



The Distelfink

Spring 2023 Newsletter of the Baird Ornithological Club

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President's Message by Lucy Cairns

Presidential Perks and Club Stalwarts

“They will expect you to do everything,” a former BOC president whispered in my ear when I was nominated to serve in this role two years ago. Indeed, there have been a few times when it has felt that way. The time and effort required to maintain the schedule of programs and field trips that members count on, and to coordinate with outside partners who look to the BOC for expertise, is significant (though intermittent). And I could list more than a few additional responsibilities that come with serving as an officer of the club, but I won't. The programs mentioned above are what I view as the core activities that support the Baird Club's mission of studying birds and nature and fanning the birding spark in others, thereby growing the community of people whose lives are enriched by this shared passion and whose love of birds will move them to engage in the conservation efforts so desperately needed at this time.

Periodically, items requiring Presidential attention seem to materialize one after the other, like Broad-wings forming a distant kettle as seen from the North Lookout. Then they stream into my inbox too quickly to count. Each time this happens, I can talk myself down from a state of anxiety by reminding myself that I am not alone on the lookout—I am one of a team of BOC leaders dedicated to working together to accomplish club business. That team can aptly be described as a group of Baird club stalwarts: accomplished birders who value the BOC's mission so highly that they have devoted countless hours over many years (even decades!) to doing all the things that make our club the effective organization we all enjoy today. You need only glance down the list of the current Board of Directors to see the names of many (though not all) of the longtime club leaders I am referring to.

The opportunity to work closely with these knowledgeable and dedicated birders was the main reason I put myself forward as a candidate for club president—and what a great perk it has been to get to know these remarkable people and work alongside them! How much of their knowledge has rubbed off on me is questionable, but I could not have wished for a more generous and congenial group to work with. Every time I have asked for help, it has been given promptly and without question. I look forward eagerly to staying on the Board to serve 2 years as immediate past-president.

In depending on a small group of stalwarts to do the work of the club, the BOC is no different from most other voluntary organizations. But even the most dedicated stalwart has an expiration date ... or at least an “I'm ready to step back a bit” date. This year, Joanne Kintner, Rudy Keller, and Tony Grimm will not be seeking another term on the board. Joanne has graciously offered to continue working her magic to create enticing raffle baskets for the banquet fundraiser, and Rudy will continue guiding trips and his work on the Distelfink, for the time being. Over time, of course, (please, let it be a long time) all of today's club stalwarts will need to be replaced.

To keep the BOC viable as a vehicle for birders to share knowledge and good times with each other and with our community at large, each year we need a few new members willing and able to take their turn on the Board of Directors. Last year this goal was achieved when Russ Hoffman and Hannah Salvatore agreed to join the Board, and they have proved to be valuable additions. This year we have openings for 2 new Directors, and the offices of Vice President and Secretary must be filled. By the time this newsletter is published we hope to have a full slate of candidates, but I decided to devote my last President's Message to this issue because the need for additional members to take a turn will never cease.

If present life commitments mean it's not practical for you to take on a few hours a month of additional duties at this time, I hope you will look for such an opportunity in the future and keep supporting the BOC and enjoying club programs in the meantime. On the other hand, if you feel inspired by the chance to join forces with Baird Club stalwarts soon and make your interest known. From personal experience I can guarantee that

you will be given a warm welcome and all the support you may need to become an equal partner in assuring the continued success of our illustrious Baird Ornithological Club.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your president. It has been an honor and a pleasure.

BOC Leadership opportunities as of Feb. 20, 2023.

Term of office to begin in June of 2023.

- **Vice President** (2-year term)
 - Preside at meetings in the absence of the President, and otherwise fill in for the President if needed.
 - Serve on or chair a committee responsible for planning the annual banquet in May.
 - Attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and participate in the general work of the Board.
 - Serve as President after completing term as VP (not required, but has generally been the practice)
- **Director** (3-year term)
 - Attend all meetings of the Board of Directors (generally 3 or 4 meetings per year) and participate in the general work of the Board.
 - Serve on or chair either the Banquet Committee or the Friday Program Speaker Committee (responsible for contacting desired speakers to finalize the schedule for the coming year and coordinating with each speaker around the time of their appearance).

If you may be interested in being nominated for one of these positions, please contact Lucy Cairns at 610-223-4501 or ljanetcairns@gmail.com.

Reinvigorating the Route 183 Hawk Watch - Mike Slater

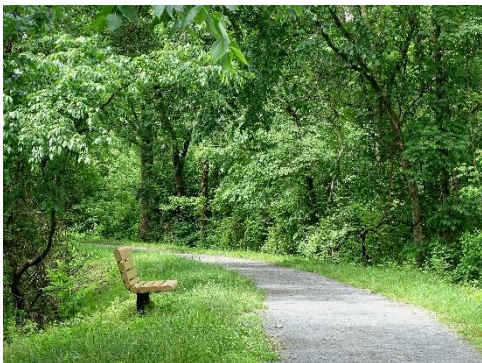
Dr. Laurie Goodrich, Research Director at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, has asked the Baird Club members to help find hawk counting volunteers to supplement a part-time, paid counter for the Route 183 Hawk Watch. Dr. Goodrich has secured a grant that includes funding for someone to count at the long-time hawk watching location where PA Rte. 183 crosses the Kittatinny Ridge.

She is looking for people to make commitments to go up next fall and count on the days when the main counter isn't there. Training will be provided by Hawk Mountain this coming summer. If you would like to help out or for more information please contact Rudy Keller (rckeller@fastmail.com) or Mike Slater (paplantings@gmail.com).

Berks Birding Site Profiles

Look under this heading for occasional descriptions and photos of publicly accessible birding sites in Berks County. Please consider writing a profile of one of your favorite birding places.

Union Meadows East, a Union Township Park - By Linda Ingram with photos by the author



This relatively new Berks birding site, appearing on eBird checklists beginning in 2014. In 2022, Union Meadows ranked in the top ten Berks eBird hotspots with 167 species sighted to date. Proximity to the Schuylkill River increases the opportunity for Spring and Fall migrants.

The Berm Trail: In 1948 a major Schuylkill River clean-up was begun. Coal mining and transport had clogged and severely degraded the river. Impoundment basins enclosed by a raised berm were constructed to hold pumped river water and silt slurry. When the coal silt settled out,

the water was returned to the river. Today that berm provides an excellent 1.6-mile raised loop circling through a variety of habitats – fields, vernal ponds in the old desilting basins, and riverine forest. Strategically placed signage orients the visitor to history past and nature present. The Berm Trail is joined by the Schuylkill River Trail for a very short distance and the parking lot also serves as an SRT trailhead. By walking east on the SRT for about one mile, you can connect with the Hopewell Big Woods Trail, the newest addition to French Creek State Park.



Birding Union Meadows: A wide gravel path (shared with bicyclists, dog walkers, and the occasional horse) allows you to focus on the birds with good views looking down into the habitat. Rusty blackbirds are regular here in spring – check the canal and Vernal Pond side trail. Sparrow species are abundant in the fall along field edges planted with wildflowers. Woodpeckers are well represented, with even the Red-headed sighted one fall. Red-shouldered, Red-tailed and Cooper’s Hawks are frequent year-round, Bald Eagles seem to like the river edge, and Broad-winged Hawks are usually seen in the Spring. Warblers are well represented in their given

seasons, with 25 species presently on the list. Nesting species include Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, American Redstart, Prairie Warbler, and Blue-winged Warbler. Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green, Black and White, Magnolia, and Blackburnian Warblers are regular migrants, and the less common Mourning and Connecticut are possible. You can explore eBird’s Berks County hotspots



Union Meadows bar charts for species reported at any given time of year. BOC always has a few walks here in the annual field trip list – please join us when you can. With the variety of habitats and good viewing conditions, you’ll be sure to have a productive visit, and you never know what may show up next!

Directions: Union Meadows East parking lot is also a trailhead for the Schuylkill River Trail. Signs for both are along Rt. 724. Travel on Rte.724, also known as East Main St. east of Birdsboro, 2 miles east from Birdsboro to 100 Campbell Forge Road, Douglassville PA 19518. The entrance is adjacent to the parking lot for the Fork and Ale restaurant.

247 species Found in Berks County, PA in 2022, by Russ Hoffman



Short-billed Dowitcher. Photo by Russ Hoffman

by S. Marony, a **Short-billed Dowitcher** was seen by P. and J. Wolfe in August, a **Baird's Sandpiper** was found in August by R. Keller, a stilt sandpiper was a good find by A. Wlasneiowski in September and an **American Golden Plover** was found by Dr. T. Underwood In September. While these birds are not rare, they are not seen every year in Berks. The Baird's sandpiper is named for Spencer Fullerton Baird, who was born in Reading in 1823 and became the second secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. The local Baird Ornithological Club is also named after him.

Another event that took place that attracted shorebirds was the draining of Bernhart's Dam. Again, this



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created an area that was a magnet for migrating birds both in spring and fall. For birders of Berks County, the past year yielded mixed results in birdwatching. Although the overall count for the year was below the 20-year average of 252 species seen, there were some unusual and exciting finds among the 247 species detected.

Some of these sightings occurred in the shorebird group. Most years, shorebird sightings depend on the water level of the local lakes and ponds. The lower the level, the more mud is exposed, which provides feeding areas for sandpipers, plovers and waders.

Two locations impacted this phenomenon this past year. Near Hamburg, a holding pond for a warehouse complex yielded ideal conditions that attracted unusual birds.

