



The Distelfink

Newsletter of the Baird
Ornithological
Club

Spring 2022

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"One Foot in Front of the Other"

As winter inches closer to spring, and we are all looking forward to the return of migrant birds, BOC members should take a moment to look back over our fall and winter activities and feel proud at how our club has prospered in challenging times. In addition to a series of fascinating monthly programs and invigorating field trips, we held a wildly successful 100th Anniversary Banquet, graced



by the presence of keynote speaker Scott Weidensaul. A few weeks later, in December, a prolonged campaign spearheaded by Tony Grimm and Bill Uhrich culminated in a well-attended dedication ceremony for a replacement of the lost state historical marker for Spencer Fullerton Baird at the site of his birth in the City of Reading. You will find detailed descriptions of these events in this newsletter.

The end of 2021 and beginning of 2022 also brought many BOC members out to participate in the 122nd Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Participation in the CBC is free and open to birders at every level of experience. If you have not experienced the camaraderie of spending a winter day with some of the best birders in our area, on the prowl for every bird to be found in your assigned plot, consider volunteering for the 123rd CBC.

The BOC received a generous amount of positive publicity for our activities during our 100th year, and club membership has grown. BOC members are in demand to lead bird walks for outside groups as well as for our club trips. Six 'Birding with Baird' walks will be guided by club members at Nolde Forest this spring, and we have responded to a request for a spring bird walk by the Exeter Township Park and Rec Dept.


Most recently, we were asked to provide leaders for an outing on March 5 at Angelica Creek Park to kick off a program titled "Celebrating Birds in Berks through Science and Art." Developed by a group of professors at Penn State Berks and Berks Nature, this program is designed to introduce people of all ages to the benefits of spending time outdoors attending to birds. Through the March 5 walk, participants will be recruited for an ongoing program which will include creating art and a written piece reflecting on the experience of birding. A 'game' on a mobile app will guide participants through activities. The conclusion of the program will involve a community art exhibit.

In responding to these requests for trip leaders, I became aware that the BOC currently depends on just 5 members to lead most of our trips! We are therefore planning to schedule some outings for the exclusive purpose of training additional BOC members to become trip guides. Advanced ID skills are NOT a prerequisite to providing a group with an enjoyable and educational experience, so I say to any Baird member who might enjoy leading an occasional trip: contact myself, Linda Ingram, or Mike Slater so we can include you in this new initiative.

As poet Mary Oliver almost said: "Pay attention to birds and be amazed."

Congratulations from another B.O.C. *

*Berkshire Ornithological Club, Reading, England, U.K.



Congratulations to the Baird Ornithological Club
on reaching its 100th anniversary! An impressive
achievement. Wishing you continued success with
raising awareness of birds and their conservation
within your local area and with introducing folk to
the hobby of birdwatching.

From the Berkshire Ornithological Club, UK

History of the Baird Ornithological Club of Reading, Pennsylvania By Bill Uhrich

Although the Baird Ornithological Club is celebrating its centennial, the roots of the BOC can be traced deep into the 19th century, as far back as John James Audubon. Spencer Fullerton Baird, the club's namesake, was born in Reading in the family home at the southwest corner of Fifth and Washington streets in 1823. The family moved to Carlisle when Baird was 6. He was an avid collector of all things related to natural history, and in his youth, Baird maintained a lively correspondence with Audubon after Baird had sent him a specimen of a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, a species then new to science. In return, Audubon named the Baird's Sparrow, *Ammodramus bairdii*, a bird of the Great Plains, in his honor. The Baird's Sparrow is the last bird species described by Audubon and is the final plate in Audubon's monumental work, The Birds of America. The Baird's Sandpiper, *Calidris bairdii*, was also named for him in 1861.

Baird rose to prominence as the first curator of the National Museum at the Smithsonian Institution in 1850 and was named the second Secretary of the Smithsonian in 1878. He concurrently held the position of the first director of the United States Commission on Fish and Fisheries, establishing the Marine Biological Research Station in Woods Hole, Mass., where he died in 1887. His pioneering

work with fisheries was honored by his fellow researchers with nearly 100 species of marine life named for him. Baird himself named over 200 species.

Although he had left Reading, Baird still had ties to the city. One young man influenced by Baird was Levi Mengel, who would go on to found the Reading Public Museum. Mengel's father was a lawyer for the Baird family, and Mengel in his unpublished autobiography recalls a dinner meeting with the great naturalist. "Well do I recollect the first time I ever saw Professor Spencer F. Baird," Mengel writes. "When I was yet a little boy, one day we had a great guest for dinner. Can anyone picture my awe and amazement, when I gazed across the table and beheld the great Professor Baird? I was almost afraid to breathe." Mengel goes on to recall how Baird listened to him intently and with interest as he showed him his own meager collection of stones. Baird emphasized to Mengel the importance of labeling each specimen with the location where it was collected. If there is one outstanding characteristic of the Baird Ornithological Club, it is this patient attention given to nature enthusiasts of all ages and abilities by its members during the monthly meetings and the many field trips to various spots in Berks County and beyond.

Levi Mengel in 1916 would bring Earl L. Poole to Reading as an art teacher and then assistant director to the Reading Public Museum. In 1921, Poole and Harold Morris formed the contemporary Baird Ornithological Club and held regular meetings at the Reading Public Museum. The first published reference to the BOC occurred in **Bird-Lore**, the forerunner of **Audubon** magazine, for the 1923 Christmas Bird Count. The Reading Christmas Bird Count began in 1911, and only individuals submitted their records to Bird-Lore. Beginning in 1923 and continuing to the present, the BOC has organized and compiled every Reading Christmas Bird Count.

One distinguishing characteristic of the early BOC was its egalitarian nature. Very few scientific societies at the time admitted women to their ranks. For instance, the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club has only allowed women to join since the 1980s. The BOC, however, welcomed women bird watchers, and Poole's records from those times list Anna and Mary Dieter, Florence Hergesheimer, and Constance Kline as contributors. Catharine A. Feick served as the first woman president in 1952, and more recently Emma Gage, Pamela Munroe, Ruth Adams, Katrina Knight, and Joanne Kintner have all served as president of the BOC. Lucy Cairns is the current president.

