



# TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
JUNE/JULY 2016 ISSUE 16:03

*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

Raise your hand if you've heard this before. "Hey, you're the bird girl/guy aren't you?" Let's see...1, 2, 3, 4, 5...Ok, you can put your hands down now. That's certainly my claim to fame at work. For instance, today one of my co-workers walked out of the main office and was singing the song "Girl Watcher" by the O'Kaysions (now, there's a one hit wonder). As he walked passed me he grinned as he changed the lyrics: "I'm a bird watcher, I'm a bird watcher. Here comes one now." I also grinned as I shook my head. I get at least one question a week from my co-workers, usually related to bird identification but sometimes related to bird behavior. This week it was one of the kitchen staff who asked me why the birds fly so low in the morning as he is driving to work, "like, right in front of my car". I told him that it was probably because the bugs that the birds eat are probably flying low. I should've added that it might be a territorial thing or even a courtship thing. We've all probably had the experience of a bird pursuing another with apparent tunnel vision, oblivious to their surroundings. Hmm. Sounds like some people I know, but I digress.

Last week a co-worker asked for help identifying a bird that had been at his feeder. He described it as being smaller than a robin, gray or blue on its back depending on the light, white on the front with dark stripes on the top of its head. As you can see, it was a really detailed description, but also really had me stumped. I bet a lot of you already know what bird he had seen, but I pondered over it for days, not in some obsessive way, just every

time I saw my co-worker, every time I saw a bird, every time I... I gave it a few shots, starting with catbird due to the "dark stripe" he described and thinking maybe he was mistaken about the white chest. He said, "not even close." Ouch! Not a good showing for "the bird girl". Then, just yesterday, I was watching the birds at my own feeder and "Eureka!" I thought I figured out what the bird he had seen was so I sent him a photo... "Yes, I think that's it!", he replied. Phew, reputation intact. Oh, you want to know what it was? There is a picture of it somewhere in this issue of the TOE.(Cont.p2)

## JUNE /JULY THINGS TO DO!



**BUTTERFLY WEED**

**June 17, Friday** – PIAS Picnic at 7:00PM at the AAUW Pavilion

**June 20, Monday** – First Day of Summer

**July 19, Tuesday** – PIAS Board Meeting at the TREC at 6:00pm in the Conference Room

## THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

### 2016-2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Officers

President	Michele Rundquist-Franz
Vice-President	Paul Burroughs
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Bird Records	Jerry McWilliams
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Sales & Marketing	Mary Birdsong
Sanctuaries	Sue Murawski

Did I mention we have an aviary at work? Yes, that little detail provides a multitude of opportunities for questions and requests, like the time I was asked to trim the beak of one of the finches. Apparently, non-birders think that birders are totally at home with all aspects of bird life. Truthfully, I felt so bad for the little guy, who couldn't possibly have been getting any seed with the length of the overgrowth, I Googled how to trim the beak and did a little minor snipping until the pet store personnel could come in that weekend. That certainly solidified my title.

So, being the "bird gal/guy" can be a fun and rewarding experience and every once in a while you get to be the "bird hero".

~Michele Rundquist Franz, PIAS President



- ✓ Nesting season is in full swing. Continue to keep your cat indoors!
- ✓ If you haven't already done so, build a compost pile with grass clippings, kitchen scraps, and leaf litter.
- ✓ Change the water in your birdbath regularly and keep it filled.
- ✓ Mulch garden beds to conserve moisture and control weeds.
- ✓ Continue to monitor your yard for insect pests and use the least-toxic treatment methods possible.
- ✓



- ✓ Remember to leave nitrogen-rich grass clippings on the lawn after mowing.

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](http://www.presqueisleaudubon.org)

## MCCLELLAND PROJECT GRANT APPROVED



I am happy to announce that the executive board of the Presque Isle Audubon has voted to approve the first application from our Special Projects Fund which was developed as part of our new strategic plan. The Special Projects Fund is a fund managed by the PIAS board. Funding is available, through a thorough application and review process, to organizations and/or individuals whose special project meets criteria set down by the executive board and is in-line with PIAS mission: To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and their habitats for the enjoyment and benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity in northwestern Pennsylvania. Additionally, the project must parallel at least one of the PIAS strategic foci in order for an application to be approved.



What is it?

The Lake Erie Group of the Pennsylvania Sierra Club applied for a grant from PIAS in the amount of \$2500.00 to assist in paying for improvements to the trails at McClelland Park which is in southeast Erie. The forested, 56-acre public park is owned and maintained by the city of Erie. In addition to woodlands, the park also has meadows and wetlands as well

as housing the headwaters of McDannell Run which empties into Lake Erie approximately one-mile north of the park.