An **American Avocet** was found in July

by S. Marony, a **Short-billed Dowitcher** was seen by P. and J. Wolfe in August, a **Baird's Sandpiper** was found in August by R. Keller, a stilt sandpiper was a good find by A. Wlasneiowski in September and an **American Golden Plover** was found by Dr. T. Underwood In September. While these birds are not rare, they are not seen every year in Berks. The Baird's sandpiper is named for Spencer Fullerton Baird, who was born in Reading in 1823 and became the second secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. The local Baird Ornithological Club is also named after him.

Another event that took place that attracted shorebirds was the draining of Bernhart's Dam. Again, this created an area that was a magnet for migrating birds both in spring and fall. **Semi-palmated Sandpipers** and **Semi-palmated Plovers** were seen here, and an uncommon, **Red-necked Phalarope** was found in September by R. Hoffman. In the spring, the uncommon **Little Blue Heron** was noted by J. Beatrice. The future for both productive birding locations is uncertain.

Left - Red-necked Phalarope).

Photos by Russ Hoffman

Two first-Berks County sightings occurred this year. In March in the western part of the county, a **Western Tanager** showed up at the Bethel area feeders of C. Cravotta. Due to Mr. Cravotta's hospitality, Berks birders got to see this tanager, which is very rare in the eastern part of the country. (Picture in the sightings list below)

In mid-December, J. and L. Spildes' backyard was found by another unusual visitor from the West. A **Townsend's Warbler** was seen in an evergreen tree from their kitchen window. This is a first record of this western species of warbler in Berks. (Picture in the Christmas Bird Count Wrap-up below)

The **Peregrine Falcons** that have been nesting in downtown Reading in recent years were successful in producing offspring again this year. Four young were born, and three fledged for sure. The presence of these birds in early summer is an awe-inspiring sight. To see six of these magnificent wild creatures creating havoc in a downtown setting is an unforgettable experience!

Other notable sightings in 2022 include the very unusual **Little Gull** found by an excited group of Baird club birders on a scheduled walk at Lake Ontelaunee in March, **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks** seen by J. and L. Spilde in June, a **Short-eared Owl** found by L. Ingram and a **Northern Goshawk** reported by E. Barrell.

We birding enthusiasts have already begun the quest to see the wonders of the avian world in 2023. Come join us. For more information on bird watching in Berks, go to the [Baird Ornithological Club's website](#) .

Russ Hoffman is a longtime member of the Baird Ornithological Club and has extensively photographed the birds of Berks County.

The following are the birds seen and reported in Berks County, PA during 2022:

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Acadian Flycatcher | Bank Swallow | Blue-headed Vireo | Chimney Swift |
| Alder Flycatcher | Barred Owl | Blue-winged Teal | Chipping Sparrow |
| American Avocet | Bay-breasted Warbler | Blue-winged Warbler | Cliff Swallow |
| American Bittern | Belted Kingfisher | Bobolink | Common Golden-eye |
| American Black Duck | Black and White | Bonaparte's Gull | Common Grackle |
| American Coot | Warbler | Broad-winged Hawk | Common Loon |
| American Crow | Black Vulture | Brown Creeper | Common Merganser |
| American Golden Plover | Black.-billed Cuckoo | Brown thrasher | Common Nighthawk |
| American Goldfinch | Black-bellied Plover | Brown-headed Cowbird | Common Raven |
| American Kestrel | Black-bellied Whistling Duck | Bufflehead | Common Tern |
| American Pipit | Blackburnian Warbler | Cackling Goose | Common Yellowthroat |
| American Redstart | Black-capped Chickadee | Canada Goose | Connecticut Warbler |
| American Robin | Black-crowned N. | Canada warbler | Cooper's Hawk |
| American Tree Sparrow | Heron | Canvasback | Dark-eyed Junco |
| American Wigeon | Blackpoll Warbler | Cape May Warbler | Dbf.-crest Cormorant |
| American Woodcock | Black-thr. Blue Warbler | Carolina Chickadee | Dickcissel |
| Arctic tern | Black-thr. Green | Carolina Wren | Downy Woodpecker |
| Baird's Sandpiper | Warbler | Caspian Tern | Dunlin |
| Bald Eagle | Blue Grosbeak | Cattle Egret | Eared Grebe |
| Baltimore Oriole | Blue Jay | Cedar Waxwing | Eastern Bluebird |
| Bank Swallow | Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher | Cerulean Warbler | Eastern Meadowlark |
| | | Chestnut-sided Warbler | Eastern Phoebe |

Eastern Screech Owl
 Eastern Towhee
 Eastern Whip-poor-will
 Eastern Wood Pewee
 Eurasian Collared Dove
 European Starling
 Evening Grosbeak
 Field Sparrow
 Fish Crow
 Forster's Tern
 Fox sparrow
 Gadwall
 Glaucous Gull
 Golden Eagle
 Golden-crown Kinglet
 Grasshopper Sparrow
 Gray Catbird
 Gray-cheeked Thrush
 Great Black-backed Gull
 Great Crested
 Flycatcher
 Great Egret
 Great-blue Heron
 Greater Scaup
 Greater White-fronted
 Goose
 Greater Yellowlegs
 Great-horned Owl
 Green Heron
 Green-winged Teal
 Hairy Woodpecker
 Hermit Thrush
 Herring Gull
 Hooded Merganser
 Hooded Warbler
 Horned Grebe
 Horned Lark
 House Finch
 House Sparrow
 House Wren
 Iceland Gull
 Indigo Bunting
 Kentucky Warbler
 Killdeer
 Lapland Longspur

Least Flycatcher
 Least Sandpiper
 Lesser Black-backed
 Gull
 Lesser Scaup
 Lesser Yellowlegs
 Lincoln's Sparrow
 Little Gull
 Little-blue Heron
 Long-tailed Duck
 Louisiana Waterthrush

Northern Parula
 Northern Pintail
 Northern Rough-
 winged Swallow
 Northern Shoveler
 Northern Shrike
 Northern Waterthrush
 Olive-sided flycatcher
 Orange-crown Warbler
 Orchard Oriole
 Osprey

Red-bellied
 Woodpecker
 Red-breast Nuthatch
 Red-breasted
 Merganser
 Red-eyed Vireo
 Redhead
 Red-Head. Woodpecker
 Red-necked Phalarope
 Red-shouldered Hawk
 Red-tailed Hawk



The Berks' Female Western Tanager. Photo by Russ Hoffman

Red-throated loon
 Red-winged Blackbird
 Ring-billed Gull
 Ring-necked Duck
 Ring-necked Pheasant
 Rock Pigeon
 Rose-breasted
 Grosbeak
 Rough-legged Hawk
 Ruby-Crowned Kinglet
 Ruby-throated
 Hummingbird
 Ruddy Duck
 Ruffed Grouse
 Rusty Blackbird
 Sandhill Crane
 Savannah Sparrow
 Scarlet Tanager
 Semi-palmated Plover
 Semi-palmated
 Sandpiper
 Sharp-shinned Hawk
 Short-billed Dowitcher
 Short-eared Owl
 Snow Bunting
 Snow Goose
 Solitary Sandpiper
 Song Sparrow
 Sora
 Spotted Sandpiper
 Stilt Sandpiper
 Surf Scoter
 Swanson's Warbler
 Swamp Sparrow

Magnolia Warbler
 Mallard
 Marsh Wren
 Merlin
 Mourning Dove
 Mourning Warbler
 Mute Swan
 N. Saw-whet Owl
 Nashville Warbler
 Northern Cardinal
 Northern Flicker
 Northern Goshawk
 Northern Harrier
 Northern Mockingbird

Ovenbird
 Palm Warbler
 Pectoral Sandpiper
 Peregrine Falcon
 Philadelphia Vireo
 Pied-billed Grebe
 Pileated Woodpecker
 Pine Siskin
 Pine Warbler
 Prairie Warbler
 Prothonotary Warbler
 Purple Finch
 Purple Martin

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Tennessee Warbler | Virginia Rail | White-winged Scoter | Worm-eating Warbler |
| Townsend's Warbler | Warbling Vireo | Wild Turkey | Yellow Warbler |
| Tree Swallow | Western Tanager | Willow Flycatcher | Yellow-bellied Flycatcher |
| Tufted Titmouse | White-throated Sparrow | Wilson's Snipe | Yellow-bellied Sapsucker |
| Tundra Swan | White-breasted Nuthatch | Wilson's warbler | Yellow-billed Cuckoo |
| Turkey Vulture | White-crowned Sparrow | Winter Wren | Yellow-breasted Chat |
| Veery | White-eyed Vireo | Wood Duck | Yellow-Rump Warbler |
| Vesper Swallow | White-rumped Sandpiper | Wood Thrush | Yellow-throated Vireo |

Spring and Autumn Birding in Berkshire, UK - Robert Godden, Berkshire Ornithological Club - Reports from our sister bird club in the United Kingdom

Spring birding in Berkshire, UK

In the cold dark winter months, who doesn't look forward to spring? We look out for the first signs – bulbs emerging in the garden, warmth in the air, birdsong and so on. In fact, the signs presented by birds are not just the preserve of birdwatchers, but have entered the common vernacular. On hearing the first **Cuckoo** of spring, the composer Delius put pen to paper, as do the general public with a letter to The Times, though I wonder how many are actually reporting **Collared Doves**! When accused of raising our hopes of spring's arrival too early, we're told that one **Swallow** does not a summer make. But spring is especially anticipated by birders, with a cohort of different species to look out for. For birds, spring means the start of the breeding season and, for some, migration. In the following paragraphs, I will just cover bird migration as we experience it in Berkshire, UK.

Spring migrant birds can be divided into summer visitors which arrive to breed in our localities, passage migrants which stop off temporarily on their journeys to breeding grounds further north and a few continental overshoots. Summer migrants arrive on a broad front and rapidly fill their chosen habitat and can seem as ubiquitous as the resident species. On the other hand, and perhaps unlike the situation in USA, passage migrants are less easily observed at inland locations such as in Berkshire; this is much more evident on the coast, but can be experienced inland when particular weather conditions cause birds to drop in. The unpredictable nature of the appearance of these passage migrants and the large number of potential species make this an exciting time for local birders.