The BOC arrived just in time for two significant events that positively impacted the bird life of Berks County: the creation of Lake Ontelaunee in 1927 and the establishment of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in 1934. Poole was the driving force behind the early BOC and was the club's president from its founding until 1946. He kept meticulous records and published his and BOC members' findings in three books, **The Bird Life of Berks County** in 1930; **A Half Century of Bird Life in Berks County, Pennsylvania**, in 1947; and **Pennsylvania Birds** in 1964. "The most significant contribution of the BOC to ornithology has been the long-term recording, compilation and publication of the bird observations by its members," said Rudy Keller of District Township, the club's bird sightings compiler. "Poole used such observations, his own and those of others, made seasonally over many years, to produce his works on the status and distribution of the birds of Berks County and Pennsylvania." Bird observations made by BOC birders have been seasonally compiled and published in **The Distelfink**, the club's quarterly newsletter, and in **Pennsylvania Birds**, journal of the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology, a magazine founded in 1987 by Barbara and Frank Haas, of Narvon, Lancaster County, that publishes quarterly reports of bird sightings gathered by county compilers across the state. These extensive records enabled the BOC to publish an update to Poole's 1947 work in 1997, the 335-page **A Century of Bird Life in Berks County, Pennsylvania**, one of the most comprehensive county bird books in the state and possibly the nation.

*This article was written by Bill Uhrich for the Club's 100th Anniversary Banquet held at the Berkshire Country Club on November 12, 2021. Bill is a longtime B.O.C. member and editor of **A Century of Bird Life in Berks County, Pennsylvania**.*

Scott Weidensaul's Presentation to our Centennial Banquet, November 12, 2021 By Liz Cates

Not even a global pandemic could keep the Baird Ornithological Club from celebrating its 100th birthday in style. A record number of attendees came together on November 12, 2021 to celebrate our Centennial at the Berkshire Country Club.





Many individuals helped pull this event together under trying circumstances. Many thanks to all who made this evening happen.

One of the bird world's most engaging speakers, Scott Weidensaul, was the featured speaker. Scott presented an overview of his latest book, *A World on the*



Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migrating Birds. His program wove personal anecdotes and observations with new, exciting discoveries made over the past few

decades of how birds orient and navigate their journeys during their migrations. Scott's earlier work, *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2000.

Joanne Kintner did a stellar job, as usual, of arranging and assembling the raffle baskets. In addition, several signed copies of bird books were raffled off, as well as a walking stick hand-carved by Dale Beitzel. Raffle ticket sales were brisk.

Dale Beitzel also gave a brief eulogy for longtime member Matt Spence who had



recently passed away and Mike Slater showed a 4 minute long video of Matt telling a story about his going on his first Christmas Bird Count with Levi Mengel.

Bill Uhrich created a brief history of the Baird bird club on a scroll, one of which was placed at every seat at the banquet. (See page 3.) The video clip of Matt Spence is available on the BOC web site's page at <https://bairdornithological.club/history%2Fabout-us>

It was a pleasure to be together in person once again to celebrate a great milestone. It was an enjoyable and memorable evening!

Remembering Matt Spence, a member of the BOC for over 70 years.

At the 100th anniversary banquet of the BOC in November 2021, Dale Beitzel spoke this remembrance of Matt Spence, long time member and past president, who died in 2021.



“Where to?”

by Dale C. Beitzel

When I would pick up Matt Spence to go birding, the first thing I would ask was, “Where to?” The answer was always to the Lake, Lake Ontelaunee of course. Every adventure started at the dam breast. After checking there we would move on to the Cement Bridge, Peter's Creek or Shartlesville perhaps. There were many places to go.

When I was a young lad, my Dad and I spent many hours fishing at the lake. In summer we would fish and picnic, during

the winter there was ice fishing and “freezing.” I have fond memories of those outings. A respect was gained and an appreciation for the lake; my dad taught me well. In the summer we enjoyed warm days, cool evening breezes, fresh smell of pine and the sound of water lapping against the shore. In the winter I remember my hesitation as we stepped onto the ice and prepared to ice fish.

In 2010 I made a phone call to Matt, having known him professionally from the Reading School District, where we were both educators. Matt had been birding for years, since 1948 to be exact. I asked him if I could join him and he immediately said, “Meet us at the Dam Breast, 9:00 Sunday morning.” That was the beginning of a 12-year friendship centered around his love for natural history and my curiosity. How lucky and blessed to have had such a mentor! Matt had years of study and field experience along with connections to other birders and naturalists such as Sam Gundy, Charlie Scheick, Ira Weigley Sr., Bob Cook, Earl Poole and Maurice Broun, who were early birding friends. One cannot forget to mention one of Matt's longtime collaborators, Barton Smith, as ‘Doc’ still contributes to the rich birding heritage of Berks County. All the stories over the years and knowledge of the lake were shared with me. So, where to? Bailey's Creek for Golden-crowned Kinglet, Happy Trails for Pine Warbler, Moselem for Solitary Sandpiper, Water Street for Green-winged Teal, Berks Cemetery for White-crowned Sparrow or Peter's Creek for Cedar Waxwings, Matt's favorite. The

appreciation for the lake I learned from my father, but I gained a deeper understanding of the Ontelaunee watershed from Matt. He taught me the many places to go, the effects of the seasons, the weather and the flora and fauna as well as the history. What good fortune to have had such a wonderful teacher and friend. I will miss him greatly.

Conrad Roland: An Unusual Sighting by Bill Uhrich

I was browsing through an antique shop in my hometown of Bath, Northampton County, when I was stopped by a pen-and-ink drawing hanging on the wall of a dead Cedar Waxwing by artist Jerry Quier.



Conrad Roland examines a study skin in his studio at his Albany Township farm in the late 1930s. Photo by Maurice Broun

My mind immediately flashed to the Albany Township farm of Berks artist Conrad Roland.

Geraldine “Jerry” Quier was a Bethlehem artist who spent summers during the 1950s painting at Roland’s farm following his wife Marie’s death in 1951. Her specialty was landscapes, so this bird drawing was undoubtedly influenced by Roland and his work.

Roland was born in



A pen-and-ink drawing of a dead Cedar Waxwing by Bethlehem artist Geraldine “Jerry” Quier hangs in an antique shop in Bath, Northampton County.

Reading in 1900 and studied under acclaimed wildlife artist Louis Agassiz Fuertes. A graduate of the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, Roland spent a year in Europe studying art through the Academy’s Cresson scholarship.

He, along with Berks artist and Baird Ornithological Club founder Earl L. Poole, contributed original line drawings to Witmer Stone’s 1937 classic, *Bird Studies at Old Cape May*. Roland as a young artist and ornithologist was also mentored by Poole.

When Roland died of a heart attack in 1957, he left his farm and possessions to “Jerry” Quier. She eventually donated all of his journals, correspondence, photographs, and remaining artwork to the Baum School in Allentown, PA. In this archive are several letters to Quier from Hawk Mountain’s Maurice and Irma Broun. Irma inquires in one letter whether Quier would sell the property to Maurice and her, so they would have a place away from Hawk Mountain. Quier, however, kept the farm, renting out the property until selling it in 1980. She died at age 88 in 1997.

