



# TERN OF EVENTS

PRESQUE ISLE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
NOVEMBER 2015 ISSUE 15:09

*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

I bet by now most of you are sick of hearing about politics. Well, as we all know, it's only just begun. Keeping that in mind, I'm going to try and keep this light and not mention "The Do^@!d" once! Last month I wrote that "I just want to go birding!" I did get to do a little of that today!! When I got home from work I opened my car door and heard the tune of the newly arrived juncos and white-throated sparrows moving around in the brush as well as the "tzee, tzee, tzees of the golden-crowned kinglets (or was it a brown creeper?) Reminds me of birders; once you start birding and hanging around other birders you pick up the vocabulary and soon we all sound alike. Anyway, I grabbed my binoculars out of the car, opened the front door to let the dog out and didn't even go into the house, because if I had, inevitably something would have distracted me and I wouldn't have come back out to bird. There was that "tzee, tzee, tzee" again. The first bird I spotted was a golden-crowned kinglet



GOLDEN CROWNED KINGLET

flitting about in a nearly bare pine tree. Not a second later a brown creeper flew in and started working the trunk of the same pine. There were bugs aplenty on this unseasonably warm October day.

My new neighbor, who has a degree in environmental education, appears to have a modicum of interest in birds. Hurray! As he walked by, pushing his young son in a stroller, I pointed out a few of the birds and their sounds. He proceeded to tell me that he got a few pictures of a pair of pileated woodpeckers that were in his yard last week. Yay! He then asked if I've seen the eagles lately and I told him I have not. There is an active nest up the creek from my house and we see them fly over fairly frequently. Guess we just haven't been out at the right time. (Cont. on Page 2)

## NOVEMBER THINGS TO DO!



**November 10, Tuesday – Festival of the Birds Committee Meeting: 6:00pm Board Room**

**November 15, Sunday – Waterfowl Watch at Sunset Point, 7:30-10:30AM (P3)**

**November 17, Tuesday – PIAS Board Meeting at 7:00pm in the Board Room at the TREC**

**November 19, Thursday – Luther Memorial Bird Project at Presque Isle, 11:30AM on...**

**November 20, Friday – PIAS General Meeting In Room 112 at the TREC 7:00PM - Social 7:30PM - Program: Into the Nest: Intimate Views of the Courting, Parenting, and Family Lives of Familiar Birds by Laura Erickson (P5)**

## 2015 - 2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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President	Michele Rundquist-Franz
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## THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

After he continued on his way, I opened the door to let the dog back in and the cat got out. She is a sneaky one who loves to be outside. My husband found her walking along a very busy section of 26<sup>th</sup> street near his garage and, long story short, he ended up bringing her home when no one claimed her. She was obviously an outdoor cat for the first 6-7 months of her life, which is an estimate the vet gave of her age when we adopted her, and she just hasn't settled in to being an indoor cat. Our other two cats have been kept strictly indoors and almost never try and venture out. We just are not used to looking for someone hiding behind the waste basket waiting for some unsuspecting human to open the door. So, once in a while, she does get out. As the president of an organization committed to the protection of birds I certainly cannot have an outdoor cat! Nor would I want to. Even for the several minutes (OK, about 45) that it took to catch her and put her back in the house I worried about the birds and other small creatures she was stalking. I was also worried about her, what if that eagle shows up!! Yes, I jest. I was actually worried about my neighbors' free roaming cats and what would happen if they crossed paths. It wouldn't be pretty. So, got the cat in the house; time to look for the birds. Heading towards the creek I hear lots of rustling in the wild raspberry thicket. The white-throated sparrows are probably enjoying the few remaining berries.

(Cont. on Page 3)



WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

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)

## THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH (Cont.)

I whistle a little “Oh, Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody!” and one flies up into a small sumac that’s been swallowed up by the thicket. It’s a tan-stripe, which, although handsome, is not my favorite of the two types. There is nothing quite as striking as a crisply marked white-stripe white-throated sparrow in my book. We usually have one or two white-throated sparrows that come to our feeders all winter. They are always in the company of the abundant dark-eyed juncos.



DARK EYED JUNCO

I'm wondering if the chipping sparrow that was at the feeders all last winter will also show up. I'm really wondering if all those fox sparrows that showed up last year will show up. I'm really, really wondering if the female evening grosbeak will show up one day in November like she did last year!



EVENING GROSBEAK

“Wondering” in the previous sentences can be replaced by “hoping”! Yep, birds keep us watching, wondering, hoping, even when, no, especially when, the days are getting shorter and colder. We watch, wonder and hope that they are safe from the harsh elements, have enough to eat, have shelter. We watch, wonder and hope that they’ll come back to visit as we provide some food for them and they some wonder, hope and joy for us.

