



TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019 ISSUE 19:02

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.

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS RESUME IN MARCH

Our bi-weekly field trips will resume in March, 2019 and as always are open to the public for people of all ages and skill levels and are free of charge



Julie, Toni and Nic

We had a small but dedicated troupe last year and are hoping to expand on our numbers and locations. Unless otherwise specified, any field trips on Presque Isle will meet at the Stull Center parking lot at 7:45AM where we will then car pool to our designated trail. All trips are subject to change depending on trail conditions. We will bird in almost any weather unless there is a torrential downpour or a forecast for dangerous conditions. Warm and waterproof clothing and shoes are recommended, especially for trips earlier in the schedule. Slip on waterproof boots can come in handy. Bring your binoculars of course, but we will have a few pairs of

binoculars available for use if you or someone you bring doesn't have them. If you have a scope you are welcome to bring it.

Field Trip Schedule For March on Page 2

FEBRUARY/MARCH THINGS TO DO!



February 5, Tuesday – Festival of the Birds Committee Meeting, 6:00p in Conference Room at the TREC

February 15, Friday – PIA Program and Social: 7:00 - Winter Raptor Surveys in Pennsylvania Followed by the Social (Page 3)

March 15, Friday – PIA Program and Social: 7:00 - Tracking the Rare Breeding Birds of Pennsylvania's High Elevation Boreal

March 16, Saturday – Field Trip (See Page 2) Wetlands followed by the Social (Page 3)

March 19, Tuesday – PIA Board Meeting at 6:00p in the Conference Room at the TREC

March 26, Tuesday – Festival of the Birds Committee Meeting, 6:00p in Conference Room at the TREC

March 30, Saturday – Field Trip (See Page 2)

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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

Field Trip Schedule for March

Unless otherwise stated trips will be 8AM-11AM but participants are welcome to join or leave at their leisure.

March 16th: Vista 1, head of the bay, Beach 1 and adjacent parking area for waterfowl, local songbirds, possible local eagles

March 30th: Feeders at Park Ranger Station, pond and area around ranger station for local passerines, possible gulls and waterfowl in pond.

MEET JENNIFER FERRICK! CHAIR OF PUBLICITY COMMITTEE



Jennifer Ferrick, has been enamored with birds since 1986. She graduated from Edinboro University with a B.S. in Business Administration and Economics.

Throughout her career, she has been working within arm's reach of birds, currently holding the position of Office Manager at Tamarack Wildlife Center.

As an avid conservationist Jennifer has been aiding conservation efforts and educating the public since 1994. Some of the groups that she has worked with include the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Erie National Wildlife Refuge in Crawford County, PA DCNR, National Audubon Society, Pennsylvania Audubon and Erie Bird Observatory.

Jennifer is always up for a new adventure and the thrill of observing birds in their native surroundings! Welcome to Presque Isle Audubon!

PIA MONTHLY PROGRAMS
Friday, February 15 and March 15
Tom Ridge Environmental Center
Room 112 at 7:00p

February 15 Program

Winter Raptor Surveys in Pennsylvania
Greg Grove, PA Society for Ornithology

Greg Grove will introduce us to the Winter Raptor Survey that has been conducted throughout Pennsylvania since 2001.

This car-based survey, once modest now included 850 hours of observation and 12,000 miles of road in 2018. New efforts in Erie County this year will add to those numbers.



AMERICAN KESTREL

The focus has been on raptors of open-country because of their ease of finding and relative winter abundance – primarily Red-tailed and Rough-legged hawks, American Kestrels, and Northern Harriers. All other raptors and vultures are also recorded. The data collected over 18 years has been analyzed to allow comparison of densities for each species between individual counties and regions of the state, and to assess trends for each species year-to-year.