The antique shop dealer put a rather inglorious title of “Dead Bird” on the drawing. The \$135 price tag precluded me from buying the framed drawing, but I would have liked to have seen if any information was on the back of the piece or whether there might have been other drawings on the back of the artwork.

Maybe I’ll check it out again on a return visit. It will probably be there for a while as I don’t believe there’s much of a market for a “Dead Bird” drawing.

Veery Wintering Habitat by Dr. Todd Underwood

Preliminary results of tracking Veeries to their overwintering sites in South America

A casual conversation with my friend and colleague, Christopher “Kitt” Heckscher, on a break at an ornithology conference in Alaska in 2019 inspired my latest research project with Veeries. Kitt has studied Veeries in Delaware for the past 20 years and has been working with different types of



Figure 1. The first Veery, band code XBNO, recovered at French Creek State Park, PA in May 2021 after flying to South America and back with a GPS tag.

tracking technology to identify their migratory routes and overwintering areas. For birds like Veeries that spend the winter in South America, we still know surprisingly little about their winter habitat and movements. A combination of research involving museum specimens and Kitt's tracking devices has narrowed their primary winter range to the southern Amazon basin, primarily in Brazil. Kitt also documented Veeries undertaking an unusual intratropical migration where they move out of the southern Amazon basin in February to a second site elsewhere in South America before migrating north in April. However, little is known about the exact location and habitat of these second sites because the tracking devices, geolocators, used in this research were not capable of providing precise locations (± 350 km). We decided to pool our resources and expand this search for their second overwintering location by tracking breeding Veeries from Pennsylvania and Delaware to their exact locations in South America in March using advanced GPS tracking technology.

We used small 1 gram GPS Tracking tags (Figure 1) that are much more precise in identifying locations (± 10 meters). The tags are attached using a harness and sit like a backpack on the bird's back. These tags must stay on a Veery through its whole migratory journey to South America and back. The bird must be captured to collect the tag and its associated data from South America. Due to the small size of the tags and batteries, the tags can only store a small number of GPS points, so they were programmed

to collect data from late February through March of 2021 when the Veeries were on their second overwintering site.

In June of 2020, we fitted GPS tags to 21 Veeries (11 at French Creek State Park in PA and 10 at White Clay Creek State Park in DE). Strong efforts in the field, including the help of students and volunteers, were made in 2021 to recapture these 21 Veeries to recover their tags and data from South America. At French Creek, six of the 11 male Veeries with GPS tags or 54.5% of those tagged in 2020 were recaptured (Figure 1). The return rate of Veeries (all birds banded in 2020, not just those with GPS tags, that returned and were recaptured/resighted in 2021) was 47.6% of all males. Thus, more Veeries with GPS tags were recovered than expected based on return rate, which suggests the tags did not have any impact on the survival of the birds. At White Clay Creek, four of 10 Veeries with GPS tags were resighted/recaptured or 30 % of those tagged in 2020. The return rate of Veeries is not yet available for White Clay Creek. Unfortunately, data were only recovered from three of these birds due to a frustrating comedy of errors that ranged from harness failure and broken antennas to completely malfunctioning technology. Although only three birds yielded data, these preliminary data yielded some novel information about the second overwintering location of Veeries in South America.

The three tracked Veeries settled down in their second winter location in the middle of March by spending ≥ 5 days in one general area (≤ 500 m apart across at least 5 days). Two of the three birds settled in southern Venezuela in the Orinoco River basin and the third in northern Brazil in the Amazon River basin near the Venezuela border (Figure 2). All three of the Veeries were in dense tropical, moist broadleaf forest. Two of the three were found at less than 500 m in elevation in the Guianan piedmont and lowland forest ecozone. The third Veery, banding code XBNO, was at 1100 m in elevation in the Guianan highlands moist forest ecozone. These areas of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil are mostly undeveloped regions of large contiguous forest with minimal human impact. There are numerous forest reserves and national parks in these areas, which suggests that the second overwintering location of Veeries is relatively secure from a conservation standpoint. By contrast, the first overwintering sites in the southern Amazon basin are under strong threat from agricultural development and forest fires.

Figure 2. Locations of three Veeries recorded on 17 March 2021 on their second overwintering sites in South America. XBNO and XAYL (yellow pins on map) are Veeries that bred at French Creek State Park, PA and Veery with tag 3569 (green pin on map) bred at White Clay Creek State Park, DE.



Of the three Veeries tracked to South America, two were from French Creek and one was from White Clay Creek. The Veeries from Pennsylvania and Delaware averaged 230 km apart on their second winter sites, whereas they were about 100 km apart on the breeding grounds. By comparison, the two Veeries from French Creek were about 330 km apart on their second winter sites, whereas they were about 2 km apart on the breeding grounds. The proximity of these birds in South America is impressive given the scale of potential sites in this vast area.

Over the next couple of years, I will continue to work with Veeries at French Creek. In 2021, I attached a GPS tag to a new Veery by reusing one of the recovered tags that was in good working order. This spring, I will attempt to recover that bird and will attach 10 new GPS tags to Veeries at French Creek where we had better success recovering the tagged birds. With a little luck and favorable migratory conditions, we hope to add to our sample size of birds tracked to South America to get a clearer picture of their second overwintering site and the habitat there.

BOC Meetings Mar., Apr. & May 2022, In-person at Nolde Forest and NOT via ZOOM.

By Lucy Cairns

Your Board of Directors has planned a return to in-person Friday evening programs starting in March 2022 (COVID-19 conditions allowing).

Due to technical problems, we will NOT have simultaneous Zoom meetings with our in person meetings this Spring. With the speakers' permission we may video record the meetings and make them available through our web site.

BOC In-person Meeting Covid Guidelines for Spring 2022

"According to the recently revised CDC guidelines for COVID risk mitigation, Berks County is in the 'low' Community Risk group. This rating is based on data indicating a low risk to our local healthcare system of being overburdened by COVID cases in the near future. The risk to individuals of being exposed to COVID carries less weight in this new set of guidelines, and it is important to understand that, as of February 28, the level of community transmission of the virus in Berks is at the 'substantial' level. At this level of transmission, public health experts recommend that fully vaccinated people (2 doses of Pfizer or Moderna or 1 dose of J&J) avoid indoor events of >50 people and wear a mask in indoor public places. Unvaccinated people are advised to avoid events with 'more than a handful' of people. Here is the CDC statement about masking, under the new guidelines: At all levels, people can wear a mask based on personal preference, informed by personal level of risk. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask."

