



TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER/JANUARY 2020-21 ISSUE 21:01

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

Hallelujah, they'll be a new administration in DC this January that's much more likely to "protect birds and the places they need." And just in time! The Bureau of Land Management in Alaska is currently seeking comments and nominations on the upcoming oil and gas leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Per National Audubon, millions of birds including Snowy Owls, Tundra Swans, American Golden-Plovers, and Snow Geese migrate to the Refuge from all 50 states and seven continents to nest in its rich tundra plains. As I send in my letter of opposition, I take comfort in reading the upcoming Biden administration is likely to reverse this plan and permanently protect ANWR. Still, join in and send your own comment of disapproval, but note that it must be on paper (no email) and received in Anchorage by December 17. You can read the details of this effort on the National Audubon website.

Another great PIA program occurred via Zoom on November 20: Wetland Restoration at Presque Isle State Park, by Jen Salem. After watching her presentation, it's evident Jen and her team are doing a terrific job at the Park. For the last few years they've grown native plants from seeds or cuttings, then rooted them on Presque Isle. They've concentrated their work in those areas that were open for new growth after being treated for invasive plants. Obstacles in 2020, like high water levels and lack of a greenhouse due to TREC being closed in the Spring, didn't deter them.

I apologize if you couldn't listen live due to lack of a passcode. For those who missed, here's the link on our You Tube channel; it's an enjoyable hour of viewing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzV3HxuTWpw> Our next Zoom program is not until Feb. 19, 2021. If you use Zoom at all, check regularly for frequent updates made to the Zoom program, so that it works smoothly.

(Cont. on Page 2)

DECEMBER/JANUARY THINGS TO DO!



No Programs for December and January

December 11, Friday – First Day of Hanukkah

December 19, Saturday – Christmas Bird Count at Presque Isle beginning at 7:00am. See page 3 for directions due to pandemic.

December 25, Friday – Christmas Day

December 26, Saturday – Kwanza

January 19, Tuesday – PIA Board Meeting

At 6:00p. Check website and emails for Information.

(PRESIDENT'S PERCH CONT.)

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Next is some news from your Board of Directors. At our November meeting we approved payment for 2021 respraying of invasive plants at the PIA Fernwood Sanctuary in Fairview, PA. Originally treated in 2015 with funding through PA Sea Grant, targeted then were common reed, glossy buckthorn, Morrow's honeysuckle, common privet and multiflora rose. In 2021, these plants will still be targeted, although now they are much fewer in numbers. Also needing treatment next year are narrow leaved and hybrid cattail, Japanese barberry, and moneywort. Two rare plants grow in this Sanctuary, and we intend to keep them from being crowded out by the invaders. Fernwood is located just north of Greater Erie Auto Auction on Route 98. At our Laura Olsen Memorial Sanctuary in Crawford County, logging of mostly dying ash trees has been completed, along with hand spraying of invasive plants. Over time, the removal of these trees and invasives will open up this forest to new growth, improving the Sanctuary for songbirds. As a side benefit, over \$8,000 was received from the timber sale through Foundation for Sustainable Forests.

February can be a dreary month in this area. To boost your spirits, participate in the annual Great Backyard Bird Count next year from Feb. 12 to 15. You can easily be part of this worldwide citizen science event, which is sponsored in part by the National Audubon Society. It's so simple: spend time watching your favorite outdoor space, count as many birds as you can find, for as little as 15 minutes or as long as you wish for four days, and then report them. "Birds are everywhere, all the time, doing fascinating things. Join us in February, when the world comes together for the love of birds." www.birdcount.org
Keep in touch!

~Sue Murawski,
president@presqueisleaudubon.org

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

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - 2020



Well, the 2020 Christmas Bird Count is on for Saturday December 19, 2020. On November 19, 2020, I participated in a Zoom Webinar conducted by National Audubon that provided guidance in conducting the count and which laid out updated guidelines regarding safety for participants. These guidelines are, of course, necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic from which, as I sit here writing, I am slowly recuperating. Although I work closely with patients with the virus on a nearly daily basis, I am always well-protected and extremely cautious. As it turns out, it was spread to me from a close family member whose co-worker spent unprotected time with a person who later tested positive for Covid-19. I am telling you this only because I know it is on those occasions when we do not prepare and become complacent with protecting ourselves and others that we run the highest risk of contracting or spreading this disease. We must abide by these guidelines to keep ourselves and our birding partners safe!!