Starting with the summer visitors, our first arrivals arrive so early that they aren't usually regarded as such – **Oystercatchers** turn up in late January and **Redshanks** in late February to breed in small numbers at gravel pits. Mid-March then sees the first **Chiffchaffs**, **Little Ringed Plovers** and **Sand Martins** [Bank Swallow] arrive, while the scarce **Garganey**, our only summer visiting duck species, and the rare **Stone Curlew**, an unusual wader [shorebird] species that inhabits arable and grassland habitats, can appear early in spring. Most summer visiting species are first recorded in April, and this includes most of the warbler species announcing their presence with a variety of songs, including the beautiful downward scale of the **Willow Warbler**, the rhythmic beat of the **Chiffchaff**, the scratchy notes of the **Whitethroat** and the exuberant virtuosity of the **Blackcap**. Other April arrivals include [Barn] **Swallow**, **House Martin** and in smaller numbers **Hobby**, **Common Tern**, **Yellow Wagtail**, **Tree Pipit**, **Redstart**, **Cuckoo** and **Nightingale**; this last having a significant population on the gravel soils south of Reading. The last to arrive are **Swift**, **Nightjar** and **Spotted Flycatcher**, usually not seen until May.

Considering now the passage migrants, very few of these are passerines. **Wheatears** and **Whinchats** occur with some regularity, favouring grasslands and open country. **Ring Ouzels** are less common but are usually encountered on higher ground. The majority of species in this category are birds that are attracted to wetland sites: typically waders, gulls and terns. The most frequent waders are **Common** and **Green Sandpipers**, **Dunlin**

and **Ringed Plover** with **Greenshank**, **Whimbrel**, **Black-tailed** and **Bar-tailed Godwits**, **Wood Sandpiper**, **Spotted Redshank**, **Avocet** and [Ruddy] **Turnstone** occurring annually in roughly decreasing order of numbers. Sometimes their arrival coincides with heavy overnight rain and they depart soon after first light; at other times their arrival seems quite random. Other birds that pass through include **Arctic** and **Black Terns** and **Little Gulls**, usually in ones and twos but sometimes much bigger flocks. The waterbodies around Reading tend to attract most, possibly indicating that the birds have followed the course of the River Thames westwards from the east coast.

Continental overshoots are birds that should be breeding in France or elsewhere in Europe but have travelled too far north. These are much rarer than the species covered previously and include such species as **Hoopoe**, **Golden Oriole** and **Red-footed Falcon**, the latter usually joining up with gatherings of **Hobbies** hunting for dragonflies over lakes and marshes.

Some highlights of the past spring:

Red-necked Grebe – an elusive bird for one day on a gravel pit south of Reading;

Common Scoter – just one this year (a species that is increasingly detected by birders operating overnight sound recording equipment);

Glossy Ibis – one present for a week, a species that is becoming more frequent in the UK;

Crane – one flew over and was seen by a lucky observer;

White Stork – several sightings, presumably all originating from a reintroduction scheme in Sussex;

Black-winged Stilt – after occurring in 2019 after an absence of 45 years, a pair and a singleton were seen at separate nearby locations on the same day this April!

Avocet – one day visits by groups of one in March and two in May;

Bar-tailed Godwit – a flock of five that thought about landing but continued east and three singles;

Spotted Redshank – one in fine summer plumage for a few hours in April;

Red-necked Phalarope – seen by one lucky observer late one evening;

[Black-legged] **Kittiwake** – two singles for one day stays;

Red-footed Falcon – a female delighted observers during its four-day stay at a gravel pit west of Reading;

Black Redstart – two in typically urban setting on the same day in April;

Ring Ouzel – six singletons.

Autumn birding in Berkshire, UK – Robert Godden

Autumn, season of mists and mellow fruitfulness – really? For birds, autumn has already been underway for several weeks by the time we celebrate harvest or detect the first nip in the air. Autumn for birds is the time when those birds that have travelled to their breeding grounds start their journey to their wintering grounds. In fact, soon after the last birds have passed through northbound in spring we start to see the first southbound birds turning up, so detecting the start of autumn isn't always that easy. This year in Berkshire, **Green Sandpipers** (a species that breeds far to the north) were seen almost daily until May 5th; there was then a gap of just 39 days before the first returning bird on Jun 13th.

Autumn is an exciting time for birdwatching in the UK with birds potentially arriving from all points of the compass, though migration is less obvious in an inland county such as Berkshire compared to coastal locations. Much of the migration goes unseen as many of the passerine species migrate by night. However, some passerine species may be encountered – birds such as **Wheatear** and **Whinchat** which don't breed in Berkshire may be found on open ground, **Redstarts** which are localised breeders in woodland may also turn up in other habitats and parties of **Yellow Wagtails** may appear in greater numbers than could be accounted for by their local breeding status. **Redwings** and **Fieldfares** are thrushes that breed in northern Europe and spend the winter in the UK in large numbers. They usually migrate by night and the soft high-pitched calls of **Redwings** are a feature of cold October nights; birds may still be travelling in the morning when flocks totalling tens of thousands may be counted overhead. The three common hirundine species (**[Barn] Swallow**, **House Martin** and **Sand Martin [Bank Swallow]**) also migrate through Berkshire in large numbers and

small flocks may be seen moving through purposefully or feeding in large numbers over a lake – an amazing 6000 **House Martins** were estimated over a gravel pit on Sep 21st 2018, with just hundreds remaining the next day.

Wetland sites attract many migrating waders [shorebirds], gulls and terns, but their appearance is erratic and unpredictable. Among the waders, apart from those that breed in the county or nearby, the commonest would be the species that breed further north in the UK such as **Common Sandpiper**, **Dunlin**, **Black-tailed Godwit** and **Greenshank**, followed by those that breed no closer than northern Europe or Russia such as **Ruff**, **Little Stint**, **Turnstone** and **Curlew Sandpiper**. A handful of American species have reached Berkshire, with 19 occurrences of **Pectoral Sandpipers** and singles of **Killdeer**, **Least Sandpiper** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**. A dull autumn day birding at a flooded gravel pit or reservoir can also be brightened when a party of **Arctic** or **Black Terns** pass through or a **Little Gull** hangs around to feed. Finally, another wader, the strange and uncommon **Stone-curlew** which breeds in small numbers in arable fields gather in small flocks on the Downs, contemplating their southbound migration to southern Spain and north Africa.

Some highlights of the past autumn:

- White-rumped Sandpiper** – an annual visitor to the UK in very small numbers, but never previously recorded in Berkshire. One was present in Buckinghamshire for a day in July at a location just 50m from the county boundary. A few lucky birders were there at just the right time to see it fly briefly into Berkshire airspace and claim it for their county list;
- Spoonbill** – one in September. With increasing numbers now breeding in Norfolk, this is becoming a more regular visitor;
- Wryneck** – one for a day in September. This species is an almost annual drift migrant from the continent;
- Garganey** – two birds in eclipse plumage required careful scrutiny to pick them out amongst the more numerous **Teal**;
- Marsh Harrier** – a juvenile stayed for seven weeks in the Blackwater Valley;
- Great Northern Diver [Common Loon]** – a summer plumage bird stayed for a week at Queen Mother Reservoir;
- Glossy Ibis** – the second bird in the county this year has been showing well on flooded fields for over a month;
- Sanderling**, **[Ruddy] Turnstone**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Ruff**, **Little Stint**, **Grey Plover [Black-bellied Plover]** – all turned up in small numbers this autumn;
- Ring-necked Duck** – a one day visit by two females in November – this represents the largest flock of this American species ever recorded in Berkshire!

123rd Reading Christmas Bird Count Wrap-up - Lucy Cairns

The Reading CBC took place this year on Sunday, December 18, with a team of 48 field observers and 24 feeder-watch counters. Eight field observers doubled as feeder-watch counters, so the total participants numbered 64 – another strong showing which came very close to matching last year's record effort. Special thanks are due to Mark Chestnut, who accepted my plea to act as team leader for the Lake Ontelaunee sector after I learned that long-time participant Dale Beitzel would be unavailable this year. Mark did a stellar job collecting and reporting the checklist and effort data. I am also grateful to Ian Cost, who took over as team leader for Lower Alsace.

Among the species doing well again this year are the Woodpeckers, Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Bald Eagle, Belted Kingfisher, and House Finch. House Finch and Woodpecker numbers have likely been bolstered the last 2 years due to a significant uptick in feeder counts, but they may also be benefiting from their ability to make use of our ever-expanding developed landscape. This year's Bald Eagle count of 12 came close to last year's all-time high of 14. Eastern Bluebirds, at 219, were present in unusually high numbers, likely related to another unusually warm early winter.

The recovery of our local populations of Tufted Titmice and Chickadees from the drastic drop in 2018 is continuing nicely. After finding only 17 Titmice and 52 Chickadees in December 2018, by last year the numbers had risen to 58 Titmice and 170 Chickadees. This year the count jumped to 118 Tufted Titmice and 230 Chickadees. An unusually rainy spring in our area in 2018 and an uptick in West Nile virus are thought to explain sudden decrease in 2018.

American Crow, American Tree Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco are the three species recorded in every Reading CBC since its inception in 1911. The 'stalwart three' made it onto our list again this year, but the Tree Sparrow has been

threatening to disappear. Only 2 or 3 have been found in 5 of the last 6 years, and this year again their number was in the single digits. Dark-eyed Juncos are cruising along in stable numbers, but the number of American Crows recorded in the Reading CBC has declined. In the six years from 2010 through 2015, an average of 614 American Crows was recorded, then that average dropped to 266 for 2016 through 2021. Only 162 were found this year.