~Michele Rundquist Franz, PIAS President

## WATERFOWL WATCH

Sunday, November 15 at Sunset Point  
7:30am - 10:30am

During migration, waterfowl can be seen crossing the lake by the thousands. They can also be found hanging out in staging areas on the bay. We'll be looking for residents and migrants alike as we move at Presque Isle from the lake to the bay on this trip.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT FOR NOVEMBER

Welcome to all of our new members as well as the people that have rejoined.

**Erie:** Cate Kager, Virginia Byers, Barbara Haggerty, Callie Arney, John DePaul, Gert Bollinger, Gail Detzel, Georgie Walker

**Corry:** Kathy Bubash

**North East:** Kitty Maloney

**Titusville:** Emily Mills

**Waterford:** Lois Wiley

**Union City:** John Stranahan

**Mexico, NY:** Patrick Crotty

~Ron Intrieri, Membership Chariman  
[membership@presqueisleaudubon.org](mailto:membership@presqueisleaudubon.org)

## BIRD REPORT

The following birds of note were reported for October 2015 from Presque Isle State Park unless noted otherwise.

**Cackling Goose**—1; Oct. 7; Fairview Business Park; M.V.



CACKLING GOOSE

**Red-necked Grebe** 1; Oct. 14; Sunset Point (waterbird count); J.M.



RED NECKED GREBE

**American Golden Plover** 1; Oct. 7 to 9; Gull Point; D.S., R.D. 1; Oct. 18; Sunset Point (waterbird count); J.M.

**White-rumped Sandpiper** 1; Oct. 7; Gull Point; D.S. 2; Oct. 9; Gull Point; R.D.

**Orange-crowned Warbler** 2; Oct. 11; Gull Point Trail; T.L. 1; Oct. 17; Erie; N.A.



ORANGE CROWNED WARBLER

**Lapland Longspur** 2; Oct. 12; Gull Point; R.D.



**Contributors:** N.A. Nancy Andersen, R.D. Roger Donn, T.L. Tim Lenz, J.M. Jerry McWilliams, D.S. Don Snyder, M.V. Mark Vass

~Jerry McWilliams, Bird Records Chariman  
814-240-8594  
[jerrymcw@aol.com](mailto:jerrymcw@aol.com)

## **PIAS MONTHLY PROGRAM**

**Friday, November 20**

**By Laura Erickson**

**Author and Birder**

### **Into the Nest: Intimate Views of the Courting, Parenting, and Family Lives of Familiar Birds.**

Based on Laura and Marie Read's bestselling book of the same title, Laura talks about the challenges birds of a few representative species face in selecting mates, mating, producing a suitable place to deposit and incubate eggs, and rearing and educating young. She also gives a bit of information about how Marie and the book's other photographers got some of their amazing shots. Laura originally presented this talk in May 2015 for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's popular Monday Night Seminar series.



**LAURA ERICKSON**

LAURA ERICKSON, the 2014 recipient of the American Birding Association's prestigious Roger Tory Peterson Award, has been a scientist, teacher, writer, wildlife rehabilitator, blogger, public speaker, photographer, contributor and American Robin Expert for the popular Journey North educational website, as well as Science Editor at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. She's written eight books about birds, including the National Outdoor Book Award winner *Sharing the Wonder of Birds with*

*Kids*, *101 Ways to Help Birds*, *The Bird Watching Answer Book* for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and the *National Geographic Pocket Guide to Birds of North America*. She's currently a columnist and contributing editor for *BirdWatching* magazine, and is writing a field guide to the birds of Minnesota for the American Birding Association. Since 1986 she has been producing the long-running "For the Birds" radio program for many public radio stations; the program is podcast on iTunes. She lives in Duluth, Minnesota, with her husband, education Eastern Screech-Owl Archimedes, two indoor cats, and her little birding dog Pip.

~Mary Birdsong, Program Chair

## **ERIE NATIONAL WILDLIFE RESERVE 2015 NATURE PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS**

Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup> was a happy day for those photographers who won recognition for their nature photographs during the Awards Reception at Erie National Wildlife Refuge in Guys Mills. Doug Copeland, President of the Friend of ENWR, welcomed the crowd, and Ron Leberman presented the awards, as follows:

**Wildlife:** 1<sup>st</sup> place Erica Senyo, 2<sup>nd</sup> place Ricardo Gilson, 3<sup>rd</sup> place Tim Lyons.

**Landscape:** 1<sup>st</sup> place Lisa Helmbreck, 2<sup>nd</sup> place Olivia Wyman, 3<sup>rd</sup> place BJ Spitzig.

**Plant Life:** 1<sup>st</sup> place Tim Lyons, 2<sup>nd</sup> place Pagricia Wigham, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Erica Senyo.

Erica won two other awards, Best Photo Taken at the Refuge and Best Student Photo. Congratulations Erica!

