TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 2014 ISSUE 14:06

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

Passenger Pigeon Anniversaries are generally thought of as times to celebrate; to mark and share the lasting impact some past event has had on the lives of the celebrants and their friends; a time to recount and examine the joyful times since that original event. The anniversary to which this Perch is devoted, however, is one that should not be celebrated, but certainly should be marked and shared. One hundred years ago this month, Martha, thought to be the last passenger pigeon, died in the Cincinnati Zoo. This marked the extinction of a bird that was once the most abundant bird in the world, accounting for one quarter (or more, by some estimates) of all the birds in North America! As little as 50 years prior to this extinction, a flock of an estimated 3.5 BILLION birds that was a mile wide flew over Ontario, taking 14 hours to pass. I can't even imagine! And that was when they were already on the decline. When its population was near its height, the passenger pigeon was estimated to be one of the largest groups of animals, second only to the Rocky Mountain Locust.

So, how could such a vast population of birds be wiped out in less than 100 years? Yes, once again, man can take at least partial credit for the devastation. The two primary reasons were commercial exploitation of pigeon meat on a massive scale and habitat destruction/deforestation that boomed as more and more settlers arrived on the continent.



Passenger Pigeon (Cont. on Page 2)

SEPTEMBER THINGS TO DO!

- September 13, Saturday** – Weed Warrior Work Session: Meet at the Stull Center at 9:30AM
- September 16, Tuesday** – PIAS Board Meeting: 7:00 in the Board Room at the TREC
- September 19, Friday** – PIAS General Meeting and Program: Room 112 at the TREC
7:00PM – Social
7:30PM - Program: **Algae: The Bad Guys or Just Bad Press?** by Jeanette Giosky (P.6)
- September 20, Saturday** – International Coastal Cleanup, 9:00 – 12:00 (P. 7)

2014-2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

President	Michele Rundquist-Franz
Vice-President	Paul Burroughs
Secretary	Lisa Danko
Treasurer	Kel McDonald
Retiring President	Janet Price

Board of Trustees

2012-2015	Dave Gustafson
2012-2015	Sam Stull
2013-2016	Steve Danko
2013-2016	Drew Mortensen
2014-2017	Don Snyder
2014-2017	Marion Gallivan

Chairs of Standing Committees

Bird Records	Jerry McWilliams
Conservation	Paul Burroughs
Education	Michele Rundquist-Franz
Field Trips	Drew Mortensen
Grants	Marion Gallivan
Hospitality	Delores & Joao Taveres
Library	Marion Gallivan
Membership	Ron Intrieri
Nominating	TBA
Presque Isle	Paul Burroughs
Publications	Janet Price
Publicity	Susan A. Smith
Programs	Mary Birdsong
Sales & Marketing	Jeanne Kern
Sanctuaries	Sue Murawski

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

Website: www.presqueisleaudubon.org

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

Because it nested in such huge colonies, the passenger pigeon was particularly vulnerable to "hunting". The means by which some of this so-called "hunting" was done was brutal and often involved massive kills. Because the meat was plentiful and cheap (\$.50/dozen) it was fed to slaves and the poor. Besides meat, the feathers of the pigeons were also sought after for bedding, etc... In one account I read, a family killed 4000 passenger pigeons in one day just for the feathers.



*The Pidgeons in such numbers we see fly
That like a cloud they do make dark the sky;
And in such multitudes are sometimes found,
As that they cover both trees and ground:
He that advances near with one good shot
May kill enough to fill both spit and pot.*

~John Holme

The size of the colonies was such that the birds required wide swaths of land, with colonies spreading over hundreds of miles with as many as 100 nests in one tree. The largest nesting area ever recorded was in Wisconsin and reportedly covered 850 square miles.

(Cont. on Page 3)

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

As forests became fragmented colonies decreased in size leading to a decline in breeding opportunities and, therefore, offspring.

Between the overhunting and decreased habitat, flocks dwindled in size and eventually reached a level at which they were no longer able to propagate the species. Naturalist, Paul Ehrlich, wrote that the extinction of the passenger pigeon *"illustrates a very important principle of conservation biology: it is not always necessary to kill the last pair of a species to force it to extinction."* He was not the only naturalist to recognize the dire state of the passenger pigeon and conservationists tried in vain to stop the wanton decimation of the species. One response by the Ohio legislature to warnings made by conservationists was as follows: *"The passenger pigeon needs no protection. Wonderfully prolific, having the vast forests of the North as its breeding grounds, traveling hundreds of miles in search of food, it is here today and elsewhere tomorrow, and no ordinary destruction can lessen them, or be missed from the myriads that are yearly produced."* Evidently they were unable or unwilling to recognize that this was no "ordinary destruction". Some states, including our own, did pass legislation to protect the passenger pigeon; however, the regulations were either weakly enforced or not at all. Legislators and hunters were unable to recognize that although the numbers of birds were still significant, they were dwindling and because of their communal roosting and breeding, the birds could not withstand the pressure of population decline. Finally, when their numbers dwindled to a few thousand, the birds stopped breeding.