*Townsend's Warbler in Berks,
photo by Russ Hoffman*

Two rarities were reported this year, a Least Sandpiper and a Townsend's Warbler, the first recorded in Berks County. The warbler, which had wandered far from its usual range in western North and Central America, visited a feeder in the yard of Baird members Jo and Larry Spilde on December 18 and returned for several days—long enough for Russ Hoffman to apply his photographic skills! The Least Sandpiper was a continuing bird at Bernhart's Dam in Muhlenberg Township. Russ obtained photos of this bird as well, and both rarities were accepted by our regional editor to become a part of the Reading CBC record.

I cannot sign off without giving a shout-out to BOC member Hannah Salvatore. Not only did she volunteer for the first time as a field observer, but she assisted me in data

compilation. Compiling all the checklists and effort reports takes more hours than I have cared to count, and since I became a compiler four years ago, I have gotten through this chore with the generous help of Art Zdancewic. This year, thanks to Hannah, I got the help I needed, and Art got to spend more holiday time with friends and family. Win-win!

BOC Meetings/Programs – Spring 2023

COVID Policy - For our 2023 meetings at Nolde Forest EEC, your Board of Directors asks:

- If you are feeling ill, have recently been exposed to COVID, or are awaiting the results of a test for COVID-19, please stay home.***
- Consider wearing a mask if you wish to minimize your risk for contracting the virus. A highly effective mask (N95, KN95, or KF94) is recommended.***

**March 10, 7:30 pm in person at Nolde Forest Environmental Ed. Center
"Middle Creek WMA" – Brant Portner, Environmental Education Specialist, PGC**

In 2018, Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area hosted nearly 180,000 migrating snow geese and tens of thousands of other waterfowl species such as tundra swans. Learn about how this migration event came to be, more about what makes these species unique, and the best tips for how to view them during the spring migration. Additional information will include some other sights and species to see outside of the typical spring waterfowl migration at Middle Creek.

April 14, 7:30 pm in person at Nolde Forest Environmental Ed. Center
“Echoes of the Past” - Bill Uhrich, BOC member

We all have seen photos of our local conservation heroes Rosalie Edge and Maurice Broun of Hawk Mt. Sanctuary, but their voices have been lost to time until now. Thanks to Jack Holcomb, we have digital copies from old tape recordings of Rosalie and Maurice. Bill Uhrich will play snippets of the Edge interview along with parts of the interview Michael Harwood did with Maurice while researching his classic 1973 book, *The View From Hawk Mountain*. We'll also be treated to film Maurice shot in the 1950s and 1960s of non-raptor species at Hawk Mountain, including views of hundreds of irrupting Evening Grosbeaks, a sight we may never witness again in our lifetimes.

May 12 Banquet at the Berkshire Country Club - Social hour 6:00 pm with Dinner at 6:30 pm.
“Birding Together: Highlights from 50 years in the Field.” – Jeffrey Gordon

Join Jeffrey Gordon for a celebration of the power of birding to delight, to educate, to heal and to transform, not only our own lives but even our world. Birding is a passion, a practice, and a community with much to offer anyone throughout their lifetime. Jeff will look back across his 6 decades of birding work, play, travel, and discovery close to home and around the world, as well as offering some thoughts on the path forward. This presentation is designed to appeal to people with varying birding backgrounds and is more concerned with emotion, meaning, and connection than with the technical and scientific.

Jeffrey A. Gordon has been a leader in the birding community and ecotourism field for decades. He is a frequent speaker and guide at birding and nature festivals and leads birding tours around a goodly portion of the globe. He served as the president of the American Birding Association from 2010 - 2021. He was a field editor for *Birdwatcher's Digest* and currently writes the column “Cardinal Directions” for its new incarnation as *BWD*. He is a past president of the Delaware Ornithological Society and was the coordinator for the Delaware Birding Trail.

A lifelong nature enthusiast, Jeff worked as an interpretive naturalist at national parks including Yosemite and Acadia, and at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. He spent 12 years leading birding tours full-time, specializing in North & Central America, as well as guiding trips to Antarctica and Africa. He has contributed writing, photography, and video production to a number of book projects including several Peterson Field Guide projects and both volumes of the *Good Birders Don't Wear White* series, the second of which he co-edited with Lisa White.

To register for this event please use sign-up form at the end of this newsletter or [on our website](#) .

BOC Field Trips/Bird Walks - Fall 2022 – Spring/Summer 2023**

GPS addresses/coordinates are included as given by Google Maps.

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/> More Tuesday Bird Walks (2nd & 4th Tuesdays) will be planned, **Spring 2023 Tuesday walks** will also be announced on the B.O.C. [Blog/Birdwalk info](#) and on the [Field Trips web page](#).

March 25 (Saturday) Green Hills Preserve – Wintering Birds 8:00 am

Wintering birds and early spring arrivals in managed grassland and edge habitats. 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 **Meeting Loc.: Natural Lands' Green Hills Preserve, 553 Gunhart Rd, Mohnton, PA**

March 26 (Sunday) French Creek State Park – Woodcock Watch 7:00 pm

American Woodcock courtship display. Coordinator: Art Zdancewic 610-858-3315
Meet at park office 843 Park Road, Elverson PA 19520.

April 8 (Saturday) Gring's Mill - Spring Walk for Early Migrants – 8:00 am

Meet at the Gring's Mill Recreation Area. Dir. East on Broadcasting Rd to end. Make right 1/2 mile to entrance on left. Coordinator and for more information Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053.

Meeting Location: Gring's Mill Recreation Area, 2083 Tulpehocken Rd, Reading, PA 19610

Breakfast with Baird at the Nature Place, with Berks Nature, April 15, 2023 - 7:00 to 9:00 am

A BOC Partner activity - Details & [free registration](#) Mix and mingle with members of Baird during breakfast to learn more about this local birding organization and how to get involved and take a bird hike with the experts. **The Nature Place 575 St. Bernardine Street Reading, PA 19607**

April 23 (Sunday) Union Meadows - Early Migrants 8:00 am

Spring migrants including early warblers. An easy walk on a wide flat trail through wooded and open field habitats. Meet at Union Meadows East parking lot, Schuylkill River Trail, Rte.724/East Main St. in Monocacy, 2 miles east of Birdsboro. Coordinators: Rudy Keller, Linda Ingram 610-621-7473

Meeting loc.: Union Meadows East parking lot, 100 Campbell Ford Road, Douglassville PA 19518,

State Game Lands 280, April 25 (Tues.) 8:00 AM

Join BOC birders for a spring birding walk through the varied habitat of State Game 280.

This area has scattered woods, fields, and the backwaters of Blue Marsh Lake. Good time of year to find a variety of birds that will be nesting locally and also species on their way to areas to our north. Directions: From intersection State Hill Rd and Brownsville Rd., go west toward Brownsville to 2 nd right after N. Church Rd. Approx 4 miles. Turn right onto **Justa Rd.** and proceed to parking at the dead end. More Info Russ Hoffman Russhoff @Yahoo.com, 4847947053.

April 29 (Saturday) Hay Creek Watershed 8:00 am

Walk the Hay Creek Watershed in search of spring warblers, including La. Waterthrush, nesting raptors and possibly nesting Bank Swallows. Meet at the closed south end on Hay Creek Rd. From traffic light at Rtes. 568 and 724 in Gibraltar, take 568 west approximately 1.5 miles and turn left on White Bear Rd. Drive 4 miles through 2 stop signs and turn left on Hay Creek Rd. Drive to the dead end and park on the shoulderCoordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053, russhoff@yahoo.com

Meeting Location: Old 82 & Parking Area, 2000 Hay Creek Rd, Birdsboro, PA 19508

April 29 (Saturday) Birds, Butterflies & Botany, Neversink Mountain, 10:00 am (with Mengel Natural History Society)

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

Coordinators: Karl Gardner 610-987-3281, Ryan Woolwine 484-883-6461.

Meeting Location: 999-975 South St, Reading, PA 19602. 40.326248, -75.918611

May 6, (Saturday) Nolde Forest Spring Walk 8:00am

Join BOC members for a walk to search for spring migrants including Louisiana Waterthrush, other warblers, and Acadian Flycatcher. Maybe also catch sight of a Barred Owl which usually nests here. We will meet at the Sawmill Parking Area just off Rt. 625, south on Rt. 625 from Shillington to sign for Sawmill Parking. Coordinator: Linda Ingram 610-621-7473

Meeting Location: 2910 New Holland Rd, Reading, PA 19607

May 7 (Sunday) State Game Lands 106, Pine Swamp Rd. 7:00 am

Excellent location for neotropical migrants and one of the few Berks County locations where Ruffed Grouse is possible. From Hawk Mt. Sanctuary go south on Hawk Mt. Rd. 4 miles and turn right on Pine Swamp Rd. Drive 1 mile to parking area on right. From Rte 143, turn left on Hawk Mt. Rd. and drive 4 miles to Pine Swamp Rd. (left turn) then 2 miles to parking lot on left.

