



TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
MARCH 2015 ISSUE 15:02

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.

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

This President's Perch is the fourth in a five part series related to some of the most significant challenges faced by bird populations including discussion about some of the things we can do as individuals and as an organization to ameliorate the impact of these significant and diverse challenges. At the top of the list on most of the research articles consulted for this series is habitat destruction. Habitat destruction continues taking place at an alarming rate in some regions and habitats while others have experienced a slowdown and even halting of the destruction due in part to efforts of conservation organizations such as National Audubon, the Sierra Club and nature conservancies. Habitat destruction is occurring on both the southern wintering grounds of migratory bird species and in their breeding grounds. I will focus this Perch on the habitat destruction that has occurred and continues to occur here in the North American breeding grounds. Finally, I will be wrapping up the series next month with an article devoted to information about habitat destruction on the southern wintering grounds.

While no one habitat goes untouched by destructive stressors, several have been more severely impacted and those avian species that rely on them have experienced the greatest decline. One example is the Tallgrass Prairie in the U.S., estimates range from 95-99% of the tallgrass prairie in this country...

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MARCH THINGS TO DO!

March 17, Tuesday – PIA Board Meeting at 7:00
In the Board Room at the TREC

March 20, Friday – PIA General Meeting and
Program: Room 112 at the TREC
7:00PM – Social

7:30PM - Program: Birding in the Land of
the Midnight Sun (Page 6)

March 21, Saturday – Field Trip: See not Sea
Gulls. Meet at Vista 1 at 9:00AM

March 24, Tuesday - Festival of the Birds
Committee Meeting at the TREC at 6:00PM

March, Any Day – Read Evelyn Anderson's New
Book – Stars and Flowers (Page 7)



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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.

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MEET OUR BOARD MEMBER, RON INTRIERI

This month we are getting to know more about Ron Intrieri who quietly and faithfully serves Presque Isle Audubon.

I have been a member of PIAS since 1993. I have made Erie my home all my life, and have worked in the pharmacy field since 1969. I called Pittsburgh my home for 3 years while I was in pharmacy school. How long ago was that? Well, there were still trolley cars running thru downtown Pittsburgh. Now all that is gone. Too bad.

In the early nineties a friend suggested that I go to some Audubon meetings. I always had an interest in the natural world. When I was a kid I would spend the entire summer on my Grandparents' farm located outside of Union City, and help with the haying. The hay would be bundled up and we would throw the bales of hay onto to a flatbed truck to take to the barn. This was used as cattle feed. It was great fun, and I didn't think of it as work. So that is where my appreciation of nature and the environment started. I know there were a lot of different birds, but I didn't try to identify them all. My mom had a Peterson's Field Guide that she used herself, and I still have that book.

Anyway, I started to go the PIAS membership meetings, which were held at the Mercyhurst amphitheater. Sure enough, someone noticed that I attended all the meetings, and asked me if I wanted to get involved in PIAS. Or course I said yes. I went to most of the field trips and learned quite a bit about birding. The advice is, if you want to learn something, always find people who know more than you do. I served as president of PIAS for 3 years, then as membership Chairman up to the present time. When i started out I could identify about three birds. Now my life list is up to six. Just kidding.

I like the Audubon activities, especially the Weed Warriors Program. I even get to learn about different plants, even the invasive species.

~Ron Intrieri, Board Member

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

and Canada being destroyed since the 1800s due to conversion of the once vast "Inland Sea" into farmland. Along with this agricultural conversion came the practices of confined grazing of farm animals, disruption of root systems by plowing and cultivation and resulting erosion all of which have led to the destruction of the tallgrass prairies. Species such as Henslow's sparrow, grasshopper sparrow and dickcissel to name just a few, have experienced a significant decline in number due in part to the destruction of their breeding habitat. Fortunately, several organizations have taken up the fight to halt the destruction of the remaining tallgrass prairie and still others are making great efforts to not only halt the destruction, but preserve and re-establish areas of tallgrass prairie, including the Nature Conservancy which has been managing the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve which is the largest remnant of protected tallgrass prairie left on earth (although still a tiny fraction of the former prairie). Supporting organizations such as the Nature Conservancy is one way in which we as individuals can make a difference. As an organization, PIAS has the capacity to collaborate with larger organizations, such as the Nature Conservancy and regional agencies such as Western PA Conservancy, to provide education and outreach opportunities to the community at large about the importance of habitat and ecosystem conservation.