Greg Grove's birding interests include the distribution of bird species in central Pennsylvania and ways of surveying populations. He founded the Stone Mt. Hawk Watch (1991), the Lake Raystown CBC (1994), the Pennsylvania Winter Raptor Survey (2001), and three Breeding Bird Surveys in Rothrock

State Forest. He is past president of the State College Bird Club and the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology and was a Regional Coordinator during the 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas. He is co-author of *The Birds of Central Pennsylvania* with Nick Bolgiano. He is currently editor of *Pennsylvania Birds* and an eBird reviewer for five counties in central Pennsylvania. In 2018, he received the Earl Poole award from the PSO, for his significant contributions to Pennsylvania's ornithology. Grove has a B.S. in Biology from Penn State and Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Ohio State. He recently retired from Penn State where he taught Biochemistry/Molecular Biology and worked in the DNA analysis lab.

March 15 Program

Tracking the Rare Breeding Birds of Pennsylvania's High Elevation Boreal Wetlands

David Yeany II, Conservation Planning Specialist/Ornithologist
Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

David Yeany, will share his research into some of Pennsylvania's rarest breeding birds, including state Endangered yellow-bellied flycatcher and blackpoll warbler, in the boreal wetlands of the state.



BLACKPOLL WARBLER

These wetlands include numerous bogs, fens, and other peatland communities characterized by plant species more common far north of Pennsylvania and soils consisting of slowly decomposing organic material – or peat.
(Cont. On Page 4)

Tracking the Rare Breeding Birds of Pennsylvania's High Elevation Boreal Wetlands (Cont.)

Their studies use Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify more than 1,300 potential peatlands statewide, and carried out the first large-scale systematic and quantitative bird survey within these difficult-to-access habitats from 2016 to 2018. This study links high priority peatland breeding birds to specific peatland community types and provides insight to their vulnerability and significance for conservation in Pennsylvania.

David Yeany serves as conservation planner and ornithologist for the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) in Pittsburgh, PA. (David below)



Prior to 2011, he was Important Bird Areas Coordinator for Audubon Maryland-DC, and has worked for Fort Indiantown Gap National Guard Training Center in Annville, PA and for the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, District 8 in Clarion.

Yeany has a M.S. in Applied Ecology and Conservation Biology from Frostburg State University and holds a B.S. in Biology from Messiah College. He has extensive studies in ornithology, herpetology, animal ecology, and plant taxonomy. David grew up in Forest County and currently lives with his wife, Colleen, and infant son, Drake, in Allegheny County.

2018 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT REPORT

On December 15, 2018 the Presque Isle Audubon hosted an energized group of birders who were happy to be able to get out onto the park and surrounding region to participate in the 119th Christmas Bird Count. I've participated in approximately ten of the 53 CBCs conducted within our count circle that have been entered into the Audubon database. This is Erie and you really can never be sure of what kind of weather you'll be encountering, nor how that weather might impact the number and species of birds tallied, however, as realistic as I think I am, I went into the count thinking that because of the unseasonably mild winter we'd experienced so far that we'd have great variety and numbers of birds. After all, the lake had not frozen over and the day of the count was quite comfortable with good visibility. Unfortunately, the birds and I were just not on the same page. While we had a respectable species number at 73, we had quite low overall numbers and missed some species we can usually count on to dominate the tally. I guess that's one of the reasons why we and other birders across the USA and Canada have continued to participate in these counts for well over 100 years. The CBC is one of several citizen science programs that provide actual scientists with longitudinal data to trace trends and patterns of bird life. Another variable that effects our count, like all others, is the number of participants from year to year. Our super dedicated and wonderful birding friends from the Conneautville area were fewer in number this year due to prior commitments, but although we missed their company it's not likely our low numbers were heavily impacted by their absence. There just weren't the number of birds that we usually experience. One surprising "miss" was the American coot, of which we recorded... a big fat goose egg. That's right, we actually had NO coots on count day.

(Cont. On Page 5)

2018 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT REPORT (CONT.)