**Special thanks to our three judges:** Tim Kirk, Mike Saletra and Heather Reichel. They came to the Refuge early Sunday morning and scrutinized each entry thoroughly, then stayed for the awards ceremony so they could speak with contestants. Thirty photographers submitted 123 photos for consideration.

All submitted photos will remain on display at the Refuge office until November 6<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in viewing them, please make sure to call the Refuge first to make sure they are open for visitors (814-789-3585).

## FROM THE EDITOR

### The Perfect Lawn, but at What Cost

I was reminded at a recent PIAS program that Audubon has been rather silent regarding the dangers of lawn care chemicals. I have to agree so I was inspired to address the issue in this newsletter.

You may wonder, "Why now, when lawns are going into hibernation". Well, I think it's the perfect time since, in the interim, you can decide if you want to continue using your weed and feed or your lawn service next spring. If the decision has been made, you have time to reconsider. I would like to offer some food for thought connected to having lush, thick, green lawns as a result of using chemicals.

I think it's appropriate to consider why we attempt to have these monocultures particularly when they are the result of lawn care chemicals. A lush, thick lawn provides an inviting place for kids to play. It is a useful ground cover for yards. Some homeowners actually compete for the pride of having the "perfect" lawn while others consider contributing the least possible effort in fulfilling the obligation of having a presentable lawn.

Homeowners can achieve all of the above results by using lawn care chemicals which effectively kill weeds and produce a beautiful lawn, but at what cost. Have you ever read the warnings or noticed that individuals who are applying lawn chemicals wear high boots and sometimes face masks? Homeowners are also advised to stay off the newly treated lawn and to keep pets and children off as well. I wonder why.

A combination of fertilizer to nourish the grass and a variety of other chemicals to kill weeds, insects and an array of diseases are used in achieving the lawn we desire. These chemicals are toxic and pose a health threat to human beings and are also poisonous to a wide variety

of other living organisms including garden plants, wildlife, and pets.



If contact is made with an area or object contaminated with the chemicals, absorption through the skin is possible or the toxic substance can be swallowed. When the chemicals are dry, they release toxic vapors which can be propelled to other areas and can then be breathed in. Pesticides and fertilizers can also leach into ground water and into private and public wells and water supplies

Commonly used pesticides are linked with a number of human diseases some of which are: cancer, birth defects, reproductive effects and liver or kidney damage. These same pesticides are detected in groundwater, have the ability to leach into drinking water sources, are toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms vital to our ecosystem, are toxic to bees, and are toxic to birds.

Birds may be particularly vulnerable to pesticides. On the ground, they can easily mistake granular pesticide for seed, and their mobility gives them access to a wide array of toxic areas.

Children, somewhat similarly, are particularly vulnerable to pesticides. They tend to play near the ground and they absorb more toxins for their size relative to adults, while their developing organs can't detoxify as well.

This smattering of ideas, I hope, gives you some food for thought. The little bit each of us contributes to a good environment adds up to a whole lot.

## A VERY BRIEF SURVEY ABOUT MONTHLY PIAS PROGRAMS

The following is a survey that we are asking all members to complete. If you have already received it and replied via email or the internet, there is no need to complete it again. If you have not completed it already, please complete it and return it by bringing it to the next program or dropping it in the mail.

Address to:

Michele Rundquist Franz  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center  
301 Peninsula Drive, Suite #8  
Erie, PA 16505

This is a very brief survey of the PIAS membership regarding potential changes to the regular monthly programs which currently take place the third Friday in the months of September-November and February-May. We already have some great presenters scheduled for early 2016, so any changes in the day of the program would not take place until after September 2016.

### 1. Which evening of the week are you most likely to attend the monthly PIAS program?

*Some members have mentioned that Friday after a long work week is not a night they'd like to attend a meeting or program. We are looking at other options based on your input.*

- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Other

### 2. Would you like to have a "briefing" about what the PIAS board has been up to as part of the monthly program?

*The PIAS has moved away from the monthly business "meeting" that used to take place before the program and we are willing to reinstitute that if the membership so desires. It would likely take 5-10 minutes.*

- Yes
- No

### 3. When would you prefer the "Social" part of the monthly program take place?

*We are strongly considering changing the format of the program/meeting by having the social at the end since we consistently observe that people are sitting quietly waiting for the presentation to start and then socializing afterwards.*

- Before the presentation
- After the presentation

### Comments:

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As always, thank you for your input and participation in the PIAS!

~Michele Rundquist Franz – PIAS 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 [jrlkkm@aol.com](mailto:jrlkkm@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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ERIE, PA 16505

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Chapter Only Membership Application**

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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Chapter only members, both new and renewal, will receive the online version of the *Tern of Events* unless they specifically request the paper copy. Please provide your e-mail address for the online version of our newsletter.

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

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Return this form with your check payable to the Presque Isle Audubon Society to:

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Ronald Intrieri, Membership  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center  
301 Peninsula Drive, Suite 8  
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**National Audubon Society  
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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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