While the massive destruction of tallgrass prairie is a major cause for concern, hitting closer to home here at the PIAS may be the loss of sufficient and quality habitat for shorebirds. Shorebirds are champion migrators, flying tens of thousands of miles between their breeding and wintering grounds during spring and fall migration. Migration routes follow coastlines and interior water sources, such as Gull Point here at Presque Isle. The migrating and breeding birds on these grounds depend on them to provide ample food to either continue their journey northward or stay and successfully breed. Nearly 50% of the wetland habitat in the lower

48 states has been destroyed or significantly degraded since the 1700s. Inland fresh and salt water habitats continue to be threatened by industrial and agricultural land use, agricultural runoff, and chemical pollution. Additionally, human use of shorebird habitats (e.g., hiking, fishing, motor vehicle use, and walking unleashed dogs) also disturbs nesting shorebirds and can cause them to abandon nest sites, eggs, or young. Of these, something I commonly see at Presque Isle, including Gull Point, are unleashed dogs. Imagine, the first nesting pair of piping plovers at PISP in decades and along comes Fifi who "only wanted to play". As with free roaming cats, it is not only potentially dangerous for the wildlife in the area, but for the dog itself who may encounter other dogs, a skunk, and unfriendly humans, not to mention ticks. If you see someone at PI with an unleashed dog you might want to point these things out, as well as the fact that it's not legal to have them off the leash at the park! [Stepping down from soapbox and back on to topic at hand.]

As most of you know, a concerted effort has been taking place to restore the habitat at Presque Isle State Park. This effort is actually an amalgamation of several restoration projects made possible by grants aimed at management of invasive species, improvement of water quality and restoration of native flora in the Great Lakes Watershed. One such grant from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative was made to Ducks Unlimited, PA DCNR and a host of other organizations dedicated to restoring the habitat at PISP, Roderick Wildlife Preserve, Erie Bluffs SP and Little Elk Creek Forest for native wildlife. These efforts are ongoing at PISP and have included aerial spraying to control invasive species such as phragmites, removal of aquatic species with specially designed equipment as well as on the ground efforts such as removal of oriental bittersweet, invasive honeysuckle, garlic mustard, cottonwood trees and purple loosestrife. While these grants help with the researching,

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BIRD REPORT

The following birds of note were recorded from January, 2015 through most of February, 2015 from Presque Isle State Park unless noted otherwise.

Surf Scoter—1 pair; Feb. 22; east of Dobbin's landing; J.M.

Long-tailed Duck—up to 7; Feb. 20 to 22; south pier; J.M.



LONG TAILED DUCK

Thayer's Gull—up to 3; Jan. 21 to 24; Lake View Landfill; J.M., D.S.

Iceland Gull—Up to 8; to Feb. 17; Lake View Landfill and east of Dobbins landing; J.M.

Lesser Black-backed Gull—up to 6; to Feb. 17; Lake Erie bay front and Lake View Landfill; S.T., J.M.

Glaucous Gull—Up to 13; to Feb. 13; Lake View Landfill and east of Dobbins landing; J.M.



PAIR OF GLAUCOUS GULLS

Rough-legged Hawk—1 dark morph; Jan. 22; Lake View landfill; J.M. 1 light morph; Jan. 23; Lake View Landfill; J.M.



ROUGH LEGGED HAWK

Snowy Owl—up to 3; to at least Jan. 31; east end of Presque Isle & on Presque Isle Bay; many observers 1; to Feb. 11; Greene Twp.; J.P.M., E.C. 1; Jan. 31 to Feb. 6; SE Union City; J.H.

Common Raven—up to 2; Jan. 22 to 24; Lake View Landfill; J.M., D.S.

Long-eared Owl—1; Feb. 7; E of B-trail, Presque Isle S.P.; R.D.

Northern Saw-whet Owl—1; Feb. 23; Erie; K.A.

Northern Shrike—1; Feb. 15; Franklin Twp.; J.D.

Brown Thrasher—1; to at least Feb. 6; east Millcreek Twp.; fide D.S.

