



TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER/JANUARY 2020 ISSUE 20:01

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

Hello, fellow members of Audubon. I've volunteered to take over as President of PIAS since Drew Mortensen resigned a few months ago. Let me now take this chance to give a big thanks to Drew for all the hard work he did while on the Board for several years. Here's hoping that he's doing more birding now with his free time!

Any ideas you have about how to improve our Audubon group? Projects you would like to see us undertake? Please contact me at president@presqueisleaudubon.org, or write to Presque Isle Audubon Society, TREC, 301 Peninsula Drive, Suite 8, Erie 16505. Many of you readers have been members much longer than I, so I would be grateful for your direction and ideas. All are welcome to attend our bimonthly Executive Board meetings, held the third Tuesday of every odd-numbered month. I know though that many have busy schedules, so I'd be happy to have your ideas or concerns emailed or mailed to me, and I'll make sure they are put on the agenda.

The Board is looking for a Secretary now, a job which mostly involves attending the Board meetings, and taking minutes. We're also looking for someone who likes to take pictures of birds with a smart phone, to help the folks at Environment Erie with their Eco-Explorer camp next June. They need someone to lead a brief class for youngsters on photographing birds. Let me know if you are interested in either role.

Our November program, "Lights out Cleveland: Saving Migrating Birds One Warbler at a Time", inspired me to think about how we can help migrating birds in our area avoid window crashes. Data about how often this happens is first needed. Let me know if you notice any dead or injured birds in overly-lit areas like downtown Erie during migration.

I'm looking forward to meeting and talking with you more at our next program on Friday, February 21st at TREC.

~Sue Murawski, Acting President of PIAS

DECEMBER/JANUARY THINGS TO DO!



- December 14, Saturday** – Christmas Bird Count, 7:30am at the Ranger Station (p. 2)
- December 21, Saturday** – First Day of Winter
- December 22, Sunday** – First Day of Hanukkah
- December 25, Wednesday** – Christmas Day
- December 26, Thursday** – Kwanza Begins

- January 1, Wednesday** – New Year's Day
- January 21, Tuesday** – PIA Board Meeting in the Conference Room at 6:00

2019-2020 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.

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

Website: www.presqueisleaudubon.org

2019 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



Join us on Saturday December 14th at the Ranger Station on Presque Isle at 7:30 a.m. (yes, 30 minutes later than previous years) for the Christmas Bird Count (CBC)! We will meet in the Ranger Station, form teams and spread out onto the park to count birds in each team's designated area. We welcome birders of all levels of experience to participate!! Bring a friend and a bagged lunch because we will reconvene at the Ranger's Station at noon to tally up morning birds. After lunch we head back out to bird areas not covered in the morning and meet for dinner at Hoss's on 26th Street at 5PM for the final tally. Participants are welcome to attend all or part of the "festivities".

The CBC is one of the longest running citizen science projects and through such projects we are able to assist professional scientists gather and compile data which they use to make analyze bird population trends and projections. The count, which began in 1900, is held each year from December 14th-January 5th. For a list and dates of bird counts in the region and across the country go to the National Audubon website CBC page.

There will be no field trips in December or January unless some special birds appear. If and when that occurs, I will send emails or post a message on the website about a meeting place and time.

~Michele Rundquist Franz, Field Trip Chair

THE BIG SIT Sunday, October 13, 2019



Jamie's Back Deck

Where is everyone?

Another year has gone by and it's time for the global Big Sit bird watch which will go from first light till well after dark. It's always a fun and exciting time sitting on my deck all day, counting every bird seen or heard, with a group of your closest birding friends. The accumulated stress from the frantic, day to day, rat race that is most people's lives, is dissolved away when you spend an entire day in one spot, enjoying and counting birds, seeing how many species and individuals you can tally. This was a 24 hour census that started and ended at midnight. The birds put on quite a show today, and with 52 species seen, we were two species shy of last year's tally of 54 species (our all-time record). The night was capped off by the rising of a full moon across the lake and the calling in of a pair of Barred Owls that came in to the nearest tree and were quite vocal (see checklist #3). Once they were lured in, they called up a storm for 20 minutes. The vocal owls capped off a marvelous day, although it was very cold. It was 32 degrees at mid-night, with a frost on the deck table, and by morning it was 29 degrees. There was a puddle of frozen ice on the picnic table until late morning. It only got up into the low sixties with a slight breeze, and even though it was sunny all day, the low sun only hit the deck for a brief time. The sun did feel great. We had 5 scopes set up. We also had one of the strongest birding teams I have ever assembled for one of these. The birding out here has been kind of dead the past couple

of weeks, and I was worried the count would be a bust, but our tally rose so fast in the morning, that I thought we could shatter our own personal species count from last year, but it slowed down in the afternoon and we failed. It was the full moon tonight, so many folks stayed on the deck to watch the moon rise after dark. It was really wonderful and beautiful. We put our scopes on the moon to see if we could see any migrant songbirds flying across the face of the moon, silhouetted. Only one was seen. Everyone brought food and it was a wonderful, shared experience, bonding over birds. There were a lot of eyes on the sky today, and keen ears listening, but also we had a lot of verbal interaction. At the end of one of these, everyone goes home feeling really energized and "up!" A combination of how you feel after a really great social gathering and party, added to spending a shared day out in nature fills you up in way hard to describe.