Coordinator: Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053, russhoff@yahoo.com

Meeting Location: Pine Swamp RD, Kempton PA, 19529, 40.626208, -75.952045

May 13 (Saturday) Hopewell Village Nat. Historic Site-Spring Migrants & Breeding Birds 7am

Once an annual BOC venue, this has long been absent from our walk schedule. Eastern Towhees are reliable. Coordinator: Sheila Martin 610-858-6005 **Disregard the published address of 2 Mark Bird Lane; the NHS gate is still closed at 7:00 a.m. From obvious crossroad of Park Rd (Rte. 345), Clemente Brooke Dr & Hopewell Rd, continue south on Park Rd. Cross a bridge, then enter a brief dense wood. At modest residential-looking twin mailboxes Nos. 2 & 4, turn right onto a gravel driveway. Make several tight turns to the Park's handicap parking lot; limited to ~ 12 spaces.**

May 20 (Saturday) Exeter Scenic River Trail at Trout Run Park 7:00 am

Spring migrants & breeders along the Schuylkill River. Park anywhere on both sides of the road. Coordinator Russ Hoffman 484-794-7053 **Meeting Location: just before the Exeter Twp. Yard Waste Composting area next to Trout Run Park, 914-920 East Neversink Rd, Reading, PA 19606**

June 3 (Saturday) Hopewell Big Woods Trail 7:00 am

Breeding birds of grassland and edge habitats. A wide trail meanders through open fields bordered by woodland. Reliable site for Yellow-breasted Chat and Blue Grosbeak. Meet at trail parking lot on Center Rd. adjacent to Union Twp. maintenance facility. Coordinators: Rudy Keller 610-845-7310, Sheila Martin 610-858-6005 **Meeting Location: 165 Center Road, Douglassville PA 19518**

June 10 (Saturday) Green Hills Preserve Butterflies 10:00am (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, Ryan Woolwine 484-883-6461 **Meeting Location: Natural Lands' Green Hills Preserve, 553 Gunhart Rd, Mohnton, PA 19540**

June 17 (Saturday) Kernsville Dragonflies & Damselflies 10:00am (with Mengel Natural History Society)

Directions: Rte. 61 north, right on Jetson Dr. (across from Cabela's), right on Industrial Dr., left on Kernsville Dam Rd. Coordinators: Mike Slater paplantings@gmail.com, Karl Gardner 610-987-3281 **Meeting Location at the big parking Lot: John Bartram Trail, Hamburg, PA 19526, 40.562424, -75.994708**

June 24 (Saturday) Nolde Forest EEC Moth Night 8:30 pm (with Mengel Natural History Society)

The leaders will hang sheets with UV lights and bait trees with rotten fruit//beer to bring in the night insects for viewing. Bring flashlight. Meet at Mansion parking lot. Coordinators: Ryan Woolwine 484-883-6461, Jim Eckert 610-373-1064, Karl Gardner 610-987-3281 **Meeting Location: 3025 New Holland Rd, Reading, PA 19607**

July 15 (Saturday) Wildflowers and Pollinators at Union Meadows West 10:00 am (with Mengel Natural History Society)

A meandering path through this former ball field converted to a pollinator meadow provides good access for observing a variety of species. Directions: Route 724 (East Main St., Birdsboro) (turn opposite St. Michael's Cemetery) Park in the ball field parking lot. Coordinators: Mike Slater paplantings@gmail.com, Linda Ingram (610-621-7473) **Meeting Location: 980 E Main St, Birdsboro, PA 19508**

August 5 (Saturday) Blue Marsh Butterflies 10:00am (with Mengel Natural History Society)

Coordinators: Karl Gardner 610-987-3281 and Ryan Woolwine 484-883-6461

Meeting Location: Blue Marsh Visitor's Center, 1268 Palisades Dr, Leesport, PA 19533

August 19 (Saturday) Angelica Park Butterflies 10:00am (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, Ryan Woolwine 484-883-6461 **Meeting Location: Berks Nature Angelica Creek Park, 575 St Bernardine St, Reading, PA 19607**

Past Season's Field Trip Reports

Blue Marsh Hawk Watch, Fall 2022 - Russ Hoffman

The hawk watch at Blue Marsh Lake has been going on for years during the fall months. In 2022 we designated one day in Sept., Oct., and Nov. to encourage new birders to join the group and gain knowledge about raptors from the experienced watchers. The best day of the fall was in mid-September when 15 species of birds were seen. The list included: 2 Bald Eagles, 2 Sharp-shinned hawks, 1 Red-shouldered hawk, 2 Red-tailed hawks, and a kettle of Broad-winged hawks numbering 30+. While not a banner day, 12 participants that were there throughout the day were treated to good looks at the end.

Angora Fruit Farm, September 2022 - Russ Hoffman

Ten eager participants gathered for an early morning walk around the Berks County Park area that was the working Angora Fruit Farm. The fruit trees are still there but not maintained. So, although the orchard does not produce edible fruit for human consumption, the area has become a great place to see interesting birds. On today's outing the group saw 24 species of birds: highlights were Least Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Cape May Warbler, and Magnolia Warbler. All enjoyed the leisurely two-hour stroll around the area on a beautiful Fall morning.

Bombay Hook NWR, September 26, 2022 – Rudy Keller

Shorebirds of 13 species highlighted this trip. We saw 105 Am. Avocets, the shorebird for which Bombay Hook is best known, as well as 19 Black-bellied Plovers and a Stilt Sandpiper. Birders new to the group and to shorebirds got excellent comparative looks at hundreds of peeps, those little mud colored birds that are so difficult to identify. We also enjoyed coastal specialties like Snowy Egrets and Laughing Gulls on a fine day with no biting green-headed flies.

Union Meadows Park October 6, 2022 – Rudy Keller



Strong migration the previous night gave us 52 species at this productive site. We saw a Lincoln's Sparrow, a target bird here in fall. An unexpectedly strong showing of 8 warbler species included a Connecticut Warbler, which allowed very good looks as it walked along an exposed branch at the edge of the

meadow. Numerous Palm Warblers of both the yellow and western forms were seen well, as were several Tennessee Warblers in low trees. No warbler neck on this day!



Connecticut Warbler at Union Meadows 10/6/2022, Photos by Russ Hoffman

Kernsville Dam Recreation Area - Desilting Basin, October 11, 2022 - Mike Slater

This recently augmented wetland habitat is continuing to produce interesting sightings. Coordinator Mike Slater was joined by 6 other birders for a lovely morning of birding. Even though the air was cold at the beginning the sun warmed thing up to a comfortable temperature. The highlight was many amazing, close looks at palm warblers on the trail. We saw 46 species which are on [the group's eBird checklist here](#).

Afterwards four of us stopped at the storm-water detention pond at Hamburg Commerce Park off Rte 61 and saw some sandpipers, including a White-rumped, 3 pectoral and 10 least sandpipers along with 23 killdeer. Some of [Mike's video of them feeding is here](#) and there are [more pictures on the eBird Checklist](#)

Union Meadows East – October 14, 2022 at 8:00 am (Flash Birdwalk)

As we had hoped, we had good looks at many sparrows including Swamp, White-crowned, Lincoln's plus the regular ones like Song and White-throated. We had a nice comparison of Downy and Hairy woodpeckers together on one tree which Russ Hoffman captured in the photo above! The full ebird checklist is here.



Two immature White-crowned Sparrow were feeding on the gravel road right in front of us and everyone had a great look at these cryptically-colored birds. Photo by Mike Slater

Afterwards some of us went to the 2-year-old butterfly meadow at Union Meadows west and got to enjoy over 100 American Goldfinches eating the seeds of the native perennial Swamp Sunflower (*Helianthus giganteus*) [as shown on our eBird list](#). We met at Union Meadows East parking lot, trailhead for the Schuylkill River Trail, Rte.724/East Main St. in Monocacy, 2 miles east of Birdsboro. Location: 100 Campbell Ford Road, Douglassville PA 19518

Middle Creek Museum & Bird walk, October 29, 2022- Trip report & photos by Lucy Cairns



First stop was the Visitors Center, where we explored the new Conservation Heritage Museum to learn about the history of the PA Game Commission through displays which included many artifacts and vintage posters. It was illuminating to contemplate the changes in conservation practices which evolved with the development of new knowledge over the years since the Commission's founding in 1895. Several of our group spent close to half an hour at the Visitors Center windows, enjoying a panoramic view of the autumn landscape glowing under a cloudless sky. Our attention,

however, was fixed on the songbirds attracted to the feeders in the planted bed just a few feet from the windows. These included several common feeder birds such as Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmouse, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Mourning Doves, House Finches, White-breasted Nuthatch, and American Goldfinches. In addition, we were thrilled to see a couple Purple Finches, an Eastern Bluebird, a Northern Mockingbird, and two White-Crowned Sparrows (one adult and one immature).

The real highlight occurred when a male Red-winged Blackbird made a brief appearance at the platform feeder, followed a few minutes afterward by a different blackbird who stayed for 5 minutes or so. None of us had seen a bird like this before. It was a solid glossy brown except for a small dark-gold wing patch and delicate edging of a similar color on most of its feathers – stunning! I suggested it might be a Rusty Blackbird, but after taking more time to review ID info I realized it had to be a nonbreeding male Red-winged Blackbird.

Arriving in the Willow Point Trail parking lot, we were greeted by the sight of a male Ring-necked Pheasant strolling along the asphalt towards the new archery range. Walking the trail yielded Blue Jays and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, a White-breasted Nuthatch, a Northern Cardinal, a few Robins, and the sighting of several sparrows we tried but failed to identify beyond being certain of a few sparrows there were not. Identified by sound only were a White-throated Sparrow, Eastern Bluebird, and Mallards. American Crows flew in small groups, and two immature Bald Eagles soared high above. Double-crested Cormorants perched on snags along the far shore of the lake and large numbers (hundreds) of Canada Geese were present in different parts of the lake.