We did have them for count week which includes the three days before and after the actual designated count date for our circle, but to not have seen them on count day is pretty unusual. "How unusual?" you ask. Well, we have recorded coots during 51 of our 53 entered into the CBC database, that's 96%.



AMERICAN COOTS

The highest number of coots was recorded in 2000, a whopping 4245. I say "whopping", but that doesn't hold a candle to the 102,000 ring-billed gulls tallied in 1986. The year that was also big for Herring gulls and Bonaparte's gulls that came in at 67,000 and 29,000, respectively. Another bird that we can usually count on for being present in good numbers is the red-breasted merganser which is one of the birds I equate with the CBC. The red-breasted merganser has been recorded in 50 of 53 CBCs for Erie with a record high in 2013 of 24,973. This year we recorded a paltry 16! The bird species that we recorded in highest numbers this year was the ring-billed gull of which we tallied 6,172.

CBC fun facts: Of the 53 recorded CBCs 6 species were seen in all 53 and they include: American tree sparrow, European starling, Herring gull, Ring-billed gull, Mallard and American black duck. There are 33 species that have been tallied during only one of the 53 CBCs and if you want the names of those please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: PIA/TOE, 301 Peninsula Drive, Suite 8, Erie, PA 16505.

BIRD REPORT

The following birds of note were reported from December 1, 2018 through January 21, 2019 from Presque Isle S.P. unless noted otherwise.

Greater White-fronted Goose—1; Dec. 16;
Edinboro Lake; J.H. (See Below)



Wood Duck—1; Jan. 17; Presque Isle; M.W.

Red-throated Loon—56 (high count); Dec. 6;
Walnut Creek access (WC=Waterbird Count);
J.M. (Below)

Red-necked Grebe—total of 3; Dec. 13 to Jan.
2; channel and Gull Point; J.M.

Cackling Goose—up to 5; to Dec. 27 to Jan. 27;
Fairview Industrial Park; m.ob. 1; Dec. 27;
Edinboro Lake; D.S.

Iceland Gull—total of 4; Dec. 19 to Jan. 17; Gull
Point and Lake View Landfill; S.S., J.M.

Lesser Black-backed Gull—total of 4; Dec. 15 to
Jan. 1; channel; J.M.

Glaucous Gull—total of 6; Dec. 2 to Jan. 17;
channel and Lake View Landfill; S.T., J.M.

Herring Gull X Glaucous Gull—1; Dec. 8; Sunset
Point (WC); J.M.

Northern Saw-whet Owl—1; Dec. 2; B-trail; R.D.
1; Jan.6 to 15, near B-trail; R.D.

Red-necked Grebe—1; Dec. 4; Sunset Point
(WC); J.M.

(Cont. On Page 6)

BIRD REPORT (Cont.)

Snowy Owl—total of 3 or 4; Dec. 2 to Jan. 15; Presque Isle S.P. area; m.ob.
1; Dec. 11; North East; fide J.L.
1; Dec. 21; Girard; fide M.B.
1; Jan. 6; Wattsburg; K.S.

Long-tailed Duck—1450 (high count); Dec. 4; Sunset Point (WC); J.M. (Below)



Rufous/Allen's hummingbird—1; to Dec. 1; Harborcreek; S.B. (fide K.A.)

Eastern Phoebe- 2 or 3; Dec. 11 to 26; Sunset Point (WC), Beach 11, channel, Dead Pond Trail; J.M., et al.
1; Dec. 18; Shades Beach Park North; J.B.
1; Dec. 25; Miller Rd., Erie; J.S.B.
1; Dec. 26 to 27; Dead Pond Trail; J.F.

Common Raven—1; Dec. 5 to at least 16; Edinboro; J.H.

House Wren—1; Dec. 18; Gull Point; S.S. First count winter record.

Gray Catbird—1; Jan. 2; Edinboro; J.H.

Brown Thrasher—1; Jan. 17; Presque Isle; M.W.

White-crowned Sparrow—1; Jan. 17; Erie; J.S.B.