The Lake Erie Group received an initial \$10,000.00 grant from the Sierra Club to get this project up and running and is seeking additional funding as well as manpower and other resources from various organizations and individuals in the Erie area. The city of Erie, who owns the park, is assisting a great deal with manpower and construction/material resources. The main trail, which will be 6 feet wide and approximately one half mile long (with several accessible off-shoot trails) will be accessible to those on foot as well as in manual and motorized wheelchairs. There will also be a trail that skirts the wetlands.



Pathway leading into McClelland Park

Directional, interpretive and educational signs will be placed along the trails. The Lake Erie Group welcomes advice from members of PIAS regarding the abundant bird habitat in McClelland Park for the interpretive signage. Initial work on this project has already begun and the Lake Erie Group of the PA Sierra Club plans a public ground breaking ceremony on June 9th at 10:00 a.m. The timeline for completion and opening of the main trail for access to the public is 3-5 months. We look forward to collaborating with the Lake Erie Group and all of the other organizations that are helping with this project that will allow for unprecedented access to nature in this urban setting.

~Michele Rundquist Franz, PIAS President

## A PACKED HOUSE: THE EIGHTH FESTIVAL OF THE BIRDS



Can you believe it? We did it again, another successful festival with more records broken. Breaking records is not one of the committee's goals, but it happens anyway.

What we set out to do in 2008 when we planned the first festival was to make people aware of the treasure we have in Presque Isle State Park. It is the site of a great spring migration that we wanted to share with anyone interested in nature and birds. Well, I believe we have accomplished that goal considering that more birders sign up each year to enjoy the weekend of the festival. For the first time we had to close registration, a new record, which was set at 150 in the original planning process. This was partly due to the size of the park and the type of facilities. It turned out that keeping the festival crowd to a minimum was one of the big advantages reported by birders every year when they turned in their evaluation sheets. Small birding groups is one of the reasons many return again and again for this celebration of migration.

David Sibley was our keynote speaker this year, thanks to **Mary Birdsong's** efforts, and that had to be a big factor in the record turnout. I know that everyone could relate to David's talk, the *Psychology of Bird Identification*, because they told me so. Can you relate to seeing a plastic bag fluttering in the shrubs

and knowing for sure that it must be a Towhee or a Turkey? His example was something like that but quite a bit more sophisticated.

Talking about a record turnout, it reminds me of how organized and smoothly registration went. **Pat Howell** educated her volunteers as to what to do as each registrant came to sign in and receive a welcome bag. **Marion Gullivan** saw to it that the bags were filled with good things that birders would like and want, especially the field guide by David Sibley.



Bob, Marion, Barb and Pat

**Michele Franz** was in charge of pre-registration and printed all the name tags to be given to each one to wear as a ticket to the breakfasts, field trips, workshops, dinner and keynote talk. She also recruited the field trip leaders and workshop presenters. The field trips led to a nest of newly fledged great horned owls. One of them posed nicely for a picture.



(Cont. on Page 6)

## A PACKED HOUSE: THE EIGHTH FESTIVAL OF THE BIRDS (Cont.)

**Sue DeArment** organized tables of items that were to be auctioned off at the end of the evening on Saturday. Two auction tickets were put in each birder's welcome bag and additional tickets were sold for those who wanted them. All each one had to do was drop a ticket in the holder connected with the item desired. Tickets were drawn and winning numbers announced. Those lucky enough to have the matching numbers took home the item or items they won. It's a fun activity with many nice prizes.

**Kel McDonald** and **Susan A. Smith** planned excellent menus for the Friday evening reception and the Saturday dinner. A good menu means little unless the food is prepared by a good chef and in this case it was, according to the many who commented about how tasty the pork tenderloin was as well as all the side dishes. The dainty, delicious desserts were of gourmet quality and were enjoyed by all.

**Ron Intriери** and **Issy Lawrie** made sure that early birders "got the worm"...hot coffee or tea and bagels and fruit... before they started their trek to locate the migrating birds on Presque Isle. They also made sure that all birders were fueled for their trip home by providing Sunday lunch of pizza and salad. It is the first time I've seen the tables filled all at once for Sunday lunch. For a while, there was standing room only. The camaraderie among the birders was exciting to see. It reflected an atmosphere of a good time had by all.

Two committee members that work behind the scenes are **Holly Best** and **Ann DeSarro**, both staff members of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. They took care of facility details and assigning other DCNR staff to help out with field trips and workshops, critical phases necessary for the completion of all aspects of the festival. One of these phases was getting the pontoon boat out of winter hibernation and recruiting pilots

to make the trips into the lagoons. This field trip was a highlight of the festival. Since the boat can only hold 16 people at a seating, we had to have sign-up sheets for the six trips. All the seats were signed for by the end of Friday evening except one.



The names in bold print in the preceding article are the members of the Festival of the Birds Committee and I want to thank them wholeheartedly for all they've done.

There are many people whose names were not mentioned here but who were essential pieces of the festival puzzle. They helped to complete the whole picture and should also be recognized. You will find their names listed on page 7 of this newsletter.