Participants in this year's epic count included: Dr. Patrick Kramer, Jerry McWilliams, Sam Stull, Bonnie Ginader, John Scott, Janet Price, Caroline Sturtevant, Issy Lawrie, and John Schriefer, Annette Smith, Justin Berkheimer, Alejandra Lewandowski, Deuane Hoffman, Mike Plyler, Mary Birdsong, Joao Tavares, Delores Tavares, Suzanne Winterberger, Ruth Swaney, Cindy Snyder, Lezlee Betts, Alyson Betts, Robert Scribner, Susan A. Smith, Ben Haranin, and Mary Jo Haranin. So, including me, we had 26 participants, about double last year.

~James R. Hill, III, Organizer and Host of the
2019 Big Sit (And many others)

THE BIRD REPORT

The following birds of note were reported the past two months from Presque Isle S.P. unless noted otherwise.

Snow Goose—3 blue and 1 white; Nov. 8; Gull Point; J.B.

Cackling Goose—1; Oct. 13; Waterford; J.M., J.H.

Red-necked Grebe—1; Oct. 9; Sunset Point (WC =Waterbird count); J.M. 1; Oct. 18 & 19; Beach 11; C.V. 1; Nov. 4; Sunset Point (WC); B.O., J.M. (Below)



Great Cormorant—1; Oct. 11; Sunset Point (WC); J.F., J.M., J.B. First county record. (Below)



American White Pelican—1; Oct. 23 & 24; channel; S.T.

American Bittern—1; Nov. 5 (late); Gull Point; M.W.

Cattle Egret—1; Nov. 3; McKean (along Dunn Valley Rd. with Black Angus Cattle); S.S.

Long-eared Owl—2; Nov. 10; east of B-trail; R.D.

Short-eared Owl—1; Nov. 3; Gull Point; R.D. 2; Nov. 10; Gull Point; A.M.

Northern Saw-whet Owl—1; Nov. 10 & 11; east of B-trail; R.D.

Snail Kite—1; Oct. 22; Beach 11 and Horseshoe Pond; C.V., J.F. First record in the U.S. north Georgia. (Below)



American Avocet—u to 3; Oct. 31 to Nov. 11; Gull Point; M.W., J.F.

American Golden Plover—1; Oct. 12; Gull Point; R.D.

Red-necked/Red Phalarope—1; Nov. 13; Sunset Point (WC); J.M. (Below)



(Continued on Page 5)

THE BIRD REPORT (Cont.)

Parasitic/Pomarine jaeger—1; Oct. 17; off Beach 11; R.S. 1; Nov. 2; Walnut Creek access (WC); J.M., J.B., J.F. (Below)



Northern Shrike—1; Nov. 14; McKean Twp. S.S. 1; Nov. 15; Franklin Center; J.D. (Below)



White-eyed Vireo—1; Oct. 19 (late); Gull Point; T.L. (Below)



Red-eyed Vireo—1; Oct. 19; Gull Point; T.L. Record late in the county by at least two weeks.

Swainson's Thrush—1; Nov. 8; Erie; N.A. Record late in the county by about eight days. (Below)



Lapland Longspur—1 or 2; Oct. 6; Sunset Point (WC); J.S.

Nelson's Sparrow—1; Oct. 4; Gull Point; M.W. (Below)



Contributors: N.A.-Nancy Andersen, J.B.-Justin Berkheimer, J.D.-Julie Dell, R.D.-Roger Donn, J.F.-Jennifer Ferrick, J.H.-Jamie Hill, T.L.-Tim Lenz, A.M.-Andrew Markle, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, B.O.-Bernie O'Connor, R.S.-Robert Scribner, S.S.-Sam Stull, J.S.-Joe Susi, S.T.-Shannon Thompson, C.V.-Connor Vara, M.W.-Michael Williams

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Records

MONITORING WATERBIRDS IN AND AROUND PRESQUE ISLE

Sarah Sargent, Executive Director
Erie Bird Observatory

From mid-October until the lake ice completely freezes over, usually in January, then again in March and April, the waters in and around Presque Isle are teeming with ducks, geese, grebes, loons and similar waterbirds. But how many? And how many of which species in what locations? And most importantly, are those numbers changing over the course of many years?