Nashville Warbler—1; Dec. 23; Coast Guard Rd.; J.W. First county winter record.

Common Redpoll—up to 58; Dec. 10 to at least Jan. 14; east end of Presque Isle S.P.; D.S., et al.

Northern Shrike—1; through at least Jan. 15; Fairview industrial Park; m.ob.
1 or 2; Dec 4, 20 and Jan. 14; Gull Point and Dead Pond Trail; T.R., S.S.
1; Jan 5; State Game Lands #218; J.C.
1; Jan. 13; north of Wattsburg; M.B.



NORTHERN SHRIKE

Pine Siskin—125+ (high count); to at least Jan. 20; Edinboro; fide J.H. (Below)



Contributors: K.A.-Katie Andersen, J.B.-Justin Berkheimer, M.B.-Mary Birdsong, J.S.B.-Jeffrey & Stephenie Bojc, S.B.-Sharon Brandt, J.C.-John Campbell, R.D.-Roger Donn, J.F.-Jacob Flynn, J.H.-Jamie Hill, J.L.-Julie Leonard, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, T.R.-Theo Rickert, S.S.-Steve Schmit, D.S.-Don Snyder, K.S.-Kyler Sonney, S.T.-Shannon Thompson, J.W.-Justin Welch, M.W.-Michael Williams, m.ob.-many observers

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Records Chair
814-240-8594 jerrymcw@aol.com

Winter Hiking at the PI Audubon's Laura Olsen Sanctuary, Crawford County

Saturday, January 5, promised decent weather (forecast 35-40 degrees). Temperatures were not likely to be any better for the next few months. So Julie Dell and Issy Lawrie seized the day to make an exploratory hike in PI Audubon's Laura Olsen Sanctuary, Bloomfield Township, Crawford County.

The property is located at the T-junction of Rockdale Road and Forest Home Roads and is marked with Nature Preserve and No Hunting signs, making it easily identifiable. Its other identifying feature is an extensive wetland, well maintained by a beaver population, dammed but flowing. One can park at the T intersection and take time to admire the beaver works.

The Sanctuary is a 50 acres of rectangular wooded property on the slope of a hill. Proceeding by road up the hill, one can park again by the road edge of the Sanctuary.

There is a surprising ravine, clad with Hemlocks, paralleling the road for a while; an attractive evergreen respite for an otherwise deciduous forest.

Laura Olsen offers fairly easy hiking for those with good legs, balance and stout hiking boots. There is little undergrowth but occasional fallen and decaying trunks, some small rocks, slippery leaf litter and even a small stream to negotiate. There are some small stands of Multiflora Rose, so wearing old jeans is

advantageous. There are no marked trails so a compass is advantages especially if hiking here for the first time.

Winter hiking offers many delights: iced vernal ponds with tree reflections, tree nuts scattered on leaf litter, perfectly round nesting cavities in tree trunks, beautifully formed fungi, hollow trees with squirrel garbage piles and for the birders: a lone male Hairy Woodpecker letting the chips fly with wild abandon!

Laura Olsen Sanctuary provides the opportunity for a pleasant two hour hike (though one could happily spend longer and still not see it all.) Bring a friend or someone familiar with the property for a great day out.

The Executive Board has been working and planning with the folks from Foundation for Sustainable Forests in Spartansburg since 2017 to improve this Sanctuary for birds. We all know bird populations are in serious decline, partly due to habitat loss. Removing invasive species, and selected cutting of some trees to develop new age classes of trees, will make our Sanctuary more hospitable to a wider variety of birds and insects (bird food!).

This project fits in perfectly with our 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. Work should begin this spring; the Board is hoping to have a presentation on this project at an upcoming PIAS Member Program.

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.

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY
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301 PENINSULA DRIVE, SUITE 8
ERIE, PA 16505

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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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Tom Ridge Environmental Center
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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.

Introductory membership \$20.00
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