So, for our March and April 2022 meetings at Nolde Forest EEC, your Board of Directors asks:

- **If you are feeling ill, have recently been exposed to COVID-19, or are**
- **awaiting the result of a test for COVID-19, please stay home.**
- **If you are not fully vaccinated, please wear a highly effective mask (N95, KN95, or KF94)**
- **If you are fully vaccinated, make a decision about wearing a mask**
- **based on your individual risk for severe disease and the risk to loved ones.**

BOC Meetings/Programs Spring 2022

Mar 11, 2022 7:30 pm - American Kestrel Conservation: Successful Partnership, PGC and the Birding Community - Dan Mummert, PA Game Commission Wildlife Diversity Biologist

(Location: Nolde Forest EEC, In person only, no Zoom)

The American Kestrel was added to Pennsylvania's list of species of conservation concern due to a loss of nearly half their population since the mid-1960's throughout North America. In response, the PA Game Commission's southeast region created a kestrel conservation initiative that is working to learn more about their local population and help in their conservation. This presentation will discuss this program and the team effort it has been between the PA Game Commission and the birding community.

Apr 8, 2022 7:30 pm - Bill's City of Reading Big Year - Bill Uhrich

(Location: Nolde Forest EEC, In person only, no Zoom))

To paraphrase Thoreau, I have traveled much in Reading. A layoff and COVID-19 isolation allowed me to explore the bird life possibilities within the city limits. We'll talk about the places, the people and the birds I encountered during my City of Reading Big Year counts.

May 13, 2022 7:30 pm - Berks County Birds Photo Display by Russ Hoffman & Social Evening – Joint Meeting with the Mengel Natural History Society,

(Location: Nolde Forest EEC, In person only, no Zoom)

We will end the 2021-22 season with a sampling of Russ Hoffman's excellent framed, enlarged photographs of Berks County birds. Using a selection of prints, Russ will share how he captured these remarkable images, providing valuable tips for those seeking to try as well. Members and guests will enjoy light refreshments. Bring snacks to share; drinks are provided. (The full exhibit will be displayed in Nolde Mansion during the week prior to the meeting, 8:00 am-4:00 pm.)

BOC Field Trips/Bird Walks - Spring/Summer 2022

Tuesday Bird Walks (2nd & 4th Tuesdays of each month plus a few extras)

The time and leader will be announced at least one week beforehand. Email announcements will be sent to all members and also see **our website** at <https://bairdornithological.club> for the latest information. Or Contact Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315

Birding with Baird at Nolde Forest EEC Spring 2022

Where/when: All walks will start at McConnell Hall from 8:00 am – 9:30 am
Register through Nolde Forest:

https://events.dcnr.pa.gov/event/birding_with_baird_3070

Once you click on "register" it will ask you to select the date you are interested in from the list of our spring dates. The main program description page also gives all of the details you should

need, but you can contact Rebekah Sheeler at Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center if you have questions. Nolde phone: 610.796.3689

<u>Date</u>	<u>Leader</u>
March 26	Peter & Jane Wolfe
April 3	Lucy Cairns
April 16	Linda Ingram
April 30	Nelson Weber
May 1	Art Zdancewic

Note: On May 5 at 8:30am Linda Ingram will be leading a warbler walk for Nolde staff, but additional BOC members are welcome to join.

Flash Bird Walks

Field trips may be scheduled at short notice any time it appears conditions are right for an additional outing. Email announcements will be sent to all members and the information will be on our website at the same time <https://bairdornithological.club/>

Baird Ornithological Club, regularly scheduled Bird Walks

MARCH 26, 2022 (Saturday) - Green Hills Preserve – Wintering Birds, 8 AM

Wintering birds and early spring arrivals.

From Rte. 10, go west on Rte. 568 (Kurtz Mill Rd.) turn right onto Gunhart Rd. Parking lot is on the right. Coordinator: Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315

March 27, 2022 (Sunday) - French Creek State Park – Woodcock Watch, 6:30 PM

American Woodcock courtship display. Meet at park office on Park Rd.

Coordinator: Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315

APRIL 9, 2022 (Saturday) - Tulpehocken Creek – Early Migrants, 8 AM

Look for early spring migrants. Meet at the Berks County Heritage Center side of the Red Bridge.

Coordinators: Peter and Jane Wolfe 610-944-0985

April 24, 2022 (Sunday) - Union Meadows Park – Early Migrants, 8 AM

An easy walk on wide flat trail through wooded and open field habitats.

Meet at Union Meadows East parking lot, Trailhead for the Schuylkill River Trail, Rte. 724/East Main St. in Monocacy, 2 miles east of Birdsboro. Coordinators: Rudy Keller & Linda Ingram, 610-621-7473

APRIL 30, 2022 (Saturday) - Birds, Butterflies & Botany, Neversink Mountain, 10 AM (with Mengel Natural History Society)

For butterflies flying only in early spring, this is one of the few Berks County locations. Meet at S 10th & South Sts., Reading. (Park on South St.)

Coordinators: Karl Gardner, 610-987-3281 and Ryan Woolwine, 610-777-2333.

MAY 1, 2022 (Sunday) - SGL 106 - Pine Swamp – Spring Migrants, 7AM

This is a great location for migrants as well as uncommon local birds like Ruffed Grouse and Kentucky Warbler. Meet in the parking lot on the west side of Pine Swamp Rd about 1/2 mile south of Hawk Mountain Rd. Coordinator: Rudy Keller 610-845-7310

MAY 7, 2022 (Saturday) Hay Creek – Spring Migrants, 7 AM

Easy walking in the Hay Creek Watershed and Reservoir for spring migrants. Access from Hay Creek Rd., park at south gate. Coordinator: Sheila Martin, 610-858-6005

MAY 14, 2022 (Saturday) Gravely Birding in the Charles Evans Cemetery – 8 AM

We will bird through Charles Evans Cemetery and stop at the graves to pay our respects and learn about naturalists such as Reading Public Museum founder Levi Mengel, entomologist Herman Strecker, and artist Conrad Roland. Meet inside the cemetery entrance off Centre Avenue in Reading. Coordinator: Bill Uhrich 610-698-1575

JUNE 4, 2022 (Saturday) - Hopewell Big Woods Trail French Creek SP - Grassland Breeding Birds, 7 AM

We will be walking up a wide trail that gently meanders up the hillside through open fields that are bordered by woodland. Usually an excellent location to see field and shrubby meadow loving birds. Wide trail meanders through hillside open fields bordered by woodland. Previous seasons were excellent for field and edge species. Meet at Trail Parking lot on Center Rd. adjacent to the Union Twp. maintenance facility. Coordinator: Rudy Keller, 610-845-7310 and Sheila Martin, 610-858-6005” Coordinators: Rudy Keller, 610-845-7310 and Sheila Martin, 610-858-6005

JUNE 11, 2022 (Saturday) - Green Hills Preserve Butterflies, 10 AM (with Mengel Natural History Society)

Extensive open fields and some wooded habitat. Directions: From Rte. 10, go west on Rte. 568 (Kurtz Mill Rd.) Turn right onto Gunhart Rd. Parking lot is on the right.