Red-winged Blackbird—2; Feb. 11 (early); Tom Ridge Environmental Center; R.S.

Common Grackle—1; Feb. 9 (early); Franklin Twp.; J.D.

Pine Siskin—up to 4; Jan. 29 to at least Feb. 8; Fairview; D.S.

Common Redpoll—4; Feb. 22; Ranger's station at Presque Isle; B.G.

Contributors: K.A.-Katie Andersen, E.C.-Ellie Cullen, J.D.-Julie Dell, R.D.-Roger Donn, B.G.-Bonnie Ginader, J.H.-James Hausman III, J.M.-Jerry McWilliams, J.P.M.-John P. Mitchell, D.S.-Don Snyder, R.S.-Ruth Swaney, S.T.-Shannon Thompson

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Record Chairperson
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PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON NEW MEMBERS

I hope everyone is enjoying the cold winter. There are plenty of birds to see, so keep your feeders filled. The following people have joined or rejoined Audubon. We hope to see you at one of our meetings.

Erie: Susan Smith, Christine Troutman, David Rinehardt, Robert Laird, Kathy Ireland, Patricia Downey, Mary Ann Luke, Steve Brugger, Jeanne Reynolds, Caroline Fedei, Cathay Kramer, Renita McBride, Danielle King, Albert Vota

Albion: Evelyn Stevens

Centerville: Lois Hemmer

Cochranon: C. Gallaway

Conneautville: Heidi Grams

Corry: James Becker

Cransville: D.W. Bashline

Edinboro: Mary Minch, Gayle Yonkin

Fairview: Gerald Rhone, Pam Laskowski, Marj Inderlied

Harborcreek: Patricia Akerly

Lake City: Karen Merlino

Linesville: Suzanne Schillinger

McKean: Crystal Birkmire

Meadville: Barbara Green, Elli Leveto, Calvin Ernst(Ernst Conservation Seeds)

North East: Jody Timer, Jeraldine Luke, Sandra Boyd

Saegertown: Jean Gill

Spartansburg: Helen Post

Springboro: John Hepak

Titusville: Shirley Archer,

Townville: Connie Maine, Richard Kelley

Union City: Marilyn Sweeney

Chapter Only members, both new and renewals: Janet Kisiel, Lewis Leidwinger, Mark Kovacs, Shannon Thompson, Bob and Marion Gallivan, LeeAnn Reiners, and Wouter Vanderwal

Hope I didn't miss anyone.

~Ron Intrieri, Membership Chairman
membership@presqueisleaudubon.org

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

planning and initiation of these projects, they would not be nearly as successful without the efforts of volunteers like the Weed Warriors, many of whom are members of the PIAS, led by our own Janet Price.

Another ongoing habitat restoration project at PISP is the Great Lakes Piping Plover Habitat Restoration (GLPPHR) project. In 2013 the PA Game Commission received a grant for the project that includes management of the seven easternmost acres of Gull Point and focuses primarily on removal of invasive plant species such as phragmites, purple loosestrife, native willows, and eastern cottonwood and black locust trees. Removal of these species has been accomplished in an attempt to spur the resurgence of native habitat such as large St. John's Wort and up to 25 other plants of special concern that have been identified at GP. In addition to providing an improved habitat for the endangered Great Lakes piping plover that used to nest at the point, the restoration of this habitat improves the point as a much needed stopover area for other migrating birds during the spring and fall. Again, volunteers from the PIAS and other organizations have been on the job helping with this project. In their spring 2013 newsletter the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP), who are part of the GLPPHR, reported that the initial efforts could be considered a success as demonstrated by substantially reduced frequency and coverage of invasive species such as the eastern cottonwood, phragmites and willows. The efforts, however, were less successful in controlling purple loosestrife and PNHP also noted significant cover of sweet clover, Canada thistle, and spotted knapweed in the treatment area a year following treatment. As with any such invasive species control and management effort, stakeholders will have to be vigilant in keeping up with identifying and managing resurgence. In the case of Gull Point and the GLPPHR project, there is a 10 year vegetation management plan in place to

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MARCH PIAS PROGRAM

Friday, March 20, 2015

Social at 7:00

Program at 7:30

BIRDING IN THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN



LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN

Iceland abounds in natural splendor: Waterfalls and glaciers, panoramic views and otherworldly landscapes. It is a land of Northern Lights and midnight sun. And it is the realm of one of the world's most charming and iconic birds: the Atlantic Puffin.