Hopewell Big Woods Trail, French Creek State Park – November 6, 2022 - Linda Ingram: After a streak of warm and sunny days, Sunday morning was clouded with light rain. Remarkably, seven intrepid BOC birders gathered for our walk. For a few it was a first-time visit to this open location which has become increasingly popular for field species and yields respectable numbers of woodland residents and migrants. But not quite today. As the rain shifted from drizzle to put-your-hood-up, we stalwartly phished and scanned the tall grasses adjacent to the trail. Efforts were abandoned an hour into the morning, a respectable 17 species were sighted; including the spectacle of 133 robins in a few large flocks, flights and a perched flock of cedar waxwings totaling 40, a lone fox sparrow. We will return here in the spring. [View the eBird checklist online](#)

BOC New Year Bird Tour - January 1, 2023 - Peter and Jane Wolfe

A New Year and birders are up early with clean slates, eager to begin finding as many species as they can for 2023. Twelve birders met at Breneman's Quarry at 8 AM. It was partly cloudy and a comfortable 40° F, 10° cooler than last year's tour! This is a driving tour of hot spots near Reading, in Berks County, PA.

Some highlights of the morning include an American Wigeon, Redhead and a pair of Canvasbacks at Breneman's Quarry. A Sharp-shinned Hawk flew over displaying his quick flaps then glide technique. Blue Marsh Lake State Hill yielded a Bald Eagle. Snow Geese and a Belted Kingfisher flew by at the Stilling Basin. Dry Brooks Day Use Area included 1 Lesser Black-backed among Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. We also visited the Sensory Trail bird feeders for White-breasted Nuthatch, Black-capped Chickadees, and White-throated Sparrows among others. It was very quiet along Bright School Road. We explored Mosquito Dike for the first time. At Belleman's Church Road there was a Northern Mockingbird and Northern Flicker, but no White-crowned Sparrows this year. By noon our group had dwindled so we returned to Breneman's Quarry where we added a Tundra Swan. A great start to the New Year!

B.O.C. Public Outreach - Field Programs

Birding With Binoculars at Nolde Forest E.E.C.– Feb. 5 - Rudy Keller

Mike Slater, assisted by other BOC members, used the club's stock of loaner binoculars to teach about a dozen people how to select, adjust and focus binoculars for maximum ease and effectiveness of use. Participants were able to practice the techniques they learned by focusing on birds coming to feeders outside the windows of McConnell Hall. A highlight for many was the sight of a Downy and Hairy Woodpecker sharing a suet feeder so comparisons could easily (and leisurely!) be made between them. In the early afternoon, Mike led the group outside on a bird-walk around the grounds demonstrating how to find birds in forest and how to help companion birders use their binoculars to focus on a bird you found. Everyone seemed to have learned at least one technique they hadn't known before.

Birding With Baird at Jim Dietrich Park, Muhlenberg Twp. – Feb. 11 – Rudy Keller

BOC members assisted with an introductory birding talk and walk facilitated by Brandon Pentz, Recreation Programs Supervisor for Muhlenberg Twp. Following a brief indoor session on birding techniques and binocular use, the group of about a dozen novice birders split into two groups for a walk in the park on a warm, spring-like afternoon. The people led by Mike Slater and Rudy Keller concentrated on finding used bird nests along the shrubby river edge. We found 6 Gray Catbird nests plus nests of N. Cardinals, Am. Goldfinch, Am. Robin and Baltimore Oriole, all previewing what birds might be found there in summer. The best actual bird was surely an Am. Woodcock that flushed on whistling wings from beside the path, giving reasonably good looks to people who had never seen one when it went to ground in the thicket. The group led by Brandon, Lucy Cairns and Russ Hoffman spotted a few Canada Geese and Mallards on the Schuylkill River (which forms one border of the park), Eastern Bluebirds, N. Cardinals, and a White-breasted Nuthatch in the woods, and a few Black and Turkey Vultures soaring with a Red-tailed Hawk in the distance. The novice birders were enthusiastic. It was an excellent outreach experience for BOC.

Berks County Birds, June-July 2022 compiled by Rudy Keller

Abbreviations: Blue Marsh L. (BML), French Creek State Park (FCSP), Hamburg Reservoir (HRes), Hawk Mt. Sanctuary (HMS), Kittatinny Ridge (KR), Kernsville Dam Recreation Area (KDRC), L. Ontelaunee (LO), Rodale Experimental Farm, Maxatawny Twp. (Rodale), Schuylkill R. (SchR).

July was hotter and drier than normal, with Berks County placed on a drought watch in midsummer.

Two **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** visited a flooded field along Cross Keys Rd. 6/3-6 (JSp; photos), the fifth record of this species since the first in 2006. Injured **Snow Geese** that can't migrate north are found in most summers. This year one was at Gotwals pond, Oley all summer (RK). A female **Hooded Merganser** with 4 ducklings was in a wooded swamp near Old Morlatton Village 6/11 (LI), and a female with a larger brood was on the Manatawny Cr. in Jun (RS). Breeding has previously occurred at both locations. Singletons were reported at three other places during the period. A flock of 16 **Common Mergansers** that included 13 juvs. was seen 7/28 (BL) at KDRC on the SchR, along which most breeding confirmations have been made. A few others were seen at LO (RK) and at Berks Heritage Center (RH) in Jun and Jul. Single **Ruffed Grouse** were seen 6/10 (NF) and 7/4 (EK) on the KR, the only place to see them in Berks.

Last summer several **Eurasian Collared-Doves** were seen outside of Shartlesville, giving the impression that the colony there might finally have begun expanding. There was no evidence of expansion this summer. There were just three reports of one to 3 doves perched on utility wires in the middle of town, where they have most often been found. **Black-billed Cuckoo** is not predictably found anywhere. This summer 3 were heard, one each at HMS 6/5 (CF), Mohnton 6/15 (RC) and HRes 6/17 (JT). **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** seemed to arrive late at some of its usual haunts, but once singing started, it continued till well into Aug. **Common Nighthawk** is no

longer known to breed in Berks, lending interest to summer reports. One was reported near Kutztown 6/13 (GA) and another at Henningsville 7/2 (PS). **E. Whip-poor-will** still breeds on the KR, where they are most easily found at SGL 110, Northkill Gap. Birders saw or heard 2-5 singing among **Barred Owls** and fireflies on evening walks 7/9, 10 & 14 (KG, RH, LI, RK, PJW). A **Virginia Rail** was heard at Boyertown Reservoir, where previously unreported, 6/1 (DM). A **Sora** was heard at KDRC, which has previously attracted rails, 6/8 (AWI).

A prized **Black-bellied Plover** and 5 **Semipalmated Plovers** paused on their northbound migration in a flooded field along Evansville Rd. near LO 6/2 (RK, JSp). Habitat for southbound shorebirds is usually scarce, but July's heat and drought reduced a warehouse runoff retention basin at Hamburg Commerce Park to a mudflat that attracted 7 wader species. Up to 21 **Least Sandpipers** and one to 3 **Pectoral Sandpipers**, **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, **Spotted Sandpipers**, **Solitary Sandpipers** and **Lesser Yellowlegs** could be seen there on almost any day of the month starting 7/4 (m.obs.). A smaller basin in Blandon attracted some of the above plus a **Greater Yellowlegs** 7/28 (AS).

About 6 **Ring-billed Gulls** worked the beach at BML for picnic scraps all summer, and a flock of 13 was at LO 7/9 (LI). The season's only tern was a **Forster's Tern** nicely photographed at BML 7/21 (RH). **Common Loons** that lingered into summer have usually been immature, but this year an adult was at LO 6/4 (BS) and an adult was on the SchR at KDRC 6/28 and 7/26 (KG). About 7 non-breeding **Double-crested Cormorants** summered at LO and about 3 at BML, both in the usual range of numbers. Post-breeding **Great Egrets** appeared as usual in Jul, with the seasonal high count of 10 made at LO 7/28 (RK). Summer's only reported **Little Blue Heron**, an immature in transitional plumage, was at LO 6/28 (SF). Though no **Black-crowned Night-Heron** rookery has been found since 2014, birds continue to be seen at LO and BML every year. Sightings of juvs. are especially interesting, since their presence may indicate local breeding. This year single juvs. were reported at Sheidy Boat Launch, BML 6/18 (AS), 6/23 (JSp) and 6/30 (TK). A juv. was at the LO spillway 7/28 (RK). If a rookery is found, it will most likely be near BML.

The usual one or 2 summering **Ospreys** were intermittently seen at the reservoirs, in the SchR valley and along the Maiden Creek. Breeding has never been recorded in Berks, but that might change. This year a pair fledged young from a nest on a communications tower in Palm, Montgomery County just south of the Berks line. A female **Northern Harrier**, another non-breeder, quartered grass fields in Lower Heidelberg Twp. 6/13 (BL). **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, rare and extremely secretive breeders, were observed taking sticks to a probable nest site at Hay Cr. this spring and last (RH, RK). **Red-shouldered Hawks** with fledglings were seen at Goose Run Park near Pottstown 6/7 (JT) and at Hay Cr. 6/20 (RH). Breeding also probably occurred at Union Meadows Park near Birdsboro and in District Twp. (RK). Singletons were reported at five other locations. A **Barn Owl** pair at a long established and productive nest site in Rehrersburg fledged 4 young this year (RB). **Red-headed Woodpecker** breeding was not well monitored. Nestlings or fledglings were reported at just 3 of several known locations. It was encouraging to hear of five **Am. Kestrel** nestbox sites that fledged 2-5 young each. Breeding results from a long running HMS study and from a more recent effort by PGC were not available for this report. The 4 young fledged by Reading's **Peregrine Falcon** pair were seen and photographed downtown through Jul (RH).

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at HMS 6/5 (CF) was migrating north. During the breeding season, **Blue-headed Vireos** are generally found only on the KR, usually near eastern hemlocks. This spring a pair nested at Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center in southern Berks, the first breeding confirmation south of the KR and probably the southernmost in southeastern PA. The pair nested in an eastern hemlock in one of the mature conifer plantations (mostly composed of Norway spruce) that make up much of the forest at this place. A male Blue-headed Vireo sang for a few weeks in June 2017 in tall eastern white pines planted around Birdsboro Reservoir, also in southern Berks, but breeding was not confirmed. The vireo joins **Red-breasted Nuthatch**,

Golden-crowned Kinglet and **Pine Siskin**, all conifer related species that have bred in plantations in Berks south of their normal ranges. Blue-headed Vireos were also reported at four KR locations.