The extinction of the passenger pigeon did serve to raise the public's awareness and interest in the conservation movement at that time. While I think that a larger percentage of the public is aware and active in conservation efforts than ever before, I am not convinced that a tragedy of this magnitude could never happen again. I hope that the anniversary of

the death of the last passenger pigeon moves us to strengthen our concerted resolve that it

never happens again. We must fight for legislation that improves protections for habitats and wildlife and fight legislation that places our precious flora and fauna at risk. We must educate and make our legislators aware of the folly of ignorance and hasty decisions. The cost of not doing so could cost...a species. In 1847, Aldo Leopold paid the following tribute to the passenger pigeon during a monument dedication: *Men still live who, in their youth, remember pigeons. Trees still live who, in their youth, were shaken by a living wind. But a decade hence only the oldest oaks will remember, and at long last only the hills will know.*

And now, only the hills know firsthand the beauty and grace of the passenger pigeon.

~Michele Rundquist Franz, PIAS President

FLOCKS

Many terms have been coined for flocks, flights, dissimulations, voleries, or groups of birds. Count yourself above average if you can match up more than half of these. (P.7)

1. Ostentation of _____ A. Chickens
2. Gaggle of _____ B. Nightingales
3. Parliament of _____ C. Goldfinches
4. Brood of _____ D. Owls
5. Murder of _____ E. Starlings
6. Charm of _____ F. Larks
7. Exaltation of _____ G. Geese
8. Conspiracy of _____ H. Peacocks
9. Watch of _____ I. Ravens
10. Murmuration of _____ J. Crows

BIRD REPORT

Least Bittern—1; July 30; Gull Point; M.S.
American Golden Plover—1; Aug. 22; Gull Point; R.D. (See below)



American Avocet—3; July 20 & 21; Gull Point; R.D.
2; July 27; Gull Point; M.S. 6; Aug. 20; Gull Point; R.D.

Willet—2; July 21; Gull Point; M.D. 2; Aug. 12; Gull Point; R.D. 1; Aug. 20; Gull Point; R.D.

Upland Sandpiper—1; Aug. 20; Gull Point; S.T.
(See below)



Whimbrel—total of 29; July 23 to Aug. 12; Gull Point; m.ob.

Red Knot—14; July 28; Gull Point; D.S.

White-rumped Sandpiper—2; July 28; Gull Point; D.S.

Stilt Sandpiper—4; Aug. 12; Gull Point; S.T.

Up to 2; Aug. 20-22; Gull Point; S.T.

Lesser Black-backed Gull—1 imm.; Aug. 20; Gull Point; S.T..

Black Tern—1 juv.; Aug. 16; Gull Point; R.S.
(See adult black tern below)



Olive-sided Flycatcher—1; Aug. 19; State Game Lands #155; M.W.

White-eyed Vireo—1 singing; July 21; State Game Lands #314; J.M. (See below)



Contributors: M.D.-Michael David, R.D.-Roger Donn, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, M.S.-Matt Sabatine, D.S.-Don Snyder, R.S.-Ruth Swaney, S.T.-Shannon Thompson, M.W.-Mike Weible, m.ob.-many observers.

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Record Chairperson
3508 Allegheny Rd.,
Erie, Pa. 16508-2129
814-240-8594
jerrymcw@aol.com

PIAS MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Hello everyone. The Presque Isle Audubon is pleased to welcome the following new members into our chapter.

Erie: Charles Wynkoop, Kathy Coffaro, Fred & Janet Nelson, Michele Boyle, Bianchi Motors, Virginia Sabol, Leonard Lifshen, Leah Ball, Julie Michalski, Mary Cermak

Albion: Charles Bowlus

Bear Lake: Joan Lesnak

Cambridge Sps: Darran Crabtree

Conneautville: White-Cool Funeral Home

Conneaut Lake: Street Track"N Trail

Corry: Laurel Swart

Edinboro: Berhard Frohne, Margaret & Michael Mogush, Dianna Gilbert

Fairview: Gerald Allender

Guys Mills: Dawn Gross

Linesville: Kathleen Baldwin

Meadville: Meadville Forging Company, CJ Indurtries, Elizabeth Sammartino, Stephen Mizner, Barbara Spencer,, Tom Tidball, Moody & Assoc. Inc, Optical Filters, Patsy Pero, Robert Sterba

North East: Michael Wilkinson, Jeffery Maynard, Charlotte Bdernsley

Saegertown: Dorothy Ferry

Titusville: Emily Smith

Warren: Dianna Sleeman

Waterford: Susan Stephens

Also, thanks to the following people who joined as Chapter only members, or joined on-line:

Lorena Hamara, William Ferguson, Barry Gray & Christine Troutman, Judy Lipsitz, Sandra Carlson, Kristy White, Larry Burlingame, Laura Wehman, Ronald Wagner, Lawrence Slomski, Beth Signorini, LeeAnn Reiners, Emily Mills, Patricia McMillen, Kristen McCain, and of course Michele Rundquist Franz.

My apologies if I missed anyone.