1. There will be NO in-person gatherings. This means we will NOT meet up in the morning to create teams, we will NOT meet for lunch to do

any preliminary tallies and there will be NO dinner for final compilation. I have already heard from a few individuals/teams who are interested in covering areas that are traditionally “theirs” on Presque Isle SP and other areas within the count circle. I think that this is the only way we can get this accomplished with any semblance of organization.

Anyone that would like a Field Checklist, contact me at info@presqueisleaudubon.org and I will email a digital copy. This is also where I would like people to send me their tallies. I will also leave a few copies of the count checklist outside the Ranger Station on the park on the morning of the count. If you do not use a count checklist that is fine but please send me as detailed information as possible so that I may accurately complete my report to the CBC team. I am primarily interested in species and numbers and the area you covered within the circle, but please do include names of your team members, miles and minutes both on foot and by car as close as you can get. Also, contact information for your team point person would be helpful if I have any questions.

2. Although outdoor contact is considered a low risk contact, social distancing and/or masking is required in the field. Hey, your face will stay warmer.

3. Carpooling may ONLY occur within existing familial or social “pod” groups. You know who you are.

4. Activities MUST comply with all current state and municipal COVID 19 guidelines. If there is a mandatory stay at home or shelter in-place order at the time of the CBC, the CBC will be cancelled.

(Cont. on Page 4)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT – 2020 (Cont.)

Although we don't generally ask ahead for participant registration, if you could please express your interest or pose any comments/questions to me at info@presqueisleaudubon.org, I will address them as I am able. National Audubon is keenly aware that most circles will have no CBC or have limited participation or coverage, however, during the webinar they did express interest in seeing how this will look in their longitudinal date. Having said that, I am still willing to be the compiler and participate in the count with anyone interested. I know you as a responsible and cautious group and if you are in, I am in.

I have included a photo of our CBC circle. If you bird from your home and are within the circle, please send me your information for inclusion in our tally. Also, if you have participated in prior CBCs and would like to cover the area(s) that you have covered in the past, please let me know and I will assign uncovered areas to other participants.

~Michele Franz, CBC Compiler, PIAS

PIPING PLOVERS IN 2020

Humans may have struggled through a pandemic summer, but Piping Plovers at Gull Point went about their business with assurance. An adult pair of plovers successfully hatched and fledged four adorable chicks yet again.

This is the fourth year in a row that they have been successful. The dutiful parents were the male "Jerry" who first came to Gull Point in 2016 as a first-year adult. He found no mate that year, but as you may know he did in 2017

and made history by successfully raising two chicks to fledge. The female of that historic nest, Jean, has not been seen since 2018 after they raised four chicks.

This year his mate was the same female who nested at Gull Point last year (with Jerry's son, "Blue Dot"!). She received adult bands this year and was nicknamed Olive to match her new bands.

The Erie Bird Observatory and its partners were happy to see them set up shop in a very high, dry and secure location, far from the high waters the park experienced this season.



Piping Plover Chick

By June 23, four tiny and endearing chicks were exploring their new world. By the end of July they were making their first flights and in August they headed south.

In all, Piping Plovers at Gull Point have added 16 chicks to the Great Lakes population so far. We are all looking forward to see what happens in 2021!

Thank you, Mary Birdsong, for keeping us informed about your "babies"! We know you have a special concern for the plovers, but we all want to know about them, as well. It's obvious that all the effort put into restoring the presence of the piping plovers at Presque Isle is a great success.

~The Editor!

BIRD REPORT

The following birds of note were reported from October 1, 2020 to November 21, 2020 from Presque Isle S. P. unless noted otherwise.

Snow Goose—2; Oct. 4; Sunset Point (Waterbird count); J.F. 60; Oct 27; over Dead Pond Trail; C.V.