The success of this festival has exceeded my expectations, but there is another year on the horizon and I look forward to the next festival with anticipation. I think you will too when you realize who our keynote speaker will be.

**The Ninth Festival of the Birds at Presque Isle** is scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, **May 5, 6, and 7, 2017**. Our keynote speaker is **Scott Weidensaul**, noted birder and author. Reserve the dates and watch our website for registration information. Those on our mailing list will receive an early brochure with those details. Looking forward to seeing you in 2017.

~Janet Price, Festival of the Birds Chair

## BIRD REPORT

The following birds of note were reported for May, 2016 from Presque Isle S.P. unless noted otherwise.

**White Pelican**—5; May 16; J.N., J.S.  
**American Bittern**—1; May 7; Sidewalk Trail; D.S. 1; May 13; Gull Point; M.B.  
**Least Bittern**—1; May 17; Niagara Pond; fide M.B. 1; May 31; Gull Point; M.B.  
**Snowy Egret**—1; May 8; Gull Point; M.B.  
**Piping Plover**—2 (one HY male and one AHY male (one with orange flag); May 8-10; Gull Point; J.M., S.T., M.B.. One bird remained to May 18; M.B.  
**Willet**—7; May 4; Beach 9 area; M.B.  
**Whimbrel**—1; May 24; Sunset Point; K.A. 2; May 24; Gull Point; M.B.  
**Red Knot**—1; May 23; Gull Point; M.B.  
**White-rumped Sandpiper**—1; May 17; Gull Point; J.N., J.S. 2; May 24; Gull Point; M.B.  
**Black Tern**—1; May 17; Gull Point; J.N., J.S. First Common Tern nest found on May 28; Gull Point; M.B. (



**BLACK TERN**

**Cerulean Warbler** 1; May 7; Gull Point Trail; G.M.



**CERULEAN WARBLER**

**Orange-crowned Warbler**—1; May 8; Gull Point Trail; A.L.

**Brewster's Warbler**—1; May 7; Sidewalk Trail; S.C.



**BREWSTER'S WARBLER**

**Connecticut Warbler**—1; May 17; Gull Point; J.N., J.S.



**CONNECTICUT WARBLER**

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**—1; May 6; Gull Point; D.S.

**Glaucous Gull**—1; May 8 (late); K.P., et al.

**Contributors:** K.A.-Katie Andersen, M.B.-Mary Birdsong, S.C.-Shawn Collins, A.L.-Alex Lamoreaux, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, J.N.-Johan Nilsson, K.P.-Kevin Parsons, D.S.-David Sibley, D.S.-Don Snyder, J.S.-Johan Sodercrantz, S.T. Thompson

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

## SPONSORS FOR THE FESTIVAL OF THE BIRDS

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Friends of the TREC  
Janet Price

### Baltimore Oriole

Marty Pastore

### Black Throated Blue Warbler

Mike Plyler and Mary Birdsong  
Quinn Firm  
Cheryl Zalik - (Wild Birds Unlimited,Erie)  
Line X/Krown - Erie

### Yellow Warbler

Marion Gallivan	Sue Murawski
Dolores Tavares	Joao Tavares
Megan Blackwell	Carolyn Sturtevant
Bird Abodes	Wouter Vanderwal
Channellock, Inc.	Dennis and Barb Cole
Nancy and Ken Andersen	

## IN-KIND DONATIONS

Birds & Beans	Brian Pardini
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Edward/Nancy Group	Wild Birds Unlimited
Toni Kelly	Presque Isle Printing
Little Ceasars Pizza	Nature Shop at TREC

## VOLUNTEERS

Lisa Danko	Pattie Pora
Bill Ferguson	Cindy Snyder
Janet Fox	Delores Tavares
Bob Gallivan	Nancy Ware
Toni Kelly	

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Bird Festival is over, but there is still plenty to see on Presque Isle. Hope you can make it down there. We have new members, as well as renewals and transfers in our chapter.

**Erie:** Greg Adamson, James Kearns, Judith Alstadt, Henen Christensen, Patricia Murphy, Asbury Woods Nature Center, Karen Breese, Linda Amsterdam, Marian Wolford, Glenn McKnight, Steve & Lisa Danko, Debbie Wnukoski, Priscilla Hamilton, Cynthia Kastner, Annette Slater, Julie Leonard, Janet Wilson, Katharine Kershaw, Herta Danowski, Deborah Craig, Aileen Baxter

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**Titusville:** Debra Peluso

**Union City:** Marilyn Sweeney

**Waterford:** Sharon York, Joye Deibel, Nancy Moraski

**Wattsburgh:** Kathleen Banville

Chapter only members are: Mr. & Mrs Andrew Troyer, Lizabeth Dilla and Amanda Kimball

~Ronald 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](mailto:jrplkm@aol.com) or 418 E. 36th St., Erie, PA 16504. If you have any questions, call Janet at 814-825-8394 and leave a message. Your call will be returned.

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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.**

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