Coordinators: Karl Gardner 610-987-3281 and Ryan Woolwine 610-777-2333.

JUNE 18, 2022 (Saturday) - Nolde Forest EEC Moth Night, 8:30 PM (with Mengel Natural History Society)

Leaders bait trees and hang sheets to bring in the night insects. Bring flashlight. Meet at Mansion parking lot. Coordinators: Ryan Woolwine 610-777-2333, Jim Eckert 610-373-1064, and Karl Gardner 610-987-3281.

JULY 23, 2022 (Saturday) - Kernsville Dragonflies & Damselflies, 10 AM (with Mengel Natural History Society)

Bartram Trail, Kernsville Recreation Area, Rte. 61 north, right on Jetson Dr. (across from Cabela’s), right on Industrial Dr., left on Kernsville Dam Rd. The parking area is on the right.

Coordinators: Karl Gardner, Mike Slater 610-775-3757, and Rudy Keller 610 845-7310.

AUGUST 6, 2022 (Saturday) - Blue Marsh Butterflies, 10 AM (with Mengel Natural History Society)

Meet at the Blue Marsh Lake Visitor's Center off Palisades Drive.

Coordinators: Karl Gardner 610-987-3281 and Ryan Woolwine 610-777-2333

AUGUST 20, 2022 (Saturday) - Angelica Park Butterflies, 10 AM (with Mengel Natural History Society)

Meet in the parking lot adjacent to Berks Nature (the entrance is off Rt. 10,

Morgantown Rd., at the big sign for Alvernia University). Coordinators: Karl Gardner 610-987-3281 and Ryan Woolwine 610-777-2333

Past Season's Field Trip Reports

Union Meadows Park - OCTOBER 2, 2021 by Rudy Keller

This annual trip occurs at a time of overlap between the last neotropical migrants (vireos, warblers) and the first short distance migrants (kinglets, sparrows), reflected in the list of 51 species recorded. On this cool (46F)



*Blue-headed Vireo seen on the Union Meadows Park Field Trip -
photo by Mike Slater*

morning, a slow walk by our group of 9 birders along the sunny shrubby edge of the wildflower meadow gave us good, long looks at many resident and migrant birds, including 2 Lincoln's Sparrows, a target species, and several warblers as flocks of Blue Jays and blackbirds passed overhead. The meadow was still flowery enough to attract late flying butterflies, including a common checkered skipper, a lifer butterfly for most of us. The rest of the trail loop continued to be productive, with 11 species of warblers, including a late Hooded Warbler and an always uncommon Orange-crowned Warbler recorded by the end of the walk. The latter was seen by only 2 participants, the others having been discouraged by bloodthirsty mosquitoes at that particular spot along the trail.

Hopewell Big Woods Trail - November 6, 2021 by Rudy Keller

On entering the Union Meadows parking lot, we were greeted by a frost covered landscape (it was 25F!) that kept some of us cowering in our cars till the last minute. The birds apparently felt much the same, as our group of 7 birders recorded few species until we had reached the sunny grassland at the bottom of the Hopewell Big Woods Trail, where we found our first active sparrow flock. The beauty of the frosty grass and dried flower heads compensated somewhat, but it wasn't till the slowly rising sun vaporized the frost that we started seeing more birds. A novelty was encountering several hunters walking on and off trail in pursuit of put-and-take Ring-necked Pheasants that had been released just prior to hunting season. The squawks of some of these birds reminded us that ringnecks had once been common on farms and grasslands in Berks Co. The highlight bird for most of us was a handsome gray male Northern Harrier skimming the tops of the grasses. Cold, lateness of the date and the extra disturbance from hunting all probably helped account for the low number of 29 species.

Exploring Audubon's Homestead – November, 2022 by Linda Ingram

BOC added a new field trip site, visiting the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove in Audubon, Montgomery County. The Center encompasses a new museum of Audubon artifacts and age-appropriate displays, many interactive, seeking to educate visitors of all ages about birds, bird ecology, and conservation. Five miles of trails wind through fields, woodlands, and shrub habitat. In addition, a unique playground provides children with activities such as flying like a bird instead of the traditional swing.

Live caged birds, used for educational programming, offered close views of owls and hawks, frequently difficult to have in more natural habitats.

Nine participants counted 39 species, getting good looks at many. Highlights were five species of woodpeckers, seven species of sparrows (including a White-crowned and Swamp), a small flock of Yellow-rumped Warblers, a lingering Gray Catbird, and a pair of handsome Common Mergansers floating in the Perkiomen Creek. More information at <http://johnjames.audubon.org/visit/>

Berks Birds, Summer 2021 compiled by Rudy Keller

June – July, 2021

Abbreviations: Blue Marsh L. (**BML**). Big Woods Trail (**BWT**), French Creek State Park (**FCSP**), Hamburg Reservoir (**HRes**), Kittatinny Ridge (**KR**), L. Ontelaunee (**LO**), State Game Lands (**SGL**).

Snow Geese that did not migrate to the arctic occur annually. This year a family of 5 stayed at Gotwals pond, Oley till early summer, when 3 left, leaving 2 in place through the period. A female **Hooded Merganser** trailing 7 ducklings was seen in a swamp off the Schuylkill R. near Old Morlatton Village in May (LI), and another female with young was seen on the Manatawny Cr. near Boyertown in Jun (BS).



A female **Common Merganser** with 13 young was seen on the Schuylkill R. near Hamburg 7/17 (KG). In historical terms, both mergansers are fairly recent breeders, but are now well established.

Two **Ruffed Grouse** were seen at SGL 110, Northkill Gap 6/25 (LC, LI, PJW) and one at SGL 106 on 7/6 (DH), both locations on the Kittatinny Ridge, the last stronghold of the species in Berks. There was a bit more evidence that the Shartlesville **Eurasian Collared -Dove** colony may be expanding beyond the town. Three were seen in a residential area to the west 6/19 (MW) and one was in Hamburg 6/19 (AW). Besides those, one to 5 were reported at the usual Main St. locations through the period (mobs.).

Hooded Merganser Family near Old Morlatton Village photo by Linda Ingram

In summer, birders expect to hear **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** while hoping for Black-billed Cuckoos. Two of the latter were reported this season, one at BWT, FCSP 7/4 (JT) and the other near BML 7/24 (BL). Like Ruffed Grouse, **Whip-poor-wills** are now found only on the KR, where one to 3 were heard on evening walks at SGL 110, Northkill Gap 6/25 and 7/19 (LI, RK, PJW, MW).