Harlequin Duck—2; Nov. 18; Beach 8; R.G.

Brant—32; Oct. 30; Sunset Point (waterbird count); J.M.

Red-necked Grebe—total of 9; Oct. 22 to Nov. 13; Sunset Point (Waterbird count); J.M.

Eared Grebe—1; Oct. 26, Sunset Point (Waterbird count); J.M. 1; Nov. 16; Shades Beach, Harborcreek; J.H.

American Golden Plover—1; Nov. 6; Sunset Point (Waterbird count); J.F., J.M.

Baird's Sandpiper-1; Oc. 26 (late), Gull P.; A.Y.

Purple Sandpiper—1; Nov. 1; Sunset Point (Waterbird count); m.ob. 1; Nov. 14; Sunset Point (Waterbird count); J.M.

Red Phalarope 1; Nov. 15; Sunset Point (Waterbird count); B.S., J.M., 1; Nov. 17; Vista 1; J.H.

Black-legged Kittiwake—1; Oct. 27; Sunset Point (Waterbird count); 1; Nov. 16; Presque Isle Bay; M.S., J.H., R.G.

Little Gull—1; Nov. 1; Sunset Point (Waterbird count); B.S., et al. 1 or 2; Nov. 17 & 18; off Leo's and south pier; D.W., C.V., resp.

Common Loon—3550; Nov. 17; Walnut Creek (Waterbird count); J.M. Record single day high for the county.

Snowy Owl—1; Nov. 21; Gull Point; R.D., J.F.

Long-eared Owl—1; Nov. 11; pines; R.D.

Short-eared Owl—1; Oct. 18; Gull Point; J.F. 1; Oct. 25; Erie; M.B.

Northern Saw-whet Owl—2; Oct. 25 & Nov. 3, pines; R.D. B.S. 4 banded; last few days of October; Fry's landing; fide C.V.

Northern Shrike—1; Oct. 26; Dead Pond T; A.Y.

Cliff Swallow—1; Oct. 18; Sunset Point (waterbird count); J.M. Record late in the county by 17 days.

Orange-crowned Warbler—1; Oct. 3; Fry's landing; banded by E.B.O.

Connecticut Warbler—1; Oct. 5; Fry's L.; C.V.

Bay-breasted Warbler—1; Oct. 23; Pine Tree Trail; J.M., B.S. Record late in the county by about 18 days.

Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco—2; Oct. 24; Fry's landing; banded by L.M.K., C.V.; First county record.

Common Redpoll—up to 65; Nov. 9 to 21; Fry's landing; C.V., et al. They have also been reported from Edinboro and Franklin Center.

Pine Siskin—widespread across the county, in Edinboro area where there are hundreds

Evening Grosbeak—singles and small groups reported at feeders in West Springfield, Erie, and Edinboro.

Contributors: M.B.-Mary Birdsong, R.D.-Roger Donn, J.F.-Jennifer Ferrick, R.G.-Ross Gallardy, J.H.-Jason Horn, L.M.K.-Laura-Marie Koitsch, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, M.S.-Matthew Sabatine, B.S.-Bb Scibner, C.V.-Connor Vara, D.W.-Dave Wilton, A.Y.-Aaron Yappert, E.B.O.-Erie Bird Observatory, m.ob. many observers

~Jerry McWilliams
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THE BIG SIT



Jamie Hill's Deck

On October 10th, 2020, I hosted my 6th annual "Big Sit" on the deck of my Waterford, PA [Erie County] home, with 5 of my closest eBirding friends. eBirders included me, Chuck Gehringer, Jerry McWilliams, Robert Scribner, Suzanne Winterberger, and Jennifer Ferrick. I kept the numbers of participants very low this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In contrast, last year there were 26 birders who came to my deck to participate. If you were one of the regulars who didn't get invited this year, please don't be offended. Blame the virus.