Of several known **Purple Martin** colonies in Berks, three were visited by birders who made counts. Those did well, with 30 birds at Old Topton Rd. 6/26 (RK), 75 at Short Lane, Fleetwood 7/11 (RK) and 11 at Maple Grove 7/25 (AZ). **Bank Swallow** burrows were seen in spring at the Haines & Kibblehouse quarry near Birdsboro, their only known breeding colony, but it is not known if the birds nested. Dispersal had occurred by Jul, when 10 were seen on utility wires on Mertz Rd. 7/19 (RH) and 10 at the LO spillway 7/28 (RK). As noted in 2021, **Cliff Swallow** colonies may be declining. At LO, where these swallows have nested for 56 years, just 75 birds, the season's high count, were at the two bridges 6/23 (RK). In 2017, 140 birds were seen. Ten birds were at Old Church Rd. bridge at BML 7/22 (RH) and 8 at Berne Bridge 6/4 (MW), but only one pair was feeding young there later in the season (KG). Just one pair was seen at State St. bridge, Hamburg early in the season, but none later (KG).

There was a small movement of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** through the county in late Jun and Jul, weeks after the last wintering birds had left. Single birds appeared at four places between 6/24 and 7/22, none of them seen more than once (KG, RK, AW). Of the grassland sparrow trio, **Grasshopper Sparrow** and **Savannah Sparrow** were seen in many grass pastures and hayfields in healthy numbers. **Vesper Sparrow** was reported only once at SGL 280, Brownsville 6/13 (BL). A **Dark-eyed Junco** at a feeder in Barto 6/5 (LC) and a **White-throated Sparrow** near Pleasantville 6/16 (AS) were late migrants. **Swamp Sparrow** is such a thinly distributed breeder in brushy wetlands that it is seldom reported in summer. A male singing in such a wetland at Wilson School District 6/16 – 7/30 (BL) was probably breeding. The Big Woods Trail at FCSP remains the easiest place to see **Yellow-breasted Chats**, 3 of which performed their weirdly wonderful antics there in Jun and Jul (m.obs.). **Bobolinks** and **E. Meadowlarks** continue to find a few hayfields to inhabit, returning to some fields year after year even though the hay is cut by mid- to late June. No more than one to 8 Bobolinks and one to 5 E. Meadowlarks were reported at any location, and their breeding outcomes are largely unknown.

Habitat managed for a combination of grassland and edge, as at Green Hills Preserve, Big Woods Trail and SGL 106, have benefited **Blue-winged Warbler** and **Prairie Warbler**, both most readily found at these sites. A **Prothonotary Warbler** seen at Sheidy Boat Ramp, BML 6/30 (TK) had stayed longer than some spring overshoots. **Kentucky Warbler**, sometimes reported at just one place per summer, was at four places this year, three of them in the extensive piedmont forest centered at FCSP. The other was seen with a fledgling at Boyertown Reservoir 7/5 (RK), providing a rare breeding confirmation. **Hooded Warbler** tells a wood warbler success story. It maintains healthy populations at FCSP and on the KR as well as smaller tenacious populations in the larger forest fragments in eastern Berks. Spring's last reported **Blackpoll Warbler** was at Boyertown Reservoir 6/1 (DM). A **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, rare but regular on the KR, returned to the territory at HRes that it held last summer (KG, RK). **Black-throated Green Warbler**, our other KR warbler specialty, was found at four places on the ridge this year and confirmed breeding at one. **Blue Grosbeaks**, mostly singing males, were reported in Jun and Jul at 13 locations and breeding was confirmed at one. The number of sightings may indicate that its breeding population has significantly increased over what it was during the last breeding bird atlas, but the upcoming atlasing effort starting in 2024 will tell the story.

One to 3 **Dickcissels** were seen at Rodale on various dates from 5/24 till 7/29 (m.obs.). As usual, most reports were of one male singing from power lines, but a male and female were photographed perched side by side on a fence 5/29 (RH). Dickcissels have returned annually to Rodale since 2016 and breeding has been confirmed at least once. A combination of rotationally grazed grass pastures, alfalfa and grain fields ensures that breeding and feeding habitat are available all season. A male Dickcissel sang on Monument Rd., Hamburg 6/4 (AS) and 6/19 (KG), when the last hayfields had been cut. Another small colony was discovered on Heidelberg Rd. near Robesonia, where 2 or 3 birds of both sexes were seen 6/15 – 25 (BL).

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Berks Birds, Fall 2022 compiled by Matt Wlasniewski August – November, 2022

Locations: Angora Fruit Farm (**AFF**), Bartram Trail (**BAT**), Bern Township (BT), Bernhart's Dam (BD), 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 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 (HMNL), 183 Hawk Watch (HW), Hay Creek (HC), Kaercher Creek (KC), Kernsville Dam Recreation Area (KDRA), Kutztown University (KU), Lake Ontelaunee (LO), Lake Ontelaunee Bailey 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 Topton 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 (SGL280), State Hill Hawk Watch (SHHW).

The 2022 hurricane season produced 14 named storms (winds of 39 mph or greater) of which eight became hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or greater). Two of these hurricanes, Ian and Nicole, had minimal impact on Berks and resulted in few "storm" birds. The settling pond at Hamburg Commerce Park had recently become one Berks' best shorebird habitats. However, in November contractors drained the pond and brought in soil and rocks which will have a negative impact on its appeal to migrating shorebirds in the future.

A lone **Snow Goose** lingered at GP this quarter (RK) while another Snow Goose stayed at BQ 11/5-20 (RK, TU). On 11/26, JG saw 8 Snow Geese in flight over Shartlesville. RK found two Graylag Geese escapees of unknown origin at LOBF 11/22.

A single **Greater White-fronted Goose** at BQ 11/28 (JSp) was the only one reported. As the Canada Goose migration began, **Cackling Geese** were reported with one at BQ 11/1-29 (RK), one at LOBC 11/10 (JSp) and two at GP 11/20 (RK) with a gaggle of 700 Canada Geese. A flock of 45 **Tundra Swans** was seen in migration at HMNL 11/14.

RK recorded **Northern Pintail** at BQ and LO with one 10/21 and two 11/6 respectively. **Green-winged Teal** numbers increased with sightings of 13 at LOWA 10/2 (JSo) and 11 at BQ 10/25 (RK). One of the more common fall migrating puddle ducks, **Ring-necked Ducks**, arrived at local lakes with 25 at LO 11/20 (TU). On 11/9 RK counted 40 at BQ and then 26 on 11/12.

Surf Scoters made brief stops on the largest lakes with one at LOWS 10/16 (JD), six at BML 10/24 (JR) and six at LO 10/25 (RK). A lone **White-winged Scoter** was at LOWS 10/15 (TU). LCr found a **Long-tailed Duck** at LO 11/26. **Bufflehead** numbers remained the highest among sea ducks with nine at BML 10/28 (JS), 25 at BML 11/14 (BL) and 68 at LO 11/20 (JSp).

LOWS provides a good place to observe **Pied-billed and Horned Grebes**. On 10/26 ZM counted 11 Pied-billed Grebes and JR counted 3 Horned Grebes on 10/16. **Eurasian Collared-Doves** continued to be seen in Shartlesville in single digit numbers (m.ob.).

Sightings of Common Nighthawk were scattered throughout Berks during migration. KG had a high number of 61 **Common Nighthawks** on 8/25 but this total was eclipsed as 171 passed HMNL on 9/9. There

was a single report of a western hummingbird this quarter when an adult **female Rufous Hummingbird** was banded at a home near Fleetwood 11/16 (SL). It was last seen 11/20.

Rail sightings remained rare with only one **Virginia Rail** seen at LOBC 10/28 (JSp). On 11/8, a **Sandhill Crane** gave a nice look at it passed HW 11/8 (EB). An uncommon **American Golden-Plover** cooperated with birders at HCP 9/17-22 (MW, m.ob.). A

Semipalmated Plover also lingered at HCP 9/19-10/2 (DJ, MW, m.ob.). Although always found in good habitat, 33 **Killdeer** was a high number at HCP 8/15 (RK).

HCP continued to be the best shorebird habitat as unusual species continued to be found there. A single **Stilt Sandpiper** stayed on site 9/9-13 (AW, m.ob.). A lone **Dunlin** was only a one-day visitor 11/12 (RK). A **Baird's Sandpiper** was seen there 8/21-29 (RK, m.ob.).

Least Sandpipers were reported throughout Berks 8/4-10/28 (m.ob.) with the following high counts: 30 at BD (RK, m.ob.) and 50 at HCP 8/21-23 (RK). A rare **White-rumped Sandpiper** was found at HCP 10/11 (RK, MS). **Pectoral Sandpipers** were present at HCP



*Least Sandpipers at Bernhart's Dam December 5, 2022.
Photo by Russ Hoffman*

8/6-10/13 (m.ob.) with a high count of 8 on 10/6 (MW).

Semipalmated Sandpipers roamed the mud at HCP 8/9-10/11 (m.ob.). High numbers were: 10 on 8/22 (AW), 26 on 8/22 (AZ), and 12 on 9/11 (BB). A **Short-billed/Long-billed Dowitcher** made a short appearance at HCP 8/2 (JR, MW, m.ob.).