Two **Sandhill Cranes** were seen flying over Rt. 61 at Hamburg 7/18 (JSp). The birds' outstretched necks and faster wingbeats compared to Great Blue Heron were noted. Six common species of southbound arctic shorebirds barely squeaked into the period. A flock of 16 **Least Sandpipers**, a **Pectoral Sandpiper**, 2 **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, a **Wilson's Snipe**, a **Solitary Sandpiper** and 2 **Lesser Yellowlegs** were seen at a pond in northern Berks 7/30, 31 (JSp). An **American Woodcock**, seldom reported after spring courtship season, was a bonus on Whip-poor-will walks at SGL 110, Northkill Gap 7/10, 19 (LI, RK, PJW).

About 6 **Ring-billed Gulls** summered at BML watching for picnic scraps. One to 3 non-breeding **Double-crested Cormorants** summered at LO and BML as usual (mobs.). **Great Egret** was the only non-breeding heron to appear during post-breeding dispersal, with most reported in Jul. Birders reported one to 5 **Black-crowned Night-Herons** at BML or LO on various dates from 6/3 through the period. Juveniles, indicating possible breeding, were seen at LO 7/23, 8/3 and 8/4 (2), and at BML 8/11. This heron has a well documented breeding history going back to the 19th century, but no rookery has been found since 2014.

A **Black Vulture** with one functional leg was outfitted as an adult with yellow wing tag #210 by Hawk Mountain Sanctuary researchers near Kempton in Jul, 2010. This bird, nicknamed Lefty, became a regular at BML and was seen again this year (JS), having lived at least 12 years with its handicap. Though the tag is gone, the mechanism that attached it to the wing is still visible. A few non-breeding **Ospreys** spent the summer at BML and LO as they usually do. A **Northern Harrier**, rare in summer, was seen hovering in a desilting basin of the Schuylkill R. 7/17 (MWh). A fledgling **Sharp-shinned Hawk** giving food begging calls was heard at HRes on the KR 7/29 (KG). This very secretive nester has previously been confirmed breeding on the KR. A **Red-shouldered Hawk** pair nested at Union Meadows Park near Birdsboro in May (LI). The large Piedmont forest around FCSP and the adjoining Schuylkill R. floodplain have sustained these hawks for many years. Birds were also heard and intermittently seen at two locations in the forested hills of District Twp. in eastern Berks (RK), where breeding was confirmed in a few previous years. **Broad-winged Hawks** again nested on the KR and were also reported in the same large forests in southern and eastern Berks as Red-shouldered Hawks.

Four **Barn Owls** fledged from a box in Rehrersburg, a site that has produced many fledglings over the years (RB). Reports of **Barred Owls** from two new locations, Trout Run Reservoir and the Exeter Scenic R. Trail, gave more evidence that this owl, a prized find as recently as the 1990's, has expanded its range as forests have matured. **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were reported at two well established locations and at eight other places, sometimes photographed on ash trees killed by emerald ash borers. Woodlots in which ashes were common are now much more open with many snags, habitat favored by this woodpecker. Reading's **Peregrine Falcons** did not breed after spring's intense territorial battles left 2 females dead (fide BU).

Up to 9 **Acadian Flycatchers** were heard in the hemlock/rhododendron ravine at HRes in Jun and Jul (mobs.). Similar counts were made of the county's other large population in the Piedmont forests in southern Berks. Few are found between these groups. **Yellow-throated Vireo** has the same distribution in Berks' large forest blocks as the flycatcher. Hemlocks at HRes continue to host the county's only **Blue-headed Vireos**, one of which sang there this summer (KG). Six **Common Ravens** seen at Henningsville 6/15, 22 (PS) were probably a family group.

Three **Purple Martin** colonies on Mennonite farms in the Great Valley between Fleetwood and Topton contained about 120 adults and fledglings 7/9 (RK). About 800 **Tree Swallows** perching on utility wires in the same area 7/9 (RK) gave a clear sign that breeding was over and dispersal had begun. The **Cliff Swallow** colony at the LO dam, occupied for 55 consecutive years, had about 30 birds attending nests 6/3 (RK). The colony across the lake at West Shore Bridge had 24 birds 7/6 (DH). A smaller colony at Old Church Rd., BML had 13 birds 7/8 (EB). There is nagging suspicion and some evidence that Cliff Swallow colonies have declined over the years. For instance, the colony at Berne Bridge south of Hamburg on the Schuylkill R. had 26 birds attending nests 6/4/18 (KG). This year, only 6 nests (perhaps not all of them active) and 4 birds were seen (KG). All of the Cliff Swallow colonies need closer monitoring.

A **White-throated Sparrow** heard singing at SGL 110, Northkill Gap 7/31 (MWh) may have been a territorial bird. There are several July records from the 20th century of this species suspected of nesting. The grassland sparrow trio was again well reported. **Grasshopper Sparrows** and **Savannah Sparrows** were found mainly in farmland, but both have recently colonized some warm season grasslands planted to attract grassland birds. The largest group of both is at Rodale, where they are pasture nesters. **Vesper Sparrow**, always the least commonly reported of this group, was nevertheless found at four farmland sites. **Swamp Sparrow** has often gone unreported in summer because its few known breeding locations did not get visited by birders. This Jul it was reported at four new sites, one of which is a retention basin at a school complex (BL). The go-to place to see **Yellow-breasted Chats** continues to be BWT at FCSP, where one to 3 obliged birders this summer. Unlike some of the grassland sparrows, **Bobolinks** and **Eastern Meadowlarks** have not yet colonized mixed grasslands planted for this group. They prefer farmland hayfields, fallow fields and pastures,

where they often lose their nests to early hay cutting. No more than 8 of either species were reported at any of the few locations attractive to them.

The KR attracts more **Worm-eating Warblers** than any other Berks location. Eight were reported at the HRes/Pinnacle trail loop 6/16 (BD) and 8 along the Appalachian Trail 6/13 (SK).