THE ATLANTIC PUFFIN

But Iceland is home to much more. During the summer months, Iceland's round-the-clock sunlight draws in a panoply of birds: Razorbills and guillemots, phalaropes and godwits, plovers and terns, all accompany the puffins in nesting frenzy.

Come along with wildlife photographers Sam Stull and Scott Gorring as they share images and stories from their recent journey across Iceland, from the island of Flatey, to the bird cliffs of Latabarg, to the Reykjavik peninsula. Along the way, we'll meet Black-tailed Godwits, Arctic Terns, Red-necked Phalaropes, Black Guillemots, and many others. We'll visit fjords, mountains, grasslands, and lava fields. And we'll come face-to-face with Atlantic Puffins. So join us as we explore the wildlife and wonder of Iceland, and discover why it's a place no birder should miss.

PRESENTERS

Scott Gorring grew up and lives in Erie. He enjoys observing and actively learning about nature. He has participated as a volunteer in the Piping Plover monitoring program at Presque Isle State Park and enjoys watching the bird banding there. Scott has been photographing birds since 2008 at Presque Isle, along the Atlantic coast, in Florida, as well as Iceland and other places.

Sam Stull is a long time member of PIAS and has had an interest in nature all of his life. An avid birder and photographer, he enjoys traveling and sharing his adventures. Sam hopes to visit Iceland again some day.

~Mary Birdsong, Program Chair

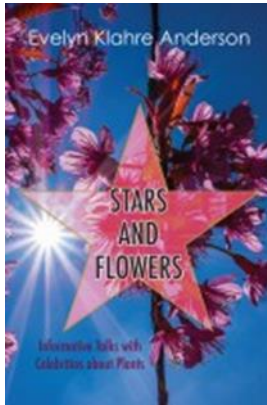
THANKS!

Our thanks goes out to Chuck Kern for seeing that we got our supply of suet to sell at the February program. All proceeds go to Presque Isle Audubon.

Thanks, also, to McDonald Meats, Inc. in Girard for supplying the suet.

STARS AND FLOWERS
By Evelyn Klahre Anderson

Congratulations, Evelyn!



Evelyn Klahre Anderson grew up in the company of nature. At a young age, she received gifts of small field guides of wildflowers and birds from her parents, who introduced her to the species growing in their flower garden and Victory garden, as well as those spotted on their many field trips and outings together. In those early years, she and her young friends enjoyed playing with some of the wild plants that they found growing nearby. In 1975, Evelyn began writing feature articles for the Erie Weekender. In September, 1984, she started a nature column, "Nature's Way," for the Erie Morning News, which branched out into the Erie Times-News and ran for twenty-eight years. During those years, she had articles printed in many other publications. In 1978, Evelyn began interviewing celebrities on the lecture circuit in Erie and nearby Chautauqua, New York, asking them for their personal memories and thoughts relating to plants, flowers, and the out-of-doors.

These celebrities included a vast cross-section of American people of interest: Broadway stars, scientists, astronauts, even presidents and first ladies. The result, Stars and Flowers, is a delightful treasury of humorous and fascinating anecdotes and homey insights from the gracious stars whose names and faces dominated the media in the 1980s and '90s.

THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

provide continued adaptive management of the invasive plant species that will be administered by PISP management and manned in part by volunteers like you and me. This past summer a group of volunteers, led by Mary Birdsong, ventured out to Gull Point and pulled purple loosestrife. Efforts such as these are an integral part of these management plans and we applaud the volunteers who spearhead and provide the much needed manpower to move these projects forward.

Certainly habitat destruction is the single largest and widespread threat to birds, but as with the other threats, working together we can make a difference. Using our pens, votes, donations and bodies we can and must all chip in to stem the tide of destruction and work to restore our forests, grasslands, shores, deserts and urban habitats, even our own backyards.

Habitat for wildlife is continually shrinking - I can at least provide a way station.

~Peter Coyote (on the designation of his yard as a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat@.)

~Michele Rundquist Franz, President

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.

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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.**

Introductory membership \$20.00

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