A "Big Sit" is a global, 24-hour-long bird census (typically scheduled for the second weekend in October, everywhere) where the participants are required to stay within a 17-foot-diameter circle while counting all the birds they see or hear. My Waterford, PA, deck, which is elevated, turns out to be an ideal location for a Big Sit as it has a substantial vista overlooking wetlands, fields, and forests. Most of my co-counters arrived at first light in the morning and stayed until dark, but I was up at 12:01 am on the morning of the 10th listening for nocturnal birds such as owls (no luck). Then I went to sleep and got back up in the dark of morning to listen for owls again (again, no luck). I did hear two species of owl (Great

Horned and Eastern Screech) after dark near the end of the count day — our final two species of the count.

How did our 2020 **species total (48)** compare to the previous 5 Big Sits at my deck? In 2019 we tallied 52 species; in 2018 we tallied 54 species (our high record); in 2017 we tallied 46 species (our low record); in 2013 we tallied 52 species; and in our first Big Sit in 2012 we tallied 50 species.

How did our 2020 **individual birds seen total (1230)** compare to the previous 5 Big Sits at my deck? In 2019 we tallied 1455 individuals; in 2018 we tallied 990 individuals; in 2017 we tallied 1148 individuals; in 2013 we tallied 1968 individuals (our high record); and on our first Big Sit in 2012 we tallied only 743 individuals (our low record).



These species and individual totals that we tallied over the six count years aren't meant to reveal any population trends as our count day totals tend to be mostly weather-related. Besides, a Big Sit is really designed just to be a fun gathering of fellow birders, doing what they love — being out in nature bird watching! ! We had a super fun day of birding and camaraderie, and ended up seeing and counting 1230 individual birds of 48 species.

#

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

I hope everyone is staying safe from the Covid-19. Hopefully it will be gone by next year. We want to welcome the new members and those that rejoined. Subscribe to our newsletter, either on line via email, or the paper copy, to keep up on our events. Hopefully, our membership meetings held monthly on a Friday night at the Tom Ridge Center will start up next year sometime.

Erie: Allen Konst, Anthony Keck, Rena Wierbinski, Judith Czigler, Richard Wilson, Lyman Cohen, Dahte Homan, Bruce Baldwin, Carol Overbeck, Janice Hill, Patricia Lux, Carolyn Hammers, Linda Best, Janet Wilson, Mitch Petroff, Pamela Mead, Roger Whelan, Diane Kallor, David Szymanowski, Kathleen Sullivan, Joan Loesel, Janet Schmitt, Jane Eakin, Jeffery Hancock, Patricia Benekos, Robert Anderson, Erica Erwin, Karen Bukowski, Jenna Mulrooney-White, Judy Lipsitz, Jerry McWilliams, Thomas Chandley, Mary Prather

Albion, Pa: Russell Bromley

Cambridge Sps: Robert Grinarm

Centerville; Sue Briggs, Marle Marteeny

Cochranton: Donald Coast, Delmar Rath

Conneautville, Pa: Adam Troyer

Corry: Dirk Simonsen

Edinboro: Bernie Connelly, John Yonko

Fairview: Mary Harsh, Candy Tompkins, Peggie Johnson, Vicki Grzasko

Freedom, Pa: Georgia Wahl

Girard: Deborah Gentile

Harborcreek: Susan Leri, Jeff Jordano, Rosemary Kurutz

Jamestown: Beth Parkinson, Charles Klingensmith

Meadville: Judy Martin, Jane Zazitski, Caroline Churchill-Hargenrater, Joyce Lynn, Cheryl Hodges, Paul & Deb Dickey, Tom Giovannelli, Mary Michaels

Mexico, NY: Patrick Crotty

North East: Nalda Hernandez, Sue Perkins

Springboro: Sandra Hebert

Titusville, Pa: Emily Mills

Union City: Marilyn Sweeney

Waterford: Delores Pasiecznik

Pittsburgh, Pa: C. Kollar

~Ron Intrieri, Membership Chairman
membership@presqueisleaudubon.org

The 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.

Printed on recycled paper.

The Presque Isle Audubon Society
Tom Ridge Environmental Center
301 Peninsula Drive, Suite 8
Erie, PA 16505

Non-Profit Organization
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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.

Introductory membership \$20.00

Renewals \$20.00

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