Deliberately maintained grassland/scrub habitat at BWT, Green Hills Preserve and SGL 106 have benefitted **Blue-winged Warblers** and **Prairie Warblers**. Up to 6 of the latter were reported at BWT this season (mobs.). **Kentucky Warbler** remains steadfast at only two known locations, SGL 106, Pine Swamp Rd. (JT) and FCSP (RK, S&F, TU). Hooded Warblers continue to thrive on the KR and at the other end of the county at FCSP, which holds the largest population in southeastern Pennsylvania south of the KR, according to eBird. **Cerulean Warbler** is now reported in the breeding season only on the KR. This summer one was at HRes 6/7 (KG) and 2 were heard along the Appalachian Trail 6/13 (SK). Lacking newly regenerating clearcuts for breeding, **Chestnut-sided Warbler** remains scarce, with single birds reported at only two locations this summer. Black-throated Blue Warbler, a KR specialty, was found at HRes, where it has been fairly regular, 7/15 (KG), and along the Appalachian Trail 6/13 (SK). The other KR specialty is **Black-throated Green Warbler**, which is more common than the former. Up to 6 were reported around HRes in Jun and Jul (mobs.). Blue Grosbeaks, singles and pairs, were reported at five locations.

Dickcissels returned to Rodale's rotationally grazed pastures and grain plots 6/2 and were reported till 7/22. One to 4 males singing from utility wires and fences were most often reported. The seasonal high count of 8 birds 7/7 (JH) probably included birds that moved to Rodale after hay was cut on other farms in late Jun and early Jul. (For example, 3 birds were recorded along Monument Rd. near Hamburg 6/22 (MW) shortly before the last timothy hay fields were cut, but not after.) Females were seen at Rodale 7/2, 7, 10 and 21 (mobs.) but breeding was not confirmed. Elsewhere, a male sang in a weedy soybean field that had been treated with herbicide on Seidel Rd. near Windsor Castle 6/26 and 7/1 (RK). All the surrounding hayfields had been cut by then. Three birds were at that farm in 2020. A bird at BML 6/22 (JS) was probably a wanderer.

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Berks Birds, Fall 2021 compiled by Matt Wlasniewski August-November 2021

Locations: Bartram Trail (BAT), Berne Township, (BT), Blue Mountain Academy (BMA), Blue Marsh Lake (BML), Blue Marsh Lake State Hill Boat Launch (BMLSH), Blue Marsh Lake Sheidy Boat Launch (BMLSBL), Blue Marsh Stilling Basin (BMSB), EJ Breneman's Quarry (BQ), French Creek State Park (FCSP), Gotwal's Pond (GP), Green Hills Preserve (GHP), Hamburg Commerce Park (HCP), Hamburg Reservoir (HR), Hawk Mountain North Lookout Data (HMNL), Hawk Mountain South Lookout (HMSL), Hay Creek (HC), Kaercher Creek (KC), Kernsville Dam Recreation Area (KDRA), Kutztown University (KU), Lake Ontelaunee (LO), Lake Ontelaunee Bailey's Creek (LOBC), Lake Ontelaunee Blue Falls (LOBF), Lake Ontelaunee Water Street (LOWA), Lake Ontelaunee West Shore Drive (LOWS), Lowland Road Retention Pond (LRRP), Monacacy Hill Recreation Area (MHRC), Mount Penn (MP), Old Tipton Road (OTP), Peter's Creek (PC), Pine Swamp Road (PSR), School Road Pond (SRP), Shartlesville Farm Pond (SFP), State Game Lands 52 (SGL52), State Game Lands 106 (SGL106), State Game Lands 110 North Kill Gap (SGL110), State Game Lands 280 Brownsville (SGL28).

Warm and dry weather mixed with weak cold fronts was the dominant weather pattern for the fall quarter of 2021. Even Hurricane Ida wasn't able to break the spell as the storm resulted in no significant wind or rainfall for *Berks*. The pattern of a few weak cold fronts also had a negative impact on the raptor and passerine migration along the ridges.

A lone **Greater White-fronted Goose** kept company with local and migrant **Canada Geese** at BQ 10/31 (RK). A high count of five **Snow Geese** near Lenhartsville were hangers-on from spring migration 11/15 (HW) while single **Snow Geese** were found around *Berks* (m.ob.). Four **Cackling Geese** were a good find among 500 **Canada Geese** at GP 11/22 (RK).

After a local thunderstorm, MW found five **Mute Swans** 9/28 LO. The group, comprised of one adult and four apparent hatch-year birds, seemed to be a family unit and remained at LO for a week. Six **Tundra Swan** rested at LO 11/9 (RK) while AS counted ten **Tundra Swan** flying over Blandon, a mile or so from LO.

Migrant bay and sea duck numbers were low as in previous years on the two main bodies of water in *Berks* – BML and LO. Four **Greater Scaup** stopped at LO 11/21-22 (RK) and two Lesser Scaup rested at EJB 11/23 (MS). The rare **White-winged Scoter** found LO to its liking with one 10/26 (MW) and five 11/9 (RK). Four **Black Scoters** 11/2 and one **Long-tailed Duck** 11/9 were all found at LO (RK).

Bufflehead continue to be the most common migrant sea ducks with two sizeable flocks at LO—44 11/17 (MW) and 16 11/22 (RK). AS counted eleven **Hooded Mergansers** at 11/20 LO. On 8/19, RH found an early flock of 27 **Common Mergansers** on BML. Nine **Red-throated Loons** were seen at LO 11/9 (RK) while HMNL numbered 4 for the migrant season. HMNL recorded 150 **Common Loons** for the migration with a one-day high of 54 11/29 (BB). LO held 12 **Common Loons** on 11/9 (RK).

Six **Pied-Billed Grebes** hung out at EJB 10/31 (RK). HMNL listed 225 **Double-crested Cormorants** for the migration. On 10/26, MW found a lone rare **Great Cormorant** perched on a snag at the fisherman's pull-off on LO.

An elusive **American Bittern** played hide-and-seek at KDRA 9/22 (MW). **Great Egrets** were recorded around *Berks*, usually lone birds. Three **Great Egrets** moved between SFP and the pastures along Mill Hill Road 8/3-8 (MW). On 10/14, in a Shartlesville pasture, MW watched a successful **Great Egret** catch and swallow a rat-like rodent. An immature **Little Blue Heron** lingered at BML 8/27-31 (JS). One **Cattle Egret**, an infrequent *Berks* migrant, was photographed 11/8 (RH) along Richmond Road in Fleetwood.

At the BML hawk watch, JS counted two **Osprey** as the fall count began. Perhaps a product of Hurricane Ida winds, seven **Bald Eagles**, four adults and three immatures, practiced aerobatics above LO 9/2 (MW). The high one-day count for **Bald Eagles** along the ridge was 41 on 9/2 (HMNL). Although becoming increasingly rare, on 11/3, a **Northern Goshawk** made the migration count (HMNL). On 9/11, a leucistic **Red-tailed Hawk** was photographed near Leesport along West Leesport Road (WJ). This raptor is pale white with a pink tail. Reports have been made for the past two years about this unusual hawk. A **Rough-legged Hawk** on 11/29 maintained the average yearly total for the fall migration (HMNL).