~Ron Intrieri, Membership Chairman
membership@presqueisleaudubon.org

MEET AND WELCOME THE PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Donald B. Snyder is one of our newest Trustees who will serve from 2014 to 2017. Don is retired from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania where, as a Biology Professor, he taught ornithology, ecology, and other wildlife-related courses. As a member of PIAS for 45 years, he's been active in a variety of ways including Christmas Count Compiler, Bird Records Committee Chairman, and Vice President. He has been Field Trip Leader at various times including for the Festival of Birds. Currently, he helps monitor shorebirds at Gull Point during migration as part of the International Shorebird Survey. Also, he's involved with the periodic revision of Checklist of Birds Recorded in Erie Co. PA Including PISP, and is serving on the Strategic Planning Committee of the PIAS. He has served as a member of the Ornithological Technical Committee of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey and was one of the decision-makers in deciding what would become the Important Bird Areas (IBA's) for the state of Pennsylvania. Other activities include Land Steward for the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy which is one of a number of other conservation organizations to which he belongs. He also has several dozen publications.

PIAS MONTHLY MEETING

Algae: The Bad Guys or Just Bad Press?
Presented by Jeannete Girosky

Cyanobacteria? Harmful Algae Blooms? Just what is this stuff anyway and why is it blue-green? Take a peek through the pond scum and discover the many relationships this algae has with the natural world, from lichens to polar bears to the very air you breathe. Find out how this tiny organism is responsible for life as we know it, and then decide if you think algae is such a bad guy after all.



Jeanette Girosky is an ecology and evolution major at Penn State Behrend. She heads the phycology (algae) collection at the Natural History Museum. She is currently engaged in research in Presque Isle Bay and is the Citizen Science Volunteer Monitor Coordinator for the Harmful Algae Bloom Task Force. She is active with the Purple Martin Conservation Association and also volunteers for DCNR.

~Mary Birdsong, Program Chairperson



MEMO TO WEED WARRIORS

From Matthew Pluta
Research Assistant
Tom Ridge Environmental Center
Phone: (814) 835-8069 x104

As we wrap up a great summer season I wanted to reach out to you all and thank you for all the great work this year! Beyond Park Management being happily amazed at the amount of work we've accomplished, the Park itself is showing extreme advances in ecosystem health.

If you have been following the schedule you'll realize we are just about wrapping up our last two weeks of regularly scheduled work days. With the eagerness to continue working into the cooler months, I've worked with the Lead Stewards to come up with the following changes and plans for the next couple months.

Starting next week (Tuesday the 9th and Thursday the 11th) - All Tuesday's events will start at 12:30 instead of 10:00 AM, and there will be no more Thursday events. This way we can focus our weekly weekday work into one effort rather than splitting it over two days.

Also, it has been decided this year to hold off on the picnic scheduled for Saturday September 20th. Unknowingly it was scheduled during the same day/time as the International Coastal Cleanup and it seemed to conflict with a lot of people's schedules.

Lastly, Saturday work sessions will continue into the cooler months but will start at 10:00 AM instead of 9:30 AM. As always, meet-up happens a few minutes before the scheduled time at the Stull Interpretive Center.

I hope everyone had a great summer and continues to enjoy things as the fall approaches. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask!

Thanks,
Matt

29th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP

Coastal Cleanup Day is dedicated to the improvement of beaches, coastal regions and surrounding areas throughout the world. It purports to be the largest volunteer event in the world, and has operated for over 26 years.



Facts from the 2013 Coastal Cleanup

When: September 20, 2014 9:00 AM

Where: Tom Ridge Environmental Center Discovery Room

Name: Presque Isle State Park

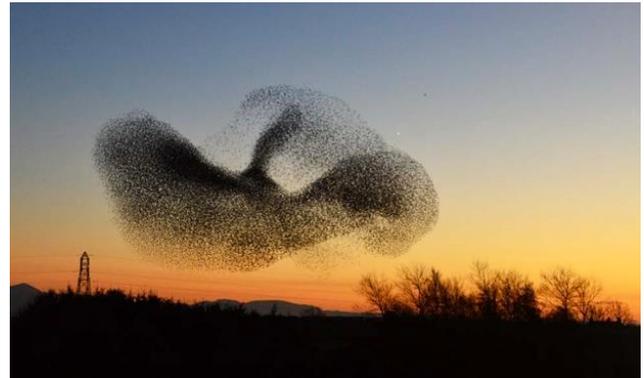
Phone: 814.833.7424

Description: Registrations open at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center or the Erie Bluffs State Park parking area for the 12th year of Presque Isle State Park's participation in this annual cleanup. Participants will be collecting trash and recording data.

Note: Groups larger than 10, please call 217-9632 by September 12th

ANSWERS TO FLOCK PUZZLE

- 1 H Ostentation of Peacocks
- 2 G Gaggle of Geese
- 3 D Parliament of Owls
- 4 A Brood of Chickens
- 5 J Murder of Crows
- 6 C Charm of Goldfinches
- 7 F Exaltation of Larks
- 8 I Conspiracy of Ravens
- 9 B Watch of Nightingales
- 10 E Murmuration of Starlings



MURMURATION OF STARLINGS

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 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 \$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 **C4ZU150Z** on your renewal application.