GREEN WINGED TEAL

Erie Bird Observatory has begun a long-term monitoring program to keep records of these numbers. We would love to have your help! We have a set of 16 locations we are using, and a simple protocol and data form for you to use, or you can use eBird and share your counts with us. Please contact us to find out how to participate! You do need to know how to identify most of the species you see. We track about 40 species, but some of those are quite rare. If you can identify the most common species of ducks, then we can use your help.

At this point we have three years of funding (2019-2021) that is tied to the marsh restoration work which the park is implementing through the Sustain Our Great Lakes program, part of the Great Lakes

Restoration Initiative. This funding allows us to hire a seasonal Waterbird Monitor for eight weeks in the spring and 10 weeks in the fall to get this monitoring program off to a strong start, including setting up data management systems as well as conducting counts. With this funding we especially are interested in whether or not we can see changes in waterbird numbers that we can tie to the treatments, that is, the control of invasive plant monocultures using herbicides. Changes may be in the form of more (or fewer) birds, or different species from before and after. Although the treatments are being applied in the marshes, the diving ducks and fish-eating birds may be affected because the marshes are nurseries for fish species that move out to the bay when they get a little older.

From our first season in March-April of 2019, we estimated a cumulative total of 175,240 waterbird use-days at the 16 sites we monitored. One “waterbird use-day” is just what it sounds like: one bird used that site on one day. We interpolate between days, so if there were 10 birds at a site one day, then 8 birds two days later, we estimate that there were 9 birds there on the day in between. So over those three days there were $10 + 9 + 8 = 27$ total use-days. Our estimate is more accurate if we have an actual count from the day in between, which is why it helps to get more people out counting.

Volunteers contributed a total of 184 checklists in the spring, and a total of over 205 hours of time. That’s the equivalent of someone working 40 hours a week for 5 weeks! Wow! That’s a lot of effort! Also, we are offering a prize for most time contributed to the project each season. In the spring season, Emily Smith narrowly beat out Shayne Hoachlander for the top prize (\$100 gift card) with her 26:30. Shayne came in second with 26:17 (so close!) and Julie Dell came in third with 25:33.

#

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We've had snow already, a portent of winter to come. Maybe .But it's still good weather for bird watching. We are glad to welcome the following new members into the Presque Isle Audubon, as well as members who renewed.

Erie: Mary Wierzbicki, Ronald Fall, Alice Pietrofesa, Joan Collins, Thomas Frank, John Gregory, Donald Brett, Deborah Bernardini, Mary Bell, Lance Strasser, Jeff Stankiewicz, Rose Koehler, Kurt Gunther, Susan Moore, Philip Kahle, Shelly Noel, Ed Koenig, Robert Allen, John & Lise DePaul, Linda Kierstein, Aubrey O'Hara, Toni & Bob Griffith, Evelyn Anderson

Conneautville: John Tautin, Clemence Ravacon Mershon

Corry: Corinne Weldon

Edinboro: Suzanne Winterberger, Jerry Covert, Debbie Zahler

Espyville: Anna Loverosky

Fairview: Ernest Nagle

Girard: Mary Sorgen, David Pangratz

Lake City: Walter Thompson

Linesville: James Smith, Mary McClinsey, Justin Street

Meadville: Byron Rich, Norman Cronin, Jeffery Deardroff

Saegertown: Alma Servideo

Spartansburg: Mary Lay

Titusville: Martha Pringle

Zephyrhills, Fl: Karen Kiel

I hope I didn't miss anyone. If I did let me know.

~Ron Intrieri, Membership Chairman
membership@presqueisleaudubon.org

NO BIRDS AT YOUR FEEDERS?

Do you wonder why there are periods of time when no birds visit your feeders? I've met a few people lately who have experienced this predicament so decided to present reasons why low feeder activity might be happening.

If natural food is available birds will tend to rely on those sources rather than go to feeders. Their absence will be most noticeable when natural food sources are exceptionally abundant.

Birds can sense when predators such as hawks and feral cats are around. You'll notice an absence of birds when a predator shows up.

Filthy feeders and moldy seed are other causes. If a month or so goes by and the seed is still there, it's time to replace it with fresh. Cleaning the feeder before adding the new is recommended.

We don't always have control over when our feathered friends "dine at our tables", but nothing can beat the pleasure we feel when they are there.

Presque Isle Audubon Society's newsletter, the *Tern of Events*, is published every other month: February, April, June, August, October and December. 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.

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

Individual membership \$15.00/year

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National Audubon Society
Membership Application

Renewal members can join as they have in the past, either by sending their membership check directly to National Audubon, or they can join online. New members are to send their first membership check to the local chapter. The address is at the bottom of this application.

Membership includes membership in BOTH the National Audubon Society and the local Presque Isle Audubon Society. National members receive *Audubon Magazine* (4 issue per year) and the chapter newsletter, *Tern of Events*. Please include your e-mail address to receive the online version of the newsletter.

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