Sandhill Cranes flew past HMNL on two dates: six on 11/29 and 16 on 11/24. Migrating shorebirds continue to be found mainly at HCP and small rain pools throughout the *Berks* countryside. A lone **Semipalmated Plover** lingered for two days at BMA 8/8-9 (MW). A high number of 25 **Greater Yellowlegs** stopped at OTP 9/18 (AS). On 9/12, 16 **Lesser Yellowlegs** also stopped at OTP (JV). A rarity in *Berks*, a single **Sanderling** was photographed at BML 9/1 (RH).

Ten **Least Sandpipers** fed at a rain pool along Zions Church Road 8/1 (SM). A single **White-rumped Sandpiper** found its rain pool along Route 61 10/6 (JSp). At HCP, a lone **Pectoral Sandpiper** kept company with **Killdeer** 8/3-7 (MW, RH). A rain pool near Strausstown was a good stopping place for 3 **Dunlin** 10/1 (JSp). Three **Common Snipe** came out of hiding at OTP 9/14 JV.

On 11/13, three **Bonaparte's Gulls** were at two separate locations: flying past HMNL and LO (RK). At LO, RK identified an early **Iceland Gull** 11/13. It was a first year winter bird. On 11/19, at the same LO, RK recorded a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** while RH recorded a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** BLM11/28. Gulls are rarely recorded migrating along the ridge, so the **Great Black-backed Gull** 9/3 was a surprise to the counters (HMNL).

Three **Caspian Terns** were seen at LO 8/8 (MW) and four at LO 8/22 (MW). Five **Caspian Terns** were found at BML 9/1 (RH). BML appears to be the preferred lake for **Common** and **Forster's Terns**. On 9/6, a single flew around BML (JW, PW). On 9/1, RH found a single **Forster's Tern** at the same lake. **Eurasian Collared-Doves** continue to breed throughout Shartlesville. The high count was five doves 9/15 (JV).

On 11/21, BB was surprised by two rare owls in the farmlands of the Kempton Valley. After finding one **Short-eared Owl** which he had expected to see, he was surprised by a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** in the same area. Two migrating **Common Nighthawks** were seen flying along the river KDRA 9/3 (MW). 515 **Common Hawks** were tallied in migration (HMNL) with the high one-day count of 378 on 8/31. The season total for migrating **Chimney Swifts** at HMNL was 1051.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds use the ridge on migration and this season 310 were tallied (HMNL). A very rare **Calliope Hummingbird** was banded at a residence south of Nolde Forest EE Center 11/17 (SL). This young female stayed at this location 11/13-21. This is the fifth record for a **Calliope Hummingbird** in *Pennsylvania* and the second record for *Berks*.

Always a crowd pleaser, 28 **Red-headed Woodpeckers** passed by HMNL this season. The 31 **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** that were tallied by HMNL may have been an omen for the numerous sightings of this bird that usually spends the winter in *Berks* but not in such high numbers.

The highest one-day count for Merlins at HMNL was 19 this season. A total of 71 **Peregrine Falcons** passed HMNL this season to date. On 11/28, an adult **Peregrine Falcon** was observed for a half hour as it devoured a Green-winged Teal. The falcon was perched atop a power pole and had left the head and legs of the teal on the road beneath the pole. A farm pond a half mile away may have been the source of the teal.

Flycatchers and vireos are common ridge migrants at HMNL. The total for these flycatchers were: **Olive-sided Flycatcher** 8; **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** 5; **Least Flycatcher** 5. The sought-after **Philadelphia Vireo** numbered 23 in migration along HMNL.

A total of 5180 **Blue Jays** were counted this season at HMNL with high counts of 1693 10/8 and 1232 10/9. The highest one day count of **Common Raven** was 112 11/8 HMNL with a season total of 783.

The first **Red-breasted Nuthatch** on migration at HMNL was 8/27. A total of 54 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were tallied in comparison to 52 **White-breasted Nuthatches** at HMNL. The last reported **Marsh Wren** was from KDRA 9/29 (KG).

A lone **Gray-cheeked Thrush** was recorded 10/1 HMNL (BB). A total of 42 **Swainson's Thrush** were tallied at HMNL. **American Robins** create a spectacle at the beginning and ending of each day at HMNL as they race past the lookout. A grand total 21,646 were counted. **Cedar Waxwings** often join **American Robins** in feeding on the berries found in the trees and understory along their migration route. This season 12,016 **Cedar Waxwings** were counted at HMNL. Eight **Snow Buntings** flew past HMNL 11/29 (BB).



In early September, the early morning passerine migration at HMNL can be a spectacle before the thermals arrival stirs the raptors to move. Sometimes a strong wind prevents the birds from stopping around the lookout. Such was the case when winds resulted in these numbers of unidentified warblers at HMNL: 9/10 122; 9/11 150; 9/25 315.

One of several fall-plumaged Blackpoll Warblers seen on the Union Meadows Park Field Trip - photo by Mike Slater

These are seasonal totals for these warblers at HMNL: **Cape May Warbler** 184; **Bay-breasted Warbler** 44; **Blackburnian Warbler** 105; **Black-throated Green Warbler** 383.

On 9/3, one **Golden-winged Warbler** stopped by HMNL. There were four reports of **Orange-crowned Warblers**: 9/19 Lower Heidelberg Township (BL); 10/2 Union Meadows Park (MS, RK); 10/4 BMA (MW); 10/13 KDRA (KG). On 9/14, a **Connecticut Warbler** was recorded at HMNL and RK found one on Lutz Road in Boyertown 9/21. KG documented a **Mourning Warbler** KDRA 8/17.

Late September summons **Lincoln's Sparrows** on migration. There were several reports of single **Lincoln's Sparrow** throughout the county with a high number of five **Lincoln Sparrows** KDRA 10/1 (AW). A total of 567 **Scarlet Tanagers** were tallied at HMNL this season. **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** made their presence known with near-record numbers. 603 **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were tallied for the season with two days of unusually high numbers: 9/25 180 and 9/27 189 (RK). These grosbeaks were coming by the lookout in groups of 20—several times in a fifteen minute period.

A rare meadow bird was seen this season at HMNL: **Blue Grosbeak** 8/16. On 8/31, LS found a lingering **Dickcissel** at SGL106. The winter finch migration took place as predicted. It was late and not numerous. Totals for HMNL were: **Purple Finch** 674; **White-winged Crossbill** 21; **Common Redpoll** 18 and **Pine Siskin** 151.

In summary, 88,035 non-raptors were counted in migration at HMNL. These include the dates August 15 to November 30. The 4th quarter report will note sightings during the last month until December 15.

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