A flushed **American Woodcock** surprised JSp on her

walk at PC 8/26. The elusive **Wilson's Snipe** was reported on three occasions: HCP 9/30 (AW, MS), two at HCP 10/13 (RK, MW) and three at GP 10/22 (JWe, PWe). There were two surprising sightings of **Red-necked Phalaropes** at different places and times in Berks. On 9/23, RH photographed a Red-necked Phalarope at BD. The bird was observed feeding in its unique whirling motion by several fortunate birders before it departed. On 10/2, during a light rainfall, MW watched three light-colored shorebirds pass over his car, over a low bank and to an algae-covered farm pond on Zweizig Road near Shoemakersville. He pulled into the farm lane and found the birds. He was able to identify the Red-necked Phalaropes as they rested on the pond but only for two minutes. The farmer's three dogs appeared on a far bank which disturbed the birds. They made two circle passes over the pond and headed west towards Shartlesville. They were not seen again.

High count for **Greater Yellowlegs** was 15 at HCP 9/11 (MW) and for **Lesser Yellowlegs** was 18 at HCP 8/16 (RK). 20 **Bonaparte Gulls** were seen at LO 11/20 (RK) and three at BML 10/5 (RH). The first **Lesser Black-backed Gull** for this season was reported at BLM 11/27 (RK).

Two **Caspian Terns** made a brief appearance at LOBC 8/15 (RH, RK). A single Caspian Tern made an unusual pass over MP 8/27 (RH). It may have been traveling from Lake Ontelaunee to Blue Marsh Lake or vice versa. It was definitely out of its element. A single **Common Loon** made several extended appearances at KC as



The White-rumped Sandpiper at Hamburg Commerce Park on October 11, 2022. Video of this species plus Least & Pectoral sandpipers at <https://vimeo.com/760600224> Photo and video by Mike Slater.

reported by KG. The loon was first seen 6/28 and 7/27; then 8/1-18 and a single loon was seen again at KC 11/8-9. It is difficult to determine if this was the same loon or not.

The surprise visit of an **American Bittern** on 9/20 to the native plant garden at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary headquarters was a new bird for the sanctuary list. The bittern seemed content to hide in the cattails along the pond edge into the next day. **Great Egrets** were reported throughout Berks in numbers of one and two (m.ob.). Three **Cattle Egrets** arrived 10/18 at the Zweizig Road farm pond in the late afternoon and departed at the next sunrise (AW, MW). The eight **Black-crowned Night-Herons** reported at BMLSBL 8/17 (EB) was the highest number reported.

The first report of **Golden Eagle** at HMNL was 9/29. There were three off-ridge reports of Golden Eagles: AFF 11/7(DJ), SHHW 11/12 (BL), Stricker Road, Heidelberg Township 11/5 (BL). **Northern Goshawk** numbers were slightly better at HMNL this season with 3 goshawks being reported. The highest one-day count for **Bald Eagle** was 38 on 9/23. The highest one-day count for **Broad-winged Hawk** was 2,883 on 9/17. A more detailed report will be available in the Pennsylvania Birds fall migration report.

Reports of **Barn Owls** are rare in Berks. On 9/22, a homeowner in rural Birdsboro got out of bed at 3 A.M. and while walking through the family room, he noticed the shining light in the backyard. Perched on one of his bird feeders was a Barn Owl. It must have activated the motion detector. The Barn Owl flew off into the night and hasn't returned (RS). At her Bernville residence on 10/30, JS was alerted to a **Northern Saw-whet Owl's** presence in her backyard by the horde of songbirds harassing the owl.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker sightings were reported over Berks after the third week of September. During the week of 10/15, 18 single sightings were reported. At HMNL, counts for **American Kestrel**, **Merlin** and **Peregrine Falcon** were at the 10-year average. The Peregrine Falcon nesting at Fourth and Penn Street in Reading successfully fledged four offspring. There were numerous sightings of single Peregrine Falcons throughout Berks.

On 9/8, along the ridge at AFF, RH found an **Olive-sided Flycatcher**. A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was found at KDRA 8/18 (KG) and one at AFF on 8/30-9/2 (RH). **Four Acadian Flycatchers** were counted at HR 8/3 (KG). During the week of 9/1, birders made nine single reports of **Least Flycatchers** in Berks.

During a walk at LOBC 8/14, RK noticed two kingbirds at the top of a tree. The **Eastern Kingbird** was easily identified but the other bird was not the same. RK's detailed description recounts the field marks he used to identify the seventh Berks record for a **Western Kingbird**. The first Western Kingbird was reported 9/18/1938 at LO by Earl Poole. The second record, also by Earl Poole, was on 8/25/1941. On 12/28/2006 near Morgantown, HH identified a Western Kingbird that remained there until 1/11/2007. This most recent Western Kingbird was observed for several minutes until it tussled with the Eastern Kingbird over an insect after which it flew off.

Off-ridge **Philadelphia Vireos** were reported: two on 9/16 at KDRA (KG), and one on 9/24 at LO (TU). At MP walks on 9/20-21, a single Philadelphia Vireo was found along the Skyline Drive (RH, PW, JW). **Fish Crows** have become more numerous in northern Berks since the increase of restaurants and stores. On 9/21, 320 Fish Crows were counted as they went to their evening roost along the Schuylkill River. This event took place every late afternoon for weeks.

The **Black-capped Chickadee** incursion commenced in mid-September resulting in numerous sightings in this quarter (m.ob.). **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and **Winter Wren** reports, usually of single birds, were common throughout this quarter also. In what has become an annual sighting, a once rare **Marsh Wren** visited KDRA 10/6-7 (KG).

Nocturnal flight calls identified these thrushes: **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Nolde Forest 10/8 (AZ) and a Boyertown residence 9/21 (RK). Ten **Swainson's Thrush** were at KDRA 9/16 (KG). Ten American Pipits worked the fields on Mertz Road 10/29 (RK).



Two views of an adult male Evening Grosbeak at the Slater's feeding station in Brecknock Twp., Berks Co. PA on October 28, 2022, Photo by Mike Slater

Sightings of **Evening Grosbeaks** at the feeders of Berks homes created excitement and hope for more of the hungry yellow birds from the north. On 9/27, KD reported a single Evening Grosbeak at a feeder near Topton. There were 10 reports of single feeder-visiting Evening Grosbeaks. At the Reading Pagoda on the Skyline Drive in Reading, on 11/2, JSo reported three Evening Grosbeaks flying past his post.

At KDRA, KG reported ten **Purple Finch** on his 10/11 morning walk. Three **Pine Siskins** flew past the Reading Pagoda 11/02 (JSo). In the early morning hours at his Henningsville residence on 11/23, PS identified a **Lapland Longspur** by its nocturnal flight call. Single **American Tree Sparrows** popped up at BML 11/18 and Reading Airport 11/28 (JSp). On 10/30, in a flock of White-throated Sparrows at the Daniel Boone Homestead, a **Dark-eyed Junco x White-throated Sparrow** (hybrid) stood out for (JSo). Six **Rusty Blackbirds** noisily fed at BML 11/17 (SF).

A total of 33 warbler species were reported this quarter. Due to the unfavorable fronts with high winds and wet weather conditions, there were no fall-outs of south-bound warblers. The warblers were scattered along ridges and in parks with bodies of water. Highlights of reports: **Orange-crowned Warbler** at HW 9/24 (EB); **Connecticut Warbler** at KDRA 9/29 (KG), at Union Meadows 10/6 (LC, LI, RH, RK, BL), and Nolde Forest 10/8 (AZ); **Mourning Warbler** 9/18 at KDRA (KG); **Kentucky Warbler** 8/26 at SGL 280 (BL); **Wilson's Warbler** 9/5 at MP (JB), 9/15 at KDRA (KG), and 9/18 at LO (TU).

Blue Grosbeak activity in the late summer results in more observations. Blue Grosbeaks were reported on these dates: HCP 8/2 (MW), HCP 8/10 (KG), SGL 280 8/21 (JSp). **Dickcissel** reports were down this quarter as field cuttings are in flux and interrupt nesting for Dickcissels. The usual fields near Hamburg, Fleetwood and Lyons produced no sightings. The only reported Dickcissel was an 11/2 flyover at the MP Reading Pagoda (JSo).

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- Payment is for **September 2022 – August 2023**

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(This new category will help us support our programs and activities and will be recognized in our newsletter.)

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- **We will still happily take a check and the completed membership form (below) or**
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BAIRD ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB ANNUAL BANQUET

May 12, 2023

Held jointly with the MINGEL NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Program:

Jeffrey Gordon

Past President of the American Birding
Association

Presents:

**Birding Together:
Highlights From 50 Years
in the Field!**

Join Jeffrey Gordon for a celebration of the power of birding to delight, to educate, to heal and to transform, not only our own lives but even our world. Birding is a passion, a practice, and a community with much to offer anyone throughout their lifetime. Jeff will look back across his 6 decades of birding work, play, travel, and discovery close to home and around the world, as well as offering some thoughts on the path forward. This presentation is designed to appeal to people with varying birding backgrounds and is more concerned with emotion, meaning, and connection than with the technical and scientific.

Location is the **Berkshire Country Club**, 1637 Bernville Rd. Reading, Pa. 19601

6:00 pm - Social hour, book signing, basket raffle, cash bar

6:30 pm – Dinner, Penne pasta with broccoli, spinach, roasted red pepper, fresh basil, parmesan cheese, and sliced chicken breast. Salad, Dessert, Coffee/Tea

Vegetarian and Gluten Free options available, choose on reservation form.

Please bring nature-related items for the customary door prizes!

Cost: \$40.00 per person

Reservation deadline is April 21

Pay online at <https://bairdornithological.club/may-banquet-2023>

Or by check payable to BOC

Send with payment, to: **Charles Coleman, 129 Grecian Terrace, Sinking Spring PA 19608**

Questions? Call Charles Coleman 610-763-2548

Name(s